

Attitudes and Awareness of Teachers of English Towards Sri Lankan English (A Study Based on Mawathagama Division of Kurunegala District)

D.W Shehani Evans Witharana

Lecturer in English, Professional Development Center for Teachers- Nikaweratiya.

evesheni@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the nexus between teacher insights, and structural validation of Sri Lankan English (SLE) in determining, social identity, and the pursuit of endonormization (linguistic authority) in English Language Teaching. Drawing upon a multidimensional description, the inquiry reflects on three distinct features of SLE—phonology, morphology and syntax—and the attitudinal orientations which inform their authentic application. The study combines online questionnaires and diagnostic audio recordings from twenty English teachers to investigate the relationship between self-reported and actual language use. The findings indicate a discrepancy regarding self-perceived adherence to Standard British or American English as exclusive models, despite aural and structural analysis portraying the pervasive presence of SLE in their use. In addition, a perpetual negative stance against SLE is evident, in light of the inadequate awareness regarding detection of essential SLE features among ELT instructors. For the validation of SLE, a high-level intervention in language planning is necessary, along with the provision of formal documentation to empower teachers on essential SLE use. In recognizing SLE as a legitimate variety, the education system can break the "monopoly" of the Standard English model and opt for a model of English language that is more representative of the Sri Lankan people.

Keywords: *English Language Teaching (ELT), Morphology, Phonology, Sri Lankan English (SLE), Syntax.*

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and its current implications

The diverse topology of English Language Teaching in post-colonial settings is quickly turning into an authentic variance between received negative criticisms and the emergent authority of localized varieties. In Sri Lanka this tension is particularly pronounced since the field of education attempts to reconcile a phenomenon like SLE, which started out as socio-linguistic phenomena into a possible pedagogic model. This inquiry provides a comprehensive analysis of the attitudes and awareness of English teachers within the Mawathagama Division toward the distinct features of the Sri Lankan variety, evaluating the structural integrity of this dialect through the characteristics of phonology, morphology, and syntax. Hence the analysis demonstrates that a profound cognitive conflict existing between teachers' self-perceived linguistic identity and their actual performance. There is a growing recognition of the need for progressive standards that reflect the cultural and linguistic authenticity of the Sri Lankan context.

The historical flight of the English language in Sri Lanka bears witness to the enduring impact of colonial linguistic hegemony and its subsequent accommodation within a dynamic indigenous milieu. Providing a precise explanation of English as it is used and spoken in Sri Lanka today is indeed a striving endeavor because there are so many complexities in relation to speakers, status, functions, dialectal variations, recognition, and acceptance. English was introduced to the island when the British East India Company annexed the coastal Provinces in 1796, with a gradual establishment of linguistic hierarchy accompanying imperial expansion. By 1802, English was promoted as the sole official language, serving as the main medium for administration, education, and religion, setting up in turn the base for anglicized elite in Ceylon who followed British linguistic and social norms.

After gaining independence, in 1948 the subsequent government responded most popular demand and ousted English while having the expectation of promoting vernacular languages. The height of this attempt was the Sinhala only policy in 1956. Thus it leads to denigration of English language as well as a massive exodus of First Language (L1) speakers of English in Sri Lanka. Then the noteworthy policy promoted English language to the status of a link language by the 13th amendment to the constitution in 1987. However English was adapted according to its new context, needs of the speakers while reaching into many domains such as administration, education, aviation, navigation, mass media, trade and commerce etc. Meanwhile the differences in phonological, morphological and syntactic features of this new version paved the way to blossom up as a home grown variety of English in Sri Lanka. In fact it had both features obtained from donor languages; Standard British English (SBE) and vernacular languages.

The current issue is how this new variety can gain its acceptability in terms of pedagogical purposes in the field of Sri Lankan Education system. The dilemma of English teachers and educators is captured

through the questions raised with the initiatives taken to introduce SLE in to the system. The questions indicating “Do you accept SLE in exam papers?” can be eliminated by having a common platform to introduce Standard Sri Lankan English with its own patterns of accentuation, pronunciation and diction.

This study serves both as a critical evaluation and an attitudinal survey to investigate on awareness and attitudes on validating features of SLE. Since it has been researched and documented extensively by local academics from English Language Teaching (ELT) departments of the universities. But it has still not been recognized and legitimized by the country’s English Teaching Curriculum which has preferred to keep SBE as perfect model for teaching English. This is most obvious as many ELT practitioners venerate Received Pronunciation (RP) in teaching pronunciation. While most respected speakers of English in the country follow the intelligible speech accents in SLE avoiding the out dated elocution accent which seems to be unnatural is of limited purpose and function in Sri Lanka. However it is still continues to make an appearance in schools on stage during English Day concerts and recitations. Therefore with these conditions prevalent in the field of English Teaching it is intended to transfer the awareness on SLE as a legitimate, full –fledged variety with its own phonology.

2. Literature Review

2.1. World Englishes

According to sociolinguistic profile of English in the world, SLE is located in the outer circle of world Englishes.

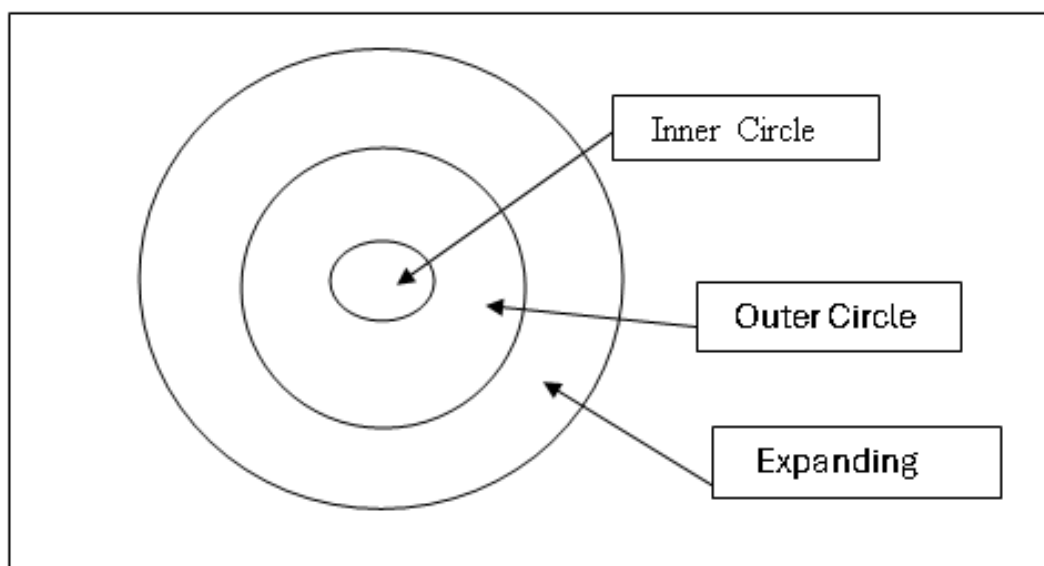


Figure 1: Sociolinguistic profile of English in the world – Kachru (1992)

The three concentric circles depict;

- Inner circle - The traditional and cultural linguistic bases of English (Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand)
- Outer circle - Institutionalized non –native varieties (Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Bangladesh, Ghana, Zambia, Nigeria, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines)
- Expanding Circle - No official status, used in limited contexts. (China, Spain, USSR, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Israel, etc.)

2.2. The status of Sri Lankan English

Defining the Sri Lankan variety require a synthesis of sociolinguistic reality and academic description. The emergence of SLE is the direct result of contact situations between English and the indigenous languages of the country. Habitual users are typically bilingual, often representing the urban middle class, although the variety has saturated all ethnic groups and socioeconomic strata. Scholars offer varied definitions that highlight different aspects of the variety:

- Kandiah (1981) emphasizes the bilingual and westernized identity of the speakers.
- Gunasekara (2005) refers to the variety used among the elite class of Sri Lanka as “Standard Sri Lankan English” (SSLE).
- Meyler (2007) defines it as the language of those who speak English as a first language or who are bilingual in English and Sinhala or Tamil.

However, it is important to differentiate SLE from the “Singlish” which is an uncomplimentary term associated with non-standard or transitional code-mixing. SLE, on the other hand, is a proper variety with a set of full-fledged phonological, morphological, and syntactic patterns. According to Pathirana (2016), lexical borrowing of terms from the Sinhala and Tamil languages was recorded dating back to as early as the year 1681. This is indicative of the long linguistic pressure. Nevertheless, it is a “lingual anarchy” language for some but a “socio-linguistic reality” for others, giving rise to a split view among the academic and professional circles. The uniqueness exhibited in SLE is present at every level of linguistics analysis. These are not errors but adaptations to the communicative environment which are systematic in Sri Lankan contexts.

2.3. Attitudes towards Other Varieties of English

The attitudes towards English extremely vary from country to country specially depending on the three circles of World Englishes as stated above. In countries which fit into the Outer circle, learning English is considered as a benefit and rather a necessity to receive a prominent place and even in habitual

actions. However, when considering a country that belongs to the Expanding Circle, they do not pay much consideration to learn English because it's a foreign language and these countries do have additional second languages to learn. With regard to a country such as Italy which belongs to the Expanding Circle, they always have a tendency to learn a language such as Spanish or French, nevertheless the students pay little attention to learn English. For them, English is required only for global communication principles. To understand the natural evolution process of SLE, the study uses the Dynamic Model of the evolution of New Englishes put forward by Schneider (2007). This model identifies strict guidelines of five stages, namely: foundation, exonormian stabilization, nativization, endonormian stabilization, and differentiation. The stage of Sri Lankan English is such that it is in a developmental stage where it is passing from the nativization stage, characterized by large-scale structural borrowing, phonological creativity, to the stage of endonormian stabilization, where the local English is accepted. But this developmental stage is marred by "complaint traditions" and "stigma of non-native accents".

The study also focuses on the ABC Attitude Model, which will be used to interpret the complexity of teacher attitudes. Furthermore, the study concerns the ABC Attitude Model of Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) to analyze the complex nature of teacher perspectives. This model deconstructs attitudes into three components:

1. Affective: Emotional reactions towards SLE, such as pride, shame, or anxiety.
2. Behavioral: The actual linguistic performance and the tendency to recommend SLE to students.
3. Cognitive: Beliefs about the legitimacy, correctness, and global utility of the Sri Lankan variety.

The relationship between these factors is significant in understanding why teachers may cognitively accept SLE but affectively reject it in high-stakes pedagogical contexts.

2.4. Some Characteristics of Sri Lankan English

Studies about Sri Lankan English compiled by different veteran academics in this field emphasize a number of characteristics of Sri Lankan English and provide firm verification that it does constitute a distinct variety of English. Both segmental and supra segmental variations in home grown varieties reflect the uniqueness in SLE. In terms of Supra segmental issues it also affects the variations in pronunciation of the speaker. Due to these variations there are clearly identified segmental variations in SLE in comparison to SBE. However in this study the main focus is laid upon segmental issues in examining dialect variations.

2.4.1. Phonological Divergence and aural realization

Phonology is the most immediate marker of the Sri Lankan variety, largely influenced by the sound systems of Sinhala and Tamil, which are syllable-timed languages, unlike the stress-timed Standard British English. This fundamental rhythmic difference leads to several diagnostic features in SLE speech patterns.

Phonological Feature	Standard British English (SBE)	Sri Lankan English (SLE)
Diphthong /eɪ/ (e.g., <i>face</i>)	Diphthongal /feɪs/	Long Monophthong /fe:s/
Diphthong /əʊ/ (e.g., <i>note</i>)	Diphthongal /nəʊt/	Long Monophthong /no:t/
Final syllable schwa + stop	/bɪskɪt/	/bɪskət/ (retroflex stop)
Palatal fricative (e.g., <i>leisure</i>)	Voiced /'leʒə/	Voiceless /'lefə/
Alveolar fricative (e.g., <i>busy</i>)	Voiced /'bɪzi/	Voiceless /'bɪsi/
Dental fricatives (e.g., <i>this, thick</i>)	/ð/, /θ/	Dental plosives /ɖ/, /ʈ/

Table 1 Phonological variation between SBE and SLE

The use of monophthongs instead of diphthongs is one of the more prominent characteristics of SSLE, even as natural language suggests the slightest degree of diphthongization in certain pre-pausal positions. SLE typically lacks syllabic consonants (as in the second syllable of *little*), with a non-optional schwa often being present.

2.4.2. Morphological Productivity and Lexical Synthesis

The morphology of SLE is characterized by high productivity in word-formation processes that serve to augment the lexicon according to local cultural needs. These processes include direct borrowing, compounding, and semantic shift. Compounding is a particularly productive process, often mixing Sinhala/Tamil and English elements or creating new English-only compounds that reflect local logic. Acronyms and clipping are also prevalent in contemporary Sri Lankan newspaper language, contributing to the variety's evolution as a distinctive standard.

Morphological Process	Examples in Sri Lankan English	Sociolinguistic Context/Implication
Direct Borrowing	<i>Konde, kiribath, aiya, poya</i>	Fills lexical gaps for indigenous concepts /kinship terms.
Compounding	<i>Funeral house, wedding house, cousin brother</i>	Influenced by local language structures to specify relationships.
Semantic Change	<i>Homecoming, flower girl, devilled</i>	English words acquiring new, localized meanings.
Affixation	<i>Karapoththas</i> (Karapoththa + -s)	Applying English inflectional rules to borrowed stems.

Table 2 Morphological processes embedded in SLE

2.4.3. Syntactic and Structural Deviations

The syntax of SLE reflects the influence of local language word order and colloquial speech patterns, often diverging from the subject-verb-object structures typical of SBE. These features are more prominent in spoken form than in the written variety.

- Topicalization: The topic sentence itself is moved forward in emphasis. (Example: "A really nice day is today.")
- Pronoun Deletion: Influenced by colloquial Sinhala question formation (e.g., "so how? Passed?").
- Prepositions Overuse: Such features include "sit for the exam" or "cope up with" and are commonly used by the SLE speakers in addition to being redundant in the SBE.
- Double Comparatives: The rising trend including "more better," commonly labeled as incorrect in examination questions, is frequently used in broadcast media.
- Invariant Tags: The use of "no?" or "isn't it?" regardless of the preceding clause's verb or tense.

While many of these features are viewed as errors by conventional educators, they constitute the foundation of the "pluricentric" reality of English in Sri Lanka, facilitating communicative efficiency within the local context in different domains.

2.5. Sri Lankan English and English Language Teaching

It is still surprising to state that some of the Sri Lankans except sociolinguists and the few personnel from the field of education are not aware about the thing called Sri Lankan English. Therefore it has become controversial issue in the field of education to gain acceptance amidst the downright resistance

in certain areas to the idea that SLE deserves to be recognized as a distinguished variety in teaching English in the local classrooms. The availability of classroom application of SLE has to be studied through the awareness and acceptance of the teachers of English as they are the ones who are mainly responsible of disseminating English Education in the country. In this regard, most decision makers of English education were in ordinary accord that SLE should be the pedagogical model to promote English proficiency among Sri Lankan students.

3. Methodology

3.1. Systematic Investigatory Framework

This study originated with an analysis of attitudes and awareness towards Sri Lankan English among the teachers of English and the study falls within the purview of descriptive methodology. Therefore questionnaire method was incorporated to generate the real issues in convincing teachers to validate features of SLE in classroom contexts. The questionnaire provided have been used to generate an analysis under four genres: morphological, phonological, syntactical and attitudinal perception of the research sample.

Figure 2 Correlation between Dependent and Independent variable

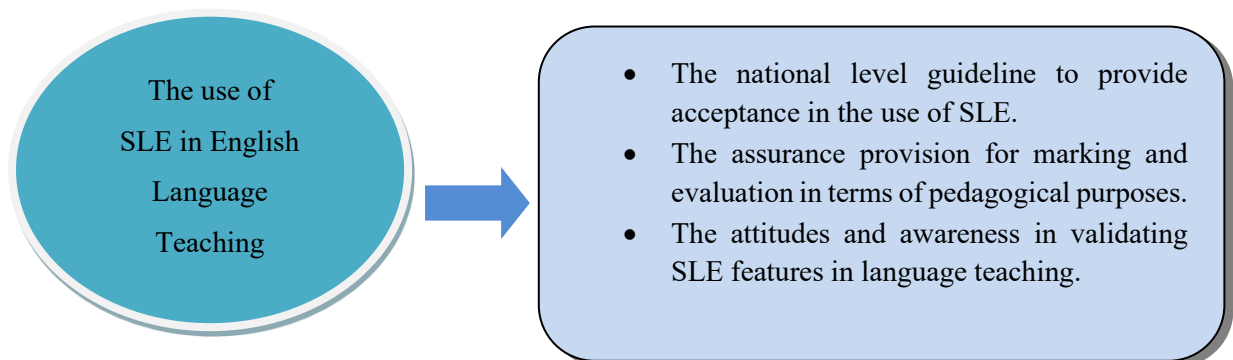
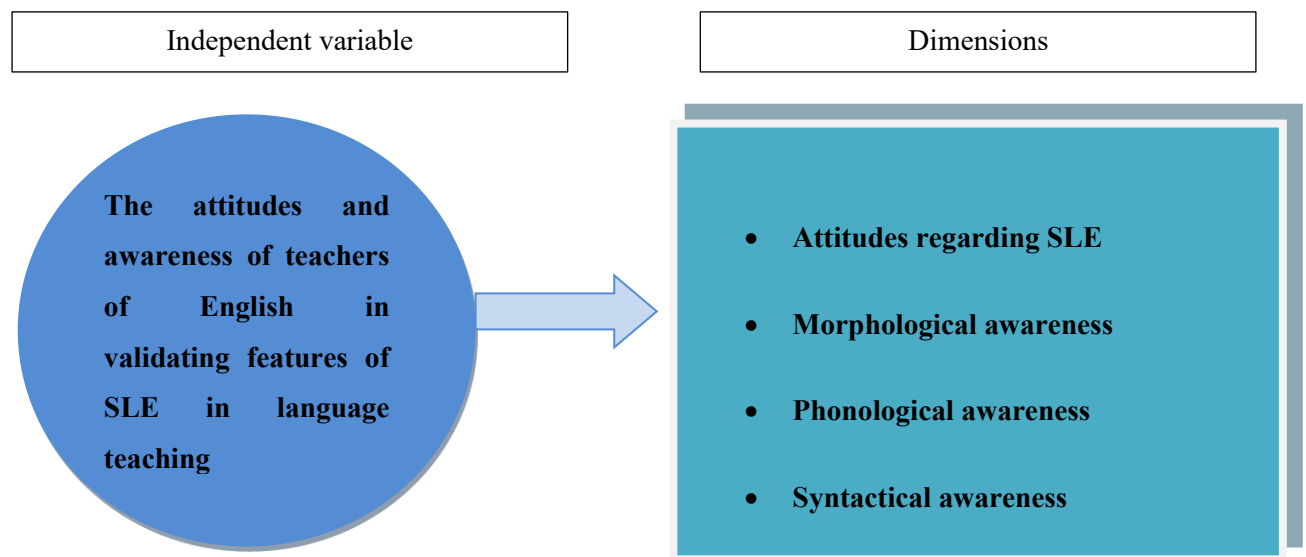


Figure 3 Operationalization framework of the research



The following dimensions highlight the indicators in the questionnaire (Question 3 to 15). The questionnaire was designed to minimize "acquiescence bias"—the tendency of participants to agree with prompts—by including objective testing components beside attitudinal scales.

Dimensions	Indicators
• Attitudes regarding SLE	3. Accuracy of the accents for the usage of Sri Lankan class rooms. 4. Acceptance on SLE by the teachers of English. 5. Attitudes towards SLE as a variety of English.
• Morphological awareness	6 Borrowings in SLE. 7. Expressions in SLE. 8. Semantic change in SLE. 9. Compounding in SLE.

- **Syntactical awareness**
 - 10. Topicalization in SLE
 - 11. Pronoun deletion in SLE.
 - 12. Over use of prepositions in SLE.
 - 13. Use of double comparatives in SLE.
 - 14. Use of tag questions in SLE.

- **Phonological awareness**
 - 15. The actual pronunciation of the respondent in order to determine their use of dialect.

Table 3 Operationalization framework

In terms of determining the phonological awareness of each respondent and their actual usage a test on pronunciation was administered.

3.2. Pronunciation Diagnostics

The objective of this test is to examine the phonological features of SLE used by the research sample. Hence, the test done with regard to phonology can be considered as a suitable device to conclude to which variety of English a particular user of English belongs to.

SLE phonology varies from SBE phonology in relation to many phonemes since some sounds available in SBE are not known by the Sri Lankan English users whose first language is either Sinhala or Tamil. As far as the SLE users are bilingual, “the phonology of Sinhala/Tamil has influenced SLE”. Therefore, the following paragraph were given to the participants to send as audio files via e mail which were constructed to examine the selected phonemic differences between SLE and SBE under following area.

- The substitution of diphthongs/ei/ and /əʊ / of SBE with long vowels/e:/ and /o:/ in SLE.
- The use of schwa in word final syllable, followed by the voiceless retroflex stop
- Substitution of voiceless palatal fricative /ʃ/ with voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/
- Substitution of voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ with voiced alveolar fricative /z/
- Use of dental plosives /t/ and /d/ in place of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ in SBE

The script given to the participants I had to face them as I didn't get a note from my love for pleasure; even I sent a bucket full of roses to her. Thus I became busy in my leisure travelling in the market.

Table 4 examples in the testing tool determine the variety of English used by participants

/ei/	/əʊ/	/ɜ/	/z/	/θ/	/ə/
face	Note	leisure pleasure	busy roses	them thus	bucket market

3.3. Participant Parameters and Demographics

To evaluate the awareness and attitudes of English teachers toward these features, a descriptive multi-dimensional analysis was conducted within the Mawathagama Division of the Kurunegala District. This region is the third most developed city in the district, with a diverse demographic outline comprising Sinhalese, Moors, and Tamils. The study involved a representative sample of twenty teachers of English, selected through purposive sampling to ensure direct involvement in validating SLE features.

Demographic Attribute	Data Summary
Majority Ethnicity	Sinhalese (82.0% of division)
First Language (L1)	Sinhala (Majority), Tamil (Minority), English (Dutch origin/rare)
Primary Education	GCE A/L (11), Basic Degree (5), Masters (2), PhD/MPhil (1)
Qualifications	
Teaching Medium	English as a Second Language (ESL)

Table 5 Selected Demographic attributes with the data summary

The majority of the research population is inherent in a community where English is primarily a second language, and their own linguistic history is rooted in the vernacular languages of Sri Lanka.

3.4. Ethical Governance and Participant Protection

The best ethical values should be maintained to the fullest to provide reliability to science and public trust. As per the guidelines provided by British Educational Research Association (2024), the study emphasized some important ethical perceptions.

- **Informed Consent:** Participants were provided with an information leaflet and consent form detailing the study's aims, risks.
- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** With a consideration of how interrelated the educational community is within Kurunegala, information has been shared without establishing a direct connection with individuals or schools for the purpose of avoiding marginalization within professional circles.
- **Social & Political Reflection:** The study is well aware of the socio/economic connections between linguistic attitudes and the Sri Lankan social context in which "Standard" English is sometimes the only means for social upward mobility.

Data Integrity: The auditory recordings were secured, and the analysis was done while being mindful of the objectivity in the phonetic identification scoring systems.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. The Disconnect Between Perception and Reality

One of the most significant findings is the overwhelming discrepancy between how teachers perceive their own speech and their actual acoustic output.

Linguistic Variety	Self-Reported Usage (%)	Objective usage (Pronunciation Test)
Standard British English (SBE)	60%	~10%
American English (AE)	20%	~0%
Sri Lankan English (SLE)	10%	~90%
Indian English	10%	~0%

Table 6 The results obtained through aural diagnostics

While ninety percent of the sample claimed to speak SBE, AE, or other non-Sri Lankan varieties, the pronunciation test revealed that ninety percent actually utilized the SLE long monophthongs /e:/ and /o:/. Furthermore, eighty percent of teachers utilized voiceless fricatives in place of voiced palatal and alveolar fricatives, a feature of the SLE phonological system. This suggests that while teachers adore Received Pronunciation (RP), they practice a localized phonetic system without conscious awareness.

4.2. Attitudinal dispositions towards the Local Variety

Specifically the accurate accent for speaking English to be used in Sri Lankan classrooms is examined in order to find out their attitudes towards pronunciation of SLE. Here are the findings in this subject matter.

Accents of Englishes	Precentages
Standard British English	60%
American English	20%
Sri Lankan English	10%
Other (Indian English)	10%

Table 7 Accents used by the respondents

The affective component of the teachers' attitudes reveals a deep-rooted bias against SLE, often viewed through the lens of deficiency rather than variety.

Attitudinal Profile	Percentage	Core Justifications
Negative	50%	"Want to talk as a native speaker," "lacks perfection," "marginalized if we speak it."
Positive	40%	"Unique flavor," "sense of safety," "Sri Lankaness."
Balanced/Functional	10%	"Purpose of communication matters more than the variety."

Table 8 Attitudinal analysis of the research sample

The majority of teachers (60%) believe that SLE is not suitable for classroom context, often recommending that students avoid it in favor of British or American variety. This conflict is closely connected with a "sense of professional responsibility" to train students in what they perceive as "correct" language for international utilization. There is a common belief that SLE is "grammatically wrong" and will not be accepted outside Sri Lanka, an insight that fosters a "complaint tradition" towards the local variety.

4.3. Meta Linguistic Awareness of SLE Features

Awareness shown by the teachers varies respecting the particular morphological and syntactic elements of the variety which is subconscious to them.

- Morphological Awareness: The use rate of SLE lexical expressions ; "aiyo" or "sin men", meaning changes ; "homecoming", and compounding ; "funeral house" is quite high at 70-

80%. The meta-linguistic awareness to appreciate the usage of such features in Singaporean English as valid variety is lacking in the teachers. They instead regard them as "Singlish"

- Syntactical Awareness: Syntactical awareness relates to grammatical knowledge and is more suitable to SBE standards and leads to the dismissal of SLE features such as double comparatives and topicalization as "ungrammatical." However, educators extensively use pronoun deletion and redundancy in prepositions without labeling them as SLE idiosyncrasies.

In summary, teachers' attitudes are characterized by a "limited awareness concerning the appropriate recognition of vocabulary of the three varieties" (SBE, AE, and SLE). The implication here would be that their disaffection with SLE is not empirically grounded on a precise definition of "brokenness" but a rather fuzzy focus on its limitations

5. Discussion

5.1. Linguistic Capital and the Stigma of the "Local "variety

The evidence emerging from the research reveals the important phase in the evolution of Sri Lankan English. The ambivalence between the teachers' attitude and linguistic reality represents the interaction between linguistic capital, social identity, and the struggle for endonormization(linguistic authority).The SBE preference shown by teachers is derived from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "linguistic capital" whereby standard forms come to signify prestige socioeconomic groups, thereby regarding 'native-like' fluency as a criterion of professional competency. In the Sri Lankan context, SBE is, therefore, the objective of English language education, considering it as an empowering tool. This is demonstrated through the creation of a situation termed "linguistic shame" wherein teachers experience embarrassment as their own speech fails to approximate to RP standards. "Not-pot English" (derogatory for SLE) is therefore a social tool utilized to mock English spoken by groups perceived as inferior. Teachers in the sample study who expressed that they would be "marginalized" if they spoke SLE are reacting to this persistent climate of accentism.

5.2. The Role of Codification in Validation

A major theme emerging from the data is the "lack of codification" as a primary driver of teacher resistance. Unlike British or American varieties, SLE lacks suitably available pedagogical resources, making it difficult for teachers to verify "correct" usage. The absence of a "Standard SLE" dictionary or grammar in the classroom, forces teachers to rely on exonormative models to avoid being seen as "incompetent". As Schneider (2007) states, endonormative stabilization requires the "residual codification" of the variety through literary writing and grammatical description. While scholars such as Gunasekara and Meyler have made significant contributions to this effort, their work has yet to be

institutionalized in the national school curriculum. The "English Our Way" program's discontinuation further illustrates the difficulty of implementing SLE without a robust, state-approved platform for standardization.

5.3. Morphological innovation and Semantic shifts in SLE

Compounding is a productive process in SLE with borrowings of Compounds from Sinhala or Tamil. Meanwhile there are forming of compounds with two English words but still it has the total influence of First language to express the ideas. Unlike the Sinhala/Sinhala+Sinhala/Tamil or Sinhala/Tamil+English, compounding of two English terms reflect the influence on Sinhala or Tamil. As in the case of funeral house, wedding house, cousin brother the aforementioned influence is highly apparent. According to the research findings this feature of SLE has came into existence in the field of education as majority of the research sample has selected the term 'green colour' rather than the direct use of the word 'green' to denote the colours. All languages undergo change and English is no exemption. Some of the major trends of language change in terms of SLE morphology. In fact English word takes on a different meaning although the word retained the same. According to the findings it is notable the terms 'homecoming', 'devilled' are highly used term as in the case of flower girl which is used to describe the little girl in bridal retinue whereas the actual English term is not associated with as such. The findings in this research also suggest that the use of terms with semantic shift, use of culture specific loan words in different scenario is highly evident in their everyday usage among the teachers engaged in Education field when they communicate with the students.

5.4. Pluricentrism and Assessment Literacy

The study highlights the necessity of transitioning from a monocentric to a "pluricentric" approach to language assessment. Pluricentrism acknowledges that a single language can have multiple, equally valid national norms. In the case of Sri Lanka, this means recognizing SSLE as a legitimate target for English language proficiency at both school and tertiary levels.

Evidence from tertiary educators suggests a growing openness to "ownership" of SLE, with some arguing that it is "unrealistic and unfair" to test students based on alien standards. However, this openness is often domain-specific; while SLE might be acceptable for "English for General Purposes," teachers remain more rigid in "English for Academic Purposes," where they believe international standards should prevail. This reflects the "changing nature of the teachers' attitudes" influenced by situational and interactional structures.

6. Conclusion

The findings from this inquiry demand several targeted interventions to align Sri Lankan education system with the socio-linguistic reality of the twenty-first century.

6.1. Strategic Recommendations and Future Outlook

The transition to validating SLE features must be supported at the national level through the Department of English of the National Institute of Education (NIE).

- **Adoption of Pluricentric Models:** The curriculum should shift the emphasis definitely away from the “perfect model” approach in RP to the SSLE model of speech and writing.
- **Formal Codification:** The state must facilitate the corpus studies in the compilation of dictionaries, grammars, and reference resources for SLE to enable teachers to be equipped with resources for education.
- **Refining Level Descriptors:** Level descriptors pertaining to language skills must be constructed with a local and global perspective so as to include "Sri Lankaness" that meet communicative skills without being considered as errors. Thus teaching speaking needs spontaneous speech as it inevitably needs SLE. Therefore acceptance of SLE is a necessity as to promote effective speaking among the students which supports the learner to use SLE vocabulary and syntactic features. Any description of their familiar surroundings, families, the food and beverages, clothing, cultural events, flora and fauna require SLE words to convey meanings with specificity and accuracy.

6.2. Enhancing Teacher perceptions

The affective components of teachers’ attitudes reveal a prejudgment rooted in a preference for a deficiency pattern over an SLE pattern. To enable teachers to shift effectively from exonormative stabilization, or "linguistic shame," to endonormative stabilization, or "ownership," as SLE, is critical for its successful integration.

- **Professional Development:** In service and Pre service trainings for teachers need to address increasing their awareness of the diversity of English and the unique structural properties of SLE.
- **Developing Assessment Literacy:** It is necessary to impart teachers with "ELF-aware" (English as a Lingua Franca) assessment skills, where the primes are communicative competence .
- **Fostering Reflective Practice:** Supporting teachers in being "reflective practitioners" in questioning personal biases and examining the influence of their linguistic views against the background of affecting students' identity formation in knowledge access.

6.3. Expanding the Research Horizon

Further studies are required to deepen our perceptive of the evolving Sri Lankan variety and its pedagogical applications.

- **Generational and Regional Variations:** Future research should investigate the phonological changes occurring in younger generations and the specific variations available within SLE itself, such as Jaffna English or other regional dialects.
- **Longitudinal Studies on Attitudes:** Monitoring the impact of SLE-informed pedagogies on student motivation and learning outcomes can provide the empirical support needed for sustained policy change.
- **Influence of Digital Media:** Analyzing how internet memes, social media, and online forums are accelerating the nativization and acceptance of SLE within the virtual sphere.

The journey towards the validation of Sri Lankan English is not merely a linguistic endeavor but a socio-political one. By recognizing SLE as a legitimate and full-fledged variety, the Sri Lankan education system can move beyond the "stranglehold" of outdated standards and embrace a model of English that is truly representative of its people. This shift will require the collective efforts of curriculum designers, teacher educators, and practitioners to create a common platform where the "Sri Lankanness" of the language is celebrated rather than suppressed.

References

- Ariyasinghe, D. et al (2016). *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, University of Kelaniya, <http://saspjournals.com/sjahss>, 30 Oct 2019.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press.
- British Educational Research Association. (2024). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (5th ed.).
- Espeap.junis.ni.ac.rs English teachers' ethical considerations in ai integration: a narrative inquiry.
- Gunsekera, M. (2005). *The post-colonial identity of Sri Lankan English*. Katha Publishers.
- Kachru, B. (1986). *The alchemy of English: The spread, functions and models of non native Englishes*. Pergamon Press.
- Kandiah, T. (1981). Disinherited Englishes: The case of Lankan English. *Navasilu*, 4, 92–113.
- Meyler, R. (2007). *A dictionary of Sri Lankan English*. Mirisgala Publications.
- Pathirana, P. (2016). Lexical features and variations of Sri Lankan English in Sri Lankan internet memes.

- Pathirana, R. (2016). Dialectal variations of Sri Lankan English due to mother tongue influence of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim.
- Rosenberg, M. J., & Hovland, C. I. (1960). Cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of attitudes. In M. J. Rosenberg & C. I. Hovland (Eds.), *Attitude organization and change: An analysis of consistency among attitude components* (pp. 1–14). Yale University Press.
- Schneider, E. W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wickramasooriya, M. (2024). Developing and validating the level descriptors for English as a second language curriculum in Sri Lanka. *Humanising Language Teaching*, 26(4).

Appendix - I

Questionnaire on Sri Lankan English

The main focus of this questionnaire is to collect data for a research work of a postgraduate to gain information on attitudes and awareness of teachers of English towards authenticating features of Sri Lankan English (SLE). Therefore I would be much obliged if you are able to respond the following 15 questions willingly. Your active and voluntary participation will be highly appreciated if you can provide true information on this subject matter.

Please underline your responses from question 1 to 14.

1. What is your mother tongue?

- a. English b. Sinhala c. Tamil

2. Which variety of English do you speak when teaching your students? a. American English

b. British English

- c. Sri Lankan English e. Other variety

If the answer is “other” please mention the variety.....

3. Which accent do you think is accurate for use in Sri Lankan classrooms?

- a. The American accent
b. The British accent
c. The Sri Lankan accent

4. Do you recommend the use of Sri Lankan English for your students?

- a. Yes b. No

5. What is your attitude towards Standard Sri Lankan English? If you have any other to state mention here

-
.....
.....
.....
- a. A kind of an indigenous variety with its unique features of morphology, syntactic and phonology.
 - b. A kind of broken variety which has to be degraded in the Sri Lankan classrooms at all costs.
 - c. It is not the variety that it matters, but the ability to express the ideas clearly.

6. Which would be your most frequently used term to name the following traditional food?

I ate a large plate of for breakfast.



Kiribath

Milk rice

7. Do you use these expressions when speaking to your students? Yes /No

Expressions: (aww/ aiyo/ apoi/ ane/ sin men)

8. Do you use these terms in your lessons? Yes /No



Homecoming (The reception hosted by the bridegroom's parents after the wedding)



Devilled (Stir fried with chillies, onions and spices)

9. Out of the following ways, which would you use when you have to introduce colours to your students?

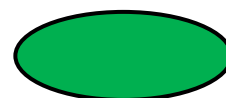
a. Green

b. Green colour

10. Among the following, which would you use in the classrooms?

a. A really nice day is today

b. Today is a really nice day



11. When talking to students, what would you prefer out of the following?

- a. passed the exam? b. Did you pass the exam?

12. Is the following example correct or wrong?

ex: He can't cope up with the situation.

- a. Correct b. Wrong

13. Is the following example correct or wrong?

ex: I feel much better now.

- a. Correct b. Wrong

14. Out of the given utterances, what would you prefer to use with your students in the classrooms?

- a. You can remember the previous lesson I taught yesterday. Can't you?
b. You can remember the previous lesson I taught yesterday no?

15. Test on pronunciation.

Please be kind enough to pronounce the given paragraph and send the recorded audio files to evesheni@ gmail.com, along with this questionnaire.

I had to face the truth as I didn't get a note from my love for pleasure; even I sent a bucket full of roses to her. Thus I became busy within my leisure travelling in the market.

Thanks for responding.