

## Developing Trends in Sri Lankan English (SLE) Vocabulary in the Domain of Journalistic Writing

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### **Abstract**

*Sri Lankan English (SLE) is recognized as an independent and unique variety of English. Since the introduction of English to Sri Lanka in 1796, its vocabulary has undergone a steady change. The current study is a trend analysis of the SLE vocabulary seen in journalistic writing. It is conducted through a content analysis and a comparative study. The data is extracted from selected newspaper articles of 1955-1965 and 2005-2015. A total of 44 newspaper pages were used for the study. The data is compared to identify the developing trends in the vocabulary used over a period of 60 years in the country. The data showed that the composition of the vocabulary of English in Sri Lanka has changed over the years. Some words have been dropped from usage and are considered archaic at present, while new vocabulary items have come into use. In the period under examination, there is an increase in the number of words that could be identified as 'SLE vocabulary'. Many word formation processes are commonly used to create the new SLE terms that are added to the language.*

**Keywords:** *Sri Lankan English, trend analysis, vocabulary, composition, word formation processes*

## **Introduction**

The present study documents the current trends in the Sri Lankan English (SLE) vocabulary as seen in the journalistic writing from 2005-2015. Fernando (2012) identifies vocabulary as an aspect that clearly reflects the changes in a language. SLE vocabulary displays a change in form and composition over the past few decades.

Research on SLE phonology has been conducted by C. Fernando (1976), S. Fernando (1985), Gunesequera (2005) and Wijetunge (2008). Gunesequera (2005) has studied SLE syntax, while SLE morphology has been studied by Fernando (2012), Gunesequera (2005) and Meyler (2011). However, apart from the linguistic characteristics identified and explored by the above researchers, the recent trends in SLE vocabulary as found in newspapers are not studied in detail. The significance of the present study is that it has analyzed journalistic writing as a specific genre of SLE writing with the objective of documenting any emerging trends in the SLE vocabulary in the said genre. Hence, the objective of the present study is to compare the vocabulary of *Ceylon Observer* from 1955-1965 with the *Sunday Observer* from 2005-2015, and thereby document any developing trends seen in the vocabulary, that are different to the ones identified by the previous researchers. Since the data is obtained from the decade 2005-2015, this study could contribute to update the existing records of SLE vocabulary analysis.

Thus, the research was conducted to answer the following research question

**RQ:** In a comparative study of the SLE vocabulary in newspapers from 1955-1965 and 2005-2015, what are the observable trends in vocabulary development?

## **Literature review**

### **Evolution Models of New Englishes**

Several theories of language evolution and its stages have been put forward by linguists, which are useful for the present study. Kachru (1992) identifies four stages of development in the “non-native institutionalized varieties of English” (p.56). They are “non-recognition of the local variety”, “extensive diffusion of bilingualism in English” which leads to the “development of varieties *within* a

variety”, non-native variety being accepted as a norm and finally the recognition of the variety (Kachru, 1992, pp. 56, 57). Schneider (2003) identifies “Foundation, Exonormative Stabilization, Nativization, Endonormative Stabilization and Differentiation” (p.243) as stages of language evolution. SLE has undergone most, if not all, of these stages of evolution and the variety has become increasingly *Lankanized* (Kachru, 1992, p.56). It has now reached a “national standard” (Gunesequera, 2005, p.128).

Fernando (2012) identifies three stages of SLE development. The first is the period after 1796, where English was exposed to social and political pressures from the local languages, and the locals as well as the British had to innovate words to express the “social, economic, geographical, cultural novelties” of the island (Fernando, 2012, p.162). The second is the “post-independence period” (Fernando, 2012, p. 165, p. 164) when the language started to shift from being the English of the “colonizer” to the English of the “once colonized” (Gunesequera, 2005, p. 20). The third stage is termed the “contemporary period” (Fernando, 2012, p. 165) where an increasing number of speakers used SLE as a second language. This is roughly the period where English was restored to the status of one of the official languages, and at a later point, attributed the state of the link language (Gunesequera, 2005, p. 17). Currently, SLE, specifically its vocabulary, continues to expand, and represents features different from those codified in the work of Gunesequera (2005) and Meyler (2011).

Against a backdrop of rapid change, in the context of World Englishes and Sri Lankan Englishes, there is a need for genre specific vocabulary analyses of SLE. The present study focusing on the journalistic writing over the decade 2005-2015 attempts to fill this gap.

### **Sri Lankan Englishes**

SLE is branching off into new varieties. Gunesequera (2005) broadly divides SLE as the standard variety and the non-standard variety depending on the social status and the degree of familiarity with the language (p.35). Other SLE varieties are defined by race and ethnic group, religion, age and the social status of the speakers.

These varieties have influenced one another (Gunesequera, 2005, p.127). As Meyler (2011) says:

[W]ithin the relatively tiny English-speaking community, there are several sub-varieties of Sri Lankan English. Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers speak different varieties; Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims have their own vocabularies; the older generation speak a different language from the younger generation; and the wealthy Colombo elite (who tend to speak English as their first language) speak a different variety from the wider community (who are more likely to learn it as a second language. (p.xi)

For a more descriptive representation of the Sri Lankan Englishes, detailed codification of each variety is essential. The present study is limited to the register of journalistic writing and is an attempt to analyze the recent SLE vocabulary of the said register.

### **Present Study**

Stating the necessity to continue studies on SLE vocabulary, Gunesequera (2005) writes, “[m]uch more research needs to be done for a thorough listing of the words and phrases of Sri Lankan English” (p.154). Also, Fernando (2012) states that the linguistic studies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should focus on “exploring the linguistic pressures and counter pressures giving rise to the future development of SLE vocabulary” (p.177). Three years after the launch of the first edition of *A Dictionary of Sri Lankan English*, Meyler (2010) points out the need for documenting the rapid changes in SLE saying; “in 10 years’ time, who knows how the language might have changed?”. Hence, SLE research needs to be revised and updated to understand the progressive nature of SLE.

The present study compares the vocabulary of newspapers from 1955-1965 and 2005-2015, and records the emerging trends in SLE vocabulary, thereby attempting to answer the research question stated in the Introduction.

## Methodology

SLE vocabulary could be extracted for research from a number of sources. Meyler (2011) uses books published between 1982 and 2006 to obtain his data (p.xxxiii) while Gunsekera (2005) records words extracted from “conversations among Sri Lankans” which “represent real life usage” (p.161). For the current research, 22 newspapers of *Ceylon Observer*<sup>1</sup> from 1955-1965 and 22 newspapers of *Sunday Observer*<sup>2</sup> from 2005-2015 were used. Hence, data was gathered from 44 newspaper pages for the study.

The data collection method is a combination of random sampling and purposive sampling. Two newspapers for each year were selected randomly. The newspapers from 1955-1965 were obtained from the Department of National Archives, Sri Lanka and the newspapers from 2005 – 2015 were obtained from the Sunday Observer website ([www.sundayobserver.lk](http://www.sundayobserver.lk))<sup>3</sup>. From each newspaper, the articles in the first page and the editorial were used for the study. In the case of online versions, the articles on the home page and the editorial were selected. These criteria make the articles a purposive sample, which according to Dörnyei is “a sampling plan describing the sampling parameters (participants, settings, events, processes), and [which] lines up with the purposes of the study” (Dörnyei, 2007, p.97, p. 126). Once the first page is selected, the SLE words in the page were extracted. To identify if a certain word could be considered SLE, the linguistic knowledge and the experience of the researcher and a colleague who are both native speakers of SLE was used. This was to ensure objectivity in the process of categorizing a word as SLE.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ceylon Observer* was the name used for *Daily News* and *Sunday Observer* at the start of the Newspaper in 1834.

<sup>2</sup> *Sunday Observer* is the Sunday newspaper of the *Daily News*. *Ceylon Observer*, *Daily News* and *Sunday Observer* are state publications published by the Associated Newspapers Ceylon Limited.

<sup>3</sup> The online newspaper and the printed newspaper contain the same articles.

## Results and Discussion: trends in SLE vocabulary

### (Analysis of vocabulary from *Ceylon observer* and *Sunday observer*)

As seen in the table below, the number of SLE words have increased in the dataset of 2005-2015.

*Table 1: Number of SLE words in the articles from 1955-1965 and 2005-2015*

| Newspaper                          | Number of SLE words |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Ceylon Observer</i> 1955 – 1965 | 37                  |
| <i>Sunday Observer</i> 2005 – 2015 | 110                 |

This indicates an increased *Sri Lankanness* in the vocabulary over the past 60 years. Compared to the dataset of 1955-1965, the number of SLE words has increased roughly by three times.

In addition, some words used in the period 1955-1965 were absent in the period 2005-2015. They are mentioned below with examples.

### Words with French origin

Communique, Epaulette, Cortege, Tour de Lanka were words of French origin that were used in the articles from 1955 to 1965. From 2005 to 2015, the data did not indicate any usages of words with French Origin.

### Idioms from literary texts and biblical allusions

British English idioms, especially those extracted from literary texts and the Bible were found in the articles of 1955 – 1965. ‘Milk of human kindness’, ‘Manna from heaven’, ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ could be mentioned as examples. Such idioms were not found in the decade 2005 – 2015.

As seen from the data, the language of the decade from 1955 to 1965 consisted of vocabulary that Halverson (1966) termed “latinate” (p.72). However, in the decade 2005-2015, the data did not contain any such phrases / idioms. As the dataset is a sample of the writing in newspapers, it can be stated that the usage of Latinate terms in SLE vocabulary has become less frequent by 2005-2015.

Apart from these, the other morphological features of the SLE vocabulary seen in journalistic writing are analyzed below.

### **SLE vocabulary in journalistic writing**

A morphological analysis of the data gathered is given below. The complete list of examples for each word formation category is given in Appendix 1 (Vocabulary from 1955 – 1965) and Appendix 2 (Vocabulary from 2005 – 2015).

### **Compounds**

Fernando (2012) identifies self-explaining compounds as a common word - formation strategy in new varieties of English (p.166). Gunsekera (2010) also identifies compounding as a “tendency of South Asian Englishes in word formation” (p.203). Over the 60 years under examination, the number of SLE compounds has increased significantly, from 12 to 31 examples. SLE compounds such as ‘Mahinda Chinthanaya’, ‘Maithri Palanaya’ and ‘Mother Lanka’ reflect the political climate of the country, ‘Aloka Pooja’ refers to religious practices while ‘seeni sambol’ refers to a food item. Fernando, in 2012, observed that the SLE vocabulary reflects the social and political climate of the country. This is evident in the compounds of the date set from 2005-2015. Some examples are given in the table below.

**Table 2: Compounds**

| <b>1955-1965</b>        | <b>2005-2015</b>    |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Bottle Lamp             | Mahinda Chinthanaya |
| Buddha Jayanthi         | Seeni Sambol        |
| Diyawardane Nilame      | Aloka Pooja         |
| Air Ceylon              | Thoppigala Jungles  |
| Radio Ceylon            | Rajapaksa regime    |
| Vidyalankara University | Bodu Bala Sena      |

|                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Devil Dancer           | Maithri Palanaya                |
| Ceylon Medical Council | Ethnic Tamil                    |
| Ran Veta               | Lalith Athulathmudali Vidyalaya |
| Vesak Lanterns         | Api Wenuwen Api                 |

### Borrowings

The complexity and the diversity in the SLE borrowings of the two datasets required a detailed classification rather than a broad division into direct borrowings and indirect borrowings. Thus, the categorization made by Fernando (2012) was used as a guide in the present analysis.

### Loanwords

Loanwords are similar to “direct borrowings” (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish, 2001, p.27). A loanword displays “phonemic substitution” but not “morphemic substitution” (Fernando, 2012, p.170). Haugen (1950) states that a loanword may contain “no, partial or complete phonemic substitution” (as cited in Fernando, 2012, p.170). Loanwords were abundant in the SLE vocabulary used in journalistic writing. Some examples are given below.

*Table 3: Loanwords*

| 1955 – 1965 |  | 2005 - 2015 |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| Loanword    | Languages from which the words are drawn | Loanword    | Languages from which the words are drawn |
| Hartal      | Arabic                                   | Murrukku    | Tamil                                    |
| Kachcheri   | Tamil                                    | Eelam       |  |
| Ayurveda    | Sanskrit                                 | Tuk tuk     | Thai English                             |

**Contd.**



|            |      |                |         |
|------------|------|----------------|---------|
| Satyagraha |      | Anthare        | Sinhala |
| Dana       | Pali | Avrudu         |         |
| Sangha     |      | Senkadagala    |         |
|            |      | Balasena       |         |
|            |      | Gama<br>Neguma |         |
|            |      | Yahapalanaya   |         |

Loanwords seem to have been popular in SLE vocabulary over the years and have increased in number. The study encountered only 8 loanwords from 1955 – 1965 and 29 from 2005 – 2015. As seen in the examples given above, the loanwords refer to the “flora and fauna of the country, to different types of food and drink, and to Buddhism, the majority religion of the country” (Meyler, 2009, p.57). The word ‘tuk tuk’ is used to refer to the trishaw and is a borrowing from Thai English (Hashim & Bennui, 2014, p.135). SLE has been enriched with loanwords from Tamil, Hindi, Malay, Arabic, Dutch, Portuguese and other Languages (Meyler, 2009, p.57). The loanwords in the dataset 2005-2015 such as Eelam, Gama Naguma, Maga Naguma, Uthuru Wasanthaya, Nagenahira Navodaya, Divinaguma, Yahapalanaya and Anthare reflect the political climate of the country. Such political references were less in the journalistic writing from 1955-1965.

### **Blended Stems**

Blended stems are a type of borrowing, and Haugen (1950) defines them as instances where “inflectional suffixes and stems from two different languages are blended in a new variety” (as cited in Fernando, 2012, p.173). Gunsekera (2010) identifies blends in which a “borrowing from an indigenous language [is] suffixed with the plural marker –s”, as a “morphological phenomenon of Sri Lankan English” (p.206). Given below are examples of blended stems.

**Table 4: Blended Stems**

| 1955 – 1965                   |  | 2005 - 2015  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------|---|
| Blended Stem                  | Meaning in Context   | Blended Stem | Meaning in Context  |
| Sinhalese <sup>4</sup>        | Sinhala Language   | Mahanayakas  | The Mahanayaka Theros of the Malwathu and Asgiri Chapters |
| [Bus] Mudalalies <sup>5</sup> | People who own buses in the private bus service of Sri Lanka | JVPers       | Supporters of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna               |
| Panas                         | Small oil lamps made out of clay                             | UNPers       | Supporters of the United National Party                   |
| Satyagrahis                   | People who engage in a ‘satyagaha’ (Protest)                 |              |   |

### Blended Compounds

This is a compound created out of a borrowing, and are formed by blending “two or more stems from different languages” (Fernando, 2012, p. 173). Blended compounds, also called “hybrid compounds”, are very commonly seen in SLE vocabulary (Fernando, 2012, p. 173).

<sup>4</sup> The word Sinhalese in the given context meant the Sinhala Language and not the Sinhala Race. Hence the suffix ‘ese’ is added to the word ‘Sinhala’ to create the blended stem.

<sup>5</sup> The word Mudalalies has a derogatory connotation

*Table 5: Blended*

| 1955 – 1965        |   | 2005 - 2015                 |   |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Blended Compound   | Formation of the Blended Compound                   | Blended Compound            | Formation of the Blended Compound           |
| Sinhala Culture    | Sinhala (S) <sup>6</sup> + Culture (E) <sup>7</sup> | Mother Lanka                | Mother (E)+ Lanka (S)                       |
| Sinhala Christians | Sinhala (S) + Christians (E)                        | Sinha Regiment Camp         | Sinha (S) + Regiment (E) + Camp (E)         |
| Bus Mudalalies     | Bus (E) + Mudalalie (S)                             | Vijeyaba Infantry Battalion | Vijeyaba (S) + Infantry (E) + Battalion (E) |
|                    |   | Bo-Leaves                   | Bo (S) + Leaves (E)                         |
|                    |   | Poson Week                  | Poson (S) + Week (E)                        |
|                    |   | Malwatta Chapter            | Malwatta (S) + Chapter (E)                  |
|                    |   | Asgiriya Chapter            | Asgiriya (S) + Chapter (E)                  |
|                    |   | Mahajana Faction            | Mahajana (S) + Faction (E)                  |

Fernando (2012) states that hybrid compounds are a “fairly large” category in SLE (p.173). In fact, the data from 2005-2015 shows that blended compounds have increased in number when compared with the data from the decade 1955-1965, as new blended compounds were created to express political and war related terms. E.g.: Mahajana Faction, Sinha Regiment Camp.

### Loan Translations

Loan translations are yet another type of borrowings where, as Haugen (1950) says, one could observe morphemic substitution without importation (as cited in Fernando, 2012, p. 174). In the SLE vocabulary, new words are formed by translating the Sinhala compounds into English. In such instances, only the

<sup>6</sup> (S) stands for Sinhala

<sup>7</sup> (E) stands for English

meaning of the Sinhala term is carried on to English. Loan translations are also made from Tamil words but the newspaper sample used in the research did not have examples of such usages. Fernando (2012) mentions that in the SLE compound ‘ash plantain’, the morphemes in the Sinhala compound ‘alu kesel’ are substituted with two English translation equivalents (p.174). Loan translations taken from the gathered data are given below.

**Table 6: Loan Translations**

| 1955 - 1965      |  | 2005 - 2015      |   |
|------------------|--|------------------|---|
| Loan Translation | Comments on Usage  | Loan Translation | Comments on the usage   |
| Devil Dancer     | A word with cultural references. The performer of the traditional ‘Yak Natuma’ | Honourable Peace | This is a politically loaded term and a translation from the concept of ‘Gaurawanwitha Saamaya’ which was frequently used by the former president of Sri Lanka, Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa |
| Lion Flags       | Translated from ‘Singha Kodi’  | Triple Gem       | The triple Gem refers to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha and is used in the extract as a term to invoke blessings.  |
|                  |  | Office Trains    | The translation from the Sinhala term ‘Kāryāla Dumriya’ which means the train used by the commuters to travel to the workplaces and back to their homes.                              |

**Contd.**

| 1955 - 1965      |                   | 2005 - 2015         |  |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| Loan Translation | Comments on Usage | Loan Translation    | Comments on the usage  |
|                  |                   | Wonder of Asia      | The borrowing from the Sinhala Term ‘Āsiyawe Āshcharya’ which was used by the former president, Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa to define his vision for the county according to his election manifesto.                     |
|                  |                   | Compassionate Rule  | This is another borrowing from the political arena, used by Mr. Maithripala Sirisena as the tagline of his presidential election campaign. The loan translation stems from the Sinhala compound ‘Maithri Pālanya’. |
|                  |                   | North –East Problem | This is a translation from the Sinhala usage ‘Uthuru Nagenahira Prashnaya’   |
|                  |                   | Tiger Terrorists    | The Sinhala usage of the term is ‘Koti Thrsthawadin’   |
|                  |                   | Lion Flag           | Used in reference to the National Flag and the translation of the Sinhala term ‘Singha Kodiya’   |

According to the definition of loan translations by Fernando (2012), and the examples provided above, it is seen that loan translations capture a specific concept in Sinhala and transports it to English. They may appear to be self-

explanatory compounds but they connote unique meanings in the Sri Lankan social, cultural and political spheres.

In the SLE vocabulary of journalistic writing, the number of loan translations with political connotations have increased significantly from 1955-1965 and this could be viewed as a characteristic of the expanding SLE vocabulary. Fernando (2012) states:

In the contemporary period, when new dialects of SLE developed, there were changes and additions to the SLE vocabulary. The mood in Sri Lanka had become more complex, as it passed through times of racial and class tensions, conflict, war, economic and social, corruption, natural disasters, rehabilitation, peace and reconciliation etc. Words representing these changes in mood have been reflected in SLE vocabulary. (p. 165)

Thus, loan translations are a creative category in the SLE vocabulary which is constantly updated and some loan translations last longer than others. Words such as ‘Triple Gem’ and ‘office trains’ have a greater possibility of retention than words such as ‘honourable peace’ or ‘compassionate rule’. Nevertheless, they are unique expressions of the Sri Lankan experience.

The number of borrowings from the decade 1955-1965 was 15 while the decade from 2005 – 2015 had 47 borrowings. According to Fernando (2012), Sinhala and Tamil borrowings in SLE vocabulary have become fashionable since the independence (p.172). The two datasets confirm this observation by Fernando (2012).

## Affixation of Compounds

The data gathered contained a few interesting examples of affixation.

*Table 7: Affixation of compounds*

| Compound + Affixation<br>(1955 – 1965) | Compound + Affixation<br>(2005-2015) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Bus Mudalalies                         | Bus Mudalalis                        |
| Little pol-thel panas                  | Maha Nayake Theras                   |

## Initialisms and Clippings

Initialisms and clippings are used to form new words through abbreviations.

### Initialisms

Initialisms are also called alphabetic abbreviations (Akmajian et al., 2001, p. 26) and each of the letters that spell the initialism is the first letter or letters of a set of words (Akmajian et al., 2001, p.25). These letters of the initialism are individually pronounced (Akmajian et al., 2001, p. 26). SLE vocabulary in newspapers consisted of initialisms which are used considerably frequently both in writing and in speech.

*Table 8: Initialisms*

| 1955 - 1965 |                            | 2005 - 2015 |  |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|
| Initialism  | Meaning                    | Initialism  | Meaning  |
| SLFP        | Sri Lanka<br>Freedom Party | LTTE        | Liberation Tigers of Tamil<br>Eelam                |
| LSSP        | Lanka Sama<br>Samaja Party | SLFP-UNP    | Sri Lanka Freedom Party –<br>United National Party |
| FP          | Federal Party              | BIA         | the Bandaranaike International<br>Airport          |

Contd.

| 1955 - 1965 |         | 2005 - 2015 |  |
|-------------|---------|-------------|--|
| Initialism  | Meaning | Initialism  | Meaning                                      |
|             |         | LLRC        | Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission |
|             |         | MRIA        | Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport      |

The articles during the 2005-2015 decade contained 17 Initialisms while the 1955-1965 decade had only 6. Also, Initialisms related to war and politics were commonly used in the journalistic writing of the decade 2005 - 2015. New projects initiated by the government were referred to by initialisms and it was frequently found in the newspapers from 2005 to 2015. The type of initialisms found in each decade represents the socio-political condition of the country at the time.

### Clippings

Clippings are formed by shortening a word, E.g. Using ‘prof’ for ‘professor’ (Akmajian et al., 2001, p. 26). Clippings were not common in the articles that were analyzed and were found only in the articles from the decade 2005 - 2015. The following are examples from the data gathered.

*Table 9: Clippings (Found in the articles from 2005 to 2015)*

| Date of Newspaper   | Clipping  | Extract from newspaper   | Meaning of the acronym                          |
|---|-----------|--|---|
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> May<br>2009     | Prabha    | Who supported Prabha to fight a sovereign State?                 | Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE. |
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> October<br>2013 | Varsities | Varsities to shift to student-centred [ <i>sic</i> ] learning... | Universities                                    |



## Semantic Change

Semantic change in the SLE vocabulary occurs when “English words take on a different meaning although the words remain unchanged” (Gunesekera, 2005, p.152). Semantic change was observed in the journalistic writing from 2005 to 2015. Most of the terms with semantic change have appropriated political connotations which might be context specific and arbitrary, as they have been produced in unique socio-cultural contexts.

**Table 10: Semantic Change (Found in the articles from 2005 to 2015)**

| Newspaper   | Semantic Change | Comment on the use of word  | Extract from newspaper  |
|---|-----------------|---|---|
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup><br>October 2006 | North           | The term ‘North’ not only means the Northern province but also the people of the North and their concerns | The opposition Leader Ranil Wickremasinghe too deserves a bouquet for extending the support of his party to the Government at a juncture the South needs unity and consensus to negotiate with the North. |
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup><br>October 2006 | Mahawa          | A train going to Mahawa   | With much surprise to the passengers, the Mahawa, that was announced as cancelled earlier, arrived at Gampaha sans passengers.  |
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup><br>October 2008 | Tiger Den       | This term is expanded to mean the LTTE Headquarters   | ... he could not halt the advancing Security Forces who are closing in on the Tiger den...  |

**Contd.**

| Newspaper   | Semantic Change | Comment on the use of word   | Extract from newspaper  |
|---|-----------------|--|---|
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> July<br>2015  | White<br>Van    | The term suggests the abductions which are said to have been done using white vans | Definitely this white van concept was orchestrated by the previous government.          |
| Sunday Observer,<br>Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> April<br>2014 | Lions           | Used to refer to the Sri Lankan Cricket team                                       | ...it provided a better option for the lions to beat the West Indies in the semifinals. |

### Archives

This section contains the vocabulary which was found in the articles from 1955 – 1965. At present, they are hardly used while some of them are no longer in use. These are mostly English words which reflect the Sri Lankan society of the 1950s and were used in context-specific meanings.

*Table 11: Archives (Found in the articles from 1955 to 1965)*

| Newspaper  | Archival words | Comment on the use of word   | Extract from newspaper  |
|--|----------------|--|---|
| Ceylon Observer,<br>Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> February<br>1956, p.1 | Ceylonese      | Ceylonese is replaced by 'Sri Lankan' in the present day.                          | The plan will have a "christening" ceremony and suitable Ceylonese names are being considered.      |
| Ceylon Observer,<br>Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> February<br>1956, p.1 | Bazaar         | Bazaar is replaced by terms such as 'marketplace' or even the Sinhala term 'pola'. | But in the bazaar, stalls occupied by Sinhalese merchants were profusely decorated with Lion flags. |

Contd.

| <b>Newspaper</b>   | <b>Archival words</b> | <b>Comment on the use of word</b>   | <b>Extract from newspaper</b>  |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|
| Ceylon Observer,<br>Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup><br>September 1963, p.1 | Beedi                 | This term was found in an advertisement. Beedi was a cheaper version of cigarettes. Its popularity has reduced and at present it is hardly advertised on a newspaper. | Rajah Beedi Special  |
| Ceylon Observer,<br>Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup><br>February 1964, p.1   | Ceylon<br>Government  | This term is replaced by 'The Government of Sri Lanka' or 'The Sri Lankan Government'.  | Lord Mountbatten will be the guest of the Ceylon Government for four days. |

These terms have decreased in use and have been replaced by new, SLE words. E.g. The use of 'pola' instead of 'bazaar'. 'Ceylon' was changed to 'Sri Lanka' after the year 1972, when the country became a republic. These examples show that the SLE vocabulary of the journalistic writing in Sri Lanka has changed over the past 60 years.

## **Conclusion**

In answering the initial research question, after a comparative study of the SLE vocabulary in newspapers from 1955-1965 and 2005-2015 several trends in SLE vocabulary development were identified.

Within the sample of the study, the vocabulary of the decade 2005-2015 could be termed more 'Sri Lankan' than that of the decade 1955-1965. In the genre of journalistic writing, the number of SLE words have increased from 37 to 110 and there is a decrease in words of French origin, idioms and biblical allusions. New SLE words are coined using several word formation rules. The most common trends observed in SLE word formation were compounding, loan words, initialisms and semantic change. Within the sample, over 60 years, the number of

compounds has increased from 12 to 31, while the number of loanwords has increased from 8 to 29. The number of initialisms has increased from 6 to 17, with 14 words with semantic change in the decade 2005-2015 as opposed to none in the decade 1955-1965.

As Künstler, Mendis, & Mukherjee (2010) observe:

[T]he English language has also been adapted to the socio-cultural context of Sri Lanka. Drawing an analogy to Kachru's (1983) concept of the 'Indianization' of English in India, one could posit a process of Ceylonization (or Lankanization, for that matter) of English ever since the establishment of British supremacy over the island in 1802 (p.264)

Similarly, it could be concluded that the developing trends in the SLE vocabulary found in journalistic writing have contributed to the increased *Lankanization* of SLE.

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