

A Segmental Analysis of Sri Lankan English: The Relationship of Phonological Patterns and Mother Tongue of Sri Lankan English Speakers

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Sri Lankan English (SLE), which belongs to the outer circle of Kachru's three-circle model, is a variety of New Englishes spoken by Sri Lankans who choose to communicate in English for any purpose. Therefore, in Sri Lanka, English is used parallel to the other two main languages of the country, Sinhala and Tamil. The main objective of the research is to find the phonological patterns observed in SLE speakers and to examine whether there are differences or similarities among the speakers depending on their mother tongue (L1). Data for this research are collected through non-probability sampling. Praat is used for auditory and acoustic analysis, and Microsoft Excel is used for quantitative analysis. The pronunciation of voiceless and voiced Th, rhoticity, consonant clusters, and vocalization of L are analyzed under auditory analysis and F1 and F2 formants of selected vowels such as FLEECE and KIT, DRESS and TRAP and THOUGHT and LOT are analyzed under acoustic study. Further, the vowel plots of the participants are compared with the vowel plot of the Standard Sri Lankan English speakers as well. It is observed that the characteristics of the phonology of SSLE are always not presented in the participants. Studying the vowel space of the participant and comparing the participants' vowel space with the vowel space of SSLE showed that there are few instances of significant difference between the pronunciation of the participant and the pronunciation of SSLE, which could have occurred as a reason for the strong influence of the participants L1 on their L2.

Keywords: L1 Influence, Segmental Analysis, SLE Speakers, SLE Vowel Plot, Sri Lankan English