

An analysis on how current social media trends affect the transformation of Sri Lankan English Morphological processes; A study based on 'Aunty Netta' YouTube channel

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Abstract: Regular changes in language can be identified as a common phenomenon in most countries including Sri Lanka. Accordingly, such deviations have caused dramatic changes in all major languages in use. From a societal perspective language changes can be identified as a historical and also a contemporary feature. Even though many tend to misunderstand this phenomenon as a situation where corruption occurs, in reality this shift is unavoidable. It can be said that everything around a particular language is changeable and it occurs due to various socio-cultural reasons. Accordingly, Sri Lankan English (SLE) is one of the languages that is constantly influenced by various languages and social aspects. Among them in the present context social media platforms perform a crucial role in causing a number of language changes in various perspectives such as morphological, syntactic, phonological and so on. Accordingly, various morphological processes can be identified in most of the languages due to the social media influence. In fact the focus of the study is on how SLE is modified according to various trends. Thus, the present study seeks out to portray the morphological processes that continuously add and create new words in Sri Lankan English vocabulary through the evidence provided by the chosen content creator 'Aunty Netta' by Nimmi Harasgama.

Keywords: Morphological processes, social media, SLE

1. Introduction

It is evident that the social, political and cultural events of a particular society profoundly affect the emergence of new words and phrases in a language. After the spread of English language "to other continents and countries from about the eighteenth century onwards the English language developed into new varieties" (Fernando, 2012) resulting in the emergence of "transplanted languages" (Kachru, 1982) such as Sri Lankan English (SLE). The bridge between these different varieties is morphology which is "the study of word-formation and word-structure" (Katamba, 2005). Accordingly, it is identifiable that in recent years the usage of social media and technology has rapidly increased in Sri Lanka. These contents are majorly found in platforms such as YouTube where people have attempted various approaches to portray humor, knowledge, lifestyles, culinary skills and so on using language. It is evident that the target audience of such creations are majorly "teenagers or young adults who are crazy about using the latest technological devices" (Senaratne, 2017). Eventually due to this phenomenon, while some of the previous vocabulary items gradually diminished, a huge number of new items have been added to SLE. Moreover, these new items can be discovered in various fields in society under morphological or word formation processes. The present study brings out the SLE

morphological processes found in Nimmi Harasgama's YouTube videos; "Aunty Netta". The rationale behind choosing Auntie Netta's videos is her Sri Lankan language roots and the time durations of her videos that date back around 12 years which gave the ability to view the language changes analytically. In the light of the selected videos, the current study attempts to seek addresses to identify and analyze morphological processes related to SLE and to identify how words are formed in Sri Lankan context to make a new variety of SLE by using different morphological processes. Moreover, with regard to the constant growth of SLE the present study also emphasizes the new word formation, as it is an "institutionalized and a developing variety of English" (Kachru, 1985). The study also tries to uncover the most productive word formation process while investigating how language changes with current trends.

2. Methodology

Accordingly, a qualitative content analysis was conducted since the data source used is a YouTube channel. Eight videos and four morphological processes were chosen by considering the availability of examples in the videos. The videos were 'Netta loves biriyani', 'Put a chat with Aunty Netta- Harsha De Silva', 'Put a chat with Aunty Netta- Sunil Perera', 'Social Distancing Advice from Auntie Netta', 'Christman feast with Aunty Netta', 'Vegetroubles with Aunty Netta' and finally 'Aunty Netta interviewed on BBC Asian network'. Respectively, various theoretical frameworks were employed to each morphological process. Thus, to fulfill the expected research objectives, after identifying the SLE features from the selected videos, they were classified according to the four morphological processes borrowing, compounding, affixation and reduplication by discovering their etymology and linguistic features further.

3. Literature Review

Language change occurs over centuries due to various reasons. As a result of that, structures and vocabulary tend to change. These changes can include multiple morphological processes such as borrowings, meaning and structural changes, coinages and many more. This evolution is a natural process that any language could possibly undergo.

In fact, according to Haugen (1950), borrowing is a process in which the attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another. Haugen (1950) further classifies borrowing as loanwords, loan shifts and loan blends which also have been used as the major classification of the current study's borrowings. When considering borrowings in SLE, "it includes words from British English, Sinhala, Tamil, Hindi, Dutch, Portuguese" (Meyler, 2009) and they reflect Sri Lankan cultural background. According to the classification brought out by Haugen (1950), he divides borrowings to loan words, loan blends ("slip in part or all of a native morpheme for some part of the foreign [word]"), and to loan shifts ("morphemic substitution without importation, and includes Loan Translations and Semantic Loans").

Gunsekere (2010) states that compounding is a tendency of South Asian Englishes in word formation and a "productive process in Sri Lankan English" (Gunsekere, 2005). Gunsekere (2010) further explains that borrowing of compounds from Sinhalese or Tamil, forming of compounds with two English words, and forming of compounds with one word in Sinhalese or Tamil and the other in English can be identified in SLE.

With reference to affixation, Baugh (1935) states that "another method of enlarging the vocabulary is by appending familiar prefixes and suffixes to existing words on the pattern of similar words in the language". As a current

trend, “application of English affixes to Sinhala words has formed unusual and unique lexical items” (Fernando, 2012).

Finally, “the process of Reduplication is a linguistic characteristic associated with South Asian Languages” (Kachru,1986) where the repetition of all or a part of the root stem to form a new word can be identified. So that, the repetition of all or a part of the root stem to form a new word can be identified as reduplication; “hence, repetitions of words and phrases are extremely common with every competent bilingual speaker in Sri Lanka (Senaratne, 2009).

Thus, the present study seeks out to portray the morphological processes that continuously add and create new words in Sri Lankan English vocabulary through the evidence provided by the chosen content creator ‘Aunty Netta’ by Nimmi Harasgama.

4. Findings And Discussion

A. Borrowings

1) *Loan Words*: When focusing on the gathered data, this section contains four parts as borrowing, compounding, affixation and reduplication and this section elaborates the use of borrowing through Einar Haugen’s terminology of borrowing. In fact, three major types of lexical borrowings were identified as loanwords, loan blends and loan shifts. Just as Meyler (2009) stated the study has also identified loan words, from different languages such as Sinhala, Tamil, Persian, and Malay. Many of the loanwords found were mostly nouns. It included food terms such as “buriyani”, “karapincha”, “watalappan”, religion names; “Muslim”, names for cloths as “sarong” and Sinhala and Tamil expressions such as “aiyo”, “kadaule”, “niyamai”. It is notable that terms such as “nice aney” with English + Sinhala expressions were also found.

Table 1. Loan Words

Field	Term	Meaning	Language of origin
Food	Karapincha	Curry leaves which is used as a food flavor ingredient	Sinhala
	Buriyani	A traditional dish made by the Muslim community	Persian
	Watalappan	Vattil(cup) + Appam (cake) a dessert made by Muslims	Tamil
Ethnicities	Muslim	An ethnic group	Arabic
Cloths	Sarong	A simple men’s wear	Malay
Expressions	Aiyo	“Used to express any kind of emotion; negative, positive or fearful” (Gunasekera, 2005)	Sinhala / Tamil
	Nice aney	Used as a positive compliment	English + Sinhala
	Niyamai		Sinhala
	Kadauley	Referring to God in negative and positive emotions	Tamil

2) *Loan Bends*: Moving on to loan blends, it is categorized into 3 subsections as, blended stem, blended derivative and blended compounds. Blended stem is found in words such as “bailas” where “the Sinhala stems are

blended with the English regular plural suffix / - s /" (Fernando, 2012). Considering blended derivative which "the derivational suffix / - fy / generates a small number of verbs" (Fernando, 2012) were found in the verbs such as "sweetyfy" and "mirikanafying". Finally, blended compounds such as "jambu stealer" were found which portrays the "blending of 2 or more stems from different languages" (Fernando 2012). It shows a morphemic substitution, where the 'stealer' (E) is substituted for the S/T equivalents.

Table 2. Loan Bends

Type of loan blend	Field	Term	Meaning	Language of origin
Blended stem	Performing arts	Bailas	"Refers to Portuguese folk dancing in towns along the seacoast" (Gunasekera, 2005)	S+E plural suffix
Blended derivative	Culinary	Sweetyfy	Enhancing the taste of a food or drink.	E adjective + E derivational suffix -fy
		mirikanafying	Extracting a liquid from something by compressing or twisting it firmly.	S verb + E derivational suffixes -fy + -ing

Blended compound	Transgression	Jambu stealer	Someone who takes rose apples without permission	S noun + E noun
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3) *Loan Shifts*: Loan shifts can be introduced as the final subsection identified under borrowings which also contains two subsections as loan translations and semantic loans. Considering the present study only loan translations were found. Thus, the SLE compound "milk toffee" was identified where the morphemes in the Sinhala compound "kiri topi" are substituted with the two English translation equivalents 'milk' and 'toffee'.

B. Compounds

Formation of compounds with two words is yet another morphological process that was observed through the study. According to Gunasekera (2005), compounding is a productive morphological process in Sri Lankan English which undergoes a rule in order to create new neologisms from the Sinhala and Tamil or foreign languages.

Spencer (1991) states that this rule is a crucial part in productivity as it is regularly and actively used in the creation of new words. For instance, COVID-19, vege-trouble (vegetable + trouble) can be taken into consideration. Hence, new combinations and frequency of new words maintains the productivity within a language. Moreover, it is obvious that compounds are produced by Sri Lankan bilinguals who borrow the term from the same or another language in order to create neologisms and nativized foreign terms through the language contact situation. In fact, some compounds are directly Sinhala nouns which are borrowed as Sinhala compound nouns: for example: lunu dehi, pol sambola.

Apart from that, some compounds are created frequently through the direct translation of Sinhala meaning into English. For that compounds such as Nextdoor neighbour, boy girl, milk toffee, cousin sister, blue colour can be highlighted. Here, it is visible that both nouns and adjectives have been used. Thus, many hybrid compounds are created in either formation of Sinhala/ Tamil + English.

Table 3. Compounds

Language of origin	Term	Meaning
S + S	Lunu dehi	"Refers to the flavor or essence of an item of food" (Gunasekera, 2005).
S + M	Pol sambol	A mixture made of onions, chilies, lime and coconut eaten with either rice, bread, roti etc.
E + E	Cousin sister	"Used to denote kinship and gender" (Gunasekera, 2005).
	Next-door neighbor	A person living next door to the speaker or person referred to.
	Blue color	The color "blue"
S + E	Aney darling	An affectionate form of address or expression to a beloved person.
	Polkudu accent	Native like English accent imitated by nonnatives, which sounds strange
	Gedara food	Homemade food
E + S	Fatty bole	An affectionate term used on a fat person

C. Affixation

Findings on affixation are employed with the terminology introduced by Gunasekera (2005). Thus, double suffixes are identified in the words such as "karakarafying" and "mirikanafying" where the two suffixes -fy and -ing being added to Sinhalese terms to form verbs. Moreover, in words such as "godeyish"

and "seafoodish", "the affix -ish can be also identified under affixation which have been used to create 'new' words.

Table 4. Affixation

Suffix	Term	Meaning
-fy + -ing	Karakarafying	Cook (food) in hot fat or oil, typically in a shallow pan.
	Mirikanafying	Extracting a liquid from something by compressing or twisting it firmly.
-ish	Godeyish	"A derogatory classist adjective in Sri Lankan English" (Gunasekera, 2012).
	Seafoodish	Fish and sea creatures that can be eaten, especially shellfish.

D. Reduplication

Moreover, 'Aunti Netta' tried to express the meaning of the idea through repetition; thus, reduplication was noticed when the root stem was fully or partially repeated. Thus, the final morphological process reduplication can be highlighted according to two subsections as total reduplication and partial reduplication. Total reduplication was found in the Sinhala, Tamil and English words expressing commands and emotions such as "karas karas", "apade apade" and "no no" where the repetition of an entire word stem, root or word can be seen. Thus, it depicts that "the reduplicating pattern is employed for emphasis (Senaratne,2009). On the contrary partial reduplication was identified in the words such as "yakada pakada", "virus birus" and "hangy bangy" where the reduplication is only in part of the word. Some of the detailed examples can be stated as below.

Table 5. Total Reduplication

Term	Meaning	Language of origin
Apade apade	An expression that gives the meaning "Is that so?" in English	Tamil
Hot hot chocky	A hot beverage made by mixing water or milk with chocolate powder.	English
Karas karas	Meaning crispy or crunchy	Sinhala
No no	Used to portray a negative response	English

Table 6. Partial Reduplication

Term	Meaning	Language of origin
Yakada pakada	Referred to metal. Something with steel.	Sinhala
Virus birus	An infective agent	English
Dadin bidin	Means something falling. Onomatopoeic showing the sounds of something/ someone falling with a loud noise	Sinhala
Hangy mangy	The general act of "hanging out."	English

5. Conclusion

The present study exemplifies some of the major trends found in SLE morphology. In fact, borrowings from various language roots accommodate the largest number of entries in SLE compared to other morphological processes. It is evident that the present SLE vocabulary has gradually extended by generating strategies in producing new vocabulary items. This study throws light towards the connection between language and society and the gradual language change that occurs with the advancement of society. The identified morphological processes highlight that the usage of SLE has a rapid growth within the Sri Lankan community by now. Thus, the expansion of SLE vocabulary can be discovered

as a process created to respond to these demands and needs. Present study identified that those new items are visible mostly in the spoken context but not in written contexts. Therefore, wide scale investigations are essential to codify the SLE vocabulary.

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Abbreviations and Specific Symbols

SLE – Sri lankan English

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