

## **Language matters: an analysis of the language of disability within selected political speeches of the elections of 2015 in Sri Lanka.**

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**Introduction:** Arguably, language has the power to formulate, promote, uphold or deter stereotypes. Politically, this year was significant in its representation of persons with disabilities within the electoral system. Within this historic context, there were references made to persons with disabilities with the political speeches by politicians of the main political parties.

**Aim:** To evaluate the representation of persons with disabilities within selected political speeches of the past year in newspapers and on television.

**Methods:** A representative sample of speeches from the main political parties were reviewed with reference to the representation of persons with disabilities. A conceptual and linguistics analysis was undertaken.

**Results:** The results indicate the use of references to persons with disabilities to evoke humour, in derogatory terms and to propagate negative stereotypes as objects of pity.

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