

## **The Changing Composition: Are Young SLE Speakers Familiar with Youtube Slang?**

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Sri Lankan English (SLE) has been widely used by native SLE speakers for several decades. So far, SLE was believed to be influenced by the vernacular languages of the country, which consists of, but not limited to, Sinhala, Tamil and Malay. However, of late, the composition of the language has been changing and the vocabulary is one area where the change is seen distinctly. The researcher has focused on the use of slang by young SLE speakers for the current study. Slang terms usually make a trending entry into the vocabulary. In terms of SLE, the researcher has observed that there is an influence of slang used internationally on the slang terms used by the young SLE speakers, as SLE speakers are 'connected' to the world and come in contact with online slang terms. For the purpose of the study the domain of YouTube was selected, as it gives access to unscripted clips of speech. This quantitative study investigates if the young SLE speakers are familiar with some of these slang terms. The data for the study was collected from YouTube videos from the channel named HigaTV. It is the vlog channel (video log channel) of Ryan Higa who is the nineteenth most subscribed YouTuber. The slang terms selected from the videos were used in a questionnaire. The survey was administered online among 150 participants and 75 responses were used for the data analysis. The respondents expressed their familiarity with each word in the questionnaire, which was measured using a three point Lickert scale with the choices very familiar, familiar and not at all familiar. From a total of 19 words, eight were very familiar to more than 50% of the population while six others were marked 'very familiar' by more than 35% of the population. In a further analysis of the meanings of the words 'duct tape' and 'legit', more than 50% of the respondents stated that they knew the words. However, some meanings they associated with the words were not the same as the meanings in the videos. The majority of the respondents were from Colombo and suburbs. Hence it was concluded that, within the population, the young SLE speakers are familiar with some slang terms used by YouTubers and some of those terms are even used by the SLE speakers in their conversations. The research is however limited to identifying the speakers' familiarity with the slang terms and does not provide an in depth analysis of the use of these terms. Future work on the topic could explore the familiarity of the slang terms among other age groups and also of speakers from different geographical locations.

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