

The Linguistic Study of the Present Day Veddah Speech

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Veddah or *Vanniyaletto* as an aboriginal group of Sri Lanka have survived for several millennia by adapting and coping with internal and external stress imposed on them. At present they are facing pressure that threatens them to be modernized according to the present day society which could easily result in disappearance of the Veddah community as a distinctive cultural group in Sri Lanka. Over ten decades, since the time of the Seligmanns (1911) did their field work on the culture of the Veddahs, the situation has been changed considerably. Since then such significant changes create an urgent need for an investigation in the field of Veddah community. Therefore, the intent of this research is to identify the current linguistic situation of Veddah speech based on the current settlement areas of the Veddah community, particularly in Dambana.

The major issue of this study is to investigate the proper linguistic situation of current Veddah speech, and to identify the linguistic features of present day Veddah speech. As this research is a qualitative empirical research, the Participant Observation Method based on Case Study has been used for data elicitation.

The findings of this research show that the language contact phenomenon may play major role in the Veddah speech from their history to at present. With regard to language contact situation of Veddah speech, it shows that current Veddah speech has borrowed not only lexical stocks but also sounds, grammar, and meaning from dominant languages. Through the key findings of this research, it is clearly evident that the present day Veddah Speech is fast disappearing due to modernization, cultural and linguistic assimilation. Finally the result of this research shows that the current Veddah speech became an extreme language mixture due to long time cultural and linguistic assimilation of dominant languages particularly, colloquial Sinhalese and Tamil.

Key words: *Extreme Language Mixture, Language Contact,; Linguistics Assimilation, Modernization, Veddah Speech.*