

The Study of the Impact of Language Contact Phenomenon on Vedda Language with Special Reference to Dambana, Sri Lanka.

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Language contact is found everywhere, hence there is no evidence to show that any specific language has developed in total isolation from other languages. When we analyze the Vedda language, the language contact phenomenon plays a major role from their history to at present. The primary objective of this study is to analyse the impact of the phenomenon of language contact on Vedda Speech. The secondary objective is to identify the proper linguistic situation of present day Vedda Language. As this research is a qualitative and empirical, the Participant Observation Method based on case study has been used for data elicitation. This research is based on first-hand data elicited from the current Vedda settlement areas, particularly Dambana. The findings of this research show that due to language contact, the present day Vedda has borrowed not only lexical stocks but also sounds, grammar, and meaning from dominant languages, significantly from colloquial Sinhala. The language contact has resulted in it becoming extremely mixed and the language situation of Vedda is severely endangered. Today only a few words of original Vedda language remain while the rest of the words are borrowed from colloquial Sinhalese. The present generation of the Vedda community are neither conversant with their cultural practices nor are they fluent in their original language, hence making them rapidly Sinhalized. In other parts of the country where the Tamil people live, Veddas have already become Tamilized. Through the empirical findings of this research it is clearly evident that the language of the Vedda is fast disappearing due to cultural and linguistic assimilation.

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