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The Language Used by Mahouts to Communicate with Captive Elephants in Mid Country of Sri Lanka

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Elephants have served man all the way through ages in numerous ways, for man has captured and tamed them from wilds for his purposes. This report presents an analysis of the language used by mahouts to communicate with the captive elephants in mid country of Sri Lanka. The goal is to answer the research problem “Is there a specific, efficient language which depicts unique linguistics characteristics that captive elephants are trained to understand and used by particular group of people - mahouts and the elephant owners in mid country of Sri Lanka which is defined as the RP? It also involves in discovering the effectiveness of this language on the domestic elephants. It is pertinent to mention that an investigation has never been done on this topic. The study is based on phonetic analysis for which the investigator draws most primary sources from constructed key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations, utilising both close and open ended questions which pave the way to in depth accumulation of data. Methodology focuses on twenty experts in this exceptional language as the sample group from the population. The researcher analyses and retests the collected data along with combinations to highlight the significance of the features of the language. Responses of the target group and results indicate the existence of a complete language with 24 basic words, 203 two words and 263 three words combinations and a practical communication mode compile with distinguish linguistic characteristics used by mahouts. To illustrate, significant dissimilarities connected to vowels and consonants, regional differences, word order and suprasegmental features are some of them. The study concludes exhibiting vocabulary lists with phonetic symbols and their meanings. In accordance with the study the researcher proposes ways to protect this precious language and converses about the possibility for further researches.

Key Words: captive elephants, language used by mahouts, linguistics characteristics, mid country of Sri Lanka, phonetic analysis