

## The Vedda Language: A Linguistic Study with Special Reference to Dambana, Sri Lanka

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The intent of this research is to examine the current situation of Vedda language from a linguistic point of view based on their overall socio-cultural background. The culture and the language of the Veddas are gradually vanishing and today the original Vedda language does not exist. The most popular accepted theory is that the Vedda language is only a regional dialect of the Sinhala language or a Creole. The research problem of this research is to identify whether the Vedda language is a dialect of Sinhala or Creole or distinct language. When we analyze the Vedda language, the language contact phenomenon play a major role from their history to at present. The present day Vedda language which exist in Sinhala language speaking areas is close to the colloquial Sinhala due to long years of linguistics assimilation. The findings of this research show due to language contact phenomenon, the present day Vedda has borrowed not only lexical stocks but also sounds, grammar, and meaning from dominant languages, significantly from colloquial Sinhalese. These linguistic results of language contact induce us to assume that it has become an extreme language mixture and the language situation is severely endangered. The Vedda settlement areas in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts almost all Veddas speak Tamil language and at these places the Vedda language has become an extinct language. However the existing linguistic features of Vedda prove that the original Vedda language is a simple hunting language. The research is based on Qualitative Empirical Research Methodology and Participant Observation Method and Case Study were adopted to collect the data. The research is based on the first-hand data elicited from the current Vedda settlement areas, particularly Dambana.

**Key Words:** Vedda Speech, Language Contact Phenomenon, Linguistics Assimilation, Extreme Language Mixture, Endanger.