

VOWELS IN KATTUNAYAKA LANGUAGE

Aiswaria G. Shajan

Research Scholar

Department of Linguistics, University of Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Abstract:

Kattunayaka is an ethnic group resides at Wayanad district of Kerala State, where many of the ethnic studies pact with generalization. This research study gives a priority to vowels in Kattunayaka language (a South Dravidian Tribal Language - i.e. SDr.) Moreover a phonemic inventory and the positions where the vowel phonemes occurred, here tries to find out any change causes in Kattunayaka vowel system due to the influence of nearby regional language Malayalam and innate language Kannada during existence. The data is collected during September 2017 to October 2017 mainly from the Kattunayaka communities resides at Southern part of Wayanad district in Kerala State. The elicited data is collected through quantitative and qualitative method using pre-structured questionnaire. 40 informants of both gender consists with youngsters, middle aged and old aged for the study.

Keywords: Kattunayaka, South Dravidian Tribal Language, Vowels, Phonemic inventory etc.

1. Introduction

This research study gives a priority to vowels in Kattunayaka language (a South Dravidian Tribal Language - i.e. SDr.) of Kattunayaka ethnic group resides at Wayanad district of Kerala State, where many of the ethnic studies pact with generalization. Moreover a phonemic inventory and the positions where the vowel phonemes occurred, here tries to find out any change causes in Kattunayaka vowel system due to the influence of nearby regional language Malayalam and innate language Kannada during existence.

1.1.Kattunayaka

Kattunayaka are a wild but inoffensive hill tribe of Kerala found in different districts such as Wayanad, Kozhikode and Malappuram in Kerala State (Vikraman Nair. K, 1978). They got their name /kaɽ,t̪u najaka:s/ because they believed that they are 'najaka:s' (heroes) of 'kaɽ,t̪u' (forest). They are not merely a food gathering tibe. Most of them are agricultural labourers. They are non-vegetarians. Early days, they are believed to be Hiindus.[oɖija:n - ,God' and oɖitti – Goddess].But these days, many of them converted to Christanity and Islam. Kattunayaka celebrates two festivals (1). Vishu – middle of April and (2.) Onam – month of August / September.



Figure 1. Map of Wayanad

1.2. Statistics of Kattunayaka in Wayanad

According to the statistics available, Wayanad consists of 1, 53,181 (Scheduled tribes) out of 816558 (total population) in which 17,051 are Kattunayaka (Census, 2011). 17 % of the total population are scheduled tribes in Wayanad in which Sex Ratio: 1013 and Literacy Rate: 57.5 to total population.

Table 1: Statistics of Kattunayaka in Wayanad

Sl.No	Local Administration	Population	Families
1	Mananthavady	50	12
2	Vellamundda	120	29
3	Thirunelli	3220	786
4	Thondernadu	16	5
5	Adavaka	0	0
6	Thavinjal	257	63
Mananthavady Block Panchayat			
1	Meenangadi	845	221
2	Nenmeni	612	152
3	Ambalavayal	326	88
4	Sulthan Bethery	974	271
5	Nulpuzha	2366	618
Sulthan Bethery Block Panchayat			
1	Kottathara	49	12
2	Vengapalli	44	12
3	Vaithiri	167	45
4	Muttill	354	100
5	Pozhuthana	271	66
6	Thariyodu	277	72
7	Padinjarethara	108	26
8	Meppadi	390	105
9	Muppainadu	236	58
Kalpetta Block Panchayat			
1	Panamaram	333	93
2	Poothadi	2555	704
3	Mullenkolly	1395	315
4	Pulpally	1977	491
5	Kaniyambatta	38	10
Panamaram Block Panchayat		6298	1613
Kalpetta Municipality		70	15
Wayanad		17051	4369

(Source: Kerala Institute of Local Administration-(12th Five Year Plan) 2012-2017)

1.3.Areas of the study

Kattunayaka were much reserved and protected themselves to their nature and keep a far away distance from rest of the ethnic and non-ethnic groups nearby. The data is collected during September 2017 to October 2017 mainly from the Kattunayaka communities resides at Southern part of Wayanad district in Kerala State.

1.4.Methodology

The speech forms of Kattunayaka are collected through direct method. Interview is done with the pre-structured questionnaire and observation is also done for the analysis and investigation of their language features. To identify the close variation in speech forms, recorded data is carried out from the field.

1.5.Sampling Size

The elicited data is collected through quantitative and qualitative method using pre-structured questionnaire. 40 informants of both gender consists with youngsters, middle aged and old aged for the study

Table 2: Statistics of Informant Categories

Approach to data	Types of Linguistic Interactions	Sample size (age-wise)	Informant category
Quantitative Qualitative	Informant observation Sociolinguistics interview Formal interview Questionnaire	10/10 5/5 5/5	Teenagers Middle Aged Old Aged

1.6.Data Analysing Method

The data is analysed on the basis of linguistics point of view. Geographical area, their living situations, relationship with other ethnic and non-ethnic groups resides nearby. The speech forms are identified with certain changes and are represented with grammatical categories as to find out the sentence structure of Kattunayaka language. Their response also observed and analysed accordingly for this study.

1.7.Limitations

This study focuses on the vowel system in Kattunayaka language collected from South Wayanad during the period 1978, 2011 and 2017. Data in between same above period is unfortunately unavailable regarding of Wayanad province.

2. Vowels

Vowels are produced with little restrictions of the airflow from the lings out through the mouth and / or the nose. (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/) Any forms of spoken language have vowels system. Vowel sounds carry pitch and loudness, longer and shorter in duration and can stand alone. It can be analysed and described through acoustically or electronically in Linguistics.

Vowels by its articulation, occurs in varied dimensions in the mouth.

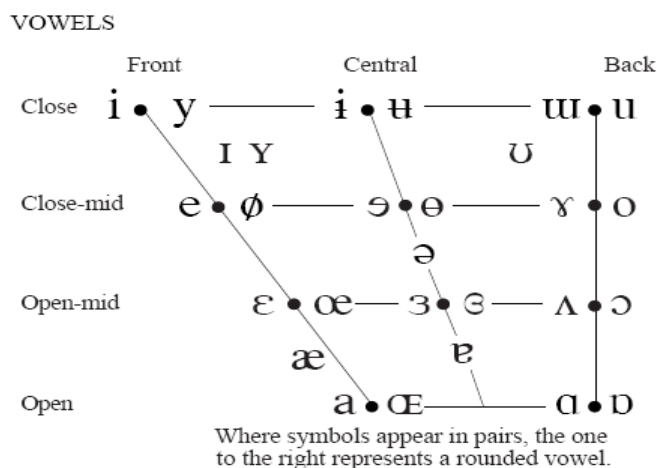


Figure 2 Positions of Vowel Occurrences

2.1. Phonemic Inventory

Phonology is a study of how sounds are organised, which includes the inventory of sounds, particular sound features and rules that specify how sounds interact each other. Phonemic inventory comprises all sounds produced in that particular language taken into consider. i.e., place, manner, voice, multi-dimensional matrix, cross-classification in phonetic features etc. Here follows Kattunayaka phonemic inventory.

Table 3: Monophthongal phonemes of Kattunayaka

	Front	Central	Back
High	i i:		u u:
Mid	e e:	ə	o o:
Low		a a:	

The language spoken by this tribe consists of five short vowels (/i/,/e/,/a/,/u/,/o/) five long vowels (/i:/,/e:/,/a:/,/u:/,/o:/) and one nasalised vowel (/ə/).

Table 4: Kattunayaka Vowels in Initial, Medieval and Final positions

Sl. No.	Vowels (short & long)	KN Word initial			Meaning	KN Word medial			Meaning	KN Word final			Meaning
		1978	2011	2017		1978	2015	2017		1978	2011	2017	
1	/i/	/idu/	/idu/	/itu/	‘This’	/hiɖi/	/hiɖi/	/piɖi/	‘Hold’	/kuɖi/	/kuɖi/	/kuɖi/	‘Drink’
2.	/i:/	/i:ga/	/i:ɖa:nu/	/i:ɖe/	‘Here’	/mi:nu/	/mi:n/	/mi:nə/	‘Fish’	-	-	-	-
3.	/e/	/ella:/	/ella:/	/ella:/	‘All’	/kett̪a/	/kett̪a/	/kett̪a/	‘Bad’	/ne:re/	/ne:re/	/ne:re/	‘Straight’
4.	/e:/	/e:llam/	/e:llam/	/e:llam/	‘Cardamom’	(1)/ke:lu/	/ke:lu/	/ke:lkkə/	‘Hear’	/avve:/	/avve:/	/avve:/	‘Mother’
5.	/a/	/alla/	/alla/	/alla/	‘Not’	(1)/kallu/	/kallu/	/ kallə /	‘Stone’	/agala/	/agala/	/agale/	‘Wide’
6.	/a:/	/a:ɖu/	/a:ɖu/	/a:ɖu/	‘Play’	(1)/ka:lu/	/ka:lu/	/ka:lə/	‘Leg’	/ba:/	/ba:/	/va:/	‘Come’
7.	/u/	/uppu/	/uppu/	/uppə/	‘Salt’	/kuɖi/	/kuɖi/	/kuɖi/	‘Drink’	/adu/	/adu/	/atu/	‘That’
8.	/u:/	/u:tu/	/u:tu/	/u:tu/	‘Swell’	/ku:ɖu/	/ku:ɖu/	/ku:ɖu/	‘Nest’	(1)/hu:/	/hu:vu/	(1)/hu/	‘Flower’
										(2)/hau/		(2)/pu:/	
9.	/o/	/ondu/	/ondu/	/ondu/	‘One’	/hoge/	/hoge/	(1)/poge/	‘Smoke’	-	-	/varumo/	‘Can you come?’
10	/o:/	/o:ɖu/	/o:ɖu/	/o:ɖu/	‘Tile’	/no:ɖu/	/no:ɖu/	/no:kku/	‘See’	-	-	-	-
11	/ə/		-	/əakki:/	‘Bird’	/nəlli/	/nəlli/	/nəlli/	‘Crab’	/kallu/	/kallu/	/kallə/	‘Toddy’

(Source: (1).Unpublished thesis ‘Phonemic reconstruction of Kattunayaka, Kannada and Malayalam, Department of Linguistics, UOK-1978. (2) ‘Research Publication Series. Vol-II.’, Kirtads- 2011 (3) Field study at Kattunayaka colonies in Southern Wayanad -2017).

While considering the vowels of Kattunayaka in above words, the change can be seen with positions in vowels as well as the consonants too. In the case of initial /i/, there is no change in phoneme /i/ but the words like, ‘This’ - /idu/ > /itu/, ‘That’ - /adu/ > /atu/ and ‘Hold’ - /hid̪i/ > /pit̪i/ the change of voiced alveolar /d/ > voiceless alveolar /t/. In the word ‘Here’ - /i:ga/ > /i:q̠a:nu/ > /i:q̠e/ in periods, there follows a tendency to back over voiced velar /g/ to voiced retroflex /q̠/.

The vowel change of /u/ (which is a high back close rounded vowel) to close-mid central vowel ə in the word, ‘Fish’ - /mi:nə/. i.e., /mi:nu/ > /mi:n/ > /mi:nə/. In the word, ‘Hear’ - /ke:lu/ changed to /ke:lkkə/. Here /u/ is lost and /kk/ + ə/ (cluster + central, positioned between half-open and half-close, neutral lip position vowel) is added. The change of /u/ > ə/ can be seen with the word, ‘Leg’ - /ka:lu/ > /ka:lə/. Here the vowel /u/ (which is a high back close rounded vowel) > ə/ (central, positioned between half-open and half-close, neutral lip position vowel).

In ‘Smoke’ - /hoge/, the initial phoneme /h/ > /p/ i.e., /pohe/ (the change of pharyngeal fricative /h/ to bilabial voiceless plosive /p/). And also the change of velar voiced plosive /g/ to pharyngeal fricative /h/. It is not so commonly identified in Kattunayaka Language.

This change to Kattunayaka language during years may be due to the influence of nearby languages exists. In order to figure out the influential facet, here follows Kannada and Malayalam phonemic inventory with cognate words. So that the clear evidence to the changes can be noted.

2.2.Vowel Distribution

2.2.1. Phonemic Inventory of Kattunayaka , Kannada and Malayalam

Table 4 Monophthongal phonemes of Kannada

	Front	Central	Back
High	i i:		u u:
Mid	e e:		o o:
Low		a a:	

Kannada language consists of five short vowels (/i/,/e/,/a/,/u/,/o/) five long vowels (/i:/,/e:/,/a:/,/u:/, /o:/).

Table 5 Monophthongal phonemes of Malayalam

	Front	Central	Back
High	i i:		u u:
Mid	e e:	ə	o o:
Low		a a:	

The language spoken by this tribe consists of five short vowels (/i/,/e/,/a/,/u/,/o/) five long vowels (/i:/,/e:/,/a:/,/u:/, /o:/) and one nasalised vowel (/ə̃/).

The distribution of the short vowels in Kattunayaka (K.N), Kannada (Ka.) and Malayalam (Ma.). Cognate words from three languages are taken into consideration.

Table 6: Distribution of Vowels in Initial, Medieval and Final positions

Sl. No.	Vowels (short & long)	Word initial			Meaning	Word medial			Meaning	Word final			Meaning
		KN	Ka.	Ma.		KN	Ka.	Ma.		KN	Ka.	Ma.	
1	/i/	(1)/idu/ (2)/itu/	/idu/	/itu/	‘This’	/hidɪ/	/hidɪ/	/pitɪ/	‘Hold’	/kudɪ/	/kudɪ/	/kutɪ/	‘Drink’
2.	/i:/	/i:ga/	/i:ga/	-	‘Here’	/mi:nu/	/mi:n/	/mi:nə/	‘Fish’	-	-	-	-
3.	/e/	/ella:/	/ella:/	/ella:m/	‘All’	/kɛt̪a/	/kɛt̪a/	/kɛt̪a/	‘Bad’	/ne:re/	/ne:re/	/ne:re/	‘Straight’
4.	/e:/	/e:llam/	-	/e:llam/	‘Cardamom’	(1)/ke:lu/ (2)/ke:lkkə/	/ke:lu/	/ke:lkku/	‘Hear’	/avve:/	/avve:/	-	‘Mother’
5.	/a/	/alla/	/alla/	/alla/	‘Not’	(1)/kallu/	/kallu/	/kallə/	‘Stone’	/agala/	/agala/	(1)/agala/ (2)/agale/	‘Wide’
6.	/a:/	/a:tu/	/a:tu/	/a:du	‘Play’	(1)/ka:lu/ (2)/ka:lə/	/ka:lu/	/ka:lə/	‘Leg’	/ba:/	/ba:/	/va:/	‘Come’
7.	/u/	/uppu/	/uppu/	/uppə/	‘Salt’	/kudɪ/	/kudɪ/	/kutɪ/	‘Drink’	/adu/	/adu/	/atu/	‘That’
8.	/u:/	/u:tu/	/u:tu/	/u:tu/	‘Swell’	/ku:t̪u/	/gu:du/	/ku:t̪u/	‘Nest’	(1)/hu:/ (2)/hau/	/hu:vu/	/hu/	‘Flower’
9.	/o/	/ondu/	/ondu/	/onnu/	‘One’	/hoge/	/hoge/	(1)/poge/ (2)/puga/	‘Smoke’	-	-	/varumo/	‘Can you come?’
10	/o:/	/o:tu/	/o:tu/	/o:tu/	‘Tile’	/no:du/	/no:du/	/no:kku/	‘See’	-	-	-	-
11	/ə/	/əkki:/	-	-	‘Bird’	/nəllɪ/	-	-	‘Crab’	(1)/kallə/ (2)/kallu/	-	/kallə/	‘Toddy’

(Source: (1).Unpublished thesis ‘Phonemic reconstruction of Kattunayaka, Kannada and Malayalam, Department of Linguistics, UOK-1978. (2) ‘Research Publication Series. Vol-II.’, Kirtads- 2011 (3) Field study at Kattunayaka colonies in Southern Wayanad -2017

3. Discussion

Proto-Dravidian had five short vowels (i, e, a, o, u) and corresponding long vowels (i:, e:, a:, o:, u:) plus two diphthongs (ai, au) which are considered more a sequence of vowel + semivowel (ay, aw, respectively) than true diphthongs. The Dravidian vowel system is very stable and has been preserved intact in most languages. (Gutman, 2013).

According to the data analysed, the following changes are noticed.

1. The tendency to change the voiceless, alveolar /t/ > voiced alveolar /d/ (contrast environments) due to the Kannada influence. Unaspirated /d/ is a feature of Kannada.
2. The vowel change of /u/ (which is a high back close rounded vowel) to close-mid central vowel ə in the word 'Fish' - /mi:nə/. i.e., /mi:nu/ > /mi:n/ > /mi:nə/. /u/ ending that exist early is a feature to Kannada but the changes to /ə/ in word end is due to Malayalam influence.
3. In the word, /ke:lu/ changed to /ke:lkkə/. Here /u/ is lost and /kk/ + /ə/ (cluster + central, positioned between half-open and half-close, neutral lip position vowel) is added is due to the Malayalam influence.
4. In /ka:lu/ changed to /ka:lə/. i.e. /u/ (which is a high back close rounded vowel) > /ə/ (central, positioned between half-open and half-close, neutral lip position vowel) where /ə/ is occurred due to the preceding of /a/ vowel. The influence of Malayalam can be seen here.
5. Diphthong /au/ is lost or rarely found in Kattunayaka. Eg: 'Flower' - /hau/ > /hu:v/ > /hu/
6. In the word /hoge/, the initial phoneme /h/ > /p/ in /pohe/ a shift of pharyngeal fricative /h/ to bilabial voiceless plosive /p/. And also velar voiced plosive /g/ to pharyngeal fricative /h/. It is due to the influence of Malayalam.
7. There is no final occurrence of /o:/ in Kattunayaka, Kannada and Malayalam.

Conclusion

The influence of Malayalam to some extent and innate relation with Kannada doesn't change much on Kattunayaka Language. Dravidian structure to its grammatical properties of Kattunayaka language system is somewhat same. "But for the influence of Malayalam in certain aspects, Kattunayaka speech is close to Kannada" (Somasekharan Nair, 1992).

According to this study, the generalisation to the changes occurring is mainly due to the influence of Kattunayaka with regional language Malayalam and innate language Kannada. Adopted changes widely seen with teenagers, few among middle aged and very less to old aged. The reasons of change noticed are:

1. Age
2. Bilingualism or Multilingual
3. Language usage domains
4. Language attitude
5. Ignorance

Though this study mainly treated the phonemic inventory of vowels, the changes analysed within the frame vowel and figure out the shift and lost followed to it. Kattunayaka are multilingual. Though they are reserved to mingle with other ethnic and non-ethnic groups, they are secure enough to use multilingual skill with the situations. Workplace and academic institutions plays a significant role in adopting language change.

The regional language Malayalam has the more influential strategies analysed. While compare to Kannada, Malayalam pioneered in changing their life style, language, approach to accept the rest. In most cases, it happened unknowingly .e.g. Teenagers and middle aged. Generally they are very proud and also shy in character. But to their language, they are very honesty. They use community language not only in their community but also in between them without considering the environment.

In fact are supposed to identify their status and needs in the society they belong but their ignorance to what they are? How strong they should be? What are their rights? Loosing base to ancestral language, are not

at a question to them. They care about their food and shelter. In short, Kattunayaka language is also leading to language endangerment.

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