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Ethnolinguistic study of Malayan

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Introduction

Malayan is one among the tribal communities in Kerala. They speak Malayan language which is spoken by less than 10,000 speakers. Malayan tribes are mainly living in the four districts of Kerala (Trissur, Ernakulam, Idukki, and kottayam). Data has been collected from Trissur district. The Malayan people are calling themselves Malayamaar or Malayangudi but their name in the government documents is specified only as Malayan.

Malayan Language

Basically, 'Malayan' is the south Indian Dravidian family. The people of Malayan speak Malayan language. Malayan is the name of their race and language.

Ethnolinguistics

Ethnolinguistics (sometimes called cultural linguistics) is a field of linguistics which studies the relationship between language and culture, and the way different ethnic groups perceive the world. It is the combination between ethnology and linguistics. The former refers to the way of life of an entire community, i.e., all the characteristics which distinguish one community from the other. Those characteristics make the cultural aspects of a community or a society. Ethnolinguistic study the way perception and conceptualization influences language, and show how this is linked to different cultures and societies

Methodology

All the data collected by interview method. In this paper ethnolinguistic research methodology involves a correlation of socio-cultural information with linguistic information with a view to identify, classify and describe the socially sensitive functional information and the expression of that information. Ethnosemantic methodology also involving the classification of vocabulary based on folk taxonomic procedures. Informants were drawn from the Malayan for eliciting the data of the present work.

Informants names

- 1) Segaran (age 65)
- 2) kumaran (age60)
- 3) parvathi (age 55)
- 4) Rathnamma (age 60)

The following places were collected data:

- 1) wachumaram colony
- 2) Thavala kuzhi para
- 3) Rendukai

Language use

Now the most of the Malayans are bilingual (Malayan and Malayalam) only few members of the tribe (above the age of sixty-five) convers with their age group with pure Malayan. The members who are below fifty are talking in Malayan at home. As the present generation is staying and studying in hostel for years, most of the time, they are not staying with their parents, so they speak Malayalam, which is their medium of instructions. The younger generation especially teenage children those who are drop out from school can understand and speak a few words and phrase in tamil the influence of media (Television, and Redio)

Bio-anthropological Details

Generally, Malayans are medium in stature and of white complexion. They have platyrrhine noses, prominent eyebrows, and Straight Hair and long arms. They are whiter than Kaadar people who are living near their settlement. Kaadar people are having dark skin and curly hair. But Malayan people are whity skin and straight hari, moreover they are thinking that they are upper cast from kaadar.

Social Customs

Everyday early morning without children and young mothers all the men and women were going to forest for finding tubers and firewoods. They were saying that they have doing this years. Everyone will come back from forest with some tubers or fierwoods. without sickl they are not going out of their home, They say that it will be helpful for them for cutting woods for firewood gathering and get protection from the forest animals.

Habitat

wachamaram colony Malayans are living in the protection of iron fence with electric power around them. The Vazhachal forest division of Kerala forest government is protecting the people from the wild animals, because the settlement was located at bank of the river, so animals will definitely come for the water and disturb the people also. In the night after 10 pm, they are passing electric power to the iron fence. Forest police station is there an Entrance of the settlement. Without their permission, unknown person can't enter to the settlement. They only take care of the whole colony.

/i:ʈʈa u:ɖu/ (Traditional huts for Malaysans)

They themselves build their traditional houses, for that they are using all part of the bamboo tree and made their houses like different parts of bamboo sticks like centre stem, the tip of the bamboo sticks and bamboo leafs that is called */i:ʈʈa u:ɖu/*.

/porattʈa u:ɖu/ (Hut For Woman)

Each family has a separate hut for girls to stay during the menaces period. It is called */porattʈa u:ɖu/* in Malayan language. Men are not allowed to enter this hut.

Cultural emphis in Malayan vocabularies**/kaŋŋi/ (Food habit)**

The main occupation of the Malayan is fishing and woodcutting, so they are eating a different kind of fishes and tubers. Rice was their main food but they are not doing cultivation because if they do cultivation elephants, deers will come and destroy their crops, so they are getting the rice from government ration shop by ration cards.

/va:ʈʈa kaŋŋi/ (Breakfast)

Monrning they don't have time to cook, they will carry their yesterdays food (rice with rice water) in a vesils and go to the forest at the early morning if the work is near by the home, they will come and eat their food at the home.

/ucca kaŋŋi/ (lunch food)

There is no practice of eating lunch food in Malayan people. those who are not going for work especially pregnant women, children, and old people only eating lunch food if it is available in home.

/co:ruu/ (Dinner)

After coming from the work (collecting fierwoods, honey, tubers and fishing, wood cutting and hunting) whatever they bought from the forest they cook it and eat with rice at night time. The remaning things of the food they will eat at the morning time and agin they will start their work.

/kattʈa:nja:ja:/ (Tea)

All the malayans are having the habit to dring the block tea with pepper power tow or three times in a day.

Life cycle**/ʈʈerattʈi kalja:nam/ (Puberty ceremony)**

When a girl attend puberty, she is kept in a separate hut for seven days. An old woman may stay with that girl. The news, that a girl attended puberty will be conveyed to the relatives of the girl and the whole colony. The seventh day, there will be a ceremony. That is called Theratti kalyanam.

/maṅṅacco:ru/ (Turmeric food)

In this, all old ladies and her aunts take the girl to the bank of the river and smear turmeric on her and make her to take bath. Then they give her new dress to wear and make up as a bride and cover her head by the cloth called (*ṭala muṅḍu*) in Malayalam and take her to home, there will be a dinner given to all named (*maṅṅacco:ru*). In this food turmeric will be added that is symbol that girl attended the puberty. On that day the *payasam* will be made up of rice will be given to all.

/kalja:nam/ (Marrige)

In ancient times, there was no concept of marriage, but the man lived with the woman whom he liked, said the elders. A Malayan tribe man can elope a Malayan tribe woman whom he loves. It is not considered as wrong. before 5 years ago the marriage happens within Malayan tribes only ,they never marry the people who belong to other tribes such as **ka:ḍar**. Nowadays, love marriages are permitted.

/iruvaṭṭu/ (28th day of child birth)

The pregnant woman was sent to a separate hut, which is beside the main house prior to 15 days of delivery. In this hut, an old woman stays to look after her. She is to attend childbirth as midwife. During delivery time elderly women accompany her. The third day of the delivery, the child is shown to his/her father. On 28th day of delivery, the girl who gives birth was shifted to the home from the separate hut after performing a ritual.

/ṭonnu:ru/ (Naming Ceremony)

The 90th day of the child birth, a small ritual is performed. At that time, a yellow sting is tied in the hands and legs of the child. The relatives of the child give new dress to the child.

Firstly, the name of grandfather's /grandmother's name is said to the child. In some of Malayan settlements they have continuing their grandparents name as title name . In some families, the parents of the child name their child what they like.

/mariccu/ Death:

They don't put garlands and flowers on dead persons. They bury the dead persons. with that dead body they used burried his cloths, soil vessels, weapons, some food, and what he/she likes more like (smoking and drinking things) .slowly they have stoped this practice after interfering and advice of forest rangers.

Religious Attitudes and involvements

In the center of the village, there is a small temple called 'Ambalam'. In this temple, the portrait of God Aiyappan and a lamp is there. Beside this, there is a small building, in this, only a small stone is there. This is called mountain God (*malai ḍeivam*). The people of Malayan worshipped *malai ḍeivam*. There is no idol for malai deivam. They believe that there is a power, and it protects from the danger from animals, evils which are in the forest. Before commence the any work in the forest, they worship the malai deivam.

Women role in religious rituals

Malayan community women are kept away from any ritual activities which are part of religious acts. Women are not supposed to go beyond a certain area where their temples are located. girl childs and elderly women are allowed to participat the temple rituals. elder women can do the all the rituals and if there is no elder man in the settelment she can lead the people as the kaaranamar.

Moopan Mudhuvan and kaaranamar

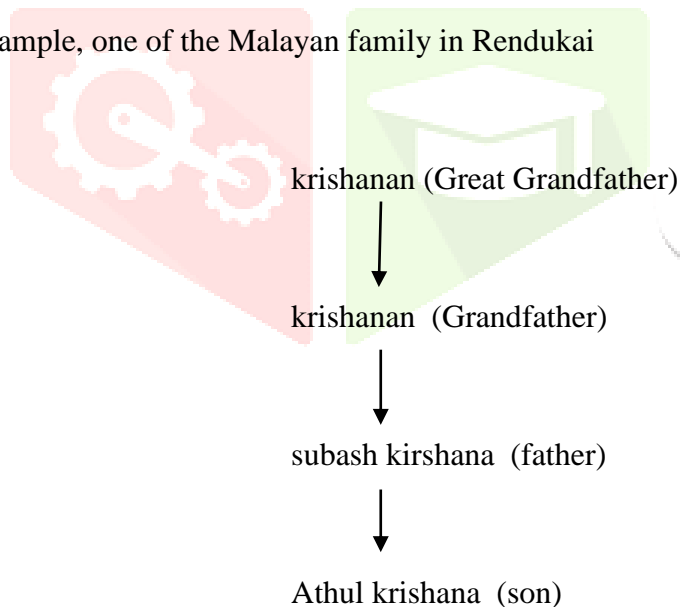
- Mooppan /*mu:ppan*/ – The village headman
- Mudhuvan /*mudhuvan*/ – elder man of the settelment
- Mudhiyor /*mudjiyo:r*/ - elder men and women of the settelment
- kaaranamar /*ka:ranama:r*/– The elder person who will perform all poojas.(It can be elder man or women)

Naming patterns (person)

Malayans are used naming the persons with natural things surrounding them like fish , snake , colour , flowers , herbs , God and Goddess names.Nowadays they are naming like Hindu malayalis.

In the Naming ceremony, for newborn baby the name of grandfather's /grandmother's name will be given to tha child, some of the familes following the same method as a title name. Some parents of the child name their child what they like.

For example, one of the Malayan family in Rendukai



old Malayan Male names

Malayan Male names	Transcription	Meaning
Velutha kende	/ve ut̪a keɳde/	One kind of river fish
Sammangande	/samman̪aɳde/	One kind of river fish
Sammachan	/samma:ccan/	(Samma+accan= samma:ccan) One kind of river fish
vellapappu	/ve lappa:ppe/	One kind of snake
karkodahan	/ka:r koɳahan/	The name of snake (which bit the nalan in Mahabaradham)
Sadayan	/saɳajan/	The name of siva (the man who have long and thik hair)
Sivan	/sivan/	The name of lord Siva
Velan	/ve:lan/	The name of lord Murugan
Kumaran	/kumaran/	The name of lord Murugan
Vediyān	/vedijaɳ/	The man who fire the gun
Old Malayan female names		
Malayan female names	Transcription	Meaning
Ambuli	/ambili/	The name of moon
Chandra	/caɳɳa:/	The name of moon
Dhulasi	/ɳu asi/	The neme of herbal plant for pureness
Karuthamma	/karut̪amma:/	black women
Veluthamma	/ve ut̪amma:/	white women
Thngamma	/taɳgamma:/	golden women
Nallayi	/nalla:ji/	good women
Dhevi	/ɳe:vi/	Goddess (Parvathi)
Dhevahi	/ɳe:vahi/	Goddess (Parvathi)
Paarvadhi	/pa:rvadi/	Goddess (Parvathi)

Place Naming

Every settlement name has some story about that name of the place. The elder people of the settlement are narrating the story.

/va:ccumaram/ (wachumaram)

The name of this village has an interesting story. While the road was laid between Vaalparai to Athirapilli, an English man who stood in this place and inspecting the work was chased by an Elephant. As he climbed up a tree in a hurry to save his life, his watch fell into a burrow in the tree. He tried as many times as he can to take the watch out, but he never succeeded. So he named the tree as 'Watchmaram' as it had watch in it. The word 'Maram' in tamil literally translates as 'tree' in English. And after that incident this place was named as Watchmaram.

/reṅḍukai/ (Rendukai)

There are two ways in opposite direction to the mountain; the settlement has located in between the ways so that is called Rendu kai.

Ethno Medicine

They have a good knowledge about medicinal herbs, but they refuse to tell it to other as they have a fear that the herbs would hide in need.

/albəm/ (for snakebite)

For snake bite, they are using a plant named /albəm/. If the the snake bite one of person they will Make the paste of the plant(albəm) and it should be placed in the bitten place, so that the poison of the snake, will be reduce from the body of the person.

/maiki:ni/ (for Cuts and wounds)

For cuts and wounds, they are using a plant named Maikini (maiki:ni). squeeze and take the extract from the plant and put in the cut and wound place of our body. It will help the wound heal, after apply this the pain and bleeding will stop immediately.

/ṭelappu/ (for Running nose and throat pain)

For cold they are drinking a black coffee with some herbs, that is called /ṭelappu/. They are adding the coffee powder, pepper powder, dried ginger powder, tulsi leave and sugar with some water and boiling it for some time and filter the black coffee and drink its very good treatment for cold, headache, runny nose, itchy eyes, sore throat.

/dḍuḷasi/ and /va:dḍakkoḍi/ (for cold)

Squeeze and take the extract from the plants /dḍuḷasi/ and /va:dḍakkoḍi/. If you take ¼ cup of the extract, thrice in a day, as continuously 3 days, cold and wheezing will be, reduce. It is a good remedy of cold for children.

/sirudɔe:n/ (for burning eyes)

If you eat /sirudɔe:n/ (one kind of honey) in empty stomach the burnig sense of eyes will be reduce.

Judiciary system

The village headman is called as */mu:ppan/*, who is eldest in the village. He has the responsibility to conduct prayers and providing judgements. If any quarrel occurs between them, 'Moopan' or any third person near them can here that problem and provide solutions, which has to be accepted. They assure that there is no theft, rape, murder or other crimes in their community. Everyone is taught to respect and obey the elders from the childhood days.

Conclusion

This genaraly explained Ethnolinguistics study of Malayan. totaly this paper talk about who are malayan, which lanugage they are talking, their language use , Social Customs and Habitat, Occupation, Housing system, Cultural emphis in Malayan vocabularies, Religious Attitudes and Involvements, women role in religious rituals, Naming patterns, Ethno medicin, Judiciary system of the Malayan community.

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