Kerala History and Studies Journal
Published by the Kerala History Conference
ISSN No. XXXX-XXXX

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Publication Vol. 1 / Issue 1 / 2026

Stable URL https://journal.keralahistoryconference.org/article/47

Date of Release 28.11.2026

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The Influence of Mappila Malayalam on Eranadan Malayalam - A Socio-Historical Perspective

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Introduction

Historical analyses of dialect studies reveal important insights that are frequently overlooked in literary language studies. The scope of regional language studies increases when they are carried out historically. Literary language differs from oral speech because it is frequently ornamental. The essence of oral speech is also present in the dialect known as Eranadan Malayalam.

In this paper, an attempt is made to conduct a comparative study between the Eranadan dialect and the Mappila dialect. This paper is used to prove that there is an inextricable relationship between them. The paper demonstrates that the view that Eranadan Malayalam is different from Mappila Malayalam needs to be critically re-examined and that their give-and-takes can be identified through linguistic, historical and cultural contexts.

The paper analyzes the historical and cultural background that led to the dialect of Eranad. The similarity of some standard forms of Malayalam with Eranad Malayalam and Mappila Malayalam is proved by comparing them. The argument is made by comparing selected standard forms of Malayalam with the forms of Eranad and Mappila Malayalam.

The primary source materials that helped in writing this paper is the contact and communication of the author with the people of various parts of Eranad. This informal field survey has motivated me to carry forward the paper in a historical and contemporary context. Secondly, there are books that describe the history and dialect in English and Malayalam. Third one is the books that connect history and linguistics in an interdisciplinary manner.

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Limitations

Although the thesis has analyzed the undeniable similarities between Eranad Malayalam and Mappila Malayalam, there may be fluctuations depending on factors such as influence, individuals, age, financial ability, education, caste, etc. Here, only Eranad, a small region of Malabar, has been studied. In this regard, a small group of people, such variations in the language, their method and usage need to be further researched in the historical context.

Language Variation – Meaning

Language variation refers to the diversity within a language in terms of words, suffixes, styles, and pronunciation patterns that have unique characteristics. There are regional linguistic variations in all regions of Kerala. . There are many varieties in the language spoken in a vast area. Lack of systematization and indifference in pronunciation are the main features of language variation.[1] The languages that are generally divided into northern and southern languages include Thrissur, Travancore, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kadathanada, Erana, Palakkad, Thalassery, and Payyannur. Muslim, Christian, Namboothiri, and Pulaya Ezhava languages are mixed with these. These are communal languages. Christian and Muslim languages are spoken almost equally in all regions. They are not subordinate to their respective regional languages. If we examine the language spoken from one end of Kerala to the other, we can see that there is a significant difference in the language with the difference in location. Here we try to examine the dialects that have occurred in the Eranadan language due to the influence of the Mappila community.

Language Variation and Foreign Culture

In ancient times, when transportation and communication facilities were not as developed as they are today, people were mostly isolated. A mountain, a forest, or a river could cut off communication between them. Even such geographical barriers could divide speech communities.[2]

The language forms used by a community can change in two ways. Internal and external. It is difficult to find the cause of internal changes, which include phonetic and morphological changes and changes based on similarity.[3] These include phonetic

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variations, phonetic root variations resulting from them, and new expressions resulting from similarity. It is not possible to pinpoint the cause of everything.

External motivation is more obvious and important than internal motivation. These are easily identifiable. Its function is multifaceted, such as foreign invasion, migration, trade relations, and cultural relations. A region where a particular language is spoken. If people speaking another language invade and conquer it, the conquered people naturally have to learn the language of the conquered people.[4] Elements of their language are assimilated. If we examine the history of Kerala in the medieval period, the changes brought about by Tipu's invasion and the cultural assimilation that followed are remarkable. An organized mass conversion to Islam was carried out, and it is said that 70,000 people were circumcised and converted to Islam.[5] In this way, the population of Muslims increased in Malabar and through Tipu Sultan, the influence of Islam and related languages began to be visible here.

Trade relations are another source of linguistic diversity in Kerala. There is evidence of dialect differences arising from these in Kerala. Contact with the Arabs who came to North Kerala for trade and settled has even changed the pronunciation of Malayalam in Malabar. This has paved the way for the birth of the dialect called Mappila Malayalam. In this way, trade relations have led to cultural relations. The spread of religious or political principles has led to the strengthening and expansion of cultural relations. With the spread of Islam, the vocabulary and usage patterns of the Arabic languages used by the main propagators of that religion have exerted an undeniable influence on translation.[6]

Such words are adopted by a culture when it encounters essential elements that are lacking in its own. In this way, when elements that are missing from the culture of one people are seen in another culture, they naturally express a willingness to adopt those cultural elements, which paves the way for the adoption of foreign language words. The use of the above-mentioned words in Kerala is clear evidence.

Eranadan dialect - historical background

In the early days, the spread of Muslims (Arabs) was limited to the coastal areas. They had close relations with the rulers in cities like Kozhikode and Kannur. At that time, there were no obstacles against converting to Islam. The Hindu kings did not

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consider the conversion of Muslims by traders as a challenge. They did not impose any restrictions on converting to Islam. Muslim Arabs intermarried with Keralite women. This gave birth to the hybrid race called Mappila.[7]

The Malayalam spoken by the Mappilas was known as Mappila Malayalam. This dialect was spoken strongly in the North Malabar regions, especially in Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur, Kasaragod, and to a lesser extent in the Thrissur and Palakkad districts.[8] The Mappilas have tried to settle in all parts of Kerala as much as possible. However, the harmony between the Hindus and Muslims of Malabar was not visible in other areas.

Sheikh Zainuddin records that the Muslims of Malabar lived in great harmony, peace, and tolerance. The respect and tolerance they showed towards the other communities and cultures that settled here increased their communication skills. In a society with high communication skills, the language loses its uniqueness. In a society with high communication and interaction, linguistic uniqueness fades and dialects develop. This also became a cause of language differences in Eranad taluk, which is part of Malabar.

Cultural and political factors also contributed to the conversion to Islam, which led to an unprecedented increase in the population of the Mappilas in Malabar. The conversion of lower castes to Islam was not only permitted, but was sometimes encouraged by the Zamorins of Calicut. Historical records, including William Logan's Malabar Manual, record that in order to strengthen the navy, it was recommended that one or more male members of the Hindu fishermen's families be raised to become Muslims.[9]

By embracing Islam, a Hindu from a lower caste would receive great respect and honor. He was raised to a social status ten times higher than that of his own community. For this reason, many families who were considered inferior in the Hindu community converted to Islam individually and collectively.[10] This historical process became crucial. The adoption of Mappila language features by religious converts from both high and low castes also led to social linguistic differentiation. This is a kind of hidden influence. Therefore, the Mappila language influence is very much seen among the lower caste Eranadan Malayalis.[11]

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Higher caste Hindus also converted to religion because they wanted more freedom in life. For example, only the eldest male in Namboothiri families was allowed to marry. This was not the case in Islam. Those who violated the strict caste system of Hinduism were excommunicated. They found solace in Islam. This constant contact between people of different castes and religions led to the fusion of Mappila Malayalam and Eranadan Malayalam.[12]

The influence of the Mappila language began to be felt even among the Namboothiris, crossing the boundaries of caste. Initially, an impersonal Eranadan spoken language was modified through Mappila contact.

Converts (from all castes) could interact with people of other religions without fear of untouchability and other customs. Naturally, the constant contact of people of different castes and religions led to the fusion of Mappila Malayalam and Eranadan Malayalam. In addition, the Zamorin had given Muslims a clear position in society at that time. A Muslim was allowed the right to sit with the Namboodiri. The Nairs were not allowed either.[13]

As the religious leader of the Muslims, they had the right to travel in the palanquin with the Zamorin. His advisors, diplomats and naval officers were all Muslims.[14]

Converts from all castes were able to live without fear of untouchability.In this way, the influence of Islam, which reached from the Zamorin to the common people, brought about similarities in language and culture among the people of Malabar. In a society without any social inferiority complex, the language of Eranad, which is part of Malabar, also changed due to Mappila contact. As the rate of Islamic propagation and conversion increased in Eranad, the population of the Muslim population increased exponentially.[15]

Population growth is one of the basic reasons for language differences. When a community with a large population comes into contact with the people who have settled there, the uniqueness of the language is lost. Over time, the Malayalam spoken by Muslims and non-Muslims in Eranad has changed and acquired the same style and pronunciation. Such friendship and cultural interaction was not seen

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anywhere in Kerala except in Malabar. Therefore, the Mappila language could not penetrate as deeply as Malabar into other areas.

When analyzing the above words, it must be concluded that Eranadan Malayalam has indisputable similarities with Mappila Malayalam. This general tendency towards phonetic simplification is a criterion for the dialect of any society.[16]

The conclusion drawn from the above analysis may explained as follow: The Eranadan people are characterized by the hasty pronunciation of words. They are not aware of the original form of the words in the language. Eranadan Malayalam mostly sees words that have become distorted due to hasty pronunciation. They are more interested in using letters in a lopsided manner. Such a dialect can certainly be due to the influence of Mappila Malayalam. The Eranadan dialect is more evident among the elderly, women and children. However, the intensity of the dialect is less in the educated youth and professionals. They deliberately try to purify the language according to the context. However, in public places, markets, and festive occasions, Eranadan Malayalam, which is similar to Mappila Malayalam, is used. This paper finds that the unique historical, political, and economic circumstances of Malabar have led to the development of Mappila and, more importantly, Eranadan dialects. The historical context confirms that this unique socio-cultural situation, which is not replicated anywhere else in Kerala, has served as a powerful catalyst for Mappila Malayalam, has gained a latent influence, has become a new regional norm, and has thereby irrevocably shaped the regional dialect of Eranadan.

Endnotes

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