



## The Realisation of the Phonological Variation of /ɻ/ in Malabar Mappila dialect of Malayalam

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the way social factors affect linguistic variation and how they influence the process of dialect levelling by taking instances from Mappila dialect of Malayalam in Malabar. Malayalam is a language which has lot of variations according to different social factors starting from the geographical region to different religions and castes. Being in Dravidian family Malayalam shows its richness in having many retroflex sounds. Some linguistic features present in the dialect of Mappila community in Malabar were different from other dialects of Malayalam and the variations were attached with their socio-cultural identity. The dialect of central Malabar, especially Muslim dialect shows a variation in this schema of retroflex sounds of Malayalam. The central Malabar Muslim dialect is marked for replacing voiced retroflex approximant sound /ɻ/ with voiced palatal approximant /j/ in all their occurrences. Even though /ɻ/ and /j/ are two different phonemes in other dialects of Malayalam, this group of population does not used to make any distinction between the two. However, the paper observed a significant variation in the existing pattern of variation among the speakers of Malabar Mappila dialect. This paper analyses the variation happened in the free variation of /ɻ/ and /j/ and the gradual process of dialect levelling happening at the level of phonology and the social factors and identity attached to it by taking instances from a sociodialect of Malayalam. The study shows agreement with previous efforts about the motivation for linguistic change and identity correlation which results in linguistic change in a community.

### সারাংশ

ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক বৈচিত্রের আলোচনায় সামাজিক প্রভাবের প্রসঙ্গ অবশ্যম্ভাবী। মালাবার অঞ্চলে প্রচলিত মালয়ালম ভাষার মাপ্পিলা ধরনটি এখানে আলোচিত হয়েছে। এই ভাষাটির একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বৈশিষ্ট হল: /ɻ/-কে /j/ দ্বারা প্রতিস্থাপন। উল্লেখ্য, দ্রাবিড়ীয় গোষ্ঠী ভুক্ত হওয়ায় মালয়ালামে সাধারণভাবে /ɻ/-এর প্রাধান্য। প্রতিস্থাপনের এই ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক সংঘটনার মূলে যে সামাজিক পরিপ্রেক্ষিত তারই আলোচনা এই প্রবন্ধের মূল আলোচ্য বিষয়।

### 1. Introduction

Variation is a universal and natural phenomenon existing in almost every human languages and it is a necessity for the existence of the language and the speech community. Language variation begins

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