THE SYNTAX OF THE VEDDA LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an inquiry into the syntax of the Vedda language from a generative syntactic perspective conducted in accordance with Noam Chomsky's (1980-) Principles and Parameters (P&P) framework and under the cartographic approach (Rizzi 1997), (Cinque 1999). Its overall objective is to examine the Vedda language word order and configurationality, phrase structure, clause structure, anaphoric relations, negation and NegPs, Heads and Head positions, movement, Topic, Focus, and other relevant syntactic phenomena. Moreover, the author intends to develop a mechanism to document the Vedda language along with a comprehensive grammar compiled from a generative syntactic perspective, taking note of the historical sources, hybridization, dialectal varieties, and other related factors. The field research was carried out in the Dambana administrative division under the Uva Province of Sri Lanka where the Vedda settlements are officially located. The sample consisted of 05 Veddas who are native speakers of the Vedda language. The data were recorded during two field visits. The data analysis was carried out with attention to the syntactic phenomena mentioned above. The most important conclusions that could be arrived at during the study are; that despite the availability of many scrambling opportunities, the Vedda language remains configurational; that it does not allow certain word orders present in the Sinhala language; that it is strongly Head final as the Sinhala language; that it does not have an articulated CP or TP periphery; that their Neg marker serves a number of modal functions in addition to Neg marking; that both Focus and Wh are located in the Focus Head; and that on the whole, the syntax of the Vedda language largely aligns with the syntax of the Sinhala language.

KEYWORDS: *the Vedda language, syntax, generative perspective*

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1 INTRODUCTION

According to the Mahavamsa, the great Chronicle of Sri Lanka, the Vedda community, indigenous to Sri Lanka, had inhabited the island before the arrival of the Aryans in the 5th century B.C. However, as Dharmadasa (1973) points out "historians and anthropologists are generally agreed on the point that the Veddas are the descendants of the Stone Age Man of Sri Lanka whose traces have been found in places such as Bandarawela and Balangoda" (Dharmadasa, 1973). Nevertheless, in recent times, the Veddas have been subjected to numerous socio-political and economic changes causing a near extinction of these dwellers. The plight of this once vibrant community with a considerable population is recorded in Dharmadasa (1973), in the following way. "The census of 1881 recorded their number as 2,200. By 1958 it had dropped to 800, and by 1963 it had dwindled to such an extent that the Veddas were no longer assigned a separate entry in the census and were included in the column for "other races"(Dharmadasa, 1973). Thus, the Vedda, the aboriginal inhabitants of the wilds of Sri Lanka have now not only dwindled in their number but also in their territory. From the whole of Uva and much of the Central and North Central Provinces, which they once occupied, as recorded in Seligmanns (Seligmanns, 1911), the Vedda occupation today covers only a small region in the northern Uva and southern Tamankaduwa areas.

With respect to the Vedda language, what we can deduce is that their interaction with the Sinhala/ Tamil community has resulted in a situation of language contact with the dominant Sinhala language overpowering the Vedda language. According to Dharmadasa (1973), "the language of the Veddas, as an examination of its recorded form from about the 1880's shows, is evidently a creole" (Dharmadasa, 1973). The situation is further complicated today with increasing hybridization of the Vedda language due to overwhelming linguistic and cultural contact with the majority Sinhalese and the pressure upon the minority Veddas to integrate with the majority community for different reasons. Thus the Vedda language has been at the receiving end of all these socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics so much so that it stands today as a threatened aboriginal language facing extinction. Such an extinction of the language of the indigenous community of Sri Lanka may not simply mean the death of another language, but a loss of access to a rich and vibrant ancient culture in the world. What is more serious and, therefore, merits urgent attention is that except for a few studies on the Vedda language (which are excellent studies in their own right) and more on ethnographic and anthropological aspects, a comprehensive grammar of the Vedda language with special focus on its syntax is yet to be compiled. Some of the available studies provide a comprehensive analysis of the Vedda language morphology, case system and parts of speech (De Silva, 1972). The focus of some other studies is the extent of language contact and language change undergone by the Vedda language, written from a historical linguistics perspective (Dharmadasa, 1973). Therefore, the syntax of the Vedda language from a

Chomskian generative approach is yet to be studied and documented and the author believes that there is a sufficient research gap that needs to be filled. This is the rationale and justification for the present study. In particular, the study is guided by the following general and specific objectives. The general objective of the study is to initiate a language documentation project of the Vedda language through an empirical study in which a comprehensive grammar is composed from a generative syntax perspective. The study will take note of the historical sources, hybridization, dialectal varieties, and other important factors that affect linguistic conclusions of the study. As for the more specific objectives, the author intends to examine the Vedda language in terms of its word order and configurationality, phrase structure, clause structure, agreement, anaphoric relations, negation and NegPs, Heads and Head positions, movement, Topic, Focus, and other syntactic phenomena of theoretical interest.

The aboriginal community of Sri Lanka, known as Veddas, has been a constant source of interest and information for historians, anthropologists, linguists, and many others. Their livelihood has been presented in both fact and fiction over the many decades since they gained attention as a unique social entity. References to the Veddas date back to a number of centuries, including such sources as the Mahavamsa, Knox, Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Geiger, the Seligmanns, and in more recent times, De Silva, and Dharmadasa. In the following sections I will outline the major focus of these writers irrespective of whether they deal with the Vedda language in particular or not.

Moszkowski (1908) in a paper presented at the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society discusses the livelihood, abodes, and religion of the Veddas and their interaction with the Sinhalese holistically, locating his stand in a comparative Eurocentric perspective of the civilized man. He concludes his paper as "the Veddas have succumbed to civilization" (Moszkowski, 1908) which provides testimony to his rather disapproving tone. Nevertheless, Moszkowski does not deal with the Vedda language in his paper.

Seligmanns in adopting Geiger's view on the Vedda language say, "in this and the following chapter Geiger's view will be assumed to be correct and we shall deal with the so-called Vedda language, which is but a dialect of Sinhalese, as a foreign language which the Veddas long ago adopted in the place of their own" (Seligmanns, 1911). They mostly focus on the Vedda lexicon, discussing and commenting on the periphrastic nature of the Vedda words, which they attribute to the requirement of the Veddas to converse among themselves in a secret language in the presence of Sinhalese. They present the etymology of the Vedda language in a comparative analysis with Sinhala tracing their origin for the most part to Sanskrit and Sinhala. They identify three stages in the evolution of the Vedda dialect which they describe as, "in the first stage their original language is effaced by an archaic form of the Sinhalese; the formation from this of a large number of secret words constitutes the second stage, while the third stage is represented by the process

of substitution of more or less modern and colloquial Sinhalese words for the majority of archaic words and forms, during which process many of the modern words underwent phonetic changes" (Seligmanns, 1911). They also discuss the non-Aryan words of the Vedda vocabulary which, according to them, are of unknown origin. Although they provide a wealth of data and examples, their discussion does not extend to the Vedda syntax.

Dharmadasa (1973) pursues the creole theory, rather than the dialect theory as adopted by Geiger and some others, in his detailed analysis of the Vedda language as a creole. He observes that "the emergence of a creole from a pidgin, as attested in Jamaican Creole and Melanesian Pidgin English appears to have taken place with the Vedda language too" (Dharmadasa, 1973). He provides evidence from the Vedda language phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon to substantiate this theory of creolization from the source language Sinhala due to language contact. He traces the process of restructuring of phonological, morphological, syntactic elements and the lexical items of the Vedda language from the source language through reduction and simplification. The comparative method adopted by the writer with respect to the sound system, case forms, number and gender marking, negation, pronominal forms, and many other grammatical categories makes the analysis and description quite explicit.

De Silva (1972) has done an extensive study on the Vedda language covering such areas as its creolization, lexicon, etymology, word classes, their case forms and uses, drawing contrasts with Sinhala where relevant. He also provides a range of Vedda texts such as narratives and songs. He accounts for the morphological structure of the words in terms of the grammatical categories number, case, mood, and tense. Thus, he identifies three major word classes in the Vedda language. They are, nominals, verbals and invariables. As for nominal categories, he provides a classification of nominals in terms of the features definite/indefinite, and common forms. Verbal categories are classified in accordance with tense, mood, finite, non-finiteness and he provides the whole paradigm along each of these criteria. Mood and tense forms are also separately treated. In his analysis, demonstratives, postpositions, adverbials, and particles are treated as invariable words. This classification is made on the basis of their high frequency occurrence with adjacent nominal and verbal forms. Therefore, De Silva's grammar sketch of the Vedda language is quite detailed and analytical. His presentation takes the form of a collection of discrete categories without any prominence for the sentence or the sentence structure. The texts (vedda narratives and songs) are also presented separately.

One obvious fact in the above studies is that all of them date back to an era more than four decades ago, even calculating from the most recent ones, however much they are pioneering and comprehensive in nature. Therefore, the recent theoretical advances in the study of Linguistics are not much represented in them. Hence, I believe that a significant research gap exists for further studies on the Vedda language, notably

along the recent theoretical and empirical findings in syntax. Accordingly, the present study takes the shape of a generative (Chomsky, 1980) inquiry into the Vedda syntax.

2 MATERIALS & METHODS

The data for the study was collected during two field visits to the Dambana administrative division under the Mahiyangana divisional secretariat in the Uva Province, Sri Lanka. The visits were made in February and March 2020.

Although the remaining Vedda population is scattered in Dambana, Maha Oya, and some places in Badulla, the existing Vedda country today is confined to Dambana, and the existing Vedda community is identified as the Veddas of Dambana, with a chief on their own, and attracting sufficient attention as a popular tourist destination and a place of academic interest for research. Hence, the Veddas of Dambana are considered to form the dominant group. As De. Silva (1972) mentions, "after observing the speech habits in all settlements in the Vedda Itinerary Strip, I found that the Dambana people had a wider vocabulary and a greater degree of fluency" (De Silva, 1972). Thus, considering the huge potential it offered for a fruitful language study, Dambana was selected by the present researcher too as the study site. The rationale for determining the sample was the availability of native speakers of the Vedda language and membership of the

highest age category of the Vedda populace. The sample consisted of five Veddas: three older Veddas and two Vedda youths encountered in both visits. All five were native speakers of the Vedda language. The two Vedda youths who were bilinguals (the Vedda language and Sinhala) acted as translators and facilitators at the interview-cum-discussion sessions. The interviews were largely structured ones as the researcher had already prepared the linguistic data to be presented to the Vedda informants. Further questions or data were added throughout the

interview for the purpose of clarifications. Hence it can be said that the methodology employed in the study is qualitative in the application of such methodological tools as focused interviews and group discussions. The data analysis was along such syntactic phenomena as word order and configurationality, phrase structure, clause structure, agreement, anaphoric relations, negation and NegPs, Heads and Head positions, movement, Topic, Focus, and other syntactic phenomena of theoretical interest.

3 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

3.1 Word Order
The relatively free word order phenomenon in Sinhala can be observed in the Vedda language too, though not to the same extent as the Sinhala language shows. Accordingly, the following are the possible and not possible word orders.

SOV: Sinhala

 (1) Poramola   aliy-ek   daekka

 Poramola (Nom) elephant –Sing saw

 'Poramola saw an elephant'

 SOV: the Vedda language

 (2) Poramola aeththo botakandala aethth-ek aehirukula-ta mando-kara

 Poramola –Honf (Nom) elephant Honf -Sing eye-Dat   mando-did

 Lit; Poramola took the elephant into his eyes

 'Poramola saw an elephant'

SVO: Sinhala

 (3) Poramola   daekka aliy-ek (va)

 Poramola (Nom) saw elephant-Sing (Acc)

 'Poramola saw an elephant'

 SVO: the Vedda language

 (4) Poramola aeththa-nne aehirukula-ta mando-una botakandala aethth-ek

  Poramola Hon-Loc eye-Dat mando-was elephant Hon-Sing

 Lit; an elephant was into the eyes of Poramola

 'Poramola saw an elephant'

OSV: Sinhala

 (5) aliy-ek -va   Poramola   daekka

 elephant-Sing-Acc Poramola (Nom) saw

'Poramola saw an elephant'

OSV: the Vedda language

(6) botakandala aethth-ek Poramola aeththa-nne aehirukula-ta mando-una

elephant Hon-Sing Poramola Hon-Loc eye-Dat mando-was Lit; an

elephant was into the eyes of Poramola

'Poramola saw an elephant'

OVS: Sinhala

(7) aliy-ek -va   daekka Poramola

elephant-Sing-Acc saw Poramola(Nom)

'Poramola saw an elephant'

OVS: the Vedda language

Not available

VSO: Sinhala

(8) Dekka Poramola   aliyek (va)

   Saw   Poramola(Nom) elephant (Acc)

'Poramola saw an elephant'

VSO: the Vedda language

Not available

VOS: Sinhala

(9) Dekka aliy-ek (va)   Poramola

Saw elephant-Sing (Acc)   Poramola (Nom)

'Poramola saw an elephant'

VOS: the Vedda language

Not available

'Mando-kara' (mando-did) and 'mando-una'(mando-was) are two high frequency verb forms that occur in the Vedda language to cover a range of activities with the meanings- 'do' 'happen', 'become' and 'be'. In such cases, the preceding NP may take dative, accusative, or any other case form, conveying the meaning difference through colocation and context. De Silva (1972) observes that the Vedda operates with as few as 23 verbs including the above two.

3.2 Configurationality

Languages that display a number of variant word orders are said to have a flat structure for which the term 'non-configurationality' was proposed (Hale 1982).

However, despite the apparent word order variations in Sinhala, it does not mean that any element in Sinhala allows such scrambling. Kariyakawana (1995) has argued with evidence from auxiliary verbs, sentential focus, and negative elements that Sinhala does not have a flat structure. With regard to Sinhala, the opinion of this author is also the same, i.e. that it does not have a flat structure[1].

Based on further restrictions on the free word-order phenomenon that we noted above with respect to the Vedda language, it can be further deduced that, like the Sinhala language, the Vedda language too is configurational. For, out of the six possible word orders in Sinhala, only three (SOV, SVO, OSV) are possible in the Vedda language as depicted below.

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[1] Henadeerage (2002) argues that Sinhala is a non-configurational language.

A) Evidence from negative elements: <u>Sinhala:</u>

(10) Poramola   loku aliyek   daekk-e[1] naehae
    Poramola(Nom)   big elephant   saw-e   Neg
  'Poramola did not see a big elephant'

(11) *Naehae Poramola   loku aliyek   daekk-e
    Neg Poramola(Nom)   big elephant   saw-e
    'Poramola did not see a big elephant'

<u>the Vedda language:</u>

(12) Poramola aeththa-nne aehirukula-ta lokuthaene botakandala aethth-ek mando-venna kodoi
Poramola Hon-Loc   eye-Dat   big   elephant Hon-Sing mando-Inf Neg
'Poramola did not see a big elephant'

(13) *Kodoi Poramola aeththa-nne aehirukula-ta lokuthaene botakandala aethth-ek mando-venna
        NegPoramola Hon-Loc   eye-Dat   big   elephant Hon-Sing   mando-Inf
'Poramola did not see a big elephant'

B) Evidence from Focus
<u>Sinhala:</u>
(14) Poramola   thamai loku aliyek   daekke
    Poramola(Nom)   FOC a big elephant   saw-e
    'Poramola saw a big elephant'

<u>the Vedda language:</u>

(15) Poramola aeththo-mai lokuthaene botakandala aethth-ek   aehirukula-ta mando-kar-e
  Poramola Hon-FOC   big   elephant Hon-Sing   eye-Dat   mando-did-e
  'It is Poramola who saw a big elephant'

<u>Sinhala:</u>
(16) *Thamai Poramola   loku aliyek daekke
      FOC   Poramola   a big elephant saw-e
    'It is Poramola who saw a big elephant'

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[1] Verb gets e-suffix when there is a negative element, Foc, or, modal marker. Present form of 'see' is 'daekka'

the Vedda language:

(17) *Mai Poramola aeththo lokuthaene botakandala aethth-ek aehirukula-ta mando-kar-e
    FOC Poramola Hon big elephant Hon-Sing eye-Dat mando-did-e 'It is Poramola
    who saw a big elephant'

C) Evidence from Principle C of Binding theory
Sinhala:

(18) Haema lamayama$_i$ eyage$_i$ amma-ta aadarei
    Every child(Nom)   his mother-Dat love
  'Every child loves his mother'

(19) *Eya$_i$ haema lamaya-gema$_i$ amma-ta$_i$ aadarei
    He   every child Gen   mother-Dat love
    *He loves every child's mother

the Vedda language:

(20) [Haema vannila aeththek-ma$_i$] eeaeththane$_i$ kaekulan-ta kaekulian-ta layapojj-en
hithlaanava
[Every vedda$_i$ -Gen]   his   boys-Dat   girls-Dat   heart-Instr love
'Every vedda$_i$ loves his$_i$ children'

(21)*E-aeththo$_i$ [haema vannila aeththanne-ma$_i$] kaekulan-ta kaekulian-ta layapojj-en
hithlaanava
        He$_i$ [every vedda-Gen$_i$]   boys-Dat   girls-Dat   heart-Instr love
*He$_i$ loves every veddas$_i$' children

Examples 11, 13, and 16, 17 indicate that movement of Neg and Focus respectively makes the sentences ungrammatical. Examples 18-21 indicate that Principle C of the binding theory applies to Sinhala and to the Vedda language both. The impossibility of co-reference between *Eya$_i$* and haema *lamaya-gema$_i$* (19) and *2E-* and *haema aeththanne-ma$_i$* (21) indicates that Principle C of the Binding Theory which

requires that referential expressions may not be co-indexed with an NP which C-commands it, applies to Sinhala and to the Vedda language both. This would not be so if Sinhala/Vedda language had a flat structure and thus is non-configurational.

3.3 Phrase Structure and Headedness

Just as Sinhala, the Vedda language too is *vannila* strongly head final and therefore, is left-branching, as exemplified below.

Table 1: Phrase Structure and Headedness

The Noun Phrase (NP):	
Sinhala	the **Vedda Language**
(22-a) Kelae-ve minissu 　Jungle-Loc people 　People of the jungle	(22-b) Kelae-poj-je minigajjo 　　Jungle-Loc people 　　People of the jungle
(23-a) Kuveni-ge kathaava 　Kuveni-Gen story Story of Kuveni/Kuveni's story	(23-b)Kuveni kiriammala aeththa-ne katha-pojja[2] 　Kuveni mother　　　person-Gen story Story of Kuveni/Kuveni's story
The Verb Phrase (VP)	
(24-a)Mee-paeni kaeva 　Bee-honey eat(Pst) 　Ate honey	(24-b) [Kandaarinige diyathena] kaevillaeva 　　[Honey] eat(Pst) 　　 Ate honey
(25-a) Wathura biuwa 　Water drink(Pst) 　Drank water	(25-b) Diyaruchcha kaevillaeva 　　Water drink(Pst) 　　Drank water
VP with an adverb	
(26-a) Ikmanata diuwa 　Soon/Fast ran 　Ran fast	(26-b) Hanikata diung-pojja mando-kara 　　Soon　　running　　did 　　Ran fast
(27-a) Himin-himin kaeva 　Slowly-slowly ate 　Ate very slowly	(27-b) Thena-kin　　　thena-kin kaevilleva 　　Place-Instr　　　place-Instr ate Lit: from here and there ate Ate very slowly
Adjectival Phrase (AdjP)	
(28-a) Hungak rasa 　Very sweet	(28-b) [Maama kaechchak] raha-pojja 　　[Very]　　　　　sweet

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[2] Pojja is a common suffix attached to inanimate things. Also, case-marked.

(29-a) Loku aliye-k
    Big elephant-Sing
A big elephant
	(29-b) Lokuthaene botakandala aeththe-k[3]
	    Big elephant person-Sing
	    A big elephant

The Prepositional Phrase (PP)	

(30-a) Kaelaeva aethul-e
    Jungle inside-Loc
    In the jungle
	(30-b) Kelae-pojj-e aethul-thaen-e
	    Jungle-pojja-Loc inside-place-Loc
	Lit: jungle inside place
	In the jungle

(31-a) Gas uda
    Tree-(Pl) up
  On the trees
	(31-b) Rukang pojja-val uda-thaen-e
	    Trees-pojja-Pl up-place-Loc
	Lit: trees up place
	On the trees

Clauses **The Relative Clause**	
(32-a) Aliya (va) mara-pu miniha Elephant (Acc) kill-Ppt man The man who killed the elephant	(32-b) Botakandala aeththo [viyamba-ta dammava-pu] minis-gajja[4] Elephant Hon [viyamba-Dat put-Ppt] man The man who killed the elephant
(33-a) Gas kapa-pu miniha Tree(Pl) cut-Ppt man The man who cut trees	(33-b) Rukang-pojja-val [pataaera-pu] minis-gajja Tree-pojja-Pl [cut-Ppt] man-gajja The man who cut trees

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[3] Aeththa/aeththek indicates honorificity

[4] Gajja is a common suffix attached to human beings

Embedding and Complementizer Phrase (CP)

Sinhala:

(34) Mama dannava   CP [Poramola honda vedde-k   kiyala]

   I(Nom) know   CP[Poramola good vedda-Sing   Comp]

    'I know that Poramola is a good vedda'

Vedda language;[5]

(35) Mee aeththo hithlaanava CP [Poramola aeththo hondavaage vanilla aeththe-k haetimata]

     This person(Hon) know CP[Poramola Hon good vedda Hon-Sing Comp] 'I know

     that Poramola is a good vedda'

(36) Mee aeththo CP [Poramola aeththo hondavaage vanilla aeththe-k haetimata] hithlaanava

     This person(Hon) CP[Poramola Hon good vedda Hon-Sing Comp] know 'I know

      that Poramola is a good vedda'

The strongly Head final nature of the Vedda language is presented in the above data together with the Sinhala equivalents for better comparison and understanding.

This phenomenon is evident in all phrase/clause structure.

3.4 Clause Structure
3.4.1 The VP Layer: The Verb and its Arguments

Just as in Sinhala, in the Vedda language too, verbs taking a single argument, two arguments, and even three arguments can be observed so that the predicates can also be classified as one-place, two-place, and three-place predicates.

Also, such arguments are represented in both phrasal and clausal forms. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon with respect to the phrasal argument patterns in the Vedda language.

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[5] Both orders, SOV and SVO are common in embedding.

One-place predicates.
(37) Vannila-aeththo   otaa-damanava
    Vedda-Hon (Nom) otaa-put(Pres)
    'The vedda dances'

Two-place predicates
(38) Poramola aeththo   depitullan-thena kaevilleva
    Poramola-Hon (Nom)   rice   eat(Pst)
    'Poramola ate rice'

Three-place predicates
(39) Vannila-aeththo   mee-aeththan-ta valaleeya mando-kara
    Vedda-Hon(Nom) this-person-Dat   bow   mando-did
    'Vedda gave me the bow'

(40) Vannila-aeththo   valaleeya mee-aeththan-ta mando-kara
    Vedda-Hon(Nom) bow   this-person-Dat   mando-did
    'Vedda gave me the bow'

3.4.2 The Inflectional (IP) Layer: Projection of Tense/Aspect/Agreement

Though the verb does not inflect for agreement, except in the case of focus/modality (to be discussed later), it inflects for tense and aspect, and hence shows evidence for Tense Phrase (TP) (41-42).

Tense
(41) Poramola aeththo rukang-pojja pataarinava /pataaeriya
    Poramola (Nom) tree-pojja cut(Pres) /cut (Pst) 'Poramola
    cut the tree'(Pres) /'Poramola cut the tree'(Pst)

Perfective Aspect
(42) Poramola aeththo rukang-pojja pataera-la
    Poramola (Nom)   tree-pojja   cut(Ppt)
    'Poramola has cut the tree'

3.4.3 The Discourse (CP) Layer: Projection of Focus and Wh

The focus marker of the Vedda language is 'mai' [1]which is a truncated version of the Sinhala focus marker 'thamai'. Though Sinhala realizes Topic, Focus, Modality morphologically with separate particles for all these, even to make finer distinctions between root, epistemic, evidential modality, the Vedda language uses only 'mai' for both focus and epistemic/evidential interpretations (43-44)

(43) Kaekulala aeththo mai kukkala aethhan-ta guti-pojja mando-kar-e
Child-Hon Foc dog-Hon –Dat hitting-pojja mando-did-e 'It is the child who hit the dog'

(44) mona-ekaa-da botakanda-va aehirukula-ta mando-karagaththe
What-one-Q elephant-Acc eye-Dat mando-did-e 'Who saw the elephant?'

Clausal Arguments
Sinhala:
(45) Mama dannava CP [Poramola honda vedde-k   kiyala]
I(Nom) know   CP [Poramola good vedda-Sing   Comp]
'I know that Poramola is a good vedda'

the Vedda language;[6]
(46) Mee aeththo hithlaanava   CP [Poramola   aeththo   hondavaage   vanilla   aeththe-k haetimata]
This person (Hon) know   CP[Poramola Hon   good   vedda Hon-Sing Comp]
'I know that Poramola is a good vedda'

(47) Mee aeththo CP [Poramola aeththo hondavaage vanilla aeththe-k haetimata] hithlaanava
This person (Hon) CP[Poramola Hon good vedda Hon-Sing Comp] know 'I know that Poramola is a good vedda'

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[6] Both orders, SOV and SVO are common in embedding.

The above examples show the presence of discourse layer in the Vedda language thereby providing sufficient evidence for a CP projection. Thus, the clause structure of the Vedda language is CP > IP > VP. The morphological realization of Tense, Aspect, Wh, and Focus makes sufficient argument for projection of these phenomena as independent functional

Heads in accordance with Rizzi (1997), and Cinque (1999).

3.5 Agreement

As in colloquial Sinhala, the Vedda language too does not show Phi-feature agreement; i.e., the verb does not inflect for number and gender agreement.

Sinhala
(48) Mama/eya, api/Nimal   watta   sudda-karanawa/kara
I(Nom)/he or she(Nom) /we(Nom)/Nimal(Nom)   garden clean-do/did
'I/he or she/ we/Nimal clean the garden/cleaned the garden'

the Vedda language
(49) Poramola/mee aeththo/vanilla aeththo   depitullan-thena kaevillanava /kaevilleva
Poramola(Nom)/I(Nom) veddas(Nom)   rice   eat(Pres)   eat(Pst)
'Poramola/I/veddas eat/ate rice'

Yet as in Sinhala, the Vedda language too shows verb agreement with first person nominative subjects when the verb is in the volitive-optative form (50, 51).

(50) Mee aeththa/ Mee aeththo   depitullan-thaena kavilla-nnam[7]
     This person (Nom) these persons   rice   eat-Vol-Opt
     'I/we will eat rice'

(51) *E-aeththo /vannilla-aeththo   depitullan-thaena kavilla-nnam
      He /veddas   rice   eat-Vol-Opt
     'He/veddas will eat rice'

Further, as in Sinhala, the verb takes the e-suffix in the presence of a Focus/Modal marker, or focused negation marker which can be considered as

Focus/Modal agreement. The –e-suffix turns up when a constituent is in narrow scope of the Focus/Modal marker (52, 53).

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[7] Kaevillanava-: eat(Present form)

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Ananda M.G.L

Sinhala

(52) Lamaya thamai /nemei   balla-ta gaehuw-**e** /*gaehuwa

Child   Foc /Foc Neg   dog-Dat hit(Pst)-e /hit(Pst)

'It is the child /It is not the child who hit the dog'

the Vedda language

(53) Kaekulala-aeththo mai /kodoi [8]   kukkala-aeththan-ta   guti-pojja   mandokar-**e** /*mandokar**a**

Child-   HonFoc/ Neg   dog-Hon-Dat   hitting-pojja   did-e

'It is the child /It is not the child who hit the dog'

The –e-suffix, which can be analyzed as a reflex of Focus /Modal agreement in both Sinhala and the Vedda language also indicates the morphology-syntax interface in both Sinhala and the Vedda language.

Volitive verbs denote intentional states-of-affairs while involitive verbs denote unintentional states-of-affairs. The involitive form is realized through ablaut. Following examples illustrate this.

3.6 Volitive- Involitive Distinction in the Verb Form

The Sinhala verb inflects for volitionality.

Table 2: Sinhala Volitive-Involitive Distinction

Volitive form	Involitive form
kapanava: cut	kaepenava: cut (involuntarily)
maranava; kill	maerenava: die
natanava: dance	naetenava; dance (involuntarily)
kadanava; break	kaedenava; break (involuntarily)

---

[8] Mai is used as both Focus and evidential modal marker in the Vedda language. Kodoi is the only Neg marker in this language and hence there is no distinction between Focused negation and negation, though such distinction exists in Sinhala due to availability of a number of Neg markers and a separate Focused Neg marker.

In the Vedda language, this distinction is maintained through the two suffixal verb forms 'karanava' (do) and 'venava' (is), which also inflect for past tense as 'kara (did) and 'una' (was) respectively. The unique Vedda prefix 'mando' is used with 'do/be' thereby making it 'mando-karanava' and 'mando-venava' As the verb here is actually 'do' or 'be', what precedes this verb is obviously an NP indicating the particular activity (Table 3).

Table 3: Volitive-Involitive Distinction in the Vedda verb forms

Volitive form	Involitive form
[Naetum pojja] mando-karanava (dance) [dancing] do Lit; dancing do	[Naetum pojja] mando-venava (dance Invl) [dancing] is Lit; Dancing is
[Thallu pojja] mando karanava (push) [pushing] do Lit: pushing do	[Thallu pojja] mando venava (push Invl) [pushing] is Lit: Pushing is

One important aspect of this volitive-involitive distinction is the syntactic distinction it accompanies in the form of case selection of the subject.

That is, whereas the volitive verb form selects a nominative subject, the involitive form selects a dative subject as shown below.

Sinhala
(54) Vedda natanava (Vol)
    Vedda(Nom) dance
    'Vedda dances'

(55) Vedda-ta   naetenava (Invol)
    Vedda-Dat   dance (Invl)
    'Vedda gets to dancing'

(56) Vedda lamaya-**va**   thallu-kara (Vol)
    Vedda (Nom) child-Acc   push-did
    'Vedda pushed the child'

(57) Vedda-**ta** lamaya-**va**   thallu-keruna (Invol)
      Vedda-Dat child-Acc   push-did(Invl)
    'Vedda pushed the child involuntarily'

the Vedda language

(58) Vannila-aeththo   otaa-damanava (Vol)
      Vedda-Hon (Nom) otaa-put(Pres)
      'Vedda dances'

(59) Vannila-aeththan-ta-   naetum-pojja mando-venava (Invol)
      Vedda-Hon-Dat   dance-pojja   mando-Be(Pres)
     Lit: to vedda, dancing is/happens
      'Vedda gets to dancing'

(60) Vannila-aeththo   kaekula-**ta**   thallu-pojja mando-kara (Vol)
      Vedda-Hon (Nom)   child-Dat   push-pojja mando-did
      'Vedda pushed the child'

(61) Vannila-aeththan-**ta**   kaekula-**ta** thallu-pojja mando-una (Invol)
      Vedda-Hon-Dat   child-Dat   push-pojja mando-Be (Past)
      'Vedda pushed the child involuntarily'

One syntactic difference we can note here between the two languages is that, when the verb is transitive, the internal argument receives accusative case in Sinhala in both volitive and involitive constructions, whereas it receives Dative case in both constructions in the Vedda language. Also, it is important to mention here that dative case-marked subjects are not confined to involitive constructions in both Sinhala and the Vedda language.

Such subjects are selected by other non-verbal predicates as 'badagini' (hungry), 'tharahai' (angry) etc. and also the root modal 'puluwan' (can).

3.7 Pro-drop and Anaphoric Reference

As it can be observed in Sinhala, the Vedda language too allows pro-drop in all argument positions (62, 63).

Sinhala

(62) Oya iiye aliye-k dekka-da? You) Nom) yesterday
elephant (Acc)(Sing) see (Pst) Q
'Did you see an elephant yesterday?'

Answer; Ø   Ø   Ø   dekka
                           saw
      'I saw an elephant yesterday'

the Vedda language

(63) Oya aeththan-ta iye-maechche   botakande-k aehirukula-ta mando-una-da?
     You Hon-Dat   yesterday-maechche   elephant-Indef eye-Dat mando-did-Q
     'Did you see an elephant yesterday?'

Answer 1: Ø   Ø   Ø   aehirukula-ta mando-una
                        eye-Dat   mando-was
                  Saw
     (I saw an elephant yesterday)

Answer 2: Ø   Ø   Ø   mando-una   kodoi
                        mando-was   Neg
                  Did not see
     (I did not see an elephant yesterday)

The distribution of empty categories in the Vedda language is grammatically constrained and their interpretation is grammatically determined (as it is in Sinhala).

For example, in adverbial clauses, the subject anaphor is controlled by subjects (64-66) and object anaphor is controlled by objects (67), irrespective of a case-mismatch between the two.

(64)   Ø $_i$ kaela-pojja-ta mangachchaddi botakandala-aeththan-ta Poramola aeththo$_i$ (Nom)puchcha-kadavua
    Ø $_i$ jungle-pojja-Dat go (Pres Pt) elephant-Hon-Dat   Poramola$_i$ (Nom) shot
   'Poramola shot an elephant while going in the jungle'

(65) Ø $_i$ Bada-uchcha-damaa-la kekula$_i$ (Nom) hadda-pojjen Ø   aendum-pojja mando-kara
   $_i$ stomach-uchcha-put-Pp child$_i$ sound-pojja-Instr 'Being   cry-pojja mando-did
   hungry, the child cried loudly'

(66) Kekula-ta$_i$ bada-uchcha-damaa-la   Ø$_i$ hadda-pojjen aendum-pojja mando-kara

Child-Dat$_i$ stomach-uchcha-put-Pp Ø $_i$ sound-pojja-Instr cry-pojja mando-did

'Being hungry, the child cried loudly'

(67) Vannila-aeththo$_i$ (Nom)kaekula-va$_j$ aehirukula-ta mando-karagena Ø $_i$ Ø $_j$ katha-pojja mando-kara

Vedda-Hon$_i$ child-Acc$_j$ eye-Dat mando-do (Prtc) Ø $_i$ Ø $_j$ speech-pojja mando-did

'Having seen the child, the vedda spoke to the child'

The examples show the extent of pro-drop and that the interpretation of the empty categories is grammatically determined in the Vedda language.

3.8 Information Structure: Topic, Focus, Mood, Modality, WH

The impoverished nature of the Vedda lexicon does not allow an articulated left periphery.

Yet, this does not mean that such information-structure related particles are totally absent, as we have already seen above with respect to Focus. Let us start with Topic.

3.8.1 Topic

The topic marker in the Vedda language is 'nang' as it is in Sinhala, thereby showing morphological realization of topic.

(68) Poramola aeththo nang kaela-pojja eli-pojja mando-karanava /mando-kara

Poramola-Hon Top jungle-pojja clear-pojja mando-do(Pres)/ mando-do(pst)

'As for Poramola, he is clearing / cleared the jungle'

(69) Poramola aeththo nang mangachcha-la

Poramola HonTop go-Pp

'As for Poramola, he has gone'

As the examples indicate, with the topic marker, only narrow scope is possible so that any constituent to its immediate left comes under its scope.

3.8.2 Focus

Just as in Sinhala, both post-verbal Focus and morphological Focus are available

in the Vedda language (apart from prosodic focus). Post-verbal focus is achieved through rightward movement of a constituent (70) and morphological focus is realized through the focus particle 'thamai' (71).

This is what Gair (1983) calls ex-situ

focus and in-situ focus respectively. In Gair, the in–situ focus is achieved through a focus particle, and ex-situ focus, through rightward movement.

Kariyakarawana(1998) calls this distinction Cleft Focus (C-focus) and Emphatic Focus (E-focus).

Sinhala

(70) Lanka-ve   aya   kanne   bath
     Sri Lanka-Loc people eat-E(non past) rice
    'It is rice that Sri Lankans eat'

(71) Lanka-ve   aya   bath thamai kanne
     Sri Lanka-Loc   people   rice Foc   eat-E (non past)
    'It is rice that Sri Lankans eat'

the Vedda language

Neutral Sentence

(72) Poramola aeththo   kaele-pojja-ta mangachchauwa
     Poramola-Hon(Nom)   jungle-Dat   go(Pst)
    'Poramola went into the jungle'

Post-verbal Focus

(73) kaele-pojja-ta mangachchauw-E   Poramola aeththo
     jungle-Dat go (Pst-E)   Poramola-Hon(Nom)
    ' It is Poramola who went into the jungle'

Morphological Focus

As noted earlier, the focus marker of Vedda language is 'mai' which is a truncated version of Sinhala Focus marker 'thamai'.

(74) Poramola aeththo mai   kaele-pojja-ta mangachchauw-E
     Poramola-Hon(Nom) Foc   jungle-Dat   go(Pst-E)
    'It is Poramola who went into the jungle'

A rather unique phenomenon that can be observed when there is such contrastive focus in the structure is the particular form the verb takes, which I term as E- suffix or E-marking. This can be observed in both post-verbal Focus and morphological Focus. Gair (1983) identifies the –*e* suffix as the focusing suffix in both cases as against the neutral sentence. (Gair, 1983). What is evident here is that it is not only the Focus position (post-verbal) or the focus marker (mai/thamai) that realizes focus, but also the–e-suffix. Hence, this e-morpheme can be considered as an

agreement feature that surfaces in both focus types discussed above. This is not rather a unique conclusion because Miyagawa (2010) too argues that topic/focus in Japanese constitutes a grammatical feature that is grammatical

feature that is computationally equivalent to Phi-feature agreement.

However, this e-suffix does not turn up in the case of sentential focus (75).

(75) Poramola aeththo   kaele-pojja-ta mangachchauwa mai
     Poramola-Hon(Nom)   jungle-Dat   go(Pst)   Foc
     'Poramola went into the jungle (indeed)'

As the example indicates, in addition to focusing, this e-suffix also has the scope-marking property. Although any constituent coming under its narrow scope is marked as focused, the e-suffix does not turn up in wide-scope or sentential focus as shown in (75).

3.8.3 Mood and Modality

Mood is often treated as a grammatical category, morphologically marked on the verb, and expressing the subjective attitude of the speaker towards the state of affairs described by the utterance. Most languages have independent paradigms for the indicative, subjunctive and the imperative moods, while at least some

others may mark further finer distinctions as, conditional, optative and the like. Modality, on the other hand, is considered as a semantic category expressing such notions as possibility, necessity, probability, obligation, permission, ability, and volition.

Just like Sinhala, the Vedda language too overtly marks on the verb, a number of speech act moods: They are: declarative/indicative, imperative, interrogative, hortative, conditional, subjunctive and permissive. Following examples[1] illustrate the indicative, imperative, and interrogative mood categories respectively.

(76) Poramola aeththo   botakandala aeththe-k (va)   aehirukula-ta mando-kara

    Poramola Hon(Nom)   elephant Hon-Sing (Acc)   eye-Dat   mando-did
     'Poramola saw an elephant'

(77) Poramola aeththan-ta botakandala aeththe-k (va) aehirukula-ta mando-una-
da? Poramola Hon-Dat elephant Hon-Sing (Acc) eye-Dat mando-was-Q 'Did
Poramola see an elephant?'

(78) Mona-ekaa-da botakanda-va aehirukula-ta mando-karagathth-e?
Which-one-Q elephant-Acc eye-Dat   mando-did-E
'Who saw the elephant?'

Although Sinhala has a number of particles/suffixes which can attach to any lexical category in an agglutinative fashion and take scope over the domain to the left to convey different types of modality, this is not so in the Vedda language. For deontic modal ability they use the word 'hith-laanava'[1] which is the same word they use to mean 'like' or 'love' (79).

(79) Poramola aeththan-ta rukang-pojja-val vala uda-thena-ta mangachchanna hithlaanava
Poramola Hon-Dat tree-pojja-Plu   Loc up-place-Dat   go(Inf)   can
Lit: Poramala can go to trees-up place
'Poramola can climb trees'

For deontic permission, they use the infinitive form of the verb with a 2nd person subject, in the absence of any modal particle to convey this meaning (80).

(80) Oya aeththo thaenakin mangachchanna
You Hon   now   go(Inf)
'You can go now' (permission)

As for epistemic modal interpretation, they use the focus maker 'mai' as an all-inclusive term to indicate epistemic interpretations including evidentiality. This impoverishment of the Vedda lexicon as well as the absence of any syntactic means of expressing such meanings also indicate the absence of an articulated IP/TP domain or CP domain depending on where one would project such Heads had they been present. Nevertheless, the preceding discussion on Topic, Focus as well as Mood and Modality which are largely morphologically realized leaves us with the question about ordering of these functional heads along Rizzi (1997) and Cinque (1999) among others. Based on Italian, Rizzi (1997) argues for a split CP projection as follows.

(81) …..Force…… (Topic)…… (Focus)……..Fin(iteness)   IP (Inflectional Phrase)

Based on a wealth of crosslinguistic evidence, Cinque (1999) builds up the argument, that natural language clause is a construct of moods, modals, tenses, and aspects. He argues that these major clause-building categories are rigidly, hierarchically ordered with respect to each other. Although the existing data on the Vedda language is not sufficient to make any neat conclusion about an articulated Head order, I would list the moods showing illocutionary force of the utterance in the C-domain, together with Focus. As the focus marker 'mai' conveys epistemic interpretation too, there is only one Head, Focus, which hosts epistemic information too. The following examples give us some clue about this order.

(82) Poramola aeththan-ta rukang-pojja-val vala uda-thaena-ta mangachchanna **hithlaanava mai**

   Poramola Hon-Dat   tree-pojja-Plu   Loc   up-place-Dat go(Inf)   can Foc

   'Poramola can climb trees indeed'

(83) *Poramola aeththan-ta rukang-pojja-val vala uda-thaena-ta mangachchanna **mai hithlaanava**

   Poramola Hon-Dat tree-pojja-Plu   Loc up-place-Dat go(Inf)   Foc can

   'Poramola can climb trees indeed'

The ungrammaticality of (83) shows that Focus should occur higher than the modal. Hence the Head order should be,

(84) FORCE (Illocutionary force/Mood) > FOCUS > TP > MODAL (deontic) [9]

3.8.4 Wh- and Yes-No Questions
3.8.4.1 *Wh Questions*

Wh- in Sinhala and in the Vedda language is formed by the Wh pronoun and the Q marker -*da*.
Sinhala

(85) Kau-da aliya-va   dekk-e?
    Who-Q elephant-Acc   see(Pst)-E
    'Who saw the elephant?'

---

[9] The projection of Topic merits a separate discussion as it has quite different properties from Focus and modals.

The Vedda language

(86) Mon-ekaa-da   botakanda-va aehirukula-ta mando-karagathth-E?
      Which-one-Q   elephant-Acc eye-Dat   mando-did-E
    'Who saw the elephant?'

(87) Botakanda-va mon-ekaa-da   aehirukula-ta mando-karagathth-E?
     elephant-Acc which-one-Q   eye-Dat   mando-did-E
     'Who saw the elephant?'

(88) Botakanda-va aehirukula-ta mando-karagathth-E mon-ekaa-da?
     elephant-Acc eye-Dat mando-did-E which-one-Q 'Who
     saw the elephant?'

(89) *Aehirukula-ta mando-karagathth-E mon-ekaa-da Botakanda-va?
     eye-Dat mando-did-E which-one-Q elephant-Acc 'Who saw the
     elephant?'

The above data indicate a number of things about Wh in the Vedda language, some of which are quite different even from Sinhala. Example (86) is the unmarked order. In (87), the object NP is scrambled. In (88), the Wh is in the post-verbal position, which earlier we identified as the position for syntactic Focus. And this is quite right because the post-verbal Wh too has a Focused reading of the Wh element. Further, the Focus marker 'mai' and the Wh cannot co-occur thereby indicating that these two are in complementary distribution. Hence, the Focus Head serves as the only head position for both (Wh and Focus) which also highlights overt Wh movement to Spec-Focus. Another important phenomenon that can be noticed here is the role of e-suffix (verbal morphology) in conveying Wh interpretation, in the absence of which, the Wh simply becomes an existential pronoun. There is a slight lexical difference here between Sinhala and the Vedda language because, in Sinhala the Wh word for 'who' is 'kauda', whereas in the Vedda language it is 'mon-ekaa-da' (which-person/one-Q) conveying a rather straightforward quantificational interpretation (which one). Thus, in the absence of 'e-suffix' such as in 'kauda kaeleta giya', the interpretation is 'somebody went into the jungle'. In the Vedda language too this phenomenon can be observed. However, in that case, they use 'mon-ekek-dɔ' as in (90).

(90) Mon-ekek-dɔ kaele-pojja-ta   mangachchuva
   Which-one-dɔ jungle-pojja-Dat   go(Pst)
    'Somebody went into the jungle'

Example (89) shows that VP fronting makes the sentence ungrammatical. This is in line with the word order of the Vedda language where earlier we noticed that VSO, VOS orders are not possible, though such orders are allowed in Sinhala.

The observations we noted above for the Vedda language hold for other Wh-pronouns too such as 'what', which in the Vedda language is 'mon-eka-da' (which-one (inanimate)- Q)).

3.8.4.2 *Yes-No Questions*

As shown above, the Q-marker –da in Sinhala is used in the Vedda language too (91)

(91) Poramola-aeththo   kaele-pojja-ta   mangachchuva da?
     Poramola Hon(Nom) jungle-pojja-Dat   go(Pst)   Q
     'Did Poramola go in to the jungle?'

As in Sinhala, Q-marker is also used to convey   contrastive   focus   interpretation, and the verb inflects for e-suffix in this instance (92).

(92) Poramola-aeththo da   kaele-pojja-ta   mangachchuv-E?
     Poramola Hon (Nom) Q   jungle-pojja-Dat   go(Pst) -E
     'Is it Poramola who went in to the jungle?'

In Rizzi's (1999) left periphery analysis, he proposes a further refined articulation of the C-system with the inclusion of "se" (if) in Italian into the left periphery as a distinct functional head. Embedded yes/no questions are introduced by "se", and it occupies a distinct position lower than that of "*che*", but necessarily higher than focus, and can be preceded and followed by a topic. This distinct position of "se" is identified as INT (errogative), and is represented in the following way in the C-system.

(93) FORCE *TOP INT *TOP FOCUS *TOP FIN IP

Following Rizzi, I identify *–da* (Q) of the Vedda language, (when *–da* is displaced from the Wh) as the distinct head INT. As Wh questions are inherently focused, I assume that INT has an interpretable [Focus] feature, a claim confirmed by the fact that *da* (INT) and '*mai*' (focus marker) cannot co-occur in the same clause, as shown in (94-95)—with sentential   scope—and   (96)—with constituent scope.

(94) *Poramola-aeththo   kaele-pojja-ta   mangachchuva mai   da?
   Poramola Hon (Nom) jungle-pojja-Dat   go(Pst)   Foc   Q
   'Did Poramola go in to the jungle indeed?'

(95) *Poramola-aeththo   kaele-pojja-ta   mangachchuva da mai
   Poramola Hon (Nom) jungle-pojja-Dat   go(Pst)   Q Foc
   'Did Poramola go in to the jungle indeed?'

(96) *Poramola-aeththo   mai da kaele-pojja-ta   mangachchuvE?
   Poramola Hon (Nom) Foc Q jungle-pojja-Dat   go(Pst) -E
   'Is it Poramola who went in to the jungle?'

As for the structural position of Q (da) I would locate it between VP and TP: that is, immediately below TP, but above deontic modals, as the highest Head in the VP domain (97).

(97) Force > Focus > TP > IntP > ModalP > VP

That the Q marker occurs higher than the deontic modals proves the above order (98).

(98) Poramola aeththan-ta rukang-pojja-val vala uda-thaena-ta mangachchanna **hithlaanava da**

   Poramola Hon-Dat   tree-pojja-Plu   Loc   up-place-Dat   go (Inf)   can Q
   'Can Poramola climb trees indeed'

3.9 Negation

Though Sinhala has a number of Neg markers such as 'naehae', 'nemei', 'naeththe', which require different syntactic environments for their licensing, in the Vedda lexicon, there is only one Neg marker, and that is 'kodoi' which they use for all kinds of negation, including the modal interpretations 'cannot', and prohibitive 'don't'.

(99) Mee aeththa depitullanthena   kaevillanna kodoi
   This person (Nom)   rice   eat(Inf)   not
   'I did not eat rice / I do not eat rice'

(100) Mee aeththan-ta ee-thaena   hithlaanna kodoi
   This person-Dat that-place   know   not
   'I do not know it'

(101) Mee kaele-pojj-e rukang-pojja-val   maama-kaechchak kodoi
   This jungle-pojja- Loc   tree-pojja-Plu   many   not

'There aren't many trees in this jungle'

(102) Poramola aeththo honda-vaage [puchcha-kadana ekame-k] mando-venna   kodoi
    Poramola-Hon (Nom)   good-like   [hunter]   mando-Be-Inf   not
    'Poramola is not a good hunter'

(103) Poramola aeththan-ta rukang-pojja-val vala uda-thaena-ta mangachchanna kodoi
    Poramola Hon-Dat tree-pojja-Plu Loc up-place-Dat go(Inf) cannot 'Poramola
    cannot climb trees' (modal interpretation)

(104) Oya aeththan-ta thaenakin mangachchanna   kodoi
    You person-Dat   now   go (Inf)   not
    'You are not permitted to go now'

(105) Oya aeththa   rukang-pojja-val-vala uda-thaena-ta mangachchanna   kodoi
    You person (Nom) tree-pojja-Plu-Loc   up-place-Dat go(Inf)   not
    'Don't climb trees'

(106) Poth-pojja [uda-thaene randana yamaka-ye]   kodoi
    Book-pojja [up-place   hold   instrument-Loc]   not
    Lit: book is not on the up-place-hold
    instrument 'Book is not on the table'

The examples illustrate different uses of 'kodoi', including a number of modal interpretations. Example (100) has a Dative subject which in Sinhala takes a Nominative one. In (101, 106) 'kodoi' is predicative. In all other examples, the infinitive verb form can be seen, which is not the same as in Sinhala. That is, in Sinhala, in VP negation, the verb takes e-suffix, as we saw it regarding Focus and Wh. In contrast, in the Vedda language, the verb is infinitive (99, 100). However, it shares with Sinhala in the case of modal interpretations, as in such interpretations, both languages take the infinitive verb. Besides, the periphrastic nature of the Vedda lexicon is quite evident, as it had been throughout the Vedda language examples cited so far. It is also notable that an apparent gap in their lexicon with

respect to modals is filled by the Neg 'kodoi'. Further, in all these examples, their Neg marker 'kodoi' occupies the sentence final position as it is so in Sinhala Neg and in the use of root modals. Thus, Neg Head should come somewhere between TP/IP and the VP as it is in Sinhala.

3.10 Negative Polarity Items (NPIs)
Negative polarity items (NPIs) are words or phrases that need a negative or interrogative environment for them to be licensed in the structure. For example, English 'any', and 'ever', as in (107-108). Also, to license the NPI, the negative or question word has to be higher in the structure;

(107) I don't want any books /*I want any books

(108) I won't ever do that. / *I will ever do that.

The NPIs in the Vedda language are listed in the following table together with their Sinhala counterparts and the meaning of each, followed by examples.

Table 4: NPIs

the **Vedda language**	**Sinhala**	**Meaning**
Mon-ekakvath	Kisima deyak	anything
Mon-ekekvath	kauruwath	nobody
Koi davas pojjakavath (which days pojja-even)	kavadavath	never
Koibavath	kohevath	anywhere

Sinhala

(109) Mata kisima-deyak oone-   nehae
     I (Dat) any-thing   want-E Neg
   'I don't want anything'

(110) *Mata   kisima-deyak   oona
     I (Dat) any-thing   want
     '*I want anything'

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(111) Mee aethth-ta [mon-ekakvath] mando-karaganna kodoi
     This person-Dat [anything]   mando-do(Inf)   Neg
     'I do not want anything'

(112) *Mee aethth-ta [mon-ekakvath] mando-karaganna
     This person-Dat [anything]   mando-do(Inf)
     '*I want anything'

(113) Ada davas-maechche [mon-ekekvath] mangachchanna   kodoi
     Today day-maechche [nobody]   come(Inf)   Neg
     'Nobody came today'

(114) Mee aeththo ee-aeththiv-va [koi-davas-pojjakavath] aehirukula-ta mando-karagena kodoi
   This person (Nom) that-person (Fem)-Acc [never]   eye-Dat   mando-do(Perf) Neg

'I have never seen her'

(115) Poramola aeththo   [koibavath] mangachchanna   kodoi
      Poramola-Hon (Nom) [anywhere] go-Inf   Neg
      'Poramola did not go anywhere'

As shown in ungrammatical (110, 112), NPIs require a negative environment for the sentence to be grammatical. Further, the Neg occupies a higher (C-commanding) position for the NPI to be licensed. This is quite in line with the Sinhala NPI behavior too.

4 CONCLUSION

The paper explored the Vedda language from a generative syntactic perspective and the analysis was presented in accordance with a number of syntactic phenomena. The theoretical framework was Chomsky (1980-) and Cartographic approaches to syntax (Rizzi 1997), (Cinque 1999). The study covered such areas of the Vedda syntax as word order and configurationality, phrase structure, clause structure, agreement, anaphoric relations, negation and NegPs, Heads and Head positions, movement, Topic, Focus, and other related syntactic phenomena. The data and analysis were presented in a comparative setting with Sinhala data and Sinhala syntax in order to make the presentation more lucid. Also, due to this comparative nature, one can trace the relation of the Vedda language to Sinhala with respect to all the syntactic phenomena presented. Yet, much more needs to be done in order to go for a sufficient documentation of the syntax of the Vedda language. The present study was limited to some of the main clause phenomena. Things might differ in the case of embedded clauses. Therefore, one important area to be researched is the embedded periphery. Also, there are a number of other syntactic phenomena to be covered of the Vedda language, such as PRO and Control, ECM, Subjacency and Island violations, Extraposition, morphology-syntax interface, movement possibilities and corresponding semantic / pragmatic readings among many others. Also, the study of Syntax in other, even smaller Vedda settlements scattered throughout the country will further validate the conclusions presented here.

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