Tamil morphology I

- Agglutinative/Concatenative morphology language where morphs are suffixed (mostly)
- Many orthographical changes occur during the process of suffixation
- Words display the morphological processes of inflection, derivation and compounding
- Lexical categories / POS: Nouns, Verbs, Postpositions, Adjectives, Adverbs, Quantifiers, Determiners and Conjunctions
- All of them under go inflectional and/or derivational processes

K. Sarveswaran Tamil Morphology August 6, 2024 1/15

Morphological analysis - An example

அம்மரங்களினைத் தறித்தான் ammarangalinaithth thariththan that-trees cut-he '(he) cut those trees'

| chunks | அம் | மரங் | கள | ിன | െ | த் |
|-----------|----------|-------|--------|----------|------------|----------|
| morphs | அ | மரம் | கள் | இன் | <u></u> | த் |
| romanised | а | maram | kal | in | ai | t |
| morphemes | dem | tree | plural | euphonic | accusative | sandhi-t |

| chunks | தறி | த் | த | ான் |
|-----------|------|--------|------|------|
| morphs | தறி | த் | த் | ஆன் |
| romanised | tari | t | t | aan |
| morphemes | cut | sandhi | past | 3sgm |

Noun =

```
(\mathsf{particle1}) + \mathsf{Lemma} + (\mathsf{plural}) + (\mathsf{oblique}) + (\mathsf{euphonic}) + (\mathsf{case}) + (\mathsf{particle2}) + (\mathsf{sandhi}) / (\mathsf{clitic}) + (\mathsf{particle2}) + (\mathsf{particle3}) + (\mathsf{particle4}) + (\mathsf{particl
```

- Lemma
 - simple noun stem => maram 'tree'
 - verbal Lemma+nominaliser
 padi 'study.IMP' +ppu=nominaliser => padippu 'study(or stream)'
 - Lemma + gender marker => pichchaik-karan 'beggar male'
- Plural suffix: is (kal)

```
poo 'flower' + kal = plural = > pookal 'flowers'
```

- Oblique suffix: A phonological increment?
 - (there are 17+ suffixes are discussed in literature)
 - maram 'tree' + aththu=obli + ai=acc => maraththai 'tree.ACC'
- Euphonic suffix : A phonological increment?

```
maram 'tree' + aththu=obli + in=euph + ai=acc => maraththinai 'tree.ACC'
```

K. Sarveswaran Tamil Morphology August 6, 2024 3 / 15

Noun =

 $(\mathsf{particle1}) + \mathsf{Lemma} + (\mathsf{plural}) + (\mathsf{oblique}) + (\mathsf{euphonic}) + (\mathsf{case}) + (\mathsf{particle2}) + (\mathsf{sandhi}) / (\mathsf{clitic}) + (\mathsf{particle3}) + (\mathsf{particle4}) + (\mathsf{purple}) + (\mathsf{particle4}) + (\mathsf{particle4}$

Cases and case markers:

| 1st case | nominative | nil |
|----------|--------------|--|
| 2nd case | accusative | ஐ (ai) |
| 3rd case | instrumental | ஆல் (<i>āl</i>) |
| 3rd case | sociative | ஒடு, உடன் (oṭu, uṭa <u>n</u>) |
| 4th case | dative | கு,க்கு,அக்கு,உக்கு(ku,kku,akku,ukku) |
| 5th case | ablative | இல், இன் (<i>il, i<u>n</u></i>) / இருந்து (iruntu) |
| 6th case | genitive | அது, இன், உடைய <i>(atu, i<u>n</u>, uṭaiya)</i> |
| 7th case | locative* | இல், இடம் (il, iṭam) |
| 8th case | **vocative | ஆ,ஈ $(ar{a},ar{\iota})$ |

^{*(}Bavanathiyaar 1957) [1] lists the following 28 locative markers. | **(pavanantiyār 1957) [1] has listed 10 markers for vocative

Noun =

```
(\mathsf{particle1}) + \mathsf{Lemma} + (\mathsf{plural}) + (\mathsf{oblique}) + (\mathsf{euphonic}) + (\mathsf{case}) + (\mathsf{particle2}) + (\mathsf{sandhi}) / (\mathsf{clitic}) + (\mathsf{particle3}) + (\mathsf{particle4}) + (\mathsf{particl
```

- Particles may precede / follow noun stems
 - demonstrative and interrogative particles precede nominal stems:
 - அப்பെ=அ+பை appai = a + pai 'that bag'
 - demonstrative particles: அ a, இ e, ≥ u
 - interrogative particle: ត ea
 - conjunction, and focus particles... (this is not an exclusive list, need a further study) can follow a noun stem or nouns with dative / accusative case marking

Noun =

 $(\mathsf{particle1}) + \mathsf{Lemma} + (\mathsf{plural}) + (\mathsf{oblique}) + (\mathsf{euphonic}) + (\mathsf{case}) + (\mathsf{particle2}) + (\mathsf{sandhi}) / (\mathsf{clitic}) + (\mathsf{particle3}) + (\mathsf{particle4}) + (\mathsf{particl$

- Sandhi $\dot{\mathbf{s}}$ k, $\dot{\mathbf{e}}$ c, $\dot{\mathbf{g}}$ t, $\dot{\mathbf{i}}$ p may follow stems with accusative/dative case markers depend on the following word there are a set of rules to decide when to include a *sandhi*
- Clitics are used to mark various information :

| [| Clitic | Function | Example |
|---|--------|---|---|
| ſ | ୍ଡ −୦୦ | doubt/indefiniteness/'or'/focus?/contrast | பந்தோ கல்லோ panthoo 'is it a ball or stone? ' |
| ſ | ஏ -ee | Self reference/emphasis | நானே சொன்னேன் nanee sonnen 'I myself told' |
| [| ஆ -aa | yes-no question | பந்தா! தந்தார்கள் panthaa thantharkal 'did they give a ball?' |

Verbal constructions 1/2

```
Imperative = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma

Imperative Negative = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+(neg1+eup1)

Indicative = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+tense+(eup2)+png

Indicative-neg = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+inf+neg3+png

Negative = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+inf+neg2

Optative = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+opt

Passive = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+inf+passive+png
```

- vbp->verbal participle
- eup1 -> ee, eup2 -> an
- inf->infinitive
- neg1 -> aath
- neg2 -> illai
- neg3 -> maaddu negative cum future marker
- opt -> [ka|kka]
- passive -> padu

Verbal constructions - 2/2

```
Causative = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+caus-morph+tense+png

Causative (Aux) = (Lemma+vbp)^n+caus-aux+tense+png

Aux verb = (Lemma+vbp)^n+aux-verb+[inf|vbp]+tense+png

Conditional verb = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+inf+(neg4)+cond

Non-finite = (Lemma+vbp)^n+Lemma+[inf|vbp]+(clitics)
```

- aux-verb ->[modal aux|aspect aux|attitude aux]
- caus-morph ->[vi|pi|ppi]
- caus-aux ->[vai 'keep' |sei 'do'|pannu 'make']
- cond -> aal
- clitics -> [thanaa|oo|ee|um]
- neg4 ->aa
- inf (infinitive marker) -> a
- vbp (verbal participle marker) -> thu

- Lemma : imperative form : ந∟ nada 'walk.ıмр'
- Tense : three tenses in Tamil

| Tense | Markers | Note |
|---------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Past | த் -t, ட் -d, ற் -it, இன் -in | |
| Present | கின்று -kintu, கிறு -kiru | positive |
| | ஆநின்று -aanintru | negative |
| Future | ப்- <i>p</i> ,வ்-v | positive |
| | மாட்டு <i>-maddu</i> | negative |

- png: a portmanteau morpheme
 - person: 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons
 - number: singular, plural
 - gender:

| Rationality | Туре | Note |
|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| Rational | Masculine | in 3P only |
| | Feminine | in 3P only |
| | Epicene | in 3P only |
| | Epicene+honorific | in 3P only |
| Irrational | Neuter | in 3P only |

Note: Irrational entities, like animals, have an inherent gender. However, it is not marked in the agreement

png morphs

| Person | Number | Gender | Morph |
|--------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1st | Singular | - | ஏன் |
| | Plural | - | ஓம் |
| 2nd | Singular | - | ஆய் |
| | Singular/Honorific | - | ஆய் தீர், தீர்கள் |
| | Plural | - | தீர்கள் |
| 3rd | Singular | Masculine | ஆன், அன் |
| | | Feminine | ஆள், அள் |
| | | Epicene | ஆர் |
| | | Epicene + honorific | ஆர்கள் |
| | | Neuter | அது |
| | Plural | Epicene | ஆர்கள் |
| | | Neuter | அவை, அன |

• Sometime people write a verb as two tokens: செய்ய வேண்டும் ceyya vendum do.inf need.fut 'must do'

Verbal and Nominal Paradigms

Verbal Paradigm

- The verb paradigm has 12/14 classes [2]
- 254 conjugational forms [3]
- 20 aspect, modal, passive and causation constructions are also included
- 3300 Lemma verbs according to a Tamil contemporary dictionary and ancient text [4]

Nominal Paradigm

• A paradigm of 26 classes [5]

K. Sarveswaran Tamil Morphology August 6, 2024 12 / 15

Verbal Paradigm

| No. | Class name | Past tense | Present tense marker | Future tense marker |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | marker | | |
| 1 | செய் (sei) | த் (t) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 2 | ஆள் (<i>aaḷ</i>) | ∟ (ţ) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 3 | கொல் (<i>kol</i>) | ற் (<i>r</i>) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 4 | கடி (kaṭi) | த் (t) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 5 | அஞ்சு (angu) | இன் (in) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 6.1 | அடு (aṭu) | <u>∟</u> (ț) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 6.2 | நகு (naku) | க் (k) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | வ், உம் (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 6.3 | உறு (uru) | ற் (<i>ṛ</i>) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | ഖ, ഉഥ് (<i>v, um</i>) |
| 7 | உண் (uṇ) | ∟ (ț) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir, kinr) | ப், உம் (<i>p, um</i>) |
| 8 | தின் (<i>tin</i>) | ற் (<i>r</i>) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir,kinr) | ப், உம் (<i>p, um</i>) |
| 9 | கொள் (k <i>oļ</i>) | ∟ (ţ) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir,kinr) | ப், உம் (p,um) |
| 10 | நில் (<i>nil</i>) | ற் (<i>r</i>) | கிற், கின்ற் (kir,kinr) | ப், உம் (<i>p, um</i>) |
| 11 | அபகரி (abakari) | த் (t) | க்கிற், க்கின்ற் (kkir, kkinr) | ப்ப், உம் (pp, um) |
| 12 | ந∟ (naṭa) | த் (t) | க்கிற், க்கின்ற் (kkir, kkinr) | ப்ப், உம் (pp, um) |

Example

வந்துகொண்டிருந்திருக்கிறான் vantukoṇṭiruntirukkiraan vantu-koṇṭiru-iru-kkir-aan come.VPART-hold_be.VPART-be-PRES-3SMR '(he) has been coming'

Four verbal lemmas can be conjugated to form a single token.

K. Sarveswaran Tamil Morphology August 6, 2024 14/15

Selected references

- [1] ārumuka nāvalar, nannūl viruttiyuraiļ. vittiyānupālana accakam, 1957.
- [2] K. Graul, Outline of Tamil grammar. Leipzig University, 1855.
- [3] S. Ramakrishnana, Ed., Cre-A: Dictionary of Contemporary Tamil. Chennai, India: Cre-A publishers, 2014.
- [4] M. Irākavaiyankār, 'Vinaittiripu viļakkam' (conjugation of Tamil verbs) (in Tamil). Eighty year anniversary publication, 1958.
- [5] S. Rajendran, "Preliminaries To The Preparation Of A Spell And Grammar Checker For Tamil," Upoaded in academia. edu and Reseach Gate, 2012.

K. Sarveswaran Tamil Morphology August 6, 2024 15 / 15