

= Tamil language =

Tamil / ˈtæmɪl / (ˈtæmɪl , [t ʔ mɪl]) is a Dravidian language predominantly spoken by the Tamil people of India and Sri Lanka , and also by the Tamil diaspora , Sri Lankan Moors , Burghers and Chindians . Tamil is an official language of two countries , Singapore and Sri Lanka . It has official status in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and the Indian Union Territory of Puducherry . It is also used as one of the languages of education in Malaysia , along with English , Malay and Mandarin . In India , outside of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry , Tamil is also spoken in the states of Kerala , Puducherry and Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a secondary language , and by minorities in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh . It is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India . It was declared as a classical language by the Government of India in 2004 .

The language is also spoken by Tamil minorities among the diaspora in Malaysia , the United Arab Emirates , the United States , United Kingdom , Mauritius , Canada , South Africa , Fiji , Germany , the Philippines , the Netherlands , Indonesia and France , as well as smaller emigrant communities elsewhere .

Tamil is one of the longest @-@ surviving classical languages in the world . Tamil @-@ Brahmi inscriptions from 500 BC have been found on Adichanallur and 2 @, @ 200 @-@ year @-@ old Tamil @-@ Brahmi inscriptions have been found on Samanamalai . It has been described as " the only language of contemporary India which is recognizably continuous with a classical past . " The variety and quality of classical Tamil literature has led to it being described as " one of the great classical traditions and literatures of the world " .

A recorded Tamil literature has been documented for over 2000 years . The earliest period of Tamil literature , Sangam literature , is dated from ca . 300 BC ? AD 300 . It has the oldest extant literature among other Dravidian languages . The earliest epigraphic records found on rock edicts and hero stones date from around the 3rd century BC . More than 55 % of the epigraphical inscriptions (about 55 @, @ 000) found by the Archaeological Survey of India are in the Tamil language . Tamil language inscriptions written in Brahmi script have been discovered in Sri Lanka , and on trade goods in Thailand and Egypt . The two earliest manuscripts from India , acknowledged and registered by UNESCO Memory of the World register in 1997 and 2005 , were written in Tamil .

In 1578 , Portuguese Christian missionaries published a Tamil prayer book in old Tamil script named ' Thambiraan Vanakkam , ' thus making Tamil the first Indian language to be printed and published . In 2014 Tamil Lexicon , published by the University of Madras , was the first among the dictionaries published in any Indian language . Tamil is used as a sacred language of Ayyavazhi and in Tamil Hindu traditions of Shaivism and Vaishnavism . According to a 2001 survey , there were 1 @, @ 863 newspapers published in Tamil , of which 353 were dailies .

= = Classification = =

Tamil belongs to the southern branch of the Dravidian languages , a family of around 26 languages native to the Indian subcontinent . It is also classified as being part of a Tamil language family , which alongside Tamil proper , also includes the languages of about 35 ethno @-@ linguistic groups such as the Irula and Yerukula languages (see SIL Ethnologue) .

The closest major relative of Tamil is Malayalam ; the two began diverging around the 9th century CE . Although many of the differences between Tamil and Malayalam demonstrate a pre @-@ historic split of the western dialect , the process of separation into a distinct language , Malayalam , was not completed until sometime in the 13th or 14th century .

= = History = =

According to linguists like Bhadriraju Krishnamurti , Tamil , as a Dravidian language , descends from Proto @-@ Dravidian , a Proto @-@ language . Linguistic reconstruction suggests that Proto @-@ Dravidian was spoken around the third millennium BC , possibly in the region around the lower Godavari river basin in peninsular India . The material evidence suggests that the speakers of Proto

@-@ Dravidian were of the culture associated with the Neolithic complexes of South India . The next phase in the reconstructed proto @-@ history of Tamil is Proto @-@ South Dravidian . The linguistic evidence suggests that Proto @-@ South Dravidian was spoken around the middle of the second millennium BC , and that proto @-@ Tamil emerged around the 3rd century BC . The earliest epigraphic attestations of Tamil are generally taken to have been written shortly thereafter . Among Indian languages , Tamil has the most ancient non @-@ Sanskritised Indian literature . Scholars categorise the attested history of the language into three periods , Old Tamil (300 BC ? AD 700) , Middle Tamil (700 ? 1600) and Modern Tamil (1600 ? present) . In November 2007 , an excavation at Quseir @-@ al @-@ Qadim revealed Egyptian pottery dating back to first century BC with ancient Tamil Brahmi inscriptions . John Guy states that Tamil was the lingua franca for early maritime traders from India .

= = = Legend = = =

According to Hindu legend , Tamil or in personification form Tamil Th?i (Mother Tamil) was created by Lord Shiva . Murugan , revered as the Tamil God , along with sage Agastya , brought it to the people .

= = = Etymology = = =

The earliest extant Tamil literary works and their commentaries celebrate the Pandiyan Kings for the organization of long @-@ termed Tamil Sangams , which researched , developed and made amendments in Tamil language . Even though the name of the language which was developed by these Tamil Sangams is mentioned as Tamil , the exact period when the name " Tamil " came to be applied to the language is unclear , as is the precise etymology of the name . The earliest attested use of the name is found in Tholkappiyam , which is dated as early as 1st century BC . Southworth suggests that the name comes from tam @-@ mi? > tam @-@ i? ' self @-@ speak ' , or ' one 's own speech ' . (see Southworth 's derivation of Sanskrit term for " others " or Mleccha) Kamil Zvelebil suggests an etymology of tam @-@ i? , with tam meaning " self " or " one 's self " , and " -i? " having the connotation of " unfolding sound " . Alternatively , he suggests a derivation of tami? < tam @-@ i? < * tav @-@ i? < * tak @-@ i? , meaning in origin " the proper process (of speaking) "

The Tamil Lexicon of University of Madras defines the word ' Tamil ' as ' sweetness ' . S.V Subramanian suggests the meaning ' sweet sound ' from ' tam ' - sweet and ' il ' - ' sound ' .

= = = Old Tamil = = =

Old Tamil is the period of the Tamil language spanning the 5th century BCE to the 8th century CE . The earliest records in Old Tamil are short inscriptions from between the 5th and 2nd century BCE in caves and on pottery . These inscriptions are written in a variant of the Brahmi script called Tamil Brahmi . The earliest long text in Old Tamil is the Tolk?ppiyam , an early work on Tamil grammar and poetics , whose oldest layers could be as old as the 1st century BC . A large number of literary works in Old Tamil have also survived . These include a corpus of 2 @,@ 381 poems collectively known as Sangam literature . These poems are usually dated to between the 1st and 5th centuries AD ,

= = = Middle Tamil = = =

The evolution of Old Tamil into Middle Tamil which is generally taken to have been completed by the 8th century , was characterized by a number of phonological and grammatical changes . In phonological terms , the most important shifts were the virtual disappearance of the aytam (?) , an old phoneme , the coalescence of the alveolar and dental nasals , and the transformation of the alveolar plosive into a rhotic . In grammar , the most important change was the emergence of the

present tense . The present tense evolved out of the verb *kil* (கில), meaning " to be possible " or " to befall " . In Old Tamil , this verb was used as an aspect marker to indicate that an action was micro @-@ durative , non @-@ sustained or non @-@ lasting , usually in combination with a time marker such as *ka* (கா) . In Middle Tamil , this usage evolved into a present tense marker *ki* (கி) which combined the old aspect and time markers .

= = Modern Tamil = =

The Nannul remains the standard normative grammar for modern literary Tamil , which therefore continues to be based on Middle Tamil of the 13th century rather than on Modern Tamil . Colloquial spoken Tamil , in contrast , shows a number of changes . The negative conjugation of verbs , for example , has fallen out of use in Modern Tamil ; negation is , instead , expressed either morphologically or syntactically . Modern spoken Tamil also shows a number of sound changes , in particular , a tendency to lower high vowels in initial and medial positions , and the disappearance of vowels between plosives and between a plosive and rhotic .

Contact with European languages also affected both written and spoken Tamil . Changes in written Tamil include the use of European @-@ style punctuation and the use of consonant clusters that were not permitted in Middle Tamil . The syntax of written Tamil has also changed , with the introduction of new aspectual auxiliaries and more complex sentence structures , and with the emergence of a more rigid word order that resembles the syntactic argument structure of English . Simultaneously , a strong strain of linguistic purism emerged in the early 20th century , culminating in the Pure Tamil Movement which called for removal of all Sanskritic and other foreign elements from Tamil . It received some support from Dravidian parties . This led to the replacement of a significant number of Sanskrit loanwords by Tamil equivalents , though many others remain .

= = Geographic distribution = =

Tamil is the first language of the majority of the people residing in Tamil Nadu , Puducherry , in India and Northern Province , Eastern Province , in Sri Lanka . The language is also spoken among small minority groups in other states of India which include Karnataka , Andhra Pradesh , Kerala , Maharashtra and in certain regions of Sri Lanka such as Colombo and the hill country . Tamil or dialects of it were used widely in the state of Kerala as the major language of administration , literature and common usage until the 12th century AD . Tamil was also used widely in inscriptions found in southern Andhra Pradesh districts of Chittoor and Nellore until the 12th century AD . Tamil was also used for inscriptions from the 10th through 14th centuries in southern Karnataka districts such as Kolar , Mysore , Mandya and Bangalore .

There are currently sizeable Tamil @-@ speaking populations descended from colonial @-@ era migrants in Malaysia , Singapore , Philippines , Mauritius , South Africa , Indonesia , Thailand , Burma , and Vietnam . A large community of Pakistani Tamils speakers exists in Karachi , Pakistan , which includes Tamil @-@ speaking Hindus as well as Christians and Muslims ; including some Tamil @-@ speaking Muslim refugees from Sri Lanka . Many in Réunion , Guyana , Fiji , Suriname , and Trinidad and Tobago have Tamil origins , but only a small number speak the language . In Reunion where the Tamil language was forbidden to be learnt and used in public space by France it is now being relearnt by students and adults . It is also used by groups of migrants from Sri Lanka and India , Canada (especially Toronto) , United States (especially New Jersey and New York City) , Australia , many Middle Eastern countries , and some Western European countries .

= = Legal status = =

Tamil is the official language of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and one of the 22 languages under schedule 8 of the constitution of India . It is also one of the official languages of the union territory of Puducherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands . Tamil is also one of the official languages of Singapore . Tamil is one of the official and national languages of Sri Lanka , along with Sinhala . It

was once given nominal official status in the state of Haryana , purportedly as a rebuff to Punjab , though there was no attested Tamil @-@ speaking population in the state , and was later replaced by Punjabi , in 2010 . In Malaysia , 543 primary education government schools are available fully in Tamil medium . The establishments of Tamil medium schools have been currently in process in Myanmar to provide education completely in Tamil language by the Tamils who settled there 200 years ago . Tamil language is taught in Canada and South Africa for the local Tamil minority populations . In Ontario , Canada , the month of January has been declared " Tamil Heritage Month " per legislation .

In addition , with the creation in October 2004 of a legal status for classical languages by the Government of India and following a political campaign supported by several Tamil associations , Tamil became the first legally recognised Classical language of India . The recognition was announced by the contemporaneous President of India , Abdul Kalam , in a joint sitting of both houses of the Indian Parliament on 6 June 2004 .

= = Dialects = =

= = = Region @-@ specific variations = = =

The socio @-@ linguistic situation of Tamil is characterised by diglossia : there are two separate registers varying by socioeconomic status , a high register and a low one . Tamil dialects are primarily differentiated from each other by the fact that they have undergone different phonological changes and sound shifts in evolving from Old Tamil . For example , the word for " here " ? i?ku in Centamil (the classic variety) ? has evolved into i?k? in the Kongu dialect of Coimbatore , inga in the dialect of Thanjavur , and i?kai in some dialects of Sri Lanka . Old Tamil 's i?ka? (where ka? means place) is the source of i?kane in the dialect of Tirunelveli , Old Tamil i?ka??u is the source of i?ku??u in the dialect of Madurai , and i?ka?e in various northern dialects . Even now , in the Coimbatore area , it is common to hear " akka??a " meaning " that place " . Although Tamil dialects do not differ significantly in their vocabulary , there are a few exceptions . The dialects spoken in Sri Lanka retain many words and grammatical forms that are not in everyday use in India , and use many other words slightly differently . The various Tamil dialects include Central Tamil dialect , Kongu Tamil , Madras Bashai , Madurai Tamil , Nellai Tamil , kumari Tamil in India and Batticaloa Tamil dialect , Jaffna Tamil dialect , Negombo Tamil dialect in Sri Lanka . Sankethi dialect in Karnataka has been heavily influenced by Kannada .

= = = = Loanword variations = = = =

The dialect of the district of Palakkad in Kerala has a large number of Malayalam loanwords , has been influenced by Malayalam 's syntax and also has a distinctive Malayalam accent . Similarly , Tamil spoken in Kanyakumari District has more unique words and phonetic style than Tamil spoken at other parts of Tamil Nadu . The words and phonetics are so different that a person from Kanyakumari district is easily identifiable by their spoken Tamil . Hebbar and Mandyam dialects , spoken by groups of Tamil Vaishnavites who migrated to Karnataka in the 11th century , retain many features of the Vaishnava paribasai , a special form of Tamil developed in the 9th and 10th centuries that reflect Vaishnavite religious and spiritual values . Several castes have their own sociolects which most members of that caste traditionally used regardless of where they come from . It is often possible to identify a person 's caste by their speech . Tamil in Sri Lanka incorporates loan words from Portuguese , Dutch , and English .

= = Spoken and literary variants = =

In addition to its various dialects , Tamil exhibits different forms : a classical literary style modelled on the ancient language (sankattami?) , a modern literary and formal style (centami?) , and a

modern colloquial form (ko?untami?) . These styles shade into each other , forming a stylistic continuum . For example , it is possible to write centami? with a vocabulary drawn from ca?kattami? , or to use forms associated with one of the other variants while speaking ko?untami? .

In modern times , centami? is generally used in formal writing and speech . For instance , it is the language of textbooks , of much of Tamil literature and of public speaking and debate . In recent times , however , ko?untami? has been making inroads into areas that have traditionally been considered the province of centami? . Most contemporary cinema , theatre and popular entertainment on television and radio , for example , is in ko?untami? , and many politicians use it to bring themselves closer to their audience . The increasing use of ko?untami? in modern times has led to the emergence of unofficial ' standard ' spoken dialects . In India , the ' standard ' ko?untami? , rather than on any one dialect , but has been significantly influenced by the dialects of Thanjavur and Madurai . In Sri Lanka , the standard is based on the dialect of Jaffna .

= = Writing system = =

After Tamil Brahmi fell out of use , Tamil was written using a script called the va??e?uttu amongst others such as Grantha and Pallava script . The current Tamil script consists of 12 vowels , 18 consonants and one special character , the ?ytam . The vowels and consonants combine to form 216 compound characters , giving a total of 247 characters (12 + 18 + 1 + (12 x 18)) . All consonants have an inherent vowel a , as with other Indic scripts . This inherent vowel is removed by adding a tittle called a pu??i , to the consonantal sign . For example , ? is ?a (with the inherent a) and ? ? is ? (without a vowel) . Many Indic scripts have a similar sign , generically called virama , but the Tamil script is somewhat different in that it nearly always uses a visible pu??i to indicate a dead consonant (a consonant without a vowel) . In other Indic scripts , it is generally preferred to use a ligature or a half form to write a syllable or a cluster containing a dead consonant , although writing it with a visible virama is also possible . The Tamil script does not differentiate voiced and unvoiced plosives . Instead , plosives are articulated with voice depending on their position in a word , in accordance with the rules of Tamil phonology .

In addition to the standard characters , six characters taken from the Grantha script , which was used in the Tamil region to write Sanskrit , are sometimes used to represent sounds not native to Tamil , that is , words adopted from Sanskrit , Prakrit and other languages . The traditional system prescribed by classical grammars for writing loan @-@ words , which involves respelling them in accordance with Tamil phonology , remains , but is not always consistently applied .

= = Phonology = =

Tamil phonology is characterised by the presence of retroflex consonants and multiple rhotics . Tamil does not distinguish phonologically between voiced and unvoiced consonants ; phonetically , voice is assigned depending on a consonant 's position in a word . Tamil phonology permits few consonant clusters , which can never be word initial . Native grammarians classify Tamil phonemes into vowels , consonants , and a " secondary character " , the ?ytam .

= = = Vowels = = =

Tamil has five vowel qualities , namely / a / , / e / , / i / , / o / and / u / . Each may be long or short . There are two diphthongs , / a? / and / a? / . Long vowels are about twice as long as short vowels . The diphthongs are usually pronounced about 1 @.@ 5 times as long as short vowels . Most grammatical texts place them with the long vowels .

= = = Consonants = = =

Tamil consonants are presented as hard , soft and medial in some grammars which roughly corresponds to plosives , approximants and nasals . Unlike most Indian languages , Tamil does not

distinguish aspirated and unaspirated consonants . In addition , the voicing of plosives is governed by strict rules in centami? . Plosives are unvoiced if they occur word @-@ initially or doubled . Elsewhere they are voiced , with a few becoming fricatives intervocalically . Nasals and approximants are always voiced .

Tamil is characterised by its use of more than one type of coronal consonants : like many of the other languages of India , it contains a series of retroflex consonants . Notably , the Tamil retroflex series includes the retroflex approximant / ʒ / (ʒ) (example Tamil ; often transcribed ' zh ') , which is absent in the Indo @-@ Aryan languages . Among the other Dravidian languages , the retroflex approximant also occurs in Malayalam (for example in ' Kozhikode ') , disappeared from spoken Kannada around 1000 AD (although the character is still written , and exists in Unicode) , and was never present in Telugu . In many dialects of colloquial Tamil , this consonant is seen as disappearing and shifting to the alveolar lateral approximant / l / . Dental and alveolar consonants also historically contrasted with each other , a typically Dravidian trait not found in the neighbouring Indo @-@ Aryan languages . While this distinction can still be seen in the written language , it has been largely lost in colloquial spoken Tamil , and even in literary usage the letters ʒ (dental) and ʒ (alveolar) may be seen as allophonic . Likewise , the historical alveolar stop has transformed into a trill consonant in many modern dialects .

A chart of the Tamil consonant phonemes in the International Phonetic Alphabet follows :

The plosives have voiced allophones in predictable contexts . The sounds / f / and / ʒ / are peripheral to the phonology of Tamil , being found only in loanwords and frequently replaced by native sounds . There are well @-@ defined rules for elision in Tamil categorised into classes based on the phoneme which undergoes elision .

== = ʒtam == =

Classical Tamil also had a phoneme called the ʒtam , written as ʒ ʒ ' . Tamil grammarians of the time classified it as a dependent phoneme (or restricted phoneme) (cʒpeʒuttu) , but it is very rare in modern Tamil . The rules of pronunciation given in the Tolkʒppiyam , a text on the grammar of Classical Tamil , suggest that the ʒtam could have glottalised the sounds it was combined with . It has also been suggested that the ʒtam was used to represent the voiced implosive (or closing part or the first half) of geminated voiced plosives inside a word . The ʒtam , in modern Tamil , is also used to convert p to f when writing English words using the Tamil script .

== = Numerals and symbols == =

Apart from the usual numerals , Tamil also has numerals for 10 , 100 and 1000 . Symbols for day , month , year , debit , credit , as above , rupee , and numeral are present as well . Tamil also uses several historical fractional signs .

== = Grammar == =

Tamil employs agglutinative grammar , where suffixes are used to mark noun class , number , and case , verb tense and other grammatical categories . Tamil 's standard metalinguistic terminology and scholarly vocabulary is itself Tamil , as opposed to the Sanskrit that is standard for most Aryan languages .

Much of Tamil grammar is extensively described in the oldest known grammar book for Tamil , the Tolkʒppiyam . Modern Tamil writing is largely based on the 13th century grammar Naʒʒʒʒl which restated and clarified the rules of the Tolkʒppiyam , with some modifications . Traditional Tamil grammar consists of five parts , namely eʒuttu , sol , poruʒ , yʒppu , aʒi . Of these , the last two are mostly applied in poetry .

Tamil words consist of a lexical root to which one or more affixes are attached . Most Tamil affixes are suffixes . Tamil suffixes can be derivational suffixes , which either change the part of speech of the word or its meaning , or inflectional suffixes , which mark categories such as person , number ,

mood , tense , etc . There is no absolute limit on the length and extent of agglutination , which can lead to long words with a large number of suffixes .

= = = Morphology = = =

Tamil nouns (and pronouns) are classified into two super @-@ classes (ti?ai) ? the " rational " (uyarti?ai) , and the " irrational " (ak?i?ai) ? which include a total of five classes (p?l , which literally means ? gender ') . Humans and deities are classified as " rational " , and all other nouns (animals , objects , abstract nouns) are classified as irrational . The " rational " nouns and pronouns belong to one of three classes (p?l) ? masculine singular , feminine singular , and rational plural . The " irrational " nouns and pronouns belong to one of two classes : irrational singular and irrational plural . The p?l is often indicated through suffixes . The plural form for rational nouns may be used as an honorific , gender @-@ neutral , singular form .

Suffixes are used to perform the functions of cases or postpositions . Traditional grammarians tried to group the various suffixes into eight cases corresponding to the cases used in Sanskrit . These were the nominative , accusative , dative , sociative , genitive , instrumental , locative , and ablative . Modern grammarians argue that this classification is artificial , and that Tamil usage is best understood if each suffix or combination of suffixes is seen as marking a separate case . Tamil nouns can take one of four prefixes , i , a , u , and e which are functionally equivalent to the demonstratives in English .

Tamil verbs are also inflected through the use of suffixes . A typical Tamil verb form will have a number of suffixes , which show person , number , mood , tense , and voice .

Person and number are indicated by suffixing the oblique case of the relevant pronoun . The suffixes to indicate tenses and voice are formed from grammatical particles , which are added to the stem .

Tamil has two voices . The first indicates that the subject of the sentence undergoes or is the object of the action named by the verb stem , and the second indicates that the subject of the sentence directs the action referred to by the verb stem .

Tamil has three simple tenses ? past , present , and future ? indicated by the suffixes , as well as a series of perfects indicated by compound suffixes . Mood is implicit in Tamil , and is normally reflected by the same morphemes which mark tense categories . Tamil verbs also mark evidentiality , through the addition of the hearsay clitic ?m .

Traditional grammars of Tamil do not distinguish between adjectives and adverbs , including both of them under the category uriccol , although modern grammarians tend to distinguish between them on morphological and syntactical grounds . Tamil has a large number of ideophones that act as adverbs indicating the way the object in a given state " says " or " sounds " .

Tamil does not have articles . Definiteness and indefiniteness are either indicated by special grammatical devices , such as using the number " one " as an indefinite article , or by the context . In the first person plural , Tamil makes a distinction between inclusive pronouns ??? ? n?m (we) , ??? namatu (our) that include the addressee and exclusive pronouns ??? ? ?? ? n??ka? (we) , ??? ematu (our) that do not .

= = = Syntax = = =

Tamil is a consistently head @-@ final language . The verb comes at the end of the clause , with a typical word order of subject ? object ? verb (SOV) . However , word order in Tamil is also flexible , so that surface permutations of the SOV order are possible with different pragmatic effects . Tamil has postpositions rather than prepositions . Demonstratives and modifiers precede the noun within the noun phrase . Subordinate clauses precede the verb of the matrix clause .

Tamil is a null @-@ subject language . Not all Tamil sentences have subjects , verbs , and objects . It is possible to construct grammatically valid and meaningful sentences which lack one or more of the three . For example , a sentence may only have a verb ? such as mu?intuvi??atu (" completed ") ? or only a subject and object , without a verb such as atu e? v??u (" That [is] my house ") .

Tamil does not have a copula (a linking verb equivalent to the word is) . The word is included in the translations only to convey the meaning more easily .

= = Vocabulary = =

The vocabulary of Tamil is mainly Dravidian . A strong sense of linguistic purism is found in Modern Tamil , which opposes the use of foreign loanwords . Nonetheless , a number of words used in classical and modern Tamil are loanwords from the languages of neighbouring groups , or with whom the Tamils had trading links , including Munda (for example , tava?ai " frog " from Munda tabeg) , Malay (e.g. cavvarici " sago " from Malay s?gu) , Chinese (for example , camp?n " skiff " from Chinese san @-@ pan) and Greek (for example , ora from Greek ???) . In more modern times , Tamil has imported words from Urdu and Marathi , reflecting groups that have influenced the Tamil area at various points of time , and from neighbouring languages such as Telugu , Kannada , and Sinhala . During the modern period , words have also been adapted from European languages , such as Portuguese , French , and English .

The strongest impact of purism in Tamil has been on words taken from Sanskrit . During its history , Tamil , along with other Dravidian languages like Telugu , Kannada , Malayalam etc . , was influenced by Sanskrit in terms of vocabulary , grammar and literary styles , reflecting the increased trend of Sanskritisation in the Tamil country . Tamil vocabulary never became quite as heavily Sanskritised as that of the other Dravidian languages , and unlike in those languages , it was and remains possible to express complex ideas (including in science , art , religion and law) without the use of Sanskrit loan words . In addition , Sanskritisation was actively resisted by a number of authors of the late medieval period , culminating in the 20th century in a movement called ta?it tami? iyakkam (meaning " pure Tamil movement ") , led by Parithimaar Kalaigal and Maraimalai Adigal , which sought to remove the accumulated influence of Sanskrit on Tamil . As a result of this , Tamil in formal documents , literature and public speeches has seen a marked decline in the use Sanskrit loan words in the past few decades , under some estimates having fallen from 40 ? 50 % to about 20 % . As a result , the Prakrit and Sanskrit loan words used in modern Tamil are , unlike in some other Dravidian languages , restricted mainly to some spiritual terminology and abstract nouns .

In the 20th century , institutions and learned bodies have , with government support , generated technical dictionaries for Tamil containing neologisms and words derived from Tamil roots to replace loan words from English and other languages .

= = Influence = =

Words of Tamil origin occur in other languages . A notable example of a word in worldwide use with Dravidian (not specifically Tamil) etymology is orange , via Sanskrit n?ra?ga from a Dravidian predecessor of Tamil nartank?y " fragrant fruit " . Anaconda is word of Tamil origin anai @-@ kondra meaning elephant killer Examples in English include cheroot (churu??u meaning " rolled up ") , mango (from mangai) , mulligatawny (from mi?aku ta??ir , " pepper water ") , pariah (from paraiyan) , curry (from kari) , and catamaran (from ka??u maram , " bundled logs ") . Congee (from Kanji - rice porridge or gruel)