

TAMIL LANGUAGE

PART I

2. PHONETICS

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2. PHONETICS

I SOUNDS

Every language is made up of articulating sounds. In Tamil these sounds are classified into primary and secondary.

1. Primary Sounds

The primary sounds are divided into vowels and consonants. The vowels are named as life (உயிர்) and the consonants as body. (மெய்) The junction of vowel and consonant is named as animated body. (உயிர்மெய்) The Tamil grammarians thought that the consonant without vowel is like the body without life. This namings show the philosophical mind of the ancient Tamils.

VOWELS

	Back.	Central	Front.
Open.	(2) ஆ (a)	(1) அ (a)	
Half open		எ (e) 8 (e:) ஏ [3] இ [i] [i:] ஈ [4]	
		9 ஐ [ai]	
Close			5 உ [u] 6 ஊ [u:]
Half close		10 (o) ஓ 11 (o:) ஔ	12 ஔ [ou]

The numbers indicate the serial order in the alphabet. Even at the time of Tholkappiyar there were twelve sounds, five short vowels and seven long vowels as shown above. ஐ and ஔ are diphthongs or combination sounds. ஐ can be made either by அ and இ or

அ and ய. ஓனா can be produced either by அ and உ or by அ and வ். Yet they are represented in the alphabet by separate single characters. The system of vowel sounds was well developed even before the 4th century B. C. (the time of Tholkappiyar)

Regarding ஓனா Dr. Caldwell says that ஓனா is not really a part of any of the Dravidian languages and it has been placed in the alphabet solely in imitation of Sanskrit (comparative Grammar page 136). It seems that this is not correct for there are many pure Tamil words which commence with ஓனா. Dr. P.S.S. Sastri says that the sanskrit ஓனா was once pronounced as ஆ உ and அ னா and it is now pronounced as அ உ (au) owing to the influence of Tamil (தமிழ் மொழிநூல் Page 41.)

All the twelve sounds are being represented by separate characters in the Tamil alphabet from the pre-Aryan Period.

Each short sound is allowed one unit of time and each long sound, two units of time (unit of time; time of the twinkling of the eye or of the rubbing of the thumb with middle finger).¹

Consonants.

	Hard.	Soft.	Medial.
Gutturals	க (K)	ங (N)	ய (Y)
Palatals.	ச [c]	ஞ (n) ன (n)	ர [R] ழ 1 (zh)
Linguals.	ட (d)	ண (n)	(l) ல ள (l)
Dentals.	த th	ந (n)	
Labials.	ப (p)	ம (m)	
Labio-dental.			வ (v)

1. கண்ணிமை நொடியன அவ்வை மாத்திரை (தொல்)

Consonants: Tholkapiyar says that there are eighteen consonants. They are classified as shown in the above table. In the spoken language, the hard class [mutes] letters க, ச, ட, த, ப, when preceded by their respective nasals, become g, j, d, dh, d¹.

- க. When it comes alone in the middle of a word as in அகம் and when it is preceded by ஃ as in எஃகு is pronounced as h
- ச. When it comes alone in the end of a word in பசி and when it is preceded by ஃ as in கஃச it is pronounced as S.
- ட when doubled it is pronounced as t (கட்டி)
- ப when preceded by ஃ it is pronounced as f (அஃப)

So there are ten more additional sounds in the spoken tongue. Including these 10 sounds; Tamil possesses 28 consonantal sounds, which are shown here-under in a table.

	SONOROUS			NONSONOROUS			
	Semi Vow els	Liquidis	Nasals	Stops		Spirants	
				Voiceless	Voiced	Voiceless	Voiced
Labials		ம (m)	ப (P)	ம்ப (b)	ஃப (f)	வ (v)	
Dentals		ரவ (r,l)	த (th)	ந்த (dh)	ச (s) பசி		
Palatals		ற	ச (c)	ஞ்ச (j)	ச (sh)	ழ (zh)	
Linguals		ள	ட (t)	ண்ட (d)			
Guttural	ய (y)	ண	க (k)	ங்க (g)	க (h)		
		ங			அஃகு		

Though there are 21 sounds, there are only 18 letters in the alphabet to represent them. So some

1. பங்கு, கஞ்சி, கண்டு, பந்து, அம்பு,

letters represent more than one sound. W. H. Low says that in a perfect or ideal alphabet we should have one and only one symbol for each simple sound in the language. [The English language page 34] So the Tamil alphabet is considered defective by some philologists.

But Dr. Caldwell considered the system of representing more than one sound by a single letter as a peculiar law of convertibility of surds and sonants and remarks that the Tamilian rule which requires the same consonant to be pronounced as k in one position and as g in another as t, th, p, in one position and as d, dh b in another is not a mere dialectic peculiarity, the gradual result of circumstances, or a modern refinement invented by grammarians; but is essentially inherent in the language and has been a characteristic principle of it from the beginning.

Dr. P. S. S. Sastri disagrees with Dr. Caldwell and says that such principle was not in existence in ancient Tamil and there were no such consonantal sounds as g, j, d, b for Tholkappiyar had not mentioned about them in his Grammar. According to Whitney, any language that has mute closures (K.C.T.P.) will have also the other related sonants and nasals: thus the presence of a P in the alphabet implies also that of a b and an m and so on (Life and growth of language pages 63—4). Therefore it is to be inferred that even the ancient Tamil possessed sonants. Tamil grammarians omitted to mention about them and to invent separate letters to

represent them in the alphabet for the meaning of the word is not affected whether the sound is pronounced either as a sonant, or as a surd. The word கஞ்சி may be pronounced as Kanci or as Kanji. The meaning is the same.

The central India Tamil (Telugu) and west coast Tamil (Malayalam) invented separate letters to represent them, following the model of Sanskrit

In modern Tamil the sounds ja, sa, sha, ha, are represented by the Grantha letters as ஜ, ஸ, ஷ, ஹ respectively. The sounds F and Z are represented by new letters invented by the Madras University. Some Tamil news papers tried to represent d, b, by underlining ட and ப as ட, ப

2. SECONDARY SOUNDS.

In the old Tamil, the aytham, Kurriyalukaram and Kurriyalikaram only were considered as secondary sounds. In the middle Tamil, Uyirmey, aytham, Vyr alabu, orralabu the shortened i, u, ai, ou, m. aytham were considered as secondary sounds. In the modern Tamil also these ten are considered as secondary sounds.

3. THE POSITION OF THE SOUNDS IN THE WORDS AND THEIR CHANGES.

INITIAL VOWELS.

All the twelve vowels occur as initial letters of the words.

a (அ) Dr. Caldwell says that a is the heaviest of all the simple vowels and therefore the most liable to change and it evinces a tendency to be weakened into 'e' (ஈ) Tamil grammarians

say that it is enough to open the mouth to pronounce this letter. The words which have this letter at the beginning are very numerous in Tamil. It is changed into 'e' very rarely.

Ari (அறி) Eruga (Tel)
Narai Neriya (Tel)

In Sanskrit Tatbhava words when following by the third varga. Tamilians pronounce as 'e'

Gajam Gejam
Gangatheeram Gengatheeram

Sometimes it is changed into (ஐ) ai

Pasal Paisal (பைசல்)
Manju Mainju (மைஞ்சு)

ஆ. (a) It is changed into e: (ஏ) (ஆறு) aeru Tel.
(வாங்கினான்) Vanginan Venginen (வேங்கினான்)

இ. (i) It is changed into எ (e) ilai (இலை) elai (எலை)
(இடம்) idam (எடம்) edam
இறங்கு irangu (எறங்கு) eragu (Tel)

உ. u is changed into (இ) i Pul புல் Pil பில்
(ஓ) o உரல் Ural ஓரல் Oral
முதல் Mudal மொதல் Modal (Tel)

'ai' is changed (அ) a (அயி) ayi Maithunan Machinan
Vaithiyan Veyithiyan

Medial Vowels

Except (ஓ) o and (ஔ) ou,, all the vowels conjoining with the consonants take place in the middle of a word,

(அ) a is changed into ai (ஐ) before the consonants (ச. ஞ. ய.)

Arasan (அரசன்) Araisan (அரைசன்)

Ilanji (இலஞ்சி) Ilainji (இலைஞ்சி)
Arayan (அராயன்) Araiyan (அரையன்)

இ. I is changed into a (அ) Vayiru Vayaru

உ. U is changed into a (அ) Murudu Muradu

ஐ. ai is changed into e (ஏ) Kadaisi Kadesi

Final Vowels

All the vowels come in the end of words (O.T.M.T;M.N.T.)

But e (எ) comes in Uyiralabadai only as ஏ எ இவன்

It never conjoins with any consonant in the end of the word

ஓ comes in the one letter word ஓநா only and

ஔ in the words ஓகன, ஓவன.

உ u, Changes into (அ) (a) Urru (உற்று)
Urra Tel. and (ஐ) ai Pandu (பண்டு) Pandai (பண்டை)
and (ஐ) ai changes into (அ) அ e (எ) Talai Tala Tel.

Thinnai Thinna (Tel)
(Thinna Tam)

In O. T. 'i' in Inri [இன்றி] is changed into 'u' (இன்று)
In M. T. 'i' in anri [அன்றி] also is changed into 'u' [அன்று]

Initial consonants. No consonant without being followed by a vowel commences a word. In old Tamil [க்] k [க்] th [ந] n [ப்] p [ம்] m. followed

by twelve vowels occurred as initial letters of the words. ச. was followed by all the vowels except அ. ஐ. ஓ. ¹

But there are words such as சட்டி, சமழ்ப்பு, சடர், சளி 2 etc. which have ச initial letter. ² These words are found even in the literature of the old Tamil period. So, Thudicaikkilar A.Chidambaranar says that the persons who copied the sutrams from book to book committed some mistakes when copying so. The sutram

சகரக்கிளவியும் அவற்றோரற்றே
அவைஓள எனும் ஒன்றலங்கடையே.

is corrupted into

சகரக்கிளவியும் அவற்றோரற்றே
அ. ஐ. ஓள. எனும் மூன்றலங்கடையே.

If we do not accept this view. It is to be taken that these words which have ச as initials came into use after the time of Tholkapiyanar. But during the Middle Tamil period ச was followed by all the vowels as now, as a result of borrowing from sanskrit. [Nannul].

வ் [V] வு, ஓ, வோ, வோ do not come as initial sound of the words.

1. சகரக்கிளவியும் அவற்றோரற்றே
அ. ஐ. ஓள எனும் மூன்றலங்கடையே. (தொல்)
2. சரி, சமழ்ப்பு, சட்டி, சருகு, சவடி,
சளி, சகடு, சட்டை, சவளி, சவி, சரடு,
சந்து, சதங்கை, சழக்காதியரி டத்தும்
வந்தனவால் சம்முதலும் வை (நன்னூல் மயிலைநாதர் உரை
பக்கம் 45.

ய (y) It was followed by ஆ only at the time of Tholkappiyar. But during the time of Nannular, the Middle Tamil period it was followed by அ (யவனர்) உ (யுகம்) ஊ (யுகம்) ஓ (யோகம்) ஓள (யௌவனம்)

These words are borrowed from Sanskrit. In the Modern period யி, யீ, யெ, யே are used corruptively in the place of இ, ஈ, ஏ, ஏ respectively by the students and half literates,

ஆ. In the Old Tamil period, it was followed by ஆ, ஏ, ஓ: ஞாலம், ஞெகிழி, ஞொள்கிற்து.

In the Middle Tamil period it was followed by அ also c.f. ஞமலி, and ஞமன் which is derived from Sanskrit யமன் > ஞமன்.

But ஞமலி is a Tamil word, meaning dog which must have come into use after the time of Tholkappiyar.

ர, ல. These letters did not occur in the beginning of the words in the old and middle periods. Some vowels must precede them. Cf: ராமன் > இராமன்; லவணம் > இலவணம். But now they occur in the beginnings of the words, discarding the vowels

ட. Though this letter was not allowed to begin the words in old and middle periods, now the words which are first taught to the children, are டங்கா, டமாரம்.

ங். This letter; conjoining with the vowel அ only commences a word ஙனம்- This word never

comes without being preceded by the demonstrative vowels அ, இ, உ and their long ones.

ண, ழ, ள, ற, ன never come as the initial letters of words in the Tamil language. ண is driven to the back ground by ற for the pronunciation of ற do not differ much from that of ண which might have been invented latter in the growth of the language. ண ழ ள ற ன are difficult to pronounce. Even now, these are pronounced incorrectly by all. So the difficulty in pronunciation might have prevented the primitive Tamils to coin words, having these letters as initials.

Medial Consonants

க், ச், த், ப், These consonants are not followed by other consonants in the middle of the words

ர், ழ These are followed by the other consonants only and they do not come after single short vowels or vowel-consonants. All the other consonants are followed by themselves and other consonants. ட், ற், ல் are followed by க, ச, ப.

வெட்கம், கற்க, செல்க;
நீட்சி, ஞாற்சி வல்சி;
தட்பம் பொற்பு, சால்பு;

The ட் which is followed by க, ச, ப is not a natural one forming part of the root. ள் or ண changes into ட் before க, ச, ப. ள் is followed by க, ப in single words கொள்க, வள்பு.

ல, ள are followed by ய், வ் in compound words

கொல்யானை, கோல்வளை
வெள்யானை, வெள்வளை

ய் is followed by க, த, ந, ப, ம

பொய்கை, வேய்தல், வேய்கர், வேய்ப, பொய்மை

ர, ழ are followed by க, த, ந, ப, ம

நேர்க, நேர்தல், நேர்கர், நேர்ப, நேர்மை

வாழ்க, வாழ்தல், வாழ்கர், வாழ்ப, கீழ்மை.

The nasals ங், ஞ், ண், ற், ம். ன் are followed by their related hard consonants தெங்கு, பஞ்சு, பண்டு, பந்து, அம்பு, குன்று.

ண் and ன் are followed by க, ப, ம, in single words; உண்க, உண்ப, உண்மொர்

and by க, ச, ஞ, ப, ம, ய, வ, in compound words

வெண்கலம், வெண்சோறு, வெண்கொண், வெண்பல், வெண்மலர், பண்யாக்கை; மண்யீடு, புண்கண், புன்செய், பொண்கொண், பொன்பெருமை, பொன்மணி, இன்யாழ், பொன்வளை.

Tholkappiyar says,

ஞ ந ம வ என்னும் புள்ளி முன்னர்
யல்கான் நிற்தல் மெய்பெற்றன்றே
மல்கான் புள்ளிமுன் வவ்வும் தோன்றும்

The commentators cited உரிஞ்யாது பொருந்யாது திருமயாது தெவ்யாது நிலம் வலிது as examples. These are not even compound words. These are all sentences. The words, in which such combination of sounds, took place went out of use

Nachinarkkiniyar had pointed out this as follows:—

இங்ஙனம் ஆசிரியர் சூத்திரம் செய்தலின் அக்காலத்து ஒரு மொழியாய் வழங்கிய சொற்கள் உள்வென்பது பெற்றும். அவை இக்காலத்து இறந்தன.

Pavananthi, the author of Nannul, had blindly followed Tholkappiyanar without ascertaining whether such words were in use.

In Tamil, the occurring of double or triple consonants in the middle of a single word is very rare. In compound words mostly the combinations of ய, ர, ழ with க, ச, த, ப and their nasals ங், ஞ், ன், ம் occur.

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|--|
| 1. | ய் | வேய்க்குழல்
வேய்ச்சிறை
வேய்த்தலை
வேய்ப்புறம் | வேய்க்குழல்
தேய்க்குது < தேய்ந்தது
வேய்ந்தனம்
வேய்ப்புறம் |
| 2. | ர். | வேர்க்குறை
வேர்ச்சிறை
வேர்த்தலை
வேர்ப்புறம் | ஆர்ங்கோடு
கூர்ஞ்சிறை
நேர்ந்தனம்
ஈர்ப்புறம் |
| 3. | ழ். | வீழ்க்குறை
வீழ்ச்சிறை
வாழ்த்தினான்
பாழ்ப்புறம் | பாழ்க்கிணறு
பாழ்க்கிணை
வாழ்ந்தான்
பாழ்ப்புறம் |

Final Consonants

The hard consonants க், ச், ட், த், ப், ற் never occur as the final sounds of the words in Tamil. The words which end in these consonants, have the enunciation 'u' at the end and it is called குற்றியலுகாரம் which will be discussed later under

the heading secondary sounds. At the time of Tholkappiyar ஞ், ண், ன், ம், ன், ய், ர், ல், வ், ழ், ள் occurred as final sounds. There was not a single word which ended in 'ங்'. Only two words ended in ன் i.e., வெரிந் and பொருந் only one word ended in ஞ் i.e., உரிஞ். Though Nannular (M.T.) included these consonants in the list of final consonants, Neminathar (M.T.) omitted them. So it is clear that the words which ended in ன், ஞ், had become obsolete in the middle Tamil period. Now there is no word which ends in ன் and ஞ். Tholkappiyar says that the words which ended in 'வ்' were four¹ They are அவ், இவ், உவ், தெவ். He omitted to include எவ் which might not have been in use in his time. Now உவ் and தெவ் have become obsolete.

"Sarpu" Letters or Secondary Sounds.

This letter of three dots முப்பாற்புள்ளி called Aytham which means subtle or minute. Tholkappiyar says that this letter and shortened இ and உ have no individual existance

சார்ந்து வரினல்லது தமக்கியல் பிலவெனத்
தேர்ந்து வெளிப்படுத்த வளை முன்றும்"

It takes place between a short letter and a surd with vowel. It softens the surds. It is different from sanskrit visarga the letter of two dots. Tholkappiyar had not placed it either with the vowels or with the consonants; He styles it in Poetics as உயிரில்லெழுத்து (consonant.)

உயிரில் லெழுத்தும் எண்ணப்படா
உயிர்த்திறம் இயக்கம் இன்மையான. (தொல் செய் கு 44)

1, வகரக்கிளவி நான் மொழியீற்றது.

Er. P. S. S. Sastri says that it is to be considered as a medial consonant for it is pronounced as a medial consonant (இடையினமெய்) with mouth half opened. ¹

Dr. Caldwell says that Tamil professes a letter half vowel, half consonant corresponding in some respects to the Sanskrit visarga and called aytham. It is pronounced like a guttural 'K' but is only found in the poets and generally considered a pedantical invention of the grammarians. Nannular says that it has half matrai when pronounced fully and quarter matrai when pronounced halfly. So Dr. Caldwell is right in considering it as half vowel.

When ல and ள come after a short letter and before க they are changed into this aytham.

கல் + தீது = கல்தீது

முள் + தீது முல்தீது.

Shortened i (குற்றியலிகரம்) This is one of the peculiar letters of the Tamil language. It has no separate character. If a word which ends in குற்றியலுகரம் is followed by a word which commences with ய் consonant, the tongue finds a little difficult to pronounce both words enphonically. If we pronounce them hastily, உ becomes இ i. e. நாகு + யாகு = நாகியாகு. Tamil grammarians noticed it and called it a separate sound. This இ appears in the syllable மியா when it is pronounced in such words as கேண்மியா and சென்மியா. This appearance of the இ when ய comes after முற்றுக்கரம் is noticed by Pavananthi, கதவு + யாது = கதவியாது

1. தொல் எழுத்து குறிப்புரை பக்கம் 48.

Shortened 'U' குற்றியலுகரம்

This sound also is peculiar to the Tamil language. Though it is recognised as different from ordinary 'u' it has no separate character. It misled some grammarians to think that the ordinary 'u' is in the shortened form Tholkappiyar did not think so and he had allotted one chapter to deal about it. If the words end in கு.சு. கு.து.பு.று. the 'u' of these letters is pronounced, allowing the time of half a matrai except in the words which are made up two letters including this 'u' the first letter being short. The 'u' of அது, இது, உது and ஏழு is pronounced as shorthand 'u'. But it is not recognised by the grammarians.

The word which ends in this 'u' is named after the letter preceding it as

1. வன்றொடர்: பட்டு. டு being preceded by the hard consonant.
2. மென்றொடர்: பந்து. து being preceded by nazal
3. இடைத்தொடர்: மார்பு. பு being preceded by medial.
4. உயிர்த்தொடர்: விறகு. கு being preceded by vowel
5. ஆய்த்தொடர்: எஃகு. கு being preceded by aytham
6. நெய்நொடர்: நாடு. டு being preceded by long letter

Tholkappiyar says:

"அவற்றுள் மெய்யீறெல்லாம் புள்ளியோடு நிலையில்"

"குற்றியலுகரமும் அற்றென மொழிப"

Some scholars infer from this that குற்றியலுகரம் had a dot like a consonant i.e. ஆடு. Some scholars infer that if a word, the initial letter being a vowel, succeeds this குற்றியலுகரம் the 'u' disappears giving place to the succeeding vowel. ஆடு + இல்லை = ஆடில்லை. Pavanathi (M. T.) expressed it clearly as உயிர்வரின் உக்குறள் மெய்விட்டோடும். (If a vowel succeeds, the shortened 'u' runs away from the consonant). In the old Tamil, the 'u' of நுந்தை also was considered as shortened 'u'

Dr. Caldwell calls the final shortened 'u' as enunciative 'u' and says that in consequence of its being impossible for Tamilian organs of speech to pronounce those letters (hard consonants) without the help of a succeeding vowel, the hard consonant shall be followed by 'u'. So it is to be inferred that in Primitive Tamil there were words which ended in hard consonants and in course of time, this shortened 'u' was added to them for the sake of euphonic purpose. If it is so, it is a marked change in the growth of Tamil. Telugu did not stay there. It allowed every word without exception to end in a vowel.

Devaneyappavanar in his ஒப்பியன்மொழிநூல் says that in primitive Tamil all words ended in vowel, and in course of time, Tamil discarded the 'u' in medial and nasal consonants allowing the hard consonants to have it. According to Vidvan Venkatarajulu Reddiar, in primitive Tamil there were words which ended in hard consonants and the 'u' was added later. It seems probable for even now the Tamilian tendency

is not for discarding the existing 'u' but for adding 'u' to final consonants i.e. நான் > நானு.

In the middle Tamil, the lengthening of vowels and consonants and the shortening of ஐ, ஓ, ம, ஃ and vowel consonants are added to the list of secondary sounds. But these are not considered as separate sounds as those above mentioned. These may be considered as variations of the sounds.

4. LENGTHENING OF VOWELS.

The quantity of long vowels is two matrai. Tamil has no letter which has three matrais. If there is a need of a letter of three matrai or more in poems, we have to add the concurring short vowels to the long vowels as ஆ அ அலவன். Here we get the lengthening sound of three matrai ஆ representing two matrai and அ representing one matrai. The later grammarians thought that the sound of the long vowel itself could be lengthened to the quantity of three matrai or more and its having of three matrai or more will be marked by adding short vowels as the case may be each to represent one matrai as a symbol i.e. ஆஅ (2+1) ஆஅஅ (2+2) This is due to the influence of Sanskrit plutham.

Lengthening of consonantal sounds:-A consonant is allowed the quantity of half matrai when not followed by the vowel.

In songs, if a syllable is deficient of the required sound all the consonants except ஈ ழ will

have one matrai each after a single short letter or double short letters and it will be denoted by doubling the consonants மங்கலம், அரங்கு. This is called Orralapadai [ஒற்றளபெடை].

Short ஐ and ஓ: During the time of Tholkappiyar, ஐ and ஓ in such words as இடையன், கௌவை had one matrai if they were pronounced as அய் and அவ். (அகரத்திம்பர் தொ. சூ. 56)

It is said in Virasoliyam and Neminatham that these will have 1½ matrai. So it is to be inferred that these letters were pronounced as if they had 1½ matrai at their time in such words as இடையன் and கௌவை. But in the time of Pavananthi and Vaithianatha Navalar, these words must have been pronounced allowing one matrai to ஐ and ஓ (ஒன்றே குறிலோடு ஐ ஓளக்குறுக்கம் (நன் எழு 44) ஐ in three places of a word and ஓ in one place only in the beginning only.

i e. ஐப்பசி, வலையன், குவளை, மௌவல்.

Short. ம்: Among the consonants the quantity of ம் only is shortened to ½ matrai. At the time of Tholkappiyar, it was shortened after ன் only. (னகாரமுன்னர் மகாரம் குறுகும்). During the middle Tamil period, it was shortened after ண் also (ணனமுன்னர்மகாரம் நைந்து. நன் ஓவல்).

Short ஃ: The aythum, which forms part of word எஃகு is not shortened. But the sythum,

born out of combination of sounds ல + த, is shortened according to Pavananthi ல, ள வீற்றியை பின் ஆய்தம் அஃகும்) கல் + தீது, கஃதீது, முள் + தீது: முஃதீது.

5. INTERCHANGE OF CONSONANTS

க. K. Dr. Caldwell says that "K" when used as sonant—that is as "g"—changes into 'v' (comparative grammar page 151). But I think that 'k' in the middle of a word is pronounced as 'h' not as 'g' ஆகட்டும் Ahattum, (மகன்) Mahan. Then it changes into 'v' ஆகட்டும் > ஆவட்டும். மகன் > மவன் Then it is left out ஆவட்டும் > ஆட்டும்.

பகுதி Pahuthi > பாதி

க K in some places becomes ச காய்க்கு > காய்ச்சு சில-கெலவு

ச S changes into க. சேரன் கேரளன் (Canarese)
ண் N. Changes into ட்; பெண்டு > பெட்டை.
எண்டு > எட்டு

த் th changes into ச்: வைத்தான் > வச்சான்
வயது > வயசு, பிடித்தான் > விடிச்சான்

த் ,, changes into ற்: விதை > விரை

ந்து N changes into ஞ்சு: ஐந்து > அஞ்சு

ப B changes into ம்: என்ப > என்ம

,, changes into ஹ: பாடு > ஹாடு (Canarese)

,, changes into வ: வேடர் > பேடர் (Canarese).

ழ zh changes into ள்: பவழம். > பவளம் > பவளம் > உளுந்து.

,, changes into ய: பழம் > பயம் கிழங்கு > கியக்கு.

ற R changes into த்: குற்று > குத்து.

These changes helped the separation of dialects into new languages.

6. REJECTION OF RADICAL CONSONANTS

Some words reject their radical consonants and seem to be new words.

நெருப்பு becomes நிப்பு Telugu
எறும்பு ,, எனுமு ,,
மருந்து ,, மந்து ,,

Aphaeresis: Some sounds disappear from the beginning of a word.

The word இலது (Iladhu) becomes லேது

தாமரை (Thamarai) is written as மரை (Marai)
ஆகாயம் (Ahayam) is written as காயம்
யானை becomes ஆனை
யாக்கை becomes ஆக்கை

Syncope: The loss of a phoneme in the middle of a word is of general occurrence.

போழ்து > போது
ஒந்தி > ஒதி

Apocope: The disappearance of final sound is found in some words நீலம் > நீல்

வாழிய > வாழி

Appearance of sounds or additions: Sounds are added under certain conditions. The process is called *prosthesis* at the beginning of a word, *epenthesis* in its body and *paragoge* at its end.

Prosthesis: The words to which initial letters are added, are not native words. There are some letters which are not used as initials of the Tamil words. If such letters are at the beginning of the foreign words, some vowels are added to them.

ராமன் becomes இராமன்
லோபம் ,, உலோபம்

Epenthesis Some sounds are added in the middle of words unconsciously to make the pronunciation easy.

கோவை > கோர்வை
ஆய்தல் > ஆராய்தல்
யாது > யாவது
காத்தான் > காத்தான்

Paragoge உ is generally added to ல், ழ், ள், ழ், ள், ம், வல் > வல்லு, ஏழ் > ஏழு, புள் > புள்ளு உரிஞ் > உரிஞு பொருந் > பொருநு. தெவ் > தெவ்வு, உரும் > உருமு.

Metathesis This is displacement of sounds in a word. Dr. Caldwell calls this as euphonic displacement of sounds: விசிறி, கொடிறு, and குதிரை become சிவிறி, குறி and குருதை respectively.

7. VOWEL GARADTION

This is a chief phenomenon of the Indo-European languages. Tamil also possesses it. The vowels of the roots are changed to form nouns to receive case signs and the tense signs.

Short vowels are lenthened to form nouns.

விடு: விட்டான் — விடு
சுடு: சுட்டான் — சுடு
கெடு: கெட்டான் — கெடு
மின்: — மின்

Long Vowels are shortened

i. to form past tense

Root	Present	past Tense
காண்	காண்கின்றான்	கண்டான்
சா	சாகின்றான்	செத்தான்

(here ஆ is changed into எ)

i i. to form all the tenses

தா — தருகிறேன் தந்தேன்
வா — வருகிறேன் வந்தேன்

(In the present tense ரு appears as additional sound)

iii. to form oblique cases:

Third personal pronouns

தான் — தன்னை
தாம் — தம்மை

Second personal pronouns.

நீ — நின்னை

First personal pronouns

நாம் — நம்மை

யான் — என்னை } (Here ஆ is changed into
யாம் — எம்மை } எ).

8. CHANGE OF SOUNDS IN LOAN WORDS.

Borrowing out of necessity is not detestable in languages and such borrowing of words is going on unconsciously. When words are borrowed

from a foreign language, the borrowed foreign words are modified according to the phonetic laws of the language into which they are taken. It is quite contrary to the nature to expect the people of one language to pronounce correctly another foreign language. The letters vary from language to language; each language possess some peculiar sounds of its own, though most of the sounds are the same in all languages. For instances ழ is not found in English and z f are not found in Tamil. So it is not to be considered as the defect of the language, if a language is not in possession of some letters to represent the sounds which are not found in it.

When we come in contact with a foreign-language which has some peculiar sounds of its own and if we begin to invent new letters to represent the new foreign sounds, there will be no end to such inventions and the number of letters will be increasing day after day. So we have to be satisfied with what we have. Hence arises the modification of sounds of the foreign language.

Contrary to this principle, if we begin to invent new letters they will remain a pedantic invention, unused by the people. For instance the English sound 'f' is new to the Tamil language. The University of Madras invented a new letter to represent that sound. But, that letter remains unnoticed and unused even by the poets and scholars.

Fiddle is pronounced as piddle (பிடில்) and funnel as punal (புனல்). It is not the characteristic of the Tamils only, but of people all over the world. The English people never try to pronounce தமிழ் as it is. They pronounce Tamil for the sound ழ is not in their language. They are neither ashamed of pronouncing so nor trying to invent a new letter to represent that sound.

Our ancient Tamils were not exempted from this. So, when they came across the Sanskrit language, which was the first foreign language the Tamils met with, they pronounced the sanskrit sounds in accordance with the Tamil phonetics. Tholkappiyar framed the rule that Sanskrit words were to be pronounced and written in Tamil letters, discarding the sanskrit sounds and in so doing it did not matter if the words became deformed (1)

Pavananthi, the grammarian of middle period, framed the rules in a detailed manner. According to him Sri, becomes 'Tiru', the second, third and fourth letters of each varga become the first letter of the respective vargas. ஐ (j) in the middle of a word become ய (y); ழ in the beginning of a word is changed into ஈ and in the middle of a word changed into ஈ and in the middle of a word changed into ஈ and ய; ழ is changed as ஈ at the beginning ட

1. வடமொழிக்கிளவி வடவெழுத்தொரீஇ
எழுத்தொடு புணர்ந்த சொல்லாகும்மே
சுதைந்தன வரினும் இயைந்தன வரையார்

My interpretation of this sutram is different from that of old commentators.

in the middle; ஸ is changed into ஈ at the beginning and ஈ and ஈ in the middle; ழ is changed into ஈ at the beginning and into ஈ in the middle and ழ into க்க or டஈ; ழ and ஈ at the end of words are changed into ஐ and இ respectively.

The 'la' and 'ra' series and 'ya' do not occur as the initial letter of the Tamil words. If sanskrit words which have these letters as initials are borrowed, ஈ இ உ are added to the words which begin with r series, இ உ to the words which begin with ஸ series, and இ to the words which begin with 'ய'

In Tamil language the hard consonants are not followed by the medial consonants and by the said consonants other than themselves. So த்ய (vathyam) க்ய (vakyam) க்ர (Vakram) and க்ல (cuklam) of Sanskrit words are transformed into க்கிய, க்கிர and க்கில.

So Vathyam, Vakram and cuklam becomes vathyam. Vakkira and cukkilam respectively. Bakthi is changed into Pathi and Sakthi into Satthi. If வ follows the hard consonant preceding 'K' is doubled and 'உ' is added to the hard consonant. So Pakvam is changed into Pakkum. If ழ follows hard consonant 'உ' is added to the hard consonant without doubling. So பத்மம் becomes பதுமம்

In some words the initial consonants are dropped as the Tamilian phonetic law does not allow double consonants at the beginning. So ஸ்தலம் and ஸ்தானம் are changed into தலம் and தானம்.

There are some some words which are com-

pletely transformed and such transformations lead one to think that they have no relation with one another.

முகூர்த்தம் is changed into முழுத்தம், விஷ்ணு into விண்டு.

The English sounds 'f' 'q' 'z' unknown to the Indian languages are changed into ப், க், ங் in Tamil.

To pronounce b, d, f, g, j correctly in Tamil also some writers of Tamil Journals invented new letters. But they have not succeeded in their attempt for the science of language is against them.

9. CHANGE OF SOUNDS IN SENTENCE.

It seems that Tamil grammarians took most care to make their language very polished. They wanted to see a sentence as a necklace of orderly strong pearls and as a chain of rings joined together in ignoble captivity. So they did not allow to separate the words from one another in a sentence. This method of writing is condemned by some scholars of modern time on the plea that it serves as stumbling block in learning the language and reading the literatures. So this mode of changing one sound into another is not now generally observed. This feature in the Tamil language was fully developed even at the time of Tholkappiyar, who laid rules in six chapters to conjoin words in a sentence.

i. Change of vowels. The vowels never change as the consonants do. If after a word

ending in a vowel another follows beginning with a vowel, there is added either ய or வ or ன between the final vowel of the standing word and initial vowel of the coming word. Tholkappiyar simply said that between the final vowel of the standing word and the initial vowel of the coming word conjoining consonants were not omitted (i) He did not mention what were the conjoining consonants. It is evident from his statement that in his time the rule was not enforced and the place of such consonants were not designated. But the vowels in Tamil are rarely combined or changed as in Sanskrit except in cases of compounds which have been borrowed directly from Sanskrit. The final vowels except 'u' are not elided when followed by vowels.

But as hiatus is dreaded by the speech organs of Tamilians the awkwardness of concurrent vowels is avoided by the interposition of V (வ்) or (ய்) y or (ன்) n between the final vowel of standing word and the initial vowel of coming word. In gradual growth of the language, the use of V (வ்) in one conjunction of vowels and that of y (ய்) in another, are marked by grammarians. It is doubtless the result of the progressive refinement of the language, வ் is to be used after the vowels அ. ஆ. உ. ஊ. எ. ஏ. ஓ. ஔ. and ஓள, y to be used after இ. ந. ற. and ஐ. Thus பூ + அழகு is written and pronounced as பூவழகு. கிளி + இல்லை becomes கிளியில்லை. ன் also is used instead of 'V' in a considerable

1. எல்லா மொழிக்கும் உயிர்வரும் வழியே உடம்படு மெய்யின் உருபுகொளல் வரையார்.

number of instances especially in the pronominal termination of verbs.

இருக்கின்ற + அ = இருக்கின்றன
பொருள் + அ = பொருளன

Tamil grammarians

do not recognise this as conjoining consonant (உடம்படுமெய்); but they named it as சாரியை expletive

ii. Change of consonants:

ண் and ள்: These consonants change into ட் before hard consonants

1. மண் + குடம் = மட்குடம்

த்: Changes into ட் after ண் and ள் and ற் after ல் and ன்

2. மண் + தீது = மண்டீது

முள் + தீது = முட்டீது

பொன் + தீது = பொன்றீது

கல் + தீது = கற்றீது

ந்: Changes into ன், ண், after ல், ள் and ன் ண் and ற் after ல் and ன்

3. பொன் + நன்று = பொன்னன்று

மண் + நன்று = மண்ணன்று

சொல் + நன்று = சொன்னன்று

கள் + நன்று = கண்ணன்று

ம்: Changes into ங் before க, ஞ் before ச, ற் before த

4. எம் + கை = எங்கை

தம் + செயல் = தஞ்செயல்

எம் + தலை = எந்தலை

ல் and ன்: Change into ற் before த

5. கல் + தீது = கற்றீது
பொன் + தீது = பொன்றீது

ல் changes into ள் if it comes after a short letter and before a hard consonant.

6. அல் + தீது = அஃறீது