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MORPHO-SYNTACTIC CONCEPT AND CONTRIBUTION OF THOLKAAPPIYAR:A VIEW FROM A DIFFERENT PRISM

*Paramasivam Muthusamy¹, Omrah Hassan@Hussin², N.Nadaraja Pillai³, Rajantheran
Muniandy⁴, Sillalee S.Kandsamy⁵, Manimaran Subramaniam⁶*

^{1,2} Department of Foreign Languages, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.

³Central Institute of Indian Languages (Rtd), Mysore, India.

⁴Department of Indian Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur,

⁵Department of Modern Languages, University Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kajang, Malaysia.

⁶Department of Indian Studies University of Malaya Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Corresponding email:²omrah@upm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

The concept of morpho-syntax is defined as ‘the study of grammatical affixes or linguistic units that have both morphological and syntactic properties’. The author of Tholkaappiyam, the earliest written Tamil grammar of 300 B.C., explains this concept exhaustively in different chapters. This notion of modern Linguistics is to be added as one of the levels of language for research and teaching grammar as well. A per the author of the grammar, tense is a morpho-semantic feature, which is added to finite verbs. Tense marker attributes to the meaning of the sentence and not to the sentence structure. That was his concept and contribution to the field of Linguistics. Features like, metonymy, ambiguity, gerund formation, etc., in the grammar, support the concept proposed. Selected verses from Tholkaappiyam have been quoted for the sustenance of his view. Additionally, this article brings in another very important concept of ‘mid-fix’, which is a new contribution to the field.

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics, the scientific study of language, has brought many revolutions in the field of analysis of language, grammar, language use in contexts, language teaching, and in many other allied subjects. Applied linguistics, on the other hand has brought a sea change in the fields of lexicography, translation, computer education, forensic linguistics, endangered languages, computational linguistics, etc., which are field-revolutions in Linguistics.

The success of any revolution depends on our capability to device and incorporate the theoretical research to review traditional grammars as well, which will update and bring in the intricacies with which the traditional grammars have analyzed the language. All qualitative improvements on revitalization and revivalism of the grammatical theories proposed by the native grammarians depend on the refreshing looks.

Tholkaappiyam, the earliest grammar of Tamil, a masterpiece written about 2300 years ago analyses, in detail, the structure and uses of language elements in general and verb and its other inflections, derivation, etc., in particular. It should be regarded as a pragmatic grammar, which includes the study of phonology [ezuttu], morphology [col] life, poetics, etc., [poruL], (Subrahmanya Sastri, 2002) which is first of its kind in the Indian grammatical scenario. Tholkaappiyam, which displays brilliant linguistic analysis, deals with many subtle features also elaborately. Nevertheless, a question arises as to why it has not given a comprehensive analysis of the tense system, prevailed at that time. This actually puzzles the researchers as to why he has left such an important feature of finite verbs in the language, while he dealt with many other components precisely. However, this paper brings out an important factor that Tholkaappiyam's main focus of Analysis is 'Morpho-syntax', in which the scheme of tenses becomes a morpho-semantic feature. A new look at Tholkaappiyam's concept and contribution leads to the field of morpho-syntax, which is a magnanimous one, keeping in view of the time of its description.

LEVELS OF LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION

Linguistic analysis of any language, deals with its descriptions of different levels of the language. The well-defined descriptions of levels of language like, Phonology, Morphology, Morphophonemics, Syntax, Semantics, discourse analysis and Pragmatics are available in the modern times for the use of language and literature teachers (Muthusamy, 2017), creative writers, teaching materials producers, etc. In fact, these linguistic/grammatical analyses have four roles to play.

1. To provide a theory of the structure of language
2. To provide the description of the structure of language
3. To provide description suitable for teaching that language.
4. To provide theories of literature for creation of newer ones.

It is worth mentioning here that somehow all theoretical descriptions deal primarily with an idealized conception of language. Whereas, for any applied linguist / language teacher the above descriptions may not be enough for his materials production or for teaching (Thirumalai, 1977; Muthusamy, 2018). It is a well-known fact that the theoretical grammar is concerned with providing a theoretical model whereas the pedagogical / prescriptive grammar is concerned with the application aspect of theoretical models for the purpose of teaching and learning of the language. We are concerned here, in this article about Tamil language and its description.

The centrality of grammar, that is, morphology and syntax, in language analysis was proposed by Chomsky in his TG model (1965). Even in Structural Linguistics, morphology plays a very important role through which the important features of a language is brought out. Here, we propose our findings through the structural linguistic approach of Tholkaappiyam.

MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF TAMIL

It would be a foundation for us to have a short review of the morphology of Tamil before discussing the main point of discussion. Morphology [urupaniyal] is defined as (i) The system of the internal structure of words and (ii) The study of words and affixes. A few features are taken for discussion to explain the theoretical contribution of Tholkaappiyam (Thamodaram Pillai, 1885 & 1891). Roots / stems to which affixes are added are not discussed here, since that is not the focus of the article, but the affixes are. While Syntax is a strong component in the grammar, Morphology [collatikaaram; here in after, some Tamil technical terms are given in square brackets for better comprehension] is the strongest because that is the base on which syntax works (Subrahmanya Sastri, 1979). Tamil is an agglutinative language and hence almost all the analyses done so far have explained the role of morphology for fruitful explanation of grammar (Karunakaran, 2014). The importance of morphology (Ilavalagan, 2003) can be well understood in the discussions on, namely, morpho-phonemics, morpho-syntax, morpho-semantic and morpho-pragmatics, where morphology forms part of the analysis. Since we revisit the traditional grammar to interpret it with the modern theoretical linguistic approaches, care has been taken to analyse the descriptions given.

MARKERS

The concept of prefix, suffix and infix needs no explanation (Matthews, 1991). In the light of the discussions, we need to analyse the suffix differently. However, when we discuss the tense markers added to the verbs in Tamil, we propose to have a new one in that series, namely, ‘mid-fix’.

A suffix is a marker added at the end of a word / form to (i) inflect [vinait tirupaakkam] or (ii) derive a new word [vinaip peyaraakkam] as in:

English: (i) writ-ing giv-en
 (ii) govern-ment, beauty-ful

- Tamil: (i) ezuta, ‘write-infinitive’
 ezuti ‘write- verbal participle’
 ezutiya ‘write -past relative participle’
 (ii) ezhut-tu ‘letter’- verbal noun
 ezutu-vatu ‘writing -gerundial noun’
 ezutu-kai ‘writing -gerundial noun’
 ezutu-tal ‘writing -gerundial noun’

The suffixes, thus, used are otherwise called ‘endings’, since they are placed at the end of the root/stem and they complete the function of the formation and meaning. From this point of view, the suffixes are to be classified into two, based on their placement and functions.

1. That marker, which completes the form and meaning, obviously, as ‘endings’ [vikutikaL / muDipukaL].

Eg. book-s work-ed
 cedi-kaL ‘plant-s’ paartt-aaL ‘saw-she’

2. That marker, which is suffixed after the root/stem or in between the root /stem and the suffix. This marker fixed in the middle cannot complete the formation or meaning of it without a real suffix that is (1) above. The tense markers in Tamil are categorized in this group.

3.

Eg. paDi+-tt- [as in paDi+-tt-+aan ‘read-he’]

The finite verb structure in Tamil is,

‘Verb + tense marker +Person, Number, Gender (PNG) marker’

Hence, the tense marker /-tt-/, as in the example, which is added in the middle followed by the PNG marker /-aan/ are necessary to complete the form and meaning. The newly coined term ‘mid-fix’ is necessary to make a well-structured finite verb form. The examples in all the three tenses given below will exemplify the stand.

naDa- nt - aan ‘walked-he’
 naD- kkiR- aaL ‘walks-she’
 naDa -pp- aar ‘will walk-he (hon.sg.)’

Hence, only the PNG markers are the real suffixes because they complete the formation. Then, what are these markers, namely, /-nt-/, /-kkiR-/ and /-v-/? Are they to be treated as suffixes or something else? In the series of prefix, suffix and infix, the middle one, we call ‘mid-fix’ [iDaiyoTTu]. Therefore, the tense markers in Tamil are mid-fixes. They themselves cannot complete a form or meaning. This is the reason why they are called ‘middle forms’ [iDainilaikaL] by Tamil traditional grammars very appropriately.

t, T, R, oRRu in ee aimpaal muuviTattu
 iRanta kaalam tarum tozil iDainilai.’ (Nannuul, 142)

‘The markers t, T, R and –in- are past tense marking

Middle forms for five genders in three persons.’

However, caution is to be taken that all the markers that occur in the middle cannot be branded as mid-fixes. For example, the empty morpheme added in the middle as in the example cannot be considered as ‘mid-fix’, because that is a morpho-phonemic addition. For example,

paDam + ai > pada+ -tt- + -ai
picture + acc. case marker > picture (object with the empty morph)

This is called /-attu- chaariyai / by the Tamil traditional grammars. They are dealt with in Morphophonemics [puNarcci] separately.

TENSE MARKERS

A customary look at the tense markers of Tamil will support the morpho-syntactic theory of Tholkaappiyam (Nadaraja Pillai, 1992).

Past tense markers

There are eleven markers grouped into four as follows:

1. /-t-/ , /T/ and /-R-/
cey-t-aan > ceytaan ‘did-he’
kaN-T-aan > kaNTaan ‘saw-he’
tin-R-aan > tinRaan ‘ate-he’
2. /-tt-/ , /-RR-/
paDi-tt-aan > paDittaaan ‘studied-he’
ka-RR-aan > kaRRaan ‘learnt-he’
3. /-nt-/ , /-nR-/ and /-ND-/
naDa-nt-aaL > naDantaaL ‘walked-she’
cel-nR-aaL > cenRaaL ‘went-she’
aaL-ND-aaL > aaNDaaL ‘ruled-she’
4. /-in-/ , /-n-/ and /-nn-/
peesu-in-aan > peesinaan ‘spoke-he’
poo-n-aan > poonaan ‘went-he’
col-nn-aan > connaan ‘told-he’

Present tense markers

There are four present tense markers grouped into two:

1. /-kiR-/ and /-kinR-/
ezutu-kiR-aan > ezutukiRaan ‘writes-he’,
ezuthu-kinR-aan > ezutukinRaan ‘writes-he’
2. /-kkiR-/ and /-kkinR-/
paar-kkiR-aan > paarkkiTaan ‘sees-he’
paar-kkinR-aan > paarkkinRaan ‘sees-he’

Future tense markers

There are five future tense markers grouped into four:

1. /-pp-/
koDu-pp-aaL>koDuppaaL 'will give-she'
2. /-v-/ and /-p-/,
cey-v-aan> ceyvaan 'will do-he';
kaaN-p-aan> kaaNpaan 'will see-he'
3. /-um/,
ooD-um> ooDum 'will run-it'
4. /-kkum/
naDa-kkum> naDakkum 'will walk-it'

The problem of distribution of tense markers could not be solved either by traditional grammars or by linguistic grammars (Nadaraja Pillai, 2009). The strong and weak classification of the verbs, to some extent, solves the problem. However, it also is a problem to define what a strong or weak verb is. A question arises as to what are strong verbs. The verbs, which take /-kkiR-/ as present tense marker are strong. The verbs, which take /-kiR-/ as present tense marker, are weak. The present tense marker /-kkiR-/ occurs with strong verbs. Thus, it is difficult to find out which verb is strong or weak. The answer is always a circular one. It is just like answering 'which one came first, the egg or the chicken'.

MORPHO-SYNTAX

The concept of morpho-syntax may be defined as 'the study of grammatical affixes or linguistic units that have both morphological and syntactic properties. In other words, the set of rules that govern linguistic units whose properties are definable by both morphological and syntactic criteria. It is a kind of cognition speakers always has (Issac & Reiss, 2013). We discuss here, in the article two main morphological features, namely, Person, Number, Gender markers and case markers, which are conditioned by syntactic criteria.

avan paampai(k) konR-aan
'He killed a snake.'

The PNG marker /-aan/ is suffixed to the verb stem with the tense marker, if the subject of the sentence is /avan/ 'he'. In other words, the morphological feature /-aan/ is conditioned by the syntactic feature, namely, the subject.

The earliest grammar of Tamil, Tholkaappiyam, which belongs to 300 BC, doesn't talk about tense markers but emphatically discusses about the morphological feature of PNG markers and their syntactic connections.

The author, Tholkaappiyar did not care to explain the morphological features of finite verbs fully, since for him, the tense is a morpho-semantic feature (Katz, 1972), which attributes to the meaning of the sentence and not to the sentence structure. Morphological theories are not his concern for explanation, where the markers do not contribute to the syntactic structures. (Spencer, 1991). He is concerned with the syntax of a sentence more and hence, analyses the components in a sentence, which contribute to clarify the syntactic qualities. That was his concept and contribution. The concept of

morpho-syntax is of comparatively a recent linguistic thought, which was thought of 2300 years back in Tamil.

He recognizes three important features of tense as in,

1. vinai enappaDuvatu veeRRumai koLLaadu
ninaiyum kaalai kaalamoDu toonRum (Thol. Verse - 683)
'The verbs are those, which will not take case markers
But will show the time sense, that is, tense.'
2. kaalam taamee muunRena mozipa (Thol. Verse - 684)
'They (scholars) say there are three tenses.'
3. iRappin nikazvin etirvin enRaa
am mukkaalamum kuRippoDum koLLum
meynnilai uDaiya toonRavaaRee (Thol. Verse - 685)
'The three tenses, namely, past, present and future appear in appellative
verbs also in an implied way.'

After reading these three rules / verses [nuuRpaa] of Tholkaappiyam, a question arises as to why he has not discussed the tense markers (Sampanthan, 1997). and after reading his verses concerned with the PNG markers we arrive at the conclusion that he bothers much about syntax rather than morphology in this case.

PERSON, NUMBER, GENDERSUFFIXES

As discussed earlier the finite verb in Tamil should indicate the PNG marker to complete the formation and meaning (Bybee, 1985). The problem of conditioning them morphologically is not possible. The Table 1 shows the modern Tamil PNG markers will exemplify the claim.

Table 1 Person,Number,Gender suffixes

Serial No.	Person	Number /gender	Marker	Examples With the verb paar 'to see'
1	First	Singular	-een	naan paar-tt-eeen 'I saw.'
2		Plural inclusive	-oom	naam paar-tt-oom 'We saw.'
3		Plural Exclusive	-oom	naankaL paar-tt-oom 'We saw.'
4	Second	Singular	-aay	nii paar-tt-aay 'You saw.'
5		Plural and honorific singular	-iirkaL	niikaL paar-tt-iirkaL 'You saw.'
6	Third	Masculine singular	-aan	avan paar-tt-aan 'He saw.'
7		Feminine singular	-aaL	avaL paar-tt-aaL 'She saw.'

8		Epicene singular	-aar	avar paar-tt-aar 'He saw.'
9		Human plural	- aarkaL	avarkaL paar-tt-aarkaL 'They saw.'
10		Neuter singular	-atu	atu paar-tt-atu 'It saw.'
11		Neuter plural	-ana	avai paar-tt-ana 'They saw.'

The agreement is the main reason why 'Tholkaappiyam' analysed and conditioned the PNG markers syntactically. Tholkaappiyar, has suggested that the syntactic feature the 'subject' of the sentence is the condition for the occurrence of PNG marker. Column numbers two and three are the conditions for the suffixes listed in column number four.

This is, precisely, the reason for him to propose a morpho-syntactic approach to solve the problem. That means, we need one of the components of syntax, namely, the subject of the sentence to condition their occurrences. Thus, there is an agreement between the subject and the verb of a sentence in Tamil.

PNG MARKERS IN THOLKAAPPIYAM

Intellectually, he first discusses about the markers as he normally does in the case of all verses. He first gives the structure and generalizes the discussion followed by details of the markers. The rules from 687 to 710 discuss the PNG markers for first, second and third person pronouns (Shanmugam, 2004). However, only four are used, here, as illustrations to explain his principle of morpho-syntax.

kuRippinum vinaiyinum neRippaDa toonRik
kaalamoDu varuum vinai col ellaam
uyartiNaikku urimayum ahRiNaikku urimayum
aayiru tiNaikkum ooranna urimayum
ammuu vuribina toonRa laaRee. (Thol. Verse - 686)

'All the verbs, which denote tense explicitly or implicitly, may appear in three types. They are those, which belong to human class, those belong to neuter class and those belong to both the classes.' (All the translations of the verses are from Subramanian, 2004).

The listing of the markers and the subject for which they occur discussed in the verses categorically, expresses his morpho-syntactic concepts.

First person Plural markers

avaitaam
am, aam, em, eem, ennum kiLaviyum
ummoDu varuu-um ka, Da, ta, Ra ennum
annaar kiLaviyoDu aa yeN kiLaviyum

panmai uraikkum tanmaic collee. (Thol. Verse - 687)

‘The morphemes (PNG Markers) -am, -aam, -em, -eem and the four forms ka, Da, ta, Ra, which occur with -um express first person plural.’

Second person markers

avaRRuL
 munnilaik kiLavi
 i, ai, aay, ena varuu um muunRum
 oppat toonRum oruvarkkum onRaRkum. (Thol. Verse - 708)

‘Of those, the three terminations, -i, -ai, and aay are for second person singular human and non-human.’

Third person singular markers

an,aan,aL,aaL ennum naankum
 oruvar marunkin padarkkaic collee (Thol. Verse - 690)

‘The four markers -an, -aan, -aL, -aaL denote third person singular.’

avan vantan-an.	‘He came.’
avan vant-aan.	‘He came.’
avaL vantan-aL.	‘She came.’
avaL vant-aaL.	‘She came.’

Thus, he explains the PNG markers for the three persons indicating the subjects for which they are suffixed to the finite verbs. They indicate the morpho-syntactic analysis. The role of tense markers is a morpho-semantic feature (Leech, 1969); that is the reason why he has not discussed the tense markers.

This is the main reason why he found it challenging to discuss about tense markers, as his focus was on the syntactic features of agreement and not to give a detailed account of a morphological analysis of the other suffixes / markers involved in the construction of a finite verb.

This point of view on Tolkaappiyar’s proposal for morpho-syntactic analysis gets strengthened by his description of the verbal participle [vinaiyeccam], relative participle [peyareccam], participial nouns [vinaiyaalaNaiyum peyar], conditional forms [nipantanai vinai], etc. In other words, tense may also be reconstructed apart from the finite verb forms from many other grammatical forms as given in section five above.

Verbal participle

Tolkaappiyam deals with some nonfinite forms termed as ‘vinaiyeccam’.

ceydu ceyyuuc ceybu ceydenac
 ceyyiyar ceyyiya ceyin ceyac ceyaRkena
 alvhai onbadum vinaiyenju kiLavi (Thol. Verse- 713)

‘There are nine verbal participle forms such as, ceydu, ceyyu, ceybu, ceydena, Ceyyiyar, ceyyiya, ceyin, ceya, ceyaRku.’

He has given a comprehensive analysis of these nonfinite forms in the following verses also, which again emphasize the morpho-syntactic study of them.

avaRRuL
 mudanilai muunRum vinaimudal muDibina. (Thol. Verse- 715)

‘Of these the first three will occur with the predicate that agrees with their subject.’

eenai yeccam vinaimuda laanum
 aan vandu iyaiyum vinainilai yaanum
 taam iyal marungin muDiyum enba. (Thol. Verse- 717)

‘They say that the other among these fifteen participial forms may get completed by the verb in agreement with subject or with those that come in addition.’

nilanum poruLum kaalamum karuvium
 vinaimudaR kiLaviyum vinai uLappaDa
 avvaRu poruTkum ooranna urimaiya
 ceyyun ceyda ennum collee (Thol. Verse- 719)

The words ‘ceyyum and ‘ceyta’ (Relative participle forms) will occur with (1) land, (2) object, (3) time, (4) instrument, (5) agent and (6) action.’

There are some studies, which have established the use of tense in denoting several other things like, habituality, universal truth, certainty, etc. (Agasthalingom, 1979). The retrievability of the tense markers from his analysis of other grammatical forms is possible, yet he has not dealt with the tense markers in his grammar, since his focus was on the morpho-syntax and not the morphological analysis of verbal forms.

CASE MARKERS

The next area for discussion about morpho-syntactic feature that Tholkaappiyar concentrates is the use of case markers. The verbs are dynamic and they only select the cases or case frames for them. This is the reason why Tholkaappiyam explains the cases and their cross overs in the morpho-

synatctic analysis. It was perhaps the theoretical consideration of Tholkaappiyar, as has been discussed earlier.

He has placed the chapter on cases [veeRRumai] in between the chapters on ‘word formation [kiLaviyaakkam]’ and ‘nouns’ [peyariyal], which itself shows that he is concerned more with the case suffixes first, because the conditions on which they are placed is the selection of nouns. In the syntactic study of sentences with cases, syntax plays the major role than morphology. For example, the verb kol ‘to kill’ selects [+animate] noun as its object. Hence, he would have thought of a case frame rather than simple morphology, which has contributed to his theory of morpho-syntax. Furthermore, there are selectional restrictions on subjects and objects (Nadaraja Pillai, 1992), including words and rules concerned with them (Pinker, 1999). Therefore, he has placed the chapter on cases before the chapter on nouns.

Case is the feature that differentiates the meaning and use of nouns. Like the Indian traditional grammatical studies, he has classified them into eight. Nevertheless, he has classified the cases into seven first and added the eighth one since the first seven have syntactic relationship with other constituents in a sentence. To understand the verbs and their role in syntax, we need to analyse the case markers and their roles / uses (Nadaraja Pillai, 1979). The sentence structure in Tamil is Subject- object- verb. The author of Tholkaappiyam begins the discussion with the following verse:

veeRRumai taamee eezena mozipa. (Thol. Verse - 546)
‘They say that cases are seven in number.’

vizi koLvatan kaN
viziyoDu eTTee (Thol. Verse - 547)
‘Including the vocative, the cases are eight.’

We may say that he has divided the cases, as above, into two because of his theory of morpho-syntax, in which verbs select the cases.

However, when he lists the case markers, he includes vocative also as in,

avaitaam

peyar, ai, oDu, ku,

in, atu, kaN, viLi, ennum iiRRa. (Thol. Verse- 548)

‘They are,

Noun (Nominative), -ai (accusative), -oDu (instrumental), -ku (dative)

-in (ablative), -atu (genitive), -kaN (locative) and vocative at the end.’

To have a view of the case suffixes, the modern Tamil examples are given for easy comprehension of the scheme of cases as presented in Table 2

Table 2 Case markers

Case Number	Case names	Case marker	Examples
1	nominative	∅	avan tuunkinaan. 'He slept.'
2	Accusative	-ai	avar enn-ai azaittaar. 'He called me.'
3	Instrumental	-aal	aval kattiy-aal veTTinaaL. 'She cut with a knife.'
4	Dative	-ku	avan enak-ku oru peenaa koDuttaan 'He gave a pen to me.'
5	Ablative	-iliruntu	naan malaakkaav-iliruntu varukiReen. 'I come from Malakka.'
6	Possessive	-atu, - udaiya	atu enn-uDaiya viiDu. 'That is my house.'
7	Locative	-il, - iDam	avar vakupp-il irukkiRaar 'He is in the class.'
8	Purposive	-kkaaka	nii avaLu-kkaaka vaankinaay. 'You bought it for her.'
9	Sociative	-ooDu, - uDan	naan avaL-oodu varukiReen. 'I come with her.'

The analysis of cases shows his principle that the verb has the main role to select the case frames, even though we have listed the modern Tamil markers. The modern Tamil markers do not affect our discussions. Though he has not attempted to say about the 'case frames', his stand in the use of cases is that the verb is dynamic in the selection of cases, which may be exemplified by the verse on second case.

iraNDaakuvathee
ai enap peyariya veeRRumaik kiLavi
evvazi varinum vinaiyee, vinaikkuRippu
avviru mutalin toonRum atuvee (Thol. Verse - 555)

'The second case called –ai denotes direct object of a verb
Or an appellative verb, and it appears in these two ways.'

It is very interesting to note that Tholkaappiyar might not know Chomsky's deep and surface structure analysis (Chomsky, 1965), but attempts to say there is a deep meaning in the above rule. Whenever the second case for this rule is explained, the two examples given are:

avan kuDattai vanaintaan. 'He made a pot.'
avan kuzaiyai uDaiyavan 'He has ear droppings.'

In both the examples, the accusative case marker /-ai/ is used to denote the object. Nevertheless, in the second sentence, there is no verb but it is an

adjectival noun in the predicate position. However, the second sentence is to be derived from the deep structure,

avan kuzaiyai aNintirukkiRaan. ‘He is wearing an ear dropping.’

with the verb /aNi/ ‘to wear’. Therefore, /-ai/ denotes the object. The verse leads to such an analysis as suggested by Chomsky. It also denotes that the author is concerned with morpho-syntax and not just morphology alone.

His rules from 555 to 567 deal with the case markers and their uses and distribution with the verbs (Fillmore, 1968). For an example, here we give the use of second case, namely, the accusative case only.

kaappin, oppin, uurtiyin izaiyin
 oopin pukazin paziyin enRaa
 peRalin izavin kaatalin vekuLiyin
 seRalin uvattalin kaRpin enRaa
 aRuttalin kuRaittalain tokuttalin pirittalin
 niRuttalin aLavin eNNin enRaa
 aakkalin saartalin selavin kanRalin
 nookkalin anjalin sitaippin enRaa

anna piRavum atan paala enmanaar (Thol. Verse - 556)

‘They say that the second case marker /-ai/ denotes the following and such other actions

and meanings: (1) protecting, (2) comparing, (3) riding, (4) chafing, (5) driving away, (6) praising, (7) despising, (8) acquiring, (9) losing, (10) loving, (11) getting angry, (12) conquering, (13) rejoicing, (14) learning, (15) cutting, (16) shortening, (17) collecting, (18) dividing, (19) weighing, (20) measuring, (21) counting, (22) making, (23) reaching, (24) going, (25) hating, (26) looking at, (27) fearing, (28) destroying, etc.’ (Vellaivaranar, 1984)

It is really an enthralling analysis of Tholkaappiyar, who has had an enormous database for arriving at these twenty-eight meanings for the second case marker /-ai/, based on the use of the verb in the sentence. He has precisely derived at the meaning from the verbs used. This means that the author has taken into contemplation the morpho-syntactic feature for his analysis. In the same manner, his explanation that the marker /-atu/ for possessive or genitive case (Thol. verses 563 and 564) indicates the relationship between the nouns, where no verb is used. Moreover, he brings in another principle that while explaining the use of cases, in addition to morphology and syntax, semantics is also necessary, which is emphasized in the modern Linguistics also. This attribution is well expressed in his rule for the use of seventh case, which is used to denote action, place and location. This contribution of Tholkaappiyar is to be treasured.

Another very important contribution is the formation of compound nouns. While linguistics analyses it in the noun morphology, Tholkaappiyam deals with it in the chapter on cases as the final rule (verse- 567) indicating many

casal relationships and non-casal relations. This also confirms his concept of morpho-syntax.

veeRRumaip poruLai virikkum kaalai
iiRRu ninRu iyalum tokaivayin pirintu
pal aaRaakap poruL puNarntu isaikkum
ellaac collum uriya enpa. (Thol. Verse - 567)

‘They say, when we expand the meaning of the cases or case markers or case signs,

It will be expanded from the compounds of the words, and it will give many meanings.’

KaaTTu yaanai ‘forest elephant’

This may mean that the elephant is in the forest or the elephant of the forest. The case marker establishes the relationship between the nouns. Hence, the morpho-syntactic properties play a significant role in giving meaning, which has been explained well by Tholkaappiyar.

MORPHO-SYNTAX AND AMBIGUITY

The chapter on case crossover or interchange of case markers deals, further, with the morpho-syntactic factors, which contribute to the meaning change and ambiguity. The chapter is devoted for resolving ambiguity in the use of case markers. Tholkaappiyar has elaborately discussed this relationship due to change in the markers, which depends on the constituent that follows the noun with the marker or even with the noun with which the case marker is suffixed.

For example,

avan tuuNaic caarntu ninRaan. ‘He was standing with the support of the pillar.’

avan arasanaic caarntu ninRaan. ‘He was standing with the support of the king.’

The meaning of support varies because of the noun with which the case marker is added. In fact. The meaning change will be attributed to synonymy in lexicon, whereas to morpho-syntax in this grammar.

Tholkaappiyam recognizes the unmarked cases and the ambiguity in meaning also, where the accusative case and instrumental case can cross over. The evergreen example is the phrase, (Subramanian, 2004)

puli kol yaanai..... ‘tiger kill elephant...’

The two noun are not suffixed with any case marker. This may mean either

puliyaik konRa yaanai..... ‘The elephant which killed the tiger...’

or

puliyaal kollappaTTa yaanai... ‘The elephant that was killed by the tiger.’

However, if the phrase is followed by another independent clause that will solve the ambiguity, as in,

puli kol yaanai ooDukiRatu. 'The elephant that killed the tiger runs.'

puli kol yaanait tantam. 'The tusk of the elephant killed by the tiger.'

It is a well-woven relationship the grammar has dealt with. Another very important factor is metonymy.

Many other syntactic features are independent of morphological features. Take for example,

Pelbagai punca berlakunya salah laku pelajar, antaranya lack of love from the Parent kadang-kadang diorang balik ke rumah ... hmm... tak ada orang kat rumah.

'There are many reasons why students misbehave, for example, lack of love from the parents... sometimes when they go home... hmm... no one is at home.'

Based on the example above, it is identified that in general the clauses in English do not have significant influence in the sentences used in the conversations. For instance, the phrases 'and for example', 'not only that', and the English particle 'or' function as empty forms that do not have any proper function. Whenever clauses like 'the lack of love from the parents' are used, they show empathic function. These syntactic features are very important for learning apart from the morphology. (Muthusamy, 2010)

MORPHO-SYNTAX AND METONYMY

The grammar explains the relationship of constituents of a sentence or the phrase under the title metonymy [aaku peyar]. It has found out seven types of metonymy in Tamil. They are listed with examples below:

1. Whole for the part
palaai inittatu. 'The jack fruit was sweet.'
2. Part for the whole
talaikku oru latcam parisu 'Rs. one lakh value for the head (of the person).
3. The place of production of the product
thirunelveli vaanki vaarunkaL. 'Bring Thirunelveli (Halwa).
4. The quality of the object
paccai irukkiRataa? 'Do you have paccai - green (gem)?'
5. Cause for effect
minveTTu niiDikkum 'Electricity cut will extend.'
6. Compounds of two nouns
panaiyinpaal inikkum 'The milk (the juice) of the Palmyra will be sweet.
7. The doer for the thing done
tiruvaLLuvar paDi ' Read Thirukkural (written by Thiruvalluvar).'

The morpho-syntactic features are well explained in the grammar. Moreover, he explains how a suffix added to a noun relates to the verb with syntactic features. The following sentences illustrate the concept.

yaanai vantaan literally means yaanai vantatu. ‘elephant came.’ with a wrong verb conjugation. ‘yaanai’ is a neuter singular noun, which takes /-atu/ as the PNG marker. But here in the sentence, a human suffix /-aan/ is used. In fact, this is a clue to treat it as metonymy. Nevertheless, as metonymy, it should mean ‘a person like an elephant came.’ This is derived from the sentence, yaanaiyaip poonRavan vantaan. With the accusative case marker connected with the verb conjugated for third person masculine singular.

MORPHO-SYNTAX AND GERUNDS

Further, Tholkaappiyar explains the manner in which the gerunds and verbal nouns take case markers in a sentence is a new approach connecting both morphology and syntax, taking into consideration the deep structure involved in the derivation.

The nouns derived from a verbs are of three types:

- (1) Gerunds, [tozil peyar]
- (2) Derived nouns, [aakkap peyar]
- (3) Participial nouns [vinaiyaalaNaiyum peyar].

It is an excellent proposition that is explained in the grammar for the gerunds like paaDutal ‘singing’, samaittal ‘cooking’, etc., which take a case marker. The other two, like paDippu ‘education’, paDippavan ‘he who studies’, etc., have become pure nouns after derivation. Gerund, a hybrid noun having the features of a verb also normally do not take case markers. However, Tholkaappiyam through the following rule explains how they can also take a case marker in the deep level.

vinaiyee, ceyvatu, ceyappaDu poruLee,
 nilanee, kaalam, karuvi, enRaa
 innataRku, itu payan aaka ennum
 anna marapiniraNDoDum tokaii
 aayeDDu enpa thozil mutanilaiyee. (Thol. Verse - 596)

‘Besides, the author emphasizes the fact that ‘there are eight primary constituents fortaking out any action. They are: (1) doing the action, (2) the doer, (3) the object, (4) the place, (5) the time, (6) the instrument, (7) the recipient, and (8) the result.’

The in-depth analysis of morpho-syntactic feature here in this case is mesmerizing. The commentators of Tholkaappiyam give manner by which the case relation with the verb is established.

vanaintaan’ made a pot-he’ is realized as vanaitalaic ceytaan, where the gerund takes the accusative case marker. Thus, it is proved beyond doubt that the gerunds too take case markers, which is not possible otherwise.

Normally, features like these are analysed under morphology, while this grammar explains with the principle of morpho-syntax. Take for example,

naan paaDam paDittatavanai(p) paartteen.
 ‘I saw the person who read the lesson.’

This is derived from the following sentences.

Sentence 1. naan S2 paartteen.

Sentence 2. avan paaDam paDittaaan > paaDam paDittavan +ai

Thus, the relationship of accusative case and the syntactic feature ‘the finite verb’ is established.

CONCLUSION

The article tried to establish that Tholkaappiyam, the Tamil grammar written 2500 years ago, follows the principle of morpho-syntax to explain some of the relationships like the person, Gender, number markers used for agreement between the subject of a sentence. Secondly, he treats the selection of cases by the dynamic constituent of a sentence, namely, the verb / predicate, etc., as a morpho-syntactic feature.

Thus, it is established beyond doubt that the language levels proposed by Linguistics, namely, Phonology, Morpho-phonemics, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics, should be added with two more levels, namely, Morpho-syntax and Morpho-semantics both for research and teaching. It is a known fact that Morphology has a lion’s share in the description of grammar of any language, especially, the Indian languages. Tamil is an agglutinative language as explained in this article. This means morpho-syntactic features explained by Tholkaappiyar is very effective and to be analysed well for establishing the theory further.

Furthermore, the article has brought in a new concept of ‘mid-fix’ applicable to Dravidian languages. We also feel more research should be undertaken for further studies on the concept of ‘morpho-syntax’ and ‘mid-fix’ in a global outlook.

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