GRAMMAR OF OLD TAMIL
FOR STUDENTS

1st Edition

Eva Wilden
Preface

The map of Old Tamil grammar still shows many white patches, although the existing descriptive works are numerous, at least in comparison to other Dravidian languages. One reason for this is that most of these works have been written by people who come from modern Tamil and see Old Tamil just as a precursor of their language. Another reason is that the prolific tradition of *ilakkanam*, grammar, has been as much of an obstacle as it has been of help in understanding. Moreover, the current representations are lopsided in that they pay an inordinate amount of attention to morphology (which is relatively simple) and next to none to syntax (which to this day in many respects is hardly understood). But more than everything else it is the attitude of teachers that has made Old Tamil a language very difficult to learn. Old Tamil is a language not well taught: to this day there is no grammar for students, no manuals, hardly a few readers. Tamil has the nimbus of a religion, something not to be learned by rod, but to be imbibed, on the Tamilian side because it is an identity marker and on the Western (European and American) side because it discourages students from asking embarrassing questions.

That is the situation the Classical Tamil Winter and Summer Seminars (CTWS/CTSS) having been trying to remedy for the last thirteen years. This year the CTWS/CTSS went into its 14th year which means the beginners course was held for the 7th time. Though the Reader and the Grammar are still far from adequate, significant progress has been made. The Reader now has a unified glossary for all the texts included (however, since this had to be done by hand, there might still be mistakes and lacunae). A minor drawback is that, since much of the bhakti material has been selected for the easiest stages, many of the later forms developing in the course of the first millennium do not actually occur. This will be remedied by adding further (advanced) readers with full analytical glossaries, based on the material produced for the CTWS/CTSS – soon to be available for download from the didactic section of the NETamil website. The grammar
is growing with the corpus under scrutiny which might by now be described as Tamil literature of the first millennium. Since for most texts reliable editions, let alone statistics for their morphology and lexicon, are not available, much of this is still patchwork – although within the last ten years a number of critical editions have appeared and several more are under preparation, and also e-texts have become markedly more numerous. But still, whenever I open a new book I come across a form not yet included here.

An easy way out would be to distinguish strictly between the grammars of Early, Middle and Late Old Tamil as well as Middle Tamil, but this would be far from reality since chronology, even in the internal sense, is for the most part not well established and since many texts cover several strata. Moreover it would not be practical for students, who want a single reference work where they can find anything they might need. Thus both students and teachers will have to live with the fact that the area covered will continue to grow, along with the descriptive text and the account of syntax. Things might be speeding up because the community of scholars working in the field has definitely increased over the last ten years.

The book is still conceived as a one-month course, true to the original scheme of the CTWS/CTSS, divided into chapters that correspond to lessons numbered from 1 to 20. But the lessons have been arranged in a way that the whole can be consulted as a grammar, starting with introductory material, sandhi, noun morphology and syntax, verb morphology and syntax, poetics and metrics. Please note that examples throughout this grammar when rendered in Tamil script appear in the form they ought to have, namely with sandhi and metrical split, while the transcript provides a complete word split.

A select bibliography including the editions of the texts quoted as examples (in so far as no critical editions are available) and the references to the works on grammar and lexicography mentioned is added at the end.

Many people I have to thank for enabling me to bring together the material for this book and for helping me to correct it, first of all, of course, the scholars with whom I studied Tamil: S.A. Srinvasan, T.V. Gopal Iyer and T.S. Gangadharan, but also the colleagues from the Caṅkam project and now NETamil who have been reading and discussing with me over all those
years: my husband Jean-Luc Chevillard, Sascha Ebeling (with whom I devised the Reader and with whom I could discuss the whole manuscript), Thomas Lehmann, G. Vijayavenugopal, T. Rajeswari, Indra Manuel, Emmanuel Francis, Suganya Anandakichenin, T. Rajarethinam, K. Nachimuthu, as well as all the students of the various CTWS and CTSS, many of them by now also colleagues, who have been coming to Pondy and asking questions. Special thanks for one final full round of discussions and correction go to the Hamburg team, Jonas Buchholz, Giovanni Ciotti, Victor D’Avella and Erin McCann. Grateful I am also to Dominic Goodall and Charlotte Schmid, who first encouraged me to organise Tamil winter classes at the centre of the EFEO in Pondy. For the typesetting I thank T.V. Kamalambal. This book is the first to be published in the new NETamil series, generously funded by an Advanced Grant from the ERC.

Eva Wilden, Hamburg, Dezember 2016
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Introduction

For the purpose of this grammar, let us call classical Tamil the language that developed, or rather, was developed, out of the various dialects spoken throughout the southernmost part of the Indian subcontinent, as a literary medium and as a medium of intellectual discourse, during the course of the first millennium CE. Here, we shall neither be concerned with exact chronology, taking the beginning of the Common Era as a convenient starting point, nor with the relation of that entity to the language that has officially gained the title of “Classical Tamil” on the part of the Indian government in the year 2004. Our target is not the language of inscriptions, which start considerably earlier, but the literary and theoretical works that have been preserved, all of them metrical form, that is, the Caṅkam corpus, the Kīḻkanakkku works, the five great poems (Tamil perunkāppiyam ~ Skt. mahākāvya-) of which only three have survived, the Śaiva bhakti corpus called the Twelve Tirumūṟai, the Vaiṣṇava bhakti corpus called the Nālāyirat Tivyappirapantam, the grammatical treatises and thesauri that start with the Tolkāppiyam, a few other great poems that have not been included among the five, as well as a number of other poetic works that still belong to the same period but cannot be conveniently classified as part of a corpus. For an overview of genres and periods, see the attached folding sheets at the beginning.

Again for the sake of convenience we may distinguish three phases of Old Tamil, namely Early, Middle and Late Old Tamil, followed, around the turn of the 10th century, by Middle Tamil, in its turn followed, in the 19th century, by Modern (Formal) Tamil. The table below lists the most tangible features of each phase along with some texts that belong to it, but it has to be kept in mind that not a single text (in the majority anthologies) exhibits features of only one of these phases. The reason for this is partly that many texts generated
over a longer period of time, but partly also that it is not always easy
to distinguish temporal from regional variations.

Old Tamil: *0-1000 AD

<table>
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<th>Period</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<td>Early Old Tamil</td>
<td><em>Kuruntokai, Narinai, Akaknaru, Purananuru, Aini-kurunuru, Pattirrupattu, Pattuppāṭṭu</em> stable word-order, particles, old pronouns, honorific, formulae, Āciriṇyappā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Old Tamil</td>
<td><em>Kīllkanakku, Cilappatikāram, Paripāṭal, Antāti-s, Kalittokai</em> old morphol., new style/content new pron. + plural, word-order and particle chaos, hybrid forms, rarely present, Veṇpā + Etukai rhyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Old Tamil</td>
<td><em>Tēvaram, Tiruvāyimoḷi, Muttoḷḷāyiram, Cintāmani, Tirukkōvaiyār, Periyatirumoḷi</em> [Kamparamāyaṇam, 12th c.] metrical revolution + Etukai standardisation of present, pl., pronouns; less pron. nouns, few formulae, new vocabulary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Middle Tamil: 1000-1900 AD new aux., compound sentences (Commentary prose)

Modern Tamil: 19th century

As for the transition from Old to Middle Tamil, stipulated for example by Zvelebil 1957, there are no statistics that would demonstrate a clear shift and further morphological changes. Until the literature of the second millennium will have been treated in more detail, we may assume that two factors justify the designation, namely, firstly, the gradual vanishing of many older forms except in some frozen expressions and, secondly, the development of commentary prose.
The following table shows the most important morphological changes that occur in the transition from Early Old Tamil to Middle and Late Old Tamil. More important than morphology, however, are two shifts in orientation that concern the overall syntactic patterns of the language. To begin with, Early Old Tamil is a language with very little explicit morphological mark-up (especially with respect to case suffixes) and a correspondingly strict word order complemented by a system of particles for modes and tenses, not unlike what is known from languages such as Classical Chinese. Probably through the influence of literary Sanskrit and with the newly developing rhyme patterns (etukai), the strict word order is gradually weakened, to be supplanted by more explicit morphology in the course of time, although it never reaches the freedom of a highly inflected Indo-European language. The particle system simply disintegrates and is lost (except as metrical filler). Moreover, the verb in Early Old Tamil is better described as marked by aspect rather than by tense. The two old aspects, imperfective (present, future, hypothetical) and perfective (past, aorist, irreal), in most grammars simply called non-past and past, later become future and past respectively with the development of a modal auxiliary construction based on the verb kil-tal, “to be able to”, into the present tense in -kinṟ.

| personal pronouns: | 1st singular nominative | yāṉ > nāṉ |
|                   | 2nd singular oblique stem | niṉ > un |
| plural suffixes:  | -kal (first for neuter, then added to old honorific) |
|                   | -ar/-ār, then gradually taking over |
|                   | -kāḷ for vocative |
|                   | -mār for 3rd plural |
|                   | -mīr for 2nd plural |
| present tense:    | -kinṟ- |
| negative absolutive: | -āmal |
special conditionals: -\texttt{āl} (after root, after \textit{peyareccam} and finite verb, after noun)
-\texttt{ākil}
-\texttt{il}
-\texttt{āl} (mostly already after absolutive, but also found after finite forms)

special imperatives: -\texttt{ēl} (negative)
-\texttt{miṅkal} (old form plus plural suffix)
-\texttt{irkal}

It is possible to be more specific about the genesis of the oldest corpus, that of the \textit{Caṅkam}, at least with respect to those texts for which critical editions have appeared or are under preparation in the Pondicherry \textit{Caṅkam} project. To briefly sum up a complicated process, after an undetermined number of centuries of oral transmission the first anthologies began to be compiled, probably under Pāṇṭiya aegis. The oldest parts of the corpus are, in Akam (erotic genre), \textit{Kuṟuntokai}, \textit{Naṟṟiṇai}, \textit{Akanāṉūṟu} and, in Puṟam (heroic genre), \textit{Puṟanāṉūṟu}, though the latter two especially contain much younger material. Further in linguistic and poetic development, but still rather close appear the Cēra anthologies \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu} (Akam) and \textit{Patirṟuppattu} (Puṟam). The first indication of anthologisation is the former invocation stanza of the \textit{Kuṟuntokai}, now counted as \textit{Kuṟuntokai} 1, but in fact a very early form of devotional poem dedicated to Murukaṉ, perhaps from the late 5\textsuperscript{th} century. Probably in the early 7\textsuperscript{th} century, or at least definitely before the pervasive sectarian splits of the bhakti period, there is evidence for the first hyper-anthology containing all the six texts mentioned so far, that is, both Pāṇṭiya and Cēra, on the initiative of the Pāṇṭiyas: We find preserved a series of five invocation stanzas by the hand of Pāratampāṭiya Peruntēvaṉār, and the conjecture is reasonable that there was a sixth in the lost beginning of the \textit{Patirṛuppattu}. 
In parallel, but slightly later, the songs now contained in the second hyper-anthology, the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, developed, with new advances in poetics, morphology and lexicon, and a growing number of Sanskrit loans. Very late, and probably related rather to the later Pāṇṭiya resurrection of the earliest poetry than to the earlier literary production itself, come the last two anthologies that we know today as elements of the *Eṭṭutokai*, that is, the *Kalittokai* and the *Paripāṭal*. The first references to the actual hyper-anthologies *Pattuppāṭṭu* and *Eṭṭutokai* are found in the grammatical commentary tradition from the 12th century onwards [for a detailed account, see Wilden 2014].
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<th>Pāṇṭiya</th>
<th>Pāṇṭiya, Cēra, Cōḷa</th>
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<td>Akānāṉūṟu</td>
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<td>4. c.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aินkuṟunūṟu</td>
<td>Patirrupattu</td>
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<td>12.c.</td>
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</table>
Lists of Literary Works from the First Millennium CE

Calculating the size of all these works is not easy. Those in Āciriya metre are simply counted by line, those in stanzas, that is, from Venpā onwards, are counted by stanza (that is, four or, exceptionally, two lines). But since the various metres range from two metrical feet to eight metrical feet per line and since moreover the works in mixed metres also contain Āciriya passages of variable length regarded as stanzas, the count is very imprecise. Still better some vague idea than no idea at all. The works included into text bodies belonging to the first millennium although actually their date of composition lies outside this frame are marked by square brackets.

Complete list of the Eṭṭuttokai

1. Kuṟuntokai (402 poems, 2504 lines; no commentary)
2. Naṟrīnai (400 poems, 4180 lines; no commentary)
3. Akanāṉūṟu (401 poems, 7151 lines; anonymous comm. on AN 1-90)
4. Puṟanāṉūṟu (400 poems, 5448 lines; anonymous comm. on PN1-250)
5. Aiṅkuṟunūṟu (501+ poems, 2163 lines; anonymous commentary)
6. Patirṟuppattu (80+ poems, 1711 lines; anonymous commentary)
7. Kalittokai (150 poems, 4314 lines; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar)
8. Paripāṭal (22+ poems, 1833 lines; comm. by Parimēḷaḷakar)

Complete list of the Pattuppāṭṭu (3552 lines)

1. Tirumurukāṟṟupphaṭai (317 l.; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, Parimēḷaḷakar, etc.)
2. Porunarrupphaṭai (248 lines; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar)
3. Cirupanāṟṟupphaṭai (269 lines; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar)
4. Perumpāṇāṟṟupphaṭai (500 lines; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar)
5. Mullaippaṭṭu (103 lines; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar)
6. Maturaikkāṉci (782 lines; comm. by Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar)
7. Netunalvaṭai (188 lines; comm. by Nacciṅarkkiṉiyar)
8. Kuṟiṅcipāṭṭu (261 lines; comm. by Nacciṅarkkiṉiyar)
9. Paṭṭinappāḷai (301 lines; comm. by Nacciṅarkkiṉiyar)
10. Maḷaipaṭukatām (583 lines; comm. by Nacciṅarkkiṉiyar)

Complete List of Patiṅeṇ Kiḻkkanaṭku:

1. Nāḷaṭiyār (didactic, 400 stanzas; comm. by Patumaṅar, Tarumaṅar, etc.)
2. Nāṉmanikkaṭikai (didactic, anonymous comm.; 101 stanzas)
3. Inṭiṅāṟpatu (didactic, anonymous comm.; 40 stanzas)
4. Iṉiyavaināṟpatu (didactic, anonymous comm.; 40 stanzas)
5. Kārnāṟpatu (Akam, anonymous comm.; 40 stanzas)
6. Kaḷavaḻināṟpatu (Puṟam, anonymous comm.; 40 stanzas)
7. Aintiṇaiyaimpatu (Akam, anonymous comm.; 50 stanzas)
8. Aintinaiyelupatu (Akam, anonymous comm.; 69 stanzas)
9. Tiṇaimoḻiyaimpatu (Akam, anonymous comm.; 50 stanzas)
10. Tiṇaimālainūṟṟaimpatu (Akam, anonymous comm.; 154 stanzas)
11. Tirukkuṟaḷ (didactic, comm. by Maṇakkuṭavar, Parimēlaḻakar, etc.; 1330 couplets)
12. Ācārakkōvai (didactic, anonymous comm.; 100 stanzas)
13. Paḻamoḻi (didactic, anonymous comm.; 400 stanzas)
14. Ciṟupañcamūlam (didactic, anonymous comm.; 102 stanzas)
15. Mutumoḻikkāñci (didactic, anonymous comm.; 10 stanzas)
16. Ēlāti (didactic, anonymous comm.; 80 stanzas)
17. Kainnilai (Akam, anonymous comm.; 60 stanzas)
18. Tirikaṭukam (didactic, anonymous comm., 100 stanzas)
19. Inṅnilai (didactic; 45 stanzas)
**Complete list of the Paṇṇiru Tirumurai**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TM IV-VI:</td>
<td>2. Appar:</td>
<td><em>Tēvāram</em> (312 decades)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TM VII:</td>
<td>3. Cuntarar:</td>
<td><em>Tēvāram</em> (101 decades)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| TM VIII: | 4. Māṇikkavācakar: | *Tiruvācakam* (652 stanzas + 646 lines),  
*Tirukkōvaiyār* (400 stanzas; comm. by Pērāciriyar) |
| TM IX: | 5. Tirumāḷikaitēvar, |  
6. Karuvūrtēvar, |  
7. Pūnturutti Nampikātanampi, |  
8. Kaṇṭarāttittar, |  
9. Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ, |  
10. Tiruvāḷiyamutanār, |  
11. Puruṭottamanampi, |  
12. Cētirāyar: | *Tiruvicaippā* |
| TM X: | 13. Čentaṉār: | *Tiruvicaippā, Tiruppallānṭu* (301 stanzas) |
| TM XII: | 15. Tiruvālavāyūṭaśayaiyar: | *Tirumukappācuram* (12 lines) |
| 17. Aiyatikaḷ Kāṭavar Kōṅ: | *Kṣētirattiruvenpā* (24 stanzas) |
| 18. Čēramāṉ Perumāḷ: | *Ponvaṉṭattantāṭi, TirukkaiyāḷaṉāṆavulā, Ārūrmummanākkōvai* (135 stanzas + 190 lines) |
19. Nakkiratēvar: Kayilaipāti Kaḷattipātiyantāti, 
Tiruvīṅkōymalai, Eḻupatu, 
Tiruvalaṅcuḷi Mummaṇikkōvai, 
Tiruvelukārrirukkai, Peruntuṉvāppōṇi, 
Kōpappiracātam, Kār Eṭṭu, Pōrrī 
Tirukkalivenpā, 
Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai, 
Tirukaṇṇappatēvar Tirumaṟam (189 
stanzas + 725 lines)

20. Kallātatēvar: Tirukkanṭappatēvar Tirumaṟam (38 
lines)

Tiruviraṭṭaimaṇimeḷai, 
Civaperumāṉ 
Tiruviraṭṭaimaṇimeḷai, 
Civaperumāṉ Tiruvantāṭi (157 
stanzas)

22. Paranatēvar: Civaperumāṉ Tiruvantāṭi (101 
stanzas)

23. Ĭḷamperumāṉ Āṭikaḷ: Civaperumāṉ Tirumummaṇikkōvai 
(30 stanzas)

24. Atirāvatikaḷ: Mūttapiḷḷayār Tirumummaṇikkōvai 
(23 stanzas)

25. Paṭṭiṉattup Piḷḷaiyār: Köyil Nāṉmanimēḷai, Tirukkaḷumala 
Mummaṇikkōvai, Tiruvithaimarutūr 
Mummaṇikkōvai, 
Tiruvēkampamutaitāya Tiruvantāṭi, 
Tiruvorriyār Orupā Orupatu (192 
stanzas)

Tiruviraṭṭaimaṇimeḷai, Köyil 
Tiruppanṭiyar Viruttam, Tirutoṭṭar 
Tiruvantāṭi, Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār 
Tiruvantāṭi, Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār}
Tiruccaṇpaiviruttam Āḻuṭaiya
Pillaiyār Mummanikkōvai Āḻuṭaiya
Pillaiyār Tiruvulāmālai, Āḻuṭaiya
Pillaiyār Tirukkalāmpakam,
Āḻuṭaiya Pillaiyār Tiruttokai,
Tirunāvukkaracu Tēvar
Tiruvēkātaca Mālai (369 st./211 l.)

TM XII: 27. Ĉekkilār: Tiruttoṇṭar purāṇam = Periyapurāṇam (3634 st.)

Complete List of the Nāḷāyirat Tivyappirapantam

1. Poykaiyāḷvār: First Tiruvantāti (100 stanzas)
2. Pūtattāḻvār: Second Tiruvantāti (100 stanzas)
3. Pēyāḻvār: Third Tiruvantāti (100 stanzas)
4. Tirumaḷíciaiyā.: Tiruccantaviruttam, Nāṉmukam Tiruvantāti
   (220 stanzas)
5. Nammāḻvār: Tiruviruttam, Tiruvāciriyam, Periyatiruvantāti,
   Tiruvāymoil (1293 stanzas)
6. Periyāḻvār: Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi (473 stanzas)
7. Āṇṭāḷ: Tiruppāvai, Nācciyār Tirumoḻi (173 stanzas)
8. Tirumankaḷiyā.: Periyatirumoḻi, Tirukuṟuntāṇṭakam,
   Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam, Tiruvelukūṟṟirukkai,
   Ciriyatirumaṭal, Periyatirumaṭal (1152 stanzas)
9. Kulacēkaraṉā.: Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi (104 stanzas)
10. Tiruppāṇā.: Amalaṉātippirāṉ (10 stanzas)
11. Toṇṭaraṭipoṭiyā: Tirumāḷai, Tirupaḷḷiyeḻucci (55 stanzas)
12. Madhurakaviyā.: Kaṅminun Cīruttāmpu (11 stanzas)
   [13. Irāmānujanāṟṟantāti (108 stanzas)]
List of first-millennium “Epics” = Aimirunukappiyam

1. Cēlappatikāram (5246 lines; anon. comm., comm. by Atiyārkkunallār)
2. Manimēkalai (4856 lines)
3. Cīvaka Cintāmani (3145 stanzas; comm. by Naccinārkkiniyar)
4. Vālavaiyāpati [lost, except for some quotations]
5. Kuṇṭalakēci [lost, except for some quotations]

Peruṅkatai (ca. 16 000 lines)
Cuḷāmaṇi (2130 stanzas)
Nīlakēci (894 stanzas; comm. by Camayativākarar)

Further miscellaneous poetic works of the first millennium

Pāṇṭikkōvai (350 stanzas)
Muttollāyiram (107 stanzas)
Nantikkalampakam (113 stanzas)
Pāratāvenpā (339 stanzas)
[Kallātam (100 poems = 3337 lines)]
The Classical Tamil alphabet is not different from the modern one, except for one special rare letter called āytam (mostly used in sandhi). It is, like most Indian scripts, of an abugida type, that is, inherent in the consonant is the letter ஏ a unless canceled by a dot above the letter (puḷḷi). All other vowels are added to the consonant letter either with special characters or in consonant-vowel ligatures. The stand-alone vowel characters are restricted to the beginning of a verse. Except for gemination and nasals consonant clusters do not exist. Single consonants are voiced if intervocalic or preceded by a nasal, consonants at the beginning of a word and double consonants are unvoiced.

Vowels

<table>
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<tr>
<th>அ</th>
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Consonants

guttural: க் k இங் ň

palatal: ச் c இஞ் ŋ

retroflex: ட் ṭ இண் Ṉ இள் ṇ
dental: த் t இந் n

labial: ப் p இம் m

semi-vowel: ய் y இர் ṛ இல் ṓ இவ் v

alveolar: ற் ṛ இன் ṇ

retroflex proximant: ற் ṛ

āytam: க் k
Sandhi in Classical Tamil

Sandhi in Classical Tamil is a complicated and controversial issue, not only because much of it allows for alternatives, but also because there are in fact several sets of rules (the earliest from the *Tolkāppiyam Eluttatikāram*), and it is often not clear who is following which set. In under-marked Tamil palm-leaf notation it is sandhi in interaction with metre that helps resolve a good number of ambiguities in the script, while at the same time retaining others that will be lost in more modern notation. The most notable case is the oblique form in -இன் -iṉ, rendered in modern editions invariably as the locative -இல் -il, in sandhi both -இன் -iṉ. That is one reason why scribes and early editors painstakingly follow the rules, although it is not always clear which rules exactly. Text editions from the 1940s onwards have gradually done away with sandhi, up to present-day editions which keep just the bare-bone modern Tamil prose rules. [For earlier lists, see Andronov 1969, §§ 15-23, and Beythan 1943, §§ 21-28.]

The first rule that confuses students is that no word, or, properly speaking, no metrical foot (*cīr*), is allowed to begin with a vowel, except at the very beginning of a poem. For that reason the final consonant of any word at the end of a metrical foot is combined with a vowel beginning the next word/*cīr*.

**Vowel sandhi**

Final அ, ஆ, உ, ஊ, ஒ, ஓ (back vowels) both within the word and at word boundaries insert the glide -ஸ- -v- before any

---

1 This list is an elaboration of the original one made by Sascha Ebeling for the first CTSS.
other vowel: சேர்ப்ப சவாம்புமதி cērppa-v-ōmpumati, “Man from the coast, beware!”

Final ஈ, எ, ஐ, ஒ, ஐ, ஓ (front vowels) both within the word and at word boundaries insert the glide -y- before any other vowel: ககான்றை யிணர் koṉṟai-yiṇar, “cluster of laburnum”.

Elision of the final vowel is mostly restricted to final -u, counted as over-short unless at the end of a two-syllable word with short vowel and single consonant (திரு tiru, “Śrī”). The over-short final -u is elided before any vowel: வண்டு இனம் > வண்டினம் vaṇṭu + iṉam = vaṇṭiṉam, “swarm of bees”.

Overshort -u followed by -y- becomes over-short (metrically discounted) -i- plus -u- y-:

வண்டியிணை venkōṭṭiyāṉai “white tusked elephant”

Exceptions are made for two-syllable adjectives ending in -u, although not regarded as over-short in the grammatical tradition. Such an adjective if followed by a vowel has mostly two options, namely either lengthening its own vowel or doubling the consonant:

ciṟu + ilai > ciṟiṟai or ciṟīṟai, “small leaf”, but only aru + iravu > āriravu, “difficult night”.

The lengthening of the vowel also applies to some numerals and to the sociative suffix -oṭu:

oru peyar, “one name”, but orūr, “one village”

---

2 A rare and probably hypercorrect parallel is கான் + யாறு kāṉ + yāṟu > kāṉiyāṟu, “forest river”.
3 A rare additional possibility is ciṟiṟilai, possibly a precursor of the modern adjectival form ciṟiya.


sandhi

english pirappu, “seven births”, but eḻulaku, “seven worlds”

petaiyotu cēval, “the rooster with [his] female”, but pinaiyō tirai, “the Iralai stag with [its] doe”

exceptions are made for some monosyllabic adjectives and some pronouns:

cem + aṭi > cēvaṭi, “red foot”
cem + ilai > cēvilai, “red jewel”

vem + varai > vevvarai, “hot mountain”
a- iṭai > āyiṭai, “in between”

varukeṉṟāḷ may either be understood as varuku eṉṟāḷ, “she said ‘I will come’”, or as ātē or aḵtē, “that”

an exceptional vowel elision is made with an optative followed by any form of the quotative verb eṉṉutal, “to say”. the form varukeṉṟāḷ may either be understood as varuku eṉṟāḷ, “she said ‘I will come’”, or as ātē varuka eṉṟāḷ, “she said ‘you may come’”.

exceptional cases for -a merging with -a- are found in some particle combinations, such as maṟanta + aṉaiyēṉ, “I am like someone who has forgotten”.

consonant sandhi

the nasal ō m followed by a consonant assimilates within the word and at word boundaries into the class nasal:
Grammar of Old Tamil for Students

$m + k > ṇk$ perum + kuṟu $>$ perumkuṟu, “big hill”

$m + c > ñc$ am + cilampu $>$ aṅcilampu, “pretty anklet”

$m + t > nt$ kurum + tokai $>$ kuruntokai, “anthology of short [poems]”

In compounds or for a case relation final -м may be substituted by the gemination of the following consonant:

$m + k/c/t/p > kk/cc/tt/pp$ kamalam + kaṇ $>$ kamalakkaṇ “lotus eye”, ān ṇcilampu $>$ aṅcilampu, “pretty anklet”

Similarly, in compounds or for a case relation final -м may be dropped before ṣ- v- and ṣ- y-:

pukar muka(m) vēlam, “elephant bull with a spotted face”, kēṇa yāṉai, “forest elephant”.

Final -м followed by a nasal ṣ- m-, ṣ- n-, ṣ- ŋ- is simply dropped, unless -м is at the end of a monosyllabic word with a short vowel, in which case it is assimilated to the class nasal.

$m + m > m$ nāmam + māṟum $>$ nāmamāṟum “the name will change”

$m + n > n$ maram + nīṇṭatu $>$ maranīṇṭatu “the tree grew long”

$m + m > mm$ cem + maṇ $>$ cemmaṇ “red earth”

$m + n > nn$ vem + nīr $>$ vennīr “hot water”

$m + ŋ > ŋn$ tam + ŋāṉ $>$ tannel “their string”
The two further nasals possible in final position are retroflex -nants and alveolar -nant-nts.  

Word-final -nant-nt followed by -nt- t- or -nt- n- causes assimilation:

\[ n + t > \text{nt} \]  
\[ \text{கண்ட தண்டுறை} \text{ tonturai,} \]  
“cool ghat”

\[ n + n > \text{nn} \]  
\[ \text{கண்ணீர்} \text{ kaṇṇīr}, \]  
“tears”

The letter -nant-nt followed by -nt- k-, -nt- c-, or -nt- p- inside a word must become -nt-nt-nt- tk-, -nt-nt-nt- tc-, -nt-nt-nt- tp-, the same is optional at a word boundary: புண்டம் புண்டம் perum-puṇ ceṇṇi > புண்டம் புண்டம் perumpuṇ ceṇṇi, “Cenni with large ornaments”; கடும் கண் பன்ைி kaṭum kaṇ paṉṟi < கடுங்கட் பன்ைி kaṭuṅkaṭ paṉṟi, “fierce-eyed hog”.

Word-final -nant-nt followed by -nt- n- causes assimilation and additionally gemination, if at the end of a short monosyllabic word with a short vowel:

\[ n + n > \text{nn} \]  
\[ \text{என்கனஞ்ேம்} \text{ eṉṉeñcam}, \]  
“my heart”

Word-final -nant-nt followed by -nt- k-, -nt- c-, -nt- t-, -nt- p- occasionally may change:

\[ n + k > \text{rk} \]  
\[ \text{அைத்திற்} \text{ kaṟattir kākkum,} \]  
“that is guarded by dharma”, but நாைன் சகண்றம nāṭaṉ kēṇmai,  
“intimacy with the man from the land”

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4 An exception is the Caṅkam word verin, “back”.

\( n + t > \text{nr or rr} \quad \text{என் சதாைி} eṉ + tōḻi > \text{என்சைாைி} eṉṟōḻi, \text{"my friend"}, \text{ென்றுைந்து} nin turantu, \text{"abandoning you"}

\( n + p > \text{rp} \quad \text{இறும்பின் பாம்பு} iṟumpiṉ pāmpu > \text{இறும்பிற்} iṟumpiṟ pāṃpu, \text{"snake in the thicket"}, \text{தறைவன் பங்கன்} talaivaṉ pāṅkaṉ, \text{"the friend of the hero"}, \text{துன்பம்} tuṉpam, \text{"sorrow"}

Final -\( y \) can cause -\( m \)- to geminate: \( இம்மு பாங்கன் poy + moli > \text{இம்மும்மு poymmoți}, \text{"false word"}

Final -\( l \) can change into its class nasal or stop in quite an astonishing number of circumstances, many of them optional.

\( l + k > \text{rk} \quad \text{திரள்} tiraḷ - \text{கால் குவறை} kāl kuvaḷai > \text{திரள்காற்} tiraḷ - \text{குவறை} kuvaḷai, \text{"round-stemmed blue water-lily"}

\( l + c > \text{rc or nc} \quad \text{இல் கேைிப்பு} il + ceṟippu > \text{இற்கேைிப்பு} iṟceṟippu, \text{"being confined in the house"}; \text{மோல்} mel + cāyal > \text{மோல்கால்} mençāyal, \text{"soft beauty"}

\( l + p > \text{rp or up} \quad \text{நுதல்} nutal + pacappu > \text{நுதற்பேப்பு} nutaṟ pacappu, \text{"pallor of the forehead"}, \text{வல்} val + pulam < \text{வன்புைம்} vaṉpulam, \text{"hard soil"}

\( l + t > \text{r or nr or rr or kr} \quad \text{அறை} alal + tuṭaṅkiṉaḷ > \text{அறை} aḷaṟuṭaṅkiṉaḷ, \text{"she started to cry"}; \text{ஆன்} nal + tāy > \text{ஆன்யை} narrāy \text{"real mother"}; \text{அள்} al + tiṇai > \text{அள்ளை} aktiṇai, \text{"non-class" = neuter}

\( l + m > \text{nm} \quad \text{வேஒ} col + mālai > \text{வேஒ}mālai, \text{"word garland"}
$l + n > η$ or $η$  
$ή$νᾱτον  $νατον$  $νατον$  $νατον$, “stroking the forehead”;  
$η$νατον  $νατον$  $νατον$  $νατον$, “good mansion”

Final -$l$ changes into its class nasal or stop within a word or compound and optionally at word boundaries:

$l + k > tk$ or $nk$  
$η$καλ  $καλ$  $καλ$, “to the daughter”;  
$η$καλ  $καλ$, “white parasol”; but  
$η$καλ  $καλ$, “did she suffer?”

$l + c > tc$ or $nk$  
$ο$ταρ$ς$  $ταρ$  $ταρ$, bright  
$ο$ταρ$ς$  $ταρ$, bright glow”

$l + p > tp$ or $np$  
$κέτπα$  $κέτπα$, inf. of $κέτπα$  $κέτπα$, “to hear”;  
$κέτπα$  $κέτπα$, “an army with shining swords”;  
$κέτπα$  $κέτπα$, “fish-taking fishermen”;

$l + t > tt$ or $τ$  
$ο$ταρ$ς$  $ταρ$  $ταρ$, “sorrowful evening”

$l + m > nm$  
$π$λ$ίυλ$  $π$λ$ίυλ$  $π$λ$ίυλ$, “sorrowful evening”

$l + n > ηη$ or $η$  
$να$ν$υταλ$  $να$ν$υταλ$  $να$ν$υταλ$, “bright forehead”
Consonant gemination

\& k, \& c, \& t, \& p undergo gemination:
- after the accusative suffix -இ-ai.
- after the dative suffix -(உ-uk)ku.
- after -இ-u preceded by a double consonant (as in the oblique case).
- after the demonstrative clitics -அ- a-, -இ- i- and after -ே- e- (also after இந்த icta, அந்த anta, எந்த ena).
- after -அ-a of the infinitive.
- after -இ-i of the absolutive (including the forms இய் āy and சபாய் pōy).
- after -அ-ā of the positive absolutive:
  (அக்காடா குறுகி kaṇputaiyā-kuṟuki, “nearing [her], covering [her] eyes” AN 9.21).
- after -அ-ā of the negative peyareccam (relative participle):
  முதிராத்திங்கள் mutirātinkal, “immature moon”, AN KV.11.
- after monosyllabic words ending in a long vowel.
- in compounds (of karmadhāraya or genitive-tatpuruṣa kind) after mono- and disyllabic neuter nouns ending in a vowel or -ே-y, -ெ-r, -ொ-l: விடி-காடவு vīti-katavu “street door”, அமர்க்கண் amarkkan, “beautiful eyes”, கிளக்கண்கக்கு kīkkanaṇkku, “minor series”.

Gemination does not occur:

- after a finite verb form.

[- after -ā of the negative absolutive:

- after -ā of the negative absolutive: unṇā-pōṇāṁ “without having eaten, he went off”.]  

- after a vocative form.

- after an imperative singular (= verbal root).

- after the clitics -ē, -ō, -ā.

- after the (declension) endings -iliruntu, -ōtu, -iliruntu, -ōtu, -uṭaiya.

- after the pronouns itu, atu, etu, ivai, avai, evai, ni.

- after enña, ettanai, ellā, pala, cila.

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\footnote{This beautiful rule does not seem to conform with reality; a spot check in Akanāṇūṟu and Narīṇai revealed that there is about an even distribution of gemination and non-gemination.}
Grammar

So far no comprehensive grammar of classical Tamil has been published. Among the works dealing also with pre-modern morphology Beythan 1943 and Andronov 1969 can be named, the former being especially useful for its excellent paradigms of the verbal classes, but written in German.⁶ There are several grammars restricted to the Cankam corpus, the most voluminous being Rajam 1992 (without index). Specialised even further (on the Patigruppatu) but dealing extensively with the old verb forms is Aghostialingom 1979. Another sub-corpus (that of the poet Kapilar) is treated by Lehmann 1994, again in German. For a brief outline of Old Tamil language, see the article Lehmann 1998. None of them treats the far more important questions of syntax. One further drawback of all the existing grammars is that they had to rely on preliminary text editions with many forms edited out as dialectal or simply “wrong”. A comprehensive grammar based at last on the forthcoming critical editions is under preparation in Pondicherry. The goal of the present work, however, is to give an overview of both morphology and syntax of the Tamil language of the first millennium for didactic purposes into the hands of students.

Nouns

1. Word Classes and Basic Inflection

Old Tamil knows three stages of noun inflection for marking case relations. The first stage is the zero mark that may correspond to the nominative of Indo-Aryan systems, which is used for the subject. But

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⁶ Although conceived rather as a manual on later premodern formal Tamil, many old forms are included in Beythan’s book, if in footnotes, and his extensive remarks on syntax remain useful to this day.
since Early Old Tamil prefers to denote case relation by word-order, zero marking can signify any other case too. The second stage is the oblique minimally marked by gemination of the final consonant, by an oblique stem in போட்டு -ttu for words ending in -ம் -m, or by doubling of the last consonant (mostly for words ending in டு/று -ṭu/-ṟu), or by the oblique suffix -இன் -iṉ. The suffix -இன் -iṉ may also be added (as a sort of double oblique mark), to any of the others. 7 This marks a case other than nominative and is liberally employed. 8

The third stage, then, is the actual explicit marking for case, partly with the help of suffixes, partly with the help of postpositions. For some cases the fluidity is enormous, and some are hardly ever marked.

1.1 Nouns

1.1.1 Cases/Non-marking of Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zero</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(voc.)</td>
<td>= nom. or loss of ending in m.sg.: நாைன் &gt; நாை or நாைா nāṭaṉ &gt; nāṭa or nāṭā “oh man from the land” 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oblique</td>
<td>-இன் -iṉ: நிைவு - நிைவின் nilavu - nilaviṉ, “moonlight”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

7 Another possible placeholder for the case suffix in metrical texts is the oblique of the 3rd person personal and reflexive pronoun அரேன் தன்றன aracaṉ taṉṉai, “the king(acc.)”.
8 This was never conceptualised in the Tamil grammatical tradition because already the Tolkāppiyam implements the Sanskrit case system of seven cases in order to describe Tamil.
9 Nouns in -அ-ai may have a vocative in -அய் -ay: அன்றன aṉṉai > அன்றய் aṉṉāy “o mother”; later the final syllable may be lengthened: பெடாைி tōḻi > பெடாைீ tōḻī or பெடாைீஇ tōḻīi, “o [you with a] forehead”, பெடாைீீி pētaikāḷ > பெடாைீீிீி pētaikāḷ, “o foolish girls”.

The only case marked fairly regularly is the dative, corresponding to the indirect object. Additional functions are the dative of direction and the frequent possessive still found in modern Tamil (māṟku āḷ, “servant of Māl”).

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10 The official locative postposition -il (derived from the noun il, “house”), ubiquitously printed by modern editors where due to sandhi is falls together with the oblique in -iṟ, is in fact a late-comer in the texts, as can be seen from the fact that the three old Akam anthologies (KT, NA, AN) contain less than a dozen definitive cases.

11 Comparative means here a simple comparative particle, often combined with others such as aṉṉa: ṛāliṟṟai kālin ceṟṟu, “gone like the wind” (NA 249.1), kāliṉ ceṉṟu aṉṉa, “like a tendril” (AN 9.2).
Locative is frequently marked, either by its case suffix or by a large number of postpositions, the majority of which also occur as regular nouns with a clear semantic meaning. Among the remaining cases sociative is the only one found more often than occasionally; besides by -ஓடு -ōtu (in sandhi before vowel -ஓ -ō) it can also be expressed by -ஒடு -oṭu. Instrumental, for instrument and for reason, may be marked in -ஆல் -āl or -ஆன் -āṉ (frequently falling together in sandhi); rarely a sociative suffix has instrumental meaning and vice versa. Accusative -ai, the case of the direct object is rarely marked (which is still true in modern Tamil for the inanimate direct object). One reason for marking it is deviation from the regular word order of Subject – Object. The genitive, too, is rarely marked, and the ablative has entered the official Tamil case system only because it is there in Sanskrit and is predominantly represented by the comparative suffix -இன் -iṉ. Late in the first millennium there is an occasional vinaiyeccam நின்று -niṟu freezing into a postposition that expresses the idea of moving away from something (literally “after having staid in x”), followed by the modern -இலிருந்து -iliruntu based on a similar semantics (having been in x”).

In a passive construction the agent may be marked by an instrumental (late: TVM 8.8.11.2f. திருமால் | arulappaṭṭa caṭakōpaṉ, “Caṭakōpan who is graced by Tirumāl”), and with a neuter singular verbal noun the agent may be marked by a dative, possibly developed out of the possessive dative (Poy 10.1-3 மண்ணும் மறையும் மைி கைலும் மாருதமும் | விண்ணும் விழுங்கியது … maṇṇum malaiyum mari kaṭalum mārutamum | viṇṇum viḻuṅkiyatu … āḻiyāykku, “Earth, mountain, churning sea, wind and sky were swallowed … by you with the discus”).
1.1.2. Types of Nouns – List of Nominal Suffixes

Noun formation and the types of suffixes employed are an understudied area; both morphological and semantic studies are as good as absent. The only list of suffixes in the available grammars is found in Zvelebil 1967. The list below is without doubt incomplete, and explanations of use are rather simplistic. As far as genders are concerned, Tamil distinguishes only “high-class” (uyar-tiṇai), that is, animate, as male and female, and low-class “low-class” (aktiṇai), that is, everything else including abstract nouns, as neuter. The notion of being male or female is generally expressed by the pronominal secondary suffixes (see below), but a few nouns have special m. or f. endings.

root nouns

Very common are nominal stems that are identical to verbal roots: அணி aṇi, “to adorn/adornment”; சுைர் cuṭar, “to glow/glow”

A minimal modification is the occasional verbal root with lengthened vowel: பெறு pēṟu, “to obtain” – பேறு pēṟu, “benefit”

primary suffixes:

-உ/வு -(v)u forming neuter nouns often freely variable with -am

-ஆம -am நெேம்/ேம் neñcu/neñcam, “heart”

-ஆ -ā often freely variable with -u: நிலவிக/நிலா nilavu-nilā, “moonlight”

-அன் -an distinction (sometimes free varitation with -am): நலம் nalam, “goodness, beauty”, but நலன் nalan, “virginity”

(-அர -ar forming adjectives: காமர் kāmar, desirable)
-ொேி -ul forming neuter nouns; less productive: கேயுள் ceyul, “metrical text”, பாயுள் paiyul, “sorrow”, விலையுள் vilaiyul, “produce” (NA 45.9)

-புறேி/பேி -v/cc/tt)i forming feminine nouns: புறேி/பேி pullacci, “washer woman”, பானேி/பேி paṇaittōli, “she with bamboo shoulders”

-i forming masculine agent nouns: என்றி eniti, “holder” (in bhakti)

-வு/(ப்)பு -vu/(p)pu forming abstract nouns from verbal roots: கேயு/கேய்பு ceyu/ceypu, “doing”,

-வய -vai forming abstract nouns from verbal roots: அலவை alavai, “measure”

-வுய -mai forming nouns (in fact to tradition the basic form from which adjectives are derived): பெருமை perumai, “greatness”, அருமை arumai, “difficulty”, but also used on verbal roots அன்றம் āṇmai, “courage”, உறைமை utaimai, “possession”

-சேி -c(ци forming abstract nouns: கேய்கேி ceykai, “action”, வழ்க்கேி vāḻkkai, “livelihood”

-சேி -c(ci forming abstract nouns: புனர்சேி puṇarcci, “union”

-சேி -t(ци forming abstract nouns: கேய்சேி ceyti, “action”

-அல்/(த்)தல் -al/(t)tal forming verbal nouns12: புணர்ல்/புணர்சேி puṇaral/ceyal/ceyttal, “to do“, புணர்சேி/புணர்ல் puṇaral/puṇarcci

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12 The verbal noun in -இல் -tal is the traditional form used to refer to a verb in the grammatical tradition. Note that the short form in -ல் -al is homophonous with the negative root imperative: கேயல் ceyal can be “to do” or “don’t do”.

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secondary suffixes:

The main types of secondary suffix are the so-called pronominal suffixes usually alternating between short and long vowels in almost all cases. In noun formation they are used for masculine, feminine and honorific in the type of pronominal nouns that are lexicalised: அந்தணன் antanān, “brahmin”, விறன் vinaivar, “workers”; the feminine often rather adopts the ending -இ for this type of noun: கல்வன் kalvan “robber”, but கல்வி kalvi, “female robber”. Note that also participial nouns are frequently lexicalised (cf. the introduction to Verbs below).

It is also with their help that singular and plural are marked. Marking of plural is optional, especially in the case of neuter. Old Tamil does not distinguish in high-class, that is, with animated nouns, between honorific and plural; the suffix -ார/-ஆர -ar/-ār denotes both and the decision has to be made by context. From bhakti times onwards the modern plural suffix -கள் -kal filters in, first with neuters, then also with animate beings. For a long time it was possible to combine honorific and plural suffixes.

Their second function is with participial nouns, a very important category in Old Tamil syntax, as well as with the type of pronominal nouns which are not lexicalised, but used to creatively form predicate nouns in a sort of denominative, called kurippuviṇai, “verb by intention” in the Tamil tradition. For both these formations the whole range of persons, numbers and genders is employed.
sg.

1. -எ/ஏ -en/-ēn
2. -i, -ஆய் -āy, -ஐ -ai, -ஓய் -ōy
3.m. -ஆன், -வான் -āṉ, -வொன் -ōṉ
3.f. -ஆள், -வாள் -āḷ, -வொள் -ōḷ
3.n. -(அ)து -(a)tu

pl.

1. -ஆம்/-ஆம் -ām/-ēm, -எம்/-எம் -em/-ēm, -ஓம்/-ஓம் -ōm/-ēm
2. -இர்/-இர் -īr/-īr (இறகள் -īrkaḷ, மீர் -mīr, மீர்கள் -mīrkaḷ)
3.h. -அர்/-ஆர் -ar/-ār, -எர்/-எர் -or/-ōr (எர் -mar, எர் -mār)
   (pl. -கள் kal, -ஆர்கள்/ஆர்கள் ārkaḷ/ārkaḷ)
3.n. -அ/ஐ -a/-ai (pl. -கள் kaḷ)

irr. feminine plural: மகைிர் makaḷir, கபண்டிர் peṇṭir, “women”; irr. pl. கேளிர் kēḷir, “relatives”

Note that in any ending, pronominal or verbal, the distinction between long and short எ/ஏ e/ē, ஒ/ஓ o/ō is an arbitrary one, since the length of these vowels was not marked in Tamil palm-leaf manuscript notation. Modern editors chose ad libitum. The existence of the dichotomy, however, is supported by the fact that we have a visible variance between அ/ஆ a/ā and இ/ஈ i/ī.

There remains a small group of suffixes that are used for the formation of secondary verbal nouns, namely perfective and negative ones:

-அறம -amai செய்தறம cey-tu-amai, “the having done”
-றம -mai செய்யாறம cey-y-āmai, “the not doing, not having done”

13 The pl. suffix -kal (in 2nd and 3rd person) can take a lengthened vocative form -kāḷ.
1.1.3. Indo-Aryan Loan Words

From the earliest attested texts onwards Tamil admitted loan words from Indo-Aryan, both Sanskrit and Prakrit. Vaidyanathan 1971 collected the ones occurring in Old Tamil (for him the Caṅkam corpus, the Kilkkanakku and the Cilappatikāram), but since he lists only one occurrence per word it is impossible to gain a realistic impression of frequency and distribution. Burrow/Emeneau’s *Dravidian Borrowings from Indo-Aryan* has a broader textual outlook but is a very slim volume and only scratches the surface. The first real statistics come with the glossaries to the critical editions of the Caṅkam corpus. It is obvious that the number of loans increases over time and virtually explodes with the bhakti works.

Rules for assimilating Sanskrit to Tamil have been laid down in the 12th-century grammar *Vīracōḻiyam*. Many derivations are fairly transparent and regular, others are markedly less so, one of the famous examples being Skt. *asura* - > Tamil அவுணன் *avuṇaṉ*. A few remarks may suffice here.

The first obvious consequence from borrowing is a loss of information, because Tamil in writing does not distinguish between voiced and unvoiced consonants and it does not have aspirates:

\[
\begin{align*}
k, \text{kh, g, gh} & \rightarrow \& k & \text{sanga-}, \text{sangha-}, \text{sāṅkha-} & > \text{தம்ம} \text{ caṅkam, “union – congegration – conch”} \\
c, \text{ch, j,jh} & \rightarrow \& c & \text{icchā-} & > \text{இச்றே iccai, “wish”} \\
\text{ṭ, th, d, dh} & \rightarrow \& t & \text{dāma-} + \text{dhāman-} & > \text{தம்ம tāmam, “string – site”} \\
\text{p, ph, b, bh} & \rightarrow \& p & \text{bali-} & > \text{பலி pali, “offering”} \\
\text{s, s} & \rightarrow \& c & \text{śiva-} & > \text{சிவன் civaṉ, “lord Śiva”}
\end{align*}
\]
Prakrit influence is betrayed by the weakening of intervocalic consonants that could be represented in Tamil: gopāla- > கொவல் kōval, “cowherd”; bhuja- > புயம் puyam, “arm”; Skt. kṛṣṇa- > Pkt. kaṇha- > கண்ணன் kaṇṇaṉ, “lord Kṛṣṇa”.

Among the vowels, Sanskrit e and o are represented in Tamil by the long vowels ஏē and ஒō, while Skt. vocalic r̥ is lost: amṛta- > அமுதம்/அமிர்தம் amutam/amirtam, “ambrosia”; vṛtta- > விருத்தம் viruttam, “circle”.

However, Tamil has one more nasal than Sanskrit, the alveolar ṇ and many Sanskrit intervocalic nasal n are depicted by a Tamil alveolar: avani- > அவனி avaṉi, “earth”; dana- > தனம் taṉam, “wealth”. Occasionally a Sanskrit r is rendered not by Tamil ṛ r but by ṍ r̥: sthira- > திரம் tiṟam, “firmness”.

Since Tamil does not begin words with ṛ r or Ṽ l, corresponding Sanskrit items are prefixed with அ- a-, இ- i- and உ- u-, depending on the surrounding phonemes: rakṣasa- > அரக்கன் arakkaṉ, “demon”; rāma- > இராமன் irāmaṉ, “Rāma”; roma- > ருமணம் urōmam, “hair”; loka- > உலகம் ulakam, “world”; lankā- > இலங்கை ilankai, “Srilanka”.

Consonant clusters are simplified along the lines already in practice by the Prakrits, the two most frequent strategies being assimilation and insertion of vowel glides, although especially in the beginning of the word consonants may simply be dropped: kṣema- > ஏமம் ēmam, “protection”; jñāna- > ஞானம் ñāṉam, “knowledge”;

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14 Initial sybilant or h- may be lost in borrowing.

A rarer choice is metathesis: agni- > அங்கி� aṅkī, “fire”.

Many important words can have several forms: Śrī > திரு tiru, cirī, cī, “the goddess Śrī”.

Since Tamil has a far more restricted use for genders and since the whole system of nominal inflection is much more straightforward, nominal endings are simplified:

- -a and consonantal stems > -am/-u, for m. eventually -aṉ:
  அரசு/அரேன் aracu/aracaṉ, “king”
  -ā (f.) > -ai n.: senā > சென்றை cēṉai, “army”
  -i, -ī (m./n./f.), -in > -i (m./n./f.): nadī > சேறன nati, “river”
  -u, -ū (m./n./f.) > -u (n.) madhu- > மது matu, “honey”

One concomittant is the shortening of words, especially if they have many syllables: parama- > பரம், பரன் param, paraṉ, “the highest, God”

Another frequent strategy besides borrowing are calques, and terminologically important words may have both: sūtra- > சூத்திரம் cūttiram, “aphorism” and நூல் nūl, “text” (literally both sūtra and nūl mean “thread”); veda- > வைத்திரம் marai, “Veda”; karman- > கருமம் karumam and விவை viṉai, “(past) deeds”; artha- > பொருள் porul, “wealth - meaning”.

As is to be expected, many words change meaning, thus creating “false friends” for students moving from Sanskrit to Tamil: kavi- “poet” > கவி kavi “poem”, lakṣaṇa- “what explains” > இலக்கனம் ilakkanam “grammar” paired with laksya- “what is to be explained” > இலக்கியம் ilakkiyam “poetry”.
Verbs are moving over rather late and are always borrowed into the 11th class of strong verbs: *vañjsp* > *vañcittal*, “to deceive”; *cint > cintittal*, “to think”.
1.2 Pronouns

Personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>base form</th>
<th>oblique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st sg.</td>
<td>யான் yāṉ, later: நான் nāṉ</td>
<td>நான் nāṉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd sg.</td>
<td>நின் niṉ</td>
<td>நின் niṉ, later: உன் uṉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd sg.</td>
<td>தான்/தாம் tāṉ/tām</td>
<td>தான்/தாம் tāṉ/tām</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pl.</td>
<td>உம்/நம் um/nam (excl.), எம்/நம் em/nam</td>
<td>உம்/நம் um/nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pl.</td>
<td>நார்/நும் nār/nam, நியிர் nīyir</td>
<td>நும் num</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pl.</td>
<td>தம்/தாம் tam/tām</td>
<td>தம் tam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The system of personal pronouns is simple and stable; only the first person singular base form (யான் yāṉ, “I”) and the second person singular oblique (நின் niṉ, “your”) are slowly taken over by நான் nāṉ and உன் uṉ respectively from bhakti times onwards, although for many centuries both forms are used side by side.

The third person pronoun தான்/தாம் tāṉ/tām functions for all genders and the plural can also be used for the honorific. It is also used as a reflexive pronoun, gradually being weakened down to the modern-day emphatic: அரேன் தான் aracaṉ tāṉ, “the king himself” – “the king!”.

The personal pronouns, occasionally in Kalittokai and Paripāṭal but more visibly in the bhakti corpus, have a tendency to mark the genitive (எனது eṉatu, நினது/உனது niṉatu/uṉatu, etc.) and even to use a short form (என eṉa, நின/உன niṉa/uṉa, etc.) to mark a genitive with a plural object:

Tē 3.4.1.2 உன கைல் கதாழுது எழுசவன்
your(pl.) anklet worshipped rise-I
“I rise in worship of your anklet[ted feet].”

demonstrative and interrogative pronouns

The demonstrative pronoun knows three degrees of deixis, close to the speaker (இ- i-), something like the other side of the table (உ- u-), and further off (அ- a-), of which the intermediate does not much survive Caṅkam times. The corresponding interrogative is எ- e-, in some forms ஆ- y-.

These stems can simply be used in the adjectival position as proclitic vowels (அம்மரம் a-m-maram, “that tree”; இவ்வுைகு i-vv-ulaku, “this world”), but there is a corresponding system of full forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m.sg.</th>
<th>f.sg.</th>
<th>n.sg.</th>
<th>3.h./pl.</th>
<th>n.pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>இ- i-</td>
<td>அம்மரம் ivaṉ</td>
<td>அம்மரம் ivaṉ</td>
<td>அம்மரம் ivaṉ</td>
<td>அம்மரம் ivaṉ</td>
<td>அம்மரம் ivaṉ</td>
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<tr>
<td>உ- u-</td>
<td>அம்மரம் uvaṉ</td>
<td>அம்மரம் uvaṉ</td>
<td>அம்மரம் uvaṉ</td>
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<tr>
<td>அ- a-</td>
<td>அம்மரம் avan</td>
<td>அம்மரம் avan</td>
<td>அம்மரம் avan</td>
<td>அம்மரம் avan</td>
<td>அம்மரம் avan</td>
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<tr>
<td>எ- e-</td>
<td>அம்மரம் evan</td>
<td>அம்மரம் evan</td>
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</table>

15 Note that for these forms the sandhi is special in that the glide before a vowel is always ய and always doubled. The modern adjectival form அந்த anta and இந்த inta are rarely found from bhakti times onwards.
Forms in *a*- stand in if the third person pronoun needs to specify gender (அவன் avaru, “that man” or simply “he”). Only the neuters form a separate oblique stem (sg. இதன் itaṉ, அதன் ataṉ, pl. இவற்று ivaṟṟu, அவற்று avaraṉu), in all other cases the base form is identical to the oblique. The indefinite/universal pronoun is formed by adding the enclitic coordinative -um: யாரும் yārum, “anybody, everybody”. The same can be done with nouns: நாள் nāḷ, “day” > நாளும் nāḷum “daily”. A postposition with a similar function is இடம்ப(ு)/forum(מ) toṟum(m), to be added to nouns (அவள் தொழ்லும் nāḷum, “every day”)16, but also to verbal roots: காண்கைாறும் kāṇ-toṟum, “whenever seeing”. The short form seems to be chosen in cases where the compound yields a full metrical foot, the long form when the noun to be modified already corresponds to a cīr: வாகல் சதாறும் vaikal tōṟum, “every day” (KT 298.3); கொரு toru followed by a vowel also changes to சதாறு tōṟu.17

In order to emulate a Sanskrit relative construction, the அ- a- stem can be juxtaposed to the அ- e- stem (yad ~ யாது yātu – அது attu).18

16 Rhetorically the same effect can be achieved by repeating a noun: நாட்டின் நாட்டின் ஊாின் ஊாின் | குடிகுடித் குடிகுடித் சதாின் | “If [we] search [him] in land by land, village by village, hamlet by hamlet ...”

17 An alternative to toṟu with a verbal root is repeated verbal root or abstract noun plus உைி uḻi: கேலுைி celuḻi, “wherever she goes” (AN 49.15). Note, however, that உைி uḻi can also be used with an absolutive for a temporal clause (cf. chapter 4).

18 An early example is found in Poy 44.1 தமர் உகந்தது எவ்வுருவம் அவ்வுருவநம் tamar ukantatu e uruvam a uruvam tāṉē, “whatever forms delights his people is just the form”, i.e., the forms Viṣṇu manifests himself in.
A number of temporal, spatial and modal adverbs are connected with the three stems (the list is not complete!):

here/there: இவ/உவ/அவ iva/uva/ava
          இவண்/அவண் ivan/avan,            இங்கண்/ஆங்கண் īṅkaṇ/āṅkaṇ,
          இங்கனம்/ஆங்கனம் īṅkaṇam/āṅkaṇam,       இங்கை/ஆங்கை īṅkai/āṅkai
here/there/where? இங்கு/அங்கு/ஆங்கு/யாங்கு īṅku/āṅku/ūṅku/yāṅku
and thus/how?    inku/īṅku/āṅku/ūṅku/yāṅku
where?:          யான்டு yāṇṭu
in between:      ஆயிறை āyiṭai
beyond:         அம்பர் umpar
before:          அண்ணம்/வண்ணம்/உண்ணம் āṇṇam/vaṇṇam/ūṇṇam
like this/like that/     இங்ஙனம்/ஆங்ஙனம்/எங்ஙனம் īṅṅaṉam/aṅṅaṉam/eṅṅaṉam,
in which manner:   இங்கனம்/அங்கனம்/எங்கனம் īṅkaṇam/aṅkaṇam/eṅkaṇam,
what, why:         எ(ன்)றன e(ṉ)ṉai
how much:          எறன eṉai
today, that day:   இன்று/இன்றை iṉṟu/iṉṟai, அன்று/அன்றை aṉṟu/aṉṟai
when?, always:     ஏனு ஏனை enu enum
now:              இனி īṇi
even now, again:   இன்றும் iṉṉu

19 In an attributive position before a noun இன்று inru and அன்று anru have the rare alternate (adjectival?) forms இற்றை irṟai and அற்றை arṟai: இற்றைத் திங்கள் arṟait tinkal, “that day’s moon” (PN 112.1).
In addition to these, there are the pronominal-adjectival stems இ(ன்)றன/அ(ன்)றன i(ṉ)ṉai/a(ṉ)ṉai which form a full paradigm of persons and numbers expressing that something/someone is like this (i-) or like that (a-): குதல் அனாயல் kūṭal anayāl, “she who is like Maturai”. The most frequent forms for neuter singular and neuter plural are இற்று/அற்று iṟṟu/aṟṟu and இன்ன/அன்ன iṉṉ/aṉṉa, the latter of which can also be used adverbially (“thus”), and அன்ன aṉṉa is one of the more frequent particles of comparison (“like”). Moreover the அ(ன்)றன a(ṉ)ṉai stem can merge with a perfective verbal stem to form a peyareccam compound:

KT 106.6   தான் மணந்தறனயம் என விடுகம் தூசத
tāṉ maṇantaṉaiyam eṉa viṭukam tūtē
he united-such-we say(inf.) send-we(sub.) messageē
“Let us send a message to say we are [still] like when he united with [us].”

A few more pronominal adjectives exist: பல் pal, ”many”; விள் cil, “few” பிற pira, “other”; மரு maru, “other”; வரு vēru, “other, different”
1.3 Adjectives

Old Tamil has a limited number of “real”, simple adjectives, but a variety of techniques for marking a noun as an adjective. All of them have in common that they cannot be directly looked up in a dictionary, since they are all perceived as noun derivates (for அரு aru, cf. அருறம arumai, etc.). The simplest manner is to put another noun in attributive position directly before another noun.

The most frequent Old Tamil adjectives are:

- அரு aru, “rare, difficult precious”
- காது kaṭu, “fast, fierce, harsh”
- சிரு ciru, “small, little”
- இறு iru, “big; dark”
- பூரு peru, “big, great”
- குறு kuru, “short”
- செது netu, “long”
- முது mutu, “old”
- நறு naṟu, “fragrant”
- காரு karu, “black”
- செம cem, “red”
- பசு pacu, “green”
- வெல vel, “white”
- இலila, “young”
- பால pal, “old”
- தா taṭa, “broad, large”
- நல nal, “good”
- தொல tol, “old”
The following seven are the established techniques for adjective formation:

1. adj. with consonant stem:  ❲ tamil ❯ nal-l-ā, “good cow”
2. adj. in -u/-a + class nasal:  ❲ tamil ❯ aruñ-curam, “difficult desert”
3. verbal root as adj.:  ❲ tamil ❯ uyar-varai, “high mountain”
4. noun in attributive position:  ❲ tamil ❯ kuṇṭu-nīr, “deep water”
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5 noun + suffix -a:

6 noun + suffix -am:

[7 modern form:]

A comparative is not expressed by changing the form of the adjective, but the preceeding noun takes the comparative suffix -iṉ plus -um: nilattinum peritē, vāninnum uyantantu ... aṉpu, “bigger than the earth, higher than the sky is love (KT 3.1+4). Equal degree in quality is expressed by simple -iṉ without -um: kūntaliṉ nariya ... pū, “flowers as fragrant as the tresses” (KT 2.4f.).
1.4 Adverbs

Old Tamil has six strategies of forming adverbs, in addition to the pronominal adverbs already discussed, and a very small number of “natural” adverbs, without etymology or cognate forms: நனி nani, “much”, தவா tava, “very”.

1. Any adjective used in the neuter form either singular or plural can stand for an adverb: சிறு ciritu, “a little” (KT 14.6), காதி kātiya, “loudly” (KT 194.3).

The oblique form is also possible, sometimes even a double oblique: நுண்ணிதின் nuṇṇitiṉ, “subtly” (KT 167.6); எைிதனின் eḷitaṉiṉ, “easily” (NA 239.3).

2. In isolated cases we see what looks like the dative of an adjective: நற்கு naṟku, “well”.

3. The enclitic particle -ē can be added to an adjective to form the adverb: வல்லா vallē, “strongly”.

4. The infinitive -என eṉa of the quotative verb என்னுதல் eṉṉutal, “to speak”, is not only employed in the formation of ideophones (see below), but also of adverbs: தாண்ட எனை taṇṇeṉa, “cool”.

5. Infinitives can be used as adverbs. Some of them are frozen and lexicalised as such: மிக mika, “much”. But they are also used productively: வர்ஷு irappa, “exceedingly” (NA 338.4).

6. Absolutives can be used as adverbs, especially when they stand in concatenation with another absolutive: விறர இ வரை viraii, “fragrantly” (KT 62.2).

For want of a better place we may add here the small number of nouns that are used as postpositions or adverbs of position:
Note that முன் muṉ and பின் pin have a number of alternate forms such as: முன்னர் muṉṉar, பின்னர் pinṉar, பின்றை pinṟai, etc.
1.5. Numerals

cardinal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjectival</th>
<th>Vowel Sandhi</th>
<th>Predicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ஒரு (oru)</td>
<td>ஒர் (or)</td>
<td>ஒன்று (onru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. இரு (iru)</td>
<td>இர் (ir)</td>
<td>இரண்டு (irantu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. மூ (mu)</td>
<td>மூ (mū)</td>
<td>மூன்று (mūṟu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. நால் (nāl)</td>
<td>நாலு (nālu)</td>
<td>நான்கு (nāṅkku)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ஐ (ai)</td>
<td>ஐம் (aim)</td>
<td>ஐந்து (aintu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. அறு (aṟu)</td>
<td>ஆற் (āṟ)</td>
<td>ஆறு (aṟu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. எழு (eḻu)</td>
<td>ஏழ் (ēḻ)</td>
<td>ஏழு (ēṭṭu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. எண் (eṇ)</td>
<td>ஏண் (ēṇ)</td>
<td>ஏண்டு (ēṇṭu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. ஒன்பது (onpatu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. பது (patu)</td>
<td>பத்து (pattu)</td>
<td>பதின் (patiṉ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. பதிகனாரு (patinoru)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100. நூறு (nūṟu)</td>
<td>நூற்று (nūṟṟu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>200. இருநூறு (irunūṟu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>900. தொல்லாயிரம் (tollāyiram)</td>
<td>தொல்லாயிரம் (tollāyirattu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000. அயிரம் (āyiram)</td>
<td>அயிரத்து (āyirattu)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ordinal: ஒன்று (onṟu), ஒன்றாவது (onṟāvatu)

When numbers are put in juxtaposition, the rule of thumb is that bigger numbers followed by smaller number have to be added,
smaller numbers followed by bigger number have to be multiplied: Pū 41.1 ṕūṅṟum muṭi ṕuṅṟum muṭi ēḻum mūṉṟum muṭi −aṉaittum, all the seven [plus] three heads” but Poy 35.3f. ēṟ maṟṟum maṟṟum ēṟ aintu muṭiyāṉ, “he with twice five heads”. Sanskrit numerals are borrowed freely from bhakti times onwards.

The numeral oru/ōr has a number of special usages. It may function as an indefinite article (“a”), but also as an attribute (“unique”). Moreover, from bhakti times on the sandhi form ēr may be used even if the following word starts with a consonant.
1.6. Ideophones

Old Tamil has a very special formation in what has recently been termed ideophones [Chevillard 2004], formerly called onomatopoeia, though only a minority among them are based on sound imitation. They consist of one or more syllables with often, though not always unclear semantic meaning combined with the quotative verb என்று என்று eṉṟu eṉtaḷ, “to say”, in any of its forms. This means they are not only used as adverbs (abs. -என்று -eṉru or inf. -என -eṉa), although that is by far most common usage, but also as adjectives (verbal root -என -eṉ or peyareccam -என்று -eṉṟa) or even as finite verbs. This flexible type is not to be confused with poetic refrain words found in bhakti songs and often also with an onomatopoeic elements, such as தலேலோ tālēlō (Periyāḻvar fourth decade). Some ideophones also take other forms such as குக்கூ kukkū, denoting the call of the rooster. Also, exclamations exist, as in any language, and they might be closer to ideophones than to particles, because they usually have an emotive and onomatopoeic value. For lament, for example, there is the old அன்சதா aṉṉō and the bhakti-time அன்சோ aṉṟō.

The most common ideophones are:

- அம்மேன ammeṉ denoting something overfull
- இம்மேன immeṉ denoting a humming sound
- இலுமேன ilumeṉ denoting noise or sweetness
- ஓயேன oyyen expressing urgency
- ஒல்லேன ollen denoting sound
- கடுமேன katumen denoting quickness
- கம்மேன kammen denoting silence
- கல்லேன kallen denoting excitement or noise
கிடிகன்  kiṭiṉeṉ  denoting tinkling

ஞரேரன்  ñerēreṉ  denoting suddeness

தண்கணன்  taṇṇeṉ  denoting coolness

தவ்கவன்  tavveṉ  denoting heat

துைககன்  tuṭkeṉ  denoting alarm

துடுகமன்  tuṭumeṉ  denoting something falling into water

துண்கணன்  tuṇṇeṉ  denoting 1. startling 2. fright 3. suddenness

நள்கைன்  naḷḷeṉ  denoting silence

புல்கைன்  pullen  denoting futility/emptiness
1.7. **Particles**

Particles belong to the least understood element of Old Tamil syntax, where they were one strategy, in coordination with word order, of marking sentence structures, periods, modes, moods, etc. [A detailed discussion can be found in Wilden 2006]. The system is already disintegrating in the younger parts of the *Caṅkam* corpus itself and only partly understood in the grammatical tradition (where a certain amount of confusion prevails between what is semantically empty and what is without function, both called *acai*, “expletive”). For many particles today we have no idea what their function might have been, and some of them do not have a sufficient number of occurrences to venture a sustainable hypothesis. For a few basics, see Chapters 16+17 under syntax.

Just for illustrating the numbers, what follows is an (incomplete) list of particles from the *Caṅkam* and bhakti corpus; many of them may also combine into particle clusters such as க்கால்சைா தில்ை kollō:

- அம்மம் *amma* - lament; invitation of attention
- அசரா *arō* - ?
- ஆ *ā* - interrogative (late)
- ஆர் *ār* - ?
- ஆல் *āl* - assertive
- ஆக் *ikā* - ?
- ஏ *ē* - sentence-final; focalising; interrogative (late)
- ஓ *ō* - interrogative
- அககொல *kol* - interrogative
- அககொன் *kon* - ?
- தில் *til* - wish
- திலா *tilla* - wish
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தையா  teyya  admonition
மற்று  maṟṟu  adversative; ?
மன்  maṉ  assertive
மன்ற  maṉra  assertive
மாது  mātu  ?
மாதா  mātō  rhetorical question
மால  māla  ?
மாலா  yāla  ?
2. Nominal Sentences

Nominal sentences are very common in Old Tamil. The regular word order is: **S O P**. In addition there are complicated focalisation (emphasis) patterns that are marked by particles. There is no copula, but occasionally emphasis can be expressed with a verb of existence:

NA 400.6 எவன் பிறைப் புண்சைா | evan pilaippu unō
what mistake it-is “What mistake is there?”

KT 207.1 கேைவாி தாகும | celavu aritākum
going difficult-it become-it. “Going WILL be difficult.”

The simplest form of a nominal sentence is an unmarked juxta-position of noun to noun:

KT 35.5 வாறையும் பிாிந்திேிசனார்க் கைசை | vāṭaiyum pirinticiṉōrkk aḻalē
to north-wind-separated-they(dat.) fire “Even the north wind [is] fire to those who are separated.”

[Here the particle -ē is not a means of focalisation, but just the sentence ending particle of the classical Āciriyam metre.]

Pēy 53.4 வேங்காடம் யாம virumpum verpu | Vēṅkaṭam we desiring-mountain
“Vēṅkaṭam, that is the mountain we desire.”

Here the sentence structure is the same, but the particle -ē is used to mark a focalisation, namely the anteposition of the predicate noun.

The second possibility is a minimal mark of noun to pronominal noun, either as an adjectival predicate noun or as a denominative.

KT 18.5 உயிர் தவ காமசமா கபாிசத | uyir tava ciritu, kāmamō perīē

“Vēṅkaṭam, that is the mountain we desire.”
life very small-it, desire-it
“Life is very small, desire, ah, it is big.”

NA 101.5f. துறைநணி ருந்த பாக்கமுமுறைநனி |
“Staying in the village, too, that was near the ghat, was very pleasant indeed.”

KT 12.4  கவறைத் தகத்தவர்கேனைவாசை
“It has a crossroad, they say, the way he has gone.”

[The following two examples elucidate the option of choosing between a verbal sentence and one with a pronominal noun:

KT 325.4  உந்தையன்னீன் கால்சைா
where he-is
“Where is he?”

KT 379.1  இன்ைியாண்றையசனாசதாைி
today where-he-friend
“Today, where is he, friend?”]

The feature here called pronominal noun is one of the most intriguing aspects of the early language. They constitute half of the explanation as to why in Tamil the border line between noun and verb is far weaker than, say, in an Indo-European language. In their productive form, call it, with the traditional term kurippuvinai, or, in English, denominative, they come close to being verbs, while on the other side of the border the distinction between a participal noun and a finite verb is often difficult to draw and many strategies for cross-over exist.

The formation of pronominal nouns of the type that can be lexicalised (already mentioned in the Introduction) is simple and has
been well-described in Lehmann 2004. To a noun or adjective, in base or oblique form, a pronominal suffix is added:

**N/adj.(-obl.)-pron.suff.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Oblique Stem</th>
<th>Oblique Suffix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>நாடு</td>
<td>nāṭu</td>
<td>nāṭṭaṉ</td>
<td>[nāṭṭaṉ]</td>
<td>“man from a land”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>கேல்வம்</td>
<td>celvam</td>
<td>celvar</td>
<td>mukam</td>
<td>“wealth” “wealthy people” “man with a heart” “woman with a face”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைம்</td>
<td>aṟam</td>
<td>aṟavaṉ</td>
<td>mukattīḷa</td>
<td>“duty” “dutiful man” “woman with a face”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>வண்ணம்</td>
<td>vanṇam</td>
<td>vanṇaṉ</td>
<td>mukam</td>
<td>“colour” “man with a colour” “woman with a face”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>நஞ்செம்</td>
<td>neñcam</td>
<td>neñcattāṉ</td>
<td>mukam</td>
<td>“heart” “man with a heart” “woman with a face”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Normally, the pronominal endings with the vowel ஒ/ஓ o/ō are reserved for participial nouns. There are, however, cross-overs, some even lexicalised. The vowel is changed from long ஆ to long ஓ regularly for metrical-euphonic reasons at the poems end (காதைர் kātalar – காதசைாசர kātalōṛē).

The productivity of pronominal nouns is highest in the early corpus and diminishes gradually until only frozen forms remain. The following tables record a few of the more productive words in their attestations in Kuruntokai, Narrinai and Akananūṟu.
noun | adjective
--- | ---
அன்பு, “love” | இலம், “young”

2.sg. அன்பிறன் anpinai

3.m. அன்பினன் anpinan [இறைசயான் ilaiyōn

f.sg. அன்பினே anpina [இறைசயாள் ilaiyōḷ

3.h. அன்பினர் anpinar [இறையர் ilaiyar, [இறைசயார் ilaiyōr,

n.pl. அன்பின anpina [இறையவர் ilaiyavar (full pronoun)

The defective stem உறை utai, “possess”, whether it be verbal or nominal, is attested for the full paradigm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1.sg.</th>
<th>2.sg.</th>
<th>2.pl.</th>
<th>3.h.</th>
<th>n.pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>உறையே</td>
<td>utaiyē</td>
<td>utaiyai</td>
<td>utaiyal</td>
<td>utaiyān</td>
<td>utaiyēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>உறையா</td>
<td>utaiyā</td>
<td>utaiyathu, utaiyathu</td>
<td>utaiyam</td>
<td>utaiyār</td>
<td>utaiyam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following types of relation are well-attested:

- **possessive, alienable**: கேல்வன் celvan “he who is prosperous”
- **possessive, inalienable**: முடியினள் muṭiyiṉaḷ “she who has a hair knot”
- **locative**: நாைன் nāṭaṉ “he who is from a country”
- **objective**: அைியள் aḷiyaḷ “she who is to be pitied”
- **subjective**: அைவர் aṟavar “they who adhere to duty”
- **attributive**: கபாியர் periyar “they who are big”
  முன்னர் muṉṉar “they who are before”

Note that for a feminine formation the special feminine suffix -இ -i is an alternative to the pronominal ending -அள்/-ஆள் -aḷ/-āḷ: சதாைி tōḷ-i “she who has a shoulder” (post-Caṅkam).
3. Attribution

Attribution is a poetic phenomenon that gains supreme syntactical importance in a language that is dependent on word order and that does not originally have relative pronouns. First, we shall focus here on the simple type containing nominal forms (noun, pronominal noun, participial noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb), but no nonfinite verbal forms. The word order of S O P is observed here as well, and the point to be taken in is that attribution is always left-branching, unless etukai (the rhyme pattern; see Chapter 20 under “Venpā”) distorts the order of words.

Attribution may be minimally marked with an oblique:

KT 24.1  கருங் காற் சவம்பி கனாண் பூ யாணர்
karum kāl vēmpin ol pū yānar
black leg Neem-tree bright flower freshness
“the freshness of the bright flower of the black-trunked Neem tree”

Attribution may be marked with an adjective suffix:

KT 16.5  அங் காற் கள்ளியம் காடு
am kāl kalliyam kāṭu
pretty leg Kalli forest “a pretty-trunked spurge forest”

Attribution may be marked with a possessive -uṭai or -keḻu + a pronominal noun:

KT 56.3  வறையுறை கணையாள்
vaiy-yuṭai kaiyal
bangle possess-hand-she “she with hands that possess bangles”

Attribution can remain completely unmarked, with the consequence that relations may be ambiguous:

KT 286.4  பெர், அமர்மலைக் கண் கோதிணி
pēr, amar malai kan koṭicci
big beauty rain eye creeper-she
“creeper girl with big beautiful rain eyes”
“big, beautiful rain-eyed creeper girl”
“creeper girl with eyes [that are like] a big beautiful rain”

Relations may be bracketed and asymmetrical:

KT 15.4f. ஆய்கைல் சேயி நீல்வை விலங்கள் வீரர்
āy kaḻal | cē ilai vel vēl viṭalai
select- anklet | red leaf white spear warrior
“warrior with choice anklets [and] a red-tipped white spear”

Relations may be bracketed and symmetrical:

KT 101.4f. பூப் பசாலுண்கண் கபான்சபா மாண்
pū poḷ uṇ kaṇ poṁ poḷ meṉi
māṇ vari alkul kuṟu makaḷ
flower similar kohl eye gold similar body
fame line hip short woman
“small woman with flower-like kohl eyes,
a gold-like body [and] hips of glorious outline”

A minimal string is achieved by adding the verbal root to the above-mentioned elements, another peculiarity of Early Old Tamil especially:

KT 2.1 ககாங்குசதர் வாழ்க்கை தாதுமிகள்
koṅku tēr vāḻkkai am cirai tumpi
pollen search- livelihood pretty wing bee
“pretty-winged bee whose livelihood is searching for pollen”
A further typical element are comparisons:

KT 23.2f. \( \text{மனவுசகாப்} \) \( \text{பன்ன நன்கனடுகூந்தைகவன்மகசை} \)
\( \text{maṉavu köpp, aṉṉa nal neṭum kūntal | akaval makalē} \)
chank-bead string like good long tresses | Akaval woman
“sooth-saying woman with good long tresses [white] like chank beads!”

Adverbs may also be integrated:

KT 37.1 \( \text{nacai perit, utayyar} \)
longing big-it possess-he(h.) “He greatly possesses longing.”

Adverbial phrase of place may be head nouns:

KT 138.2f. \( \text{em il ayalat, ēḻil umpar | ... nocci} \)
our- house neighbourhood-it Ēḻil(-hill) beyond | ...
Nocci-tree
“the Nocci tree...
beyond the Ēḻil hill that is near our house”
8. String Attribution

The phenomenon called string attribution is basically an extension of the attribution already seen, but additionally including nonfinite verbal forms, beginning with the verbal root, but also both types of peyareccam, the verbal noun, the absolutive and the infinitive. In other words, what distinguishes string attribution from subordinate clauses in the Indo-European sense is the fact that syntactically they always end with a head noun on the right side. Very frequent extensions are subject appositions and comparisons or similes. This form of subordination extends over anything from one line up to thirty or even more – some of the long songs in the Pattuppāṭṭu consist of a single sentence.

Absolutive + imperfective peyareccam + verbal root:

KT 88.2f.

ciṟu kaṇ perum kalūr vayam puli tākki
tol muraṇ cōrum tunū arum cāral

little eye big elephant-bull strength tiger attacked
old antagony diminishing- approach- difficult slope
“the slope difficult to approach, where the old antagony diminishes after the small-eyed big elephant bull attacked the strong tiger”

Comparison + infinitive + perfective peyareccam:

KT 35.2-5

ciṉai pacum pāmpīn cūl mutirpp, annā
kaṇaitta karumpin kāmpu poti avila
tun urai ali tuli talaiya
tan varal vāṭai
twig green snake’s egg ripeness like
ripened- sugar-cane’s close- bud open (inf.)
fine drip- perish- drop offered-
cool coming north wind
“the coolly coming north wind
that offered finely dripping dispersing drops
so that the closed buds on the ripened sugar cane open,
like the ripe state of the eggs of the twig-green snake”

Causal absolutive + abs. + abs. + imperfective peyareccam:

KT 69.1-5 

karum kan tä kalai perum pirittu urrañna
kaimmai uyä kāmar manti
kallä val paraḷ kilai-mutal cērtti
ōṅku varai atukkattu pāyntu uyir cekukkum
cārāl nāṭa

black eye rushing male-monkey big other-it had-because
widowhood escape-not desirable female-monkey
learn-not strong young-one horde(loc.) united
high mountain mountain-side- sprung life destroying-
slope land-he(voc.)
“o man from a land of slopes,
where the desirable she-monkey that did not escape widowhood,
because the black-eyed rushing male monkey had experienced the great other,
joined [her] untaught young one to the horde
[and] destroyed [her] life by jumping from the side of the high mountain”

Causal absolutive + absolutive + infinitive + comparison + imperfective peyareccam:

KT 139.1-5

maṉai uṟai kōḻi kuṟu māli
vēli verukₙ, īṇam mālai urrenₐ
pukum īṭan āriyātu tokupₙ, īṭan kuḷḷiₐyā
paṟṭal piḷḷai kilai payirntāṅkₐ
inngātₙ, icaikkum ampal

house remain- fowl short leg she-bird
hedge wild-cat group evening had-because
entering- place know-not gathered together crowd(inf.)
trouble child relations called-like
unpleasant-it sounding- rumour

“rumours that sound unpleasant
as if the short-legged hen of the fowl living near the house
were calling [her] flock of suffering chicks, assembled, crowding together not knowing a place to enter, because in the evening a group of wild cats turned up at the hedge”

**Subject apposition:**

**KT 285.1-3**

vaikal vaikal vaikavum vārār
ellā ellai ellaiyum tōṇṟār
yāntu ular-kollō tōḷi
day day being-kept(inf.) come-not-he(h.)
all daylight edge appear-not-he(h.)
where he-is(h.) friend

“He who did not come [back], since he is kept day by day, and who did not appear on all the borders of daylight (~evenings)

where is he, friend?”

**Comparison:**

**KT 160.1-5**

neruppiṉ anṭa cem talai anṟiṟ
iraviṉ anṭa koṭu vāy peṭaiyoṭu
taṭaviṉ ōṅku cinai kaṭciyiṉ pirintōr
Nouns

kai ara naralum naḷḷeṉ yāmattu
fireⁿ like red head Anril(-bird)
shrimpⁿ like curved mouth female-bird-with
treeⁿ high twig nestⁿ separated-they(h.)
action end(inf.) calling- deep(id.)- midnight-
“deep midnight,
when the Anril bird with a head red like fire
in the nest on a high branch of the tree, calls
for [its] female with a beak curved like a shrimp
so that action ends in those separated”

As a conclusion here a simile typical of Caṅkam literature, one that
has earned the poet his name Cempulappeyaṉīrār:

NA 190.5-7  வண்டு மூசு கநய்த கந் லி றை மைரு
வண்டு மூசு கநய்த கந் லி றை 
vaṇṭu mūcu neyal nel iṭai malarum
ariyalam kaḷaṇi ārkkāṭu aṇṇa
kāmar panai tōḷ!
bee swarm- blue-water-lily paddy middle blossoming-
nectarʷ field Ārkkāṭu(p.n. of a town)- like
desirable bamboo shoulder
“[she with] desirable bamboo shoulders
who is like [the town] Ārkkāṭu with nectary fields
where bee-swarmed water-lilies bloom among the
paddy”
cem pulam peyal nīr pōla
āṁp, uṭai neṅcam tām kalantāṉavē.
red soil raining water be-similar
love possess- heart self(pl.) they-mingled(n.pl.)ē
“That red soil [and] pouring water
[our] loving hearts themselves have mingled.”
14. Denominative (kurippuvinaimurru)

Pronominal nouns are not only be used as a means of enlarging the lexicon, but they can be employed in the function of predicate nouns – kurippu-vinai-murru, “a finite verb by intention”. In this capacity they are very frequent in Early Old Tamil, but the numbers are decreasing towards the end of the millennium. Spontaneous literary forms are found as well as established patterns with many occurrences.

KT 7.1f. வில்சைான் காைந கைசை கதாடிசயாண்
villōṉ kālaṇa kaḻalē toṭiyōl
mel ati mēlavum cilampē
bow-he leg-they(n.pl.) ankletē. armlet-she
tender foot above-they(n.pl.)um tinkling-ankletē.
“Anklets [are on] the feet of him with the bow, and anklets [are] on the feet of her with bracelets.”

If lexicalised items are employed in the function of predicate nouns, they may optionally be endowed with a special mark, any slight alteration of their usual form; one of the poetic designations of the poetic hero in the Marutam tract is as ஊரன் urāṉ, literally “the man from the village”, and as such entered into the Tamil Lexicon. In KT 97.3 the female speaker wants to make a different sort of point, by stating that the man is currently staying in his village with his own people, i.e., ஊரூர் ur-āṉ:

KT 97.3 துறைவன் மும் மூராசன
tuṟaivaṉ tam ūrāṉē
“The man from the ghat is in their village.”
கான் கோழி கவர் குற்று சேவ.

ஓல் போர் எருணித்தன் சித் உறைப்ப

புதல் நீர் வாரம் புருந்து புரவின்

சிர்கு தூப்பு மாண்டை

“[My] girl is in a little village

in the flower-scented woodlands, where shrubs are

overflown by water,

so that cool drops drip on the bright-spotted neck

of the rooster of the forest fowl with a seizing voice.”

வன் புறைக் காட்டு நாட் காளியை கந்து

வல் புலாம் கத் தாதுறவு அன்பு கலந்து

மாவின் புரித்த கல்கையை உறுதியை

உலான உரைவோல் உரே

“It is in the wild lands of hard soil,
the village of her who staid [back] remembering me, [her] heart, mingled with love, with the [sole] observance of desiring us.”

These forms are by no means restricted to the third person, but they occur throughout the paradigm:

KT 51.3f.  
\textit{cērppaṉai }| \textit{yāṉum kātalēṉ}  
coast-he(acc.) | I^{m} love-I  
“I too, I love the man from the coast.”

Indeed some noun stems form virtually full paradigms; the table for \textit{uṭai} has already been shown in lesson 3:

KT 206.5  
\textit{kuṟukal ōmpumiṉ ariv\textsubscript{u} uṭaiyīrē}  
nearing beware(ipt.) knowledge possess-you(pl.)  
“Beware of coming near, you who possess knowledge.”

NA 183.6-8  
\textit{vayiṉ-tōṟ\textsubscript{u}}  
\textit{num il pulampiṉ mālaiyum uṭaitē}  
side-ever  
pleasant-not whipping- cold-wind-with listening- (?) your(pl.)- house loneliness\textsuperscript{m} evening\textsuperscript{m} possess-it\textsuperscript{e}  
“Does your house possess evenings of loneliness too, when you listen to the unpleasantly whipping cold wind?”
Another frequent candidate is அலி aḷi, “pity” or “love”, intriguing for the formulaic systems it is part of and to be treated under formulae in lesson 19a:

KT 30.6 தமிழ்யுண் மனூத் அலியுண் யானெ tamiyēṉ-maṉṟa aḷiyēṉ yāṇē alone-I ṃna IPT pity-I Iē “Alone indeed, pitiable am I.”

KT 212.4f. அலிடோ தாசன காமம் விலிவது மனூத் சநாசகா யானெ aḷiṭō tāṉē kāmam viḷivatu-maṉṟa nōkō yāṇē pity/love-itō selfō desire perish-itō maṉṟa I-acheō Iē “Pitiable it is, desire. It will perish for sure. Ah, I ache.”

[An outstanding case is NA 355.10 with the imperative அலிமதி aḷimati, “have pity!” that semantically does not relate to the existing verbal root அலி aḷi, “to care”, but to the well-established denominative, that is, a noun plus an imperative suffix.]
Verbs

The Old Tamil verbal system was clearly based on a dual distinction that is better described as aspectual than as temporal; the basic dichotomy is imperfective – perfective/inchoative [see the discussion for modern Tamil in Deigner 1998]. Since other modes besides the indicative are at best in rudimentary existence, what is hypothetical or irreal has to be expressed along with any type of past, present and future with these two groups of forms. This is one reason why particles were important, although they were later increasingly replaced by adverbs. The two most frequent functions of the perfective aspect are the past tense and what would have been called, in Vedic Sanskrit, an aorist: அணிந்தாள் aṇinṭāḷ, “she was adorned” or “she has put on her ornaments”. The imperfective covers present and future. The present tense infiltrates from the bhakti period onwards but takes a long time to become firmly established. Even as late as the 12th (?) century conservative texts like, for example, the Ḫallāṭam make do without. The present tense very likely developed out of an early auxiliary construction consisting of a verbal root in combination with the verb கில்-தல் kil-tal, “to be able to”: தட்டையும்பார்வ் yārō pirikppavarē, “who are those that will be able to separate?” (KT 22.2), with a regular imperfective of a 10th-class verb. In the early Vaiṣṇava Antātis, then, we find that type of form along with a formation like அகிளநாற் arikinrēn (Pēy 87.1), which at first sight looks like a corresponding perfective, “I was able to know”, but which in context might well already be understood as “I know”.

Tamil has a simple verbal system that can be represented in twelve classes plus a thirteenth for a moderate number of irregulars.20 They

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20 There are two commonly used systems of counting the verb classes, the one of the Tamil Lexcion with twelve classes in Arabic numbers, as well as one in seven
are counted as weak, intermediate and strong, depending on the suffixes they take for forming the perfective and the non-perfective aspect. In fact the twelfth class is a mixed class in that it has a “weak” perfective, but a “strong” imperfective. The present tense is almost identical for all of them, with one minor deviation in the last two classes. Note that some time before the modern period the present suffix -\textit{кинъ} -\textit{kiṉṟ} - is weakened into -\textit{-кир} -\textit{kiṟ}. For an overview of the principle forms see the two folding tables (one for the twelve classes and one for the irregulars) at the back of this book, adapted into English from the immensely useful tables found in Beythan 1943.

One further peculiarity of the Tamil verbal system is that it has positive and negative forms for almost all finite forms (indicative, imperative, optative) as well as for some of the nonfinite forms (absolutive and \textit{peyareccam}). The latter will be treated along with their positives, for the phenomenon of main verb negation, see chapter 13.

\textit{classes (+ sub-classes) with Roman numbers going back to Graul 1855. This book follows the division of the Tamil Lexicon as the most important work of reference.}
The suffixes for the twelve verb classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>root</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
<th>(Present)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>cey-tu</td>
<td>cey-v-</td>
<td>(cey-kiṉṟ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>āḷ-tu</td>
<td>āḷu-v-</td>
<td>(āḷu-kiṉṟ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>kol-ṟu</td>
<td>kollu-v-</td>
<td>(kollu-kiṉṟ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ari-ntu</td>
<td>ari-v-</td>
<td>(ari-kiṉṟ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>tūṅk-ṟu</td>
<td>tūṅku-v-</td>
<td>(tūṅku-kiṉṟ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>viṭu-ntu</td>
<td>viṭu-v-</td>
<td>(viṭu-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>uṇ-ṭu</td>
<td>uṇ-p-</td>
<td>(uṇ-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>tiṉ-ṛu</td>
<td>tiṉ-p-</td>
<td>(tiṉ-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>kēṭ-ṟu</td>
<td>kēṭ-p-</td>
<td>(kēṭ-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>kaṟ-ṛu</td>
<td>kaṟ-p-</td>
<td>(kaṟ-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>tīr-ṛtu</td>
<td>tīr-pp-</td>
<td>(tīr-k-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>naṭa-ṛtu</td>
<td>naṭa-pp-</td>
<td>(naṭa-k-kiṉṛ-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some classes there is a complementary relation (intransitive – transitive 4th to 11th class: puṇartal, “to unite” – puṇarttal, “to to bring together”; transitive – causative 6th to 11th class: viṭutal, “to let go”; viṭuttal, “to cause to let go”) but with the early Kīḻkkanṇakku and bhakti corpus also a causative formation in analogy to an 11th class verb, develops: perfective/imperfective ceyvikku/ceyvitu-, “to cause to do”.

Verbs
73
There is in general a very great fluidity of category between finite and nonfinite forms. In the simple regular formation the distinction between a participial noun and a finite verb is not marked, although a number of strategies have been developed to disambiguate.

**formation of participial nouns:**

**imperfective**

1. root-\(v/p/pp\)-pron. suff.  
   \(கேய்வர்\) cey-\(v\)-\(ar\), “they who do”

2. root-\(p/pp\)-pronoun  
   \(அணிபவர்\) aṇi-p-avar, “they who adorn”

3. root-\(un\)-pron. suff.  
   \(சோலுநர்\) col-\(l\)-\(un\)-\(ar\), “they who speak”

4. root-\(um\)-pron.suff./pron. (late)  
   \(அைிலுசமான்\) aṟi-\(y\)-\(um\)-\(ṉ\), “he who knows”

**perfective**

1. root-\(nt/t/iy/(in)/tt\)-pron. suff.  
   \(அைிந்தம்\) aṟintam, “we who knew”

2. root-\(nt/t/iy/(in)/tt\)-pronoun (late)  
   \(அகன்ைவர்\) akaṉ-\(ṟ\)-avar, “they who departed”

3. root-\(nt/\(nt/\(t\)-\(i\)-\(icin\)-pron. suff. (except for the 5\(^{th}\) class)  
   \(அைிந்தம்\) aṟintam, “we who knew”

Note that after -\(இ\) -\(i\) and -\(ஞ\) -\(ai\) palatisation is possible: \(அைிஞர்\) aṟiñar. Note further that, just like the pronominal nouns, participial nouns, especially of the type 3 imperfective, are frequently lexicalised: \(சூருநர்\) cerunar, “enemies”, \(போருநன்\) porunāṇ,

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21 The particularity of this type appears to be that the weak stem in -\(v\)- is not used; all classes employ -\(p\)- while the 11\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\) double into -\(pp\)-.
“warrior/dancer”. The formation even spills over to noun stems: விறனஞர் viṉaiñar, “workers”.

The most frequent basic forms are the first in each aspect, and they are ambiguous forms: வருவன் varuvaṉ, “he who comes” or “he comes”. If a poet wants to mark the participial noun, he may either use forms of the types 2 and 3, or he chooses the pronominal ending that employs வா/வா o/ō as a vowel (possible in 2nd and 3rd person animate singular as well as in 1st and honorific plural; see below). Like so many rules for Old Tamil this is a rule of thumb, but it holds good surprisingly frequently.

If, on the contrary, the poet wants to mark a form as a finite verb form, he may choose an suffix -ku- for the imperfective (அம்/அம் varukuvaḷ, “she comes”) or the suffix -aṉ- for the perfective (அரு/அர் cey-tu-aṉ-aṉ, “he did”). Frequently of course the finite verb is also marked by the use of particles or simply by position.

[Note that -aṉ- rarely also occurs as an suffix with the imperfective, with unclear rhetorical impact: விறரவன் viraivaṉal, “she is in a hurry” (AN 16.14).]

Additional confusion is brought about by an extraordinary finite form, traditionally called a murreccam (“what has a finite verb for its complement”), that occurs within a sentence and by a commentator usually will be glossed as an absolutive, to be treated in more detail in Chapter 15.
The verbal suffixes are almost identical to the pronominal suffixes:

sg.

1st -என்/-என், -அன் -en/-ēn, -an

2nd -i, -ஆய் -ai

3rd m. -அன்/-ஆன் -an/-ān

3rd f. -அன்/-ஆன் -al/-āl

3rd n. -(அ)து -(a)tu

pl.

1. -அம்/-ஆம் -am/-ām, -stuv/-stuv -em/-ēm

2. -ir/-ir, (-mīr)

3rd h. -ஆர்/-ஆர் -ar/-ār

3rd pl. -கள், (-mār)

3rd n. -அ/ஆ/ -ai, -ஆவா/ -avai

Note here in particular the potential ambiguity arising from the use of -ஆன் -an for both the first person and the third person singular masculine.\(^{22}\)

Additional forms exist which might be explained as frozen fossils from regional variations or verbal systems that did not make it into the classical literary idiom that was more or less codified by the second half of the first millennium (perhaps when the textual tradition changed from oral to written).

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\(^{22}\) Note further that both neuter singular and neuter plural occasionally may have short forms, homophonous to the absolutive in the singular, homophonous to a perfective peyareccam in the plural (NA 220.9cf. குறுமகட் | கயசைா ராககைன் kuṟu makaṭku | ayalōr ākal eṉṟu emmoṭu paṭalē, “what happens to us means that he will become the neighbour of the little woman”; NA 5.9 மயங்கிதழ் மறைக்கண் பயந்த தூசத mayāṅku ital malai kan payanta tūtē, “rain eyes with dishevelled lashes have brought forth a message”).
Verbs

1.sg. i.a. v.r.-asp. inf.-al சபால்வல் pōl-v-al, “I resemble” (KT 103.6)

(1.pl. p.a. v.r.-asp. inf.-ikum கண்டிகும் kaṇ-ṭ-ikum, “we saw” (NA 20.1)

3.pl. i.a. v.r.-pa என்ப pa, “they say”

3.pl. i.a. v.r.-mār நோய்மார் nōy-mār, “they suffer” (NA 208.6)

3.sg. (m.f.n.) v.r.-um மல்கும் malkum “it increases”

The latter form is the famous habitual future that is formally identical with the imperfective peyareccam. The first rule of thumb for distinguishing them is that the peyareccam never comes with a particle. Note that the form does not only cover the third person singular in all the three genders, but also at times the neuter plural (examples are discussed at the end of Chapter 6 on the peyareccam).

Most grammars of Tamil would include here also the forms in -ku, -kam, -kum, -tum, -ti, -tir. In this grammar these forms are understood as another, complementary paradigm and tentatively termed “subjunctive”, discussed in Chapter 8 under moods.

23 This frequent form for the high-class plural occasionally is also used as an honorific: காணா கைிப kāṇā kaḻipa “he (the lover) passes by without seeing [me]” (KT 231.4).
4. Viṉaiyeccam
(Also known as: Absolutive/Co(n)verb/Verbal Participal/Gerund)

The Old Tamil system of nonfinite verbal forms is complex and it serves to express the main forms of subordination. The basic functions and clauses have been described in Zvelebil 1967, the only major contribution to Tamil syntax, but his description was more oriented by the perspective of later pre-modern formal Tamil in that many peculiarities of the older language are not noticed.

Among the forms called viṉaiyeccam (“that which needs a verb as a complement”) in the grammatical tradition the most frequent and syntactically important form is what has since been variously termed verbal participle, coverb, converb or absolutive. This book follows the latter designation, simply for the obvious similarity this form has with what Sanskrit scholars nowadays refer to as an absolutive. The basic official rule, in Tamil as in Sanskrit, is that there should be subject identity between the absolutive and the main verb in a sentence. In fact, statistically about 30% of early Tamil absolutives change the subject. This fact is silently acknowledged by the commentarial convention of glossing a subject-changing absolutive by an infinitive (கேய்த ceyta by கேய்ய ceyya). The rule of thumb accordingly is: First, try to understand the construction as using the same subject. Second, if that does not work, accept a change of subject.

Note also that in narrative poetry the absolutive is used, rather than a finite verb, to advance the action when the subject remains identical.
forms of the absolutive:

positive

1. perfective stem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>கேய்து</td>
<td>“having done”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>புணர்த்து</td>
<td>“having united”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அஞ்ேி</td>
<td>“having feared”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5th class [special, metrically lengthened form for 5th class in -uvu: தழுவு taḻuvu: தைீஇ taḻīi, “having embraced”]

2. verbal root + (p)pu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>புணர்ப்பு</td>
<td>“having understood”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அஞ்சுபு</td>
<td>“having embraced”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. verbal root + -ā

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>கேய்யா</td>
<td>(homophonous with the neg. abs.!)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. verbal root + -ū(u)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>சதடூஉ</td>
<td>“having sought”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

negative

5. verbal root + -ā

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>கேய்யா</td>
<td>(homophonous with the pos. abs.!)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. verbal root + -ātu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>கேய்யாது</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. verbal root + -āmal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>கேய்யாமல்</td>
<td>(later; from Kalittokai on)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. verbal root + -āmai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>கேய்யாறம</td>
<td>(homophonic to negative verbal noun; transitional form)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

24 Note that ககாள்-தல் koḷ-tal, “to take”, abs. ககாண்டு koṇṭu, has, from bhakti times onwards, ககாடு koṭu as an alternate form of the absolutive (PeTM 187.2: கஞ்ேறனக் கால்ககாடு பாய்ந்தாய் kañcaṉaik kālkoṭu pāyntāy, “taking Kañcaṉ by the leg you lept”).
Note that from bhakti times onwards there is a small number of absolutes that may serve as postpositions:

- நின்று (niṟu) “from”
- ககாண்டு/ககாடு (koṇṭu/koṭu) “with”
- சநாக்கி (nōkki) “thanks to, in consideration of”
- பற்ைி (paṟṟi) “on the basis of, with respect to”

The classical absolute clause with subject identity looks like this:

KT 69.2-4  மந்தி | கல்லா வன் பைழ் கிளைமுத் சேர்த்தி
           manti | kallā val paṟaḻ kiḷai-mutal cērtti

female-monkey | learn-not strong young-one

high mountain mountain-side- sprung life destroying-
“the female monkey joins [her] untaught young one to
the horde,
jumps from the side of the high mountain [and thus]
destroys [her] life.”

The subject can be left open, a possibility exploited by poets:

KT 4.2,4  ...
... கன்றித் தாங்கி ...
... kaṇṇīr tāṅki

... நோம் என் நீசே ...
... nōm en neiṉē

... eye-water endured  "enduring tears
... aches my- heart  my heart aches.”

---

25 Even later comes இலிருந்து (iliruntu), “from”, the modern postposition of the ablative.
The relations can be ambiguous, again possibly deliberately:

KT 21.1-4  vaṇṭu paṭa tatainta koṭi inar ītaiyitupu
vaṇṭu paṭa tatainta koṭi īnar ītaiyitupu
kaṭuṭṭum punai ilai kaṭṭiya mākalir
katuṭṭum punai ilai kaṭṭiya mākalir
beehappen(inf.) been-full- creeper cluster between placed
gold make- adorn- ornament tied- women
hair\textsuperscript{\textit{in}} appearing- new flower Laburnum(-tree)| forest
“forest of laburnum with new flowers that appear like the
hair of women who have tied in decorative ornaments
made of gold,
inserting clusters full of creepers full so that bees visit
[them]”

Debatable and sanctioned by the grammatical tradition are cases
where the subject of the absolutive can be understood as a part or
possession of the main verb subject:

NA 369.1  cuṭar ciṉam taṇintu kuṉṟam cēra
cuṭar ciṉam taṇintu kuṉṟam cēra
sun anger decreased hill join(inf.)
“when the sun joins the hill, [its] anger decreasing”

There are many obvious cases of change of subject like the
following:

KT 88.2f.  ciṟu kaṇ perum kaliru vayam puli tākki
ciṟu kaṇ perum kaliru vayam puli tākki
Grammar of Old Tamil for Students

tol muraṇ cōrum tunū arum cāral
little eye big elephant-bull strength tiger attacked
old antagony diminishing- approach- difficult slope
“slope difficult to approach where the old antagony diminishes
after the small-eyed big elephant bull attacked the strong tiger”

The following is an example of poetic multiple subject change:

NA 328.1-3

kiḻaṅku kīḻ vīḻntu tēṉ mēl tūṅki
bullous-root below descended honey above hung
few few(n.pl.) sown many many(n.pl.) ripened
millet parrot chasing-away- big stone land-he

“man from a land of big stones, where
bulbous roots descend beneath, honey hangs above,
they sow but a few [and] many many ripen,
they chase the parakeets from the millet”

The following quotation contains, along with a rare example of the absolutive in -ām(u) -ū(u), also both the ceyyā and ceyyātu types for the negative absolutive:

AN 113.9f.

nalkātu turanta kātalar enrum
Verbs

\(kāl\) porūu meliyā pātiṇ̄
grant-not abandoned lover(h.) always
time beaten become-soft-not sing-if
“if [we] sing without softening, [and] always beating
the time,
the lover who has abandoned us without granting [his
presence]”

\(ceyyā\) type for the positive absolutive:

KT 341.1-3
\(patīṭa\) paṭṭa paṭṭa paṭṭa paṭṭa
\(pūni\) paṇu paṇu paṇu paṇu
\(pūrī\) pūrī pūrī pūrī
\(pūrī\) pūrī pūrī pūrī
\(porō\) porō porō porō
\(porī\) porī porī porī
\(cinai\) cinai cinai cinai
\(ākiya\) âkiya âkiya âkiya
many blossom happened- green bud bottle-flower-tree
be-parched- flower Puṅku-tree-with grove adornment
take
twig pleasant-it become(p.)- time"
“Even at a time when the twigs have become pleasing,
after the grove has taken for decoration the bottle-
flower tree
with green buds that fall as many blossoms, along with
the Puṅku tree with flowers [looking like] parched-rice”

\(ceyyāmal\) type for the negative absolutive (late):

Kali 1.3
\(kūṟā\) kūṟittataṉ mēl cellum kaṭum kūli
tell-not intended-it- upon going- fierce demon
“the fierce demons who go according to what is intended [by you] without [your] telling”

Occasionally the negative verbal noun in -āmai can stand in for a negative absolutive:

Kali 2.16ff. 

偶尔的消极的动词名词 -āmai 可以代替消极的 absolutive:

One more special function is fulfilled by the absolutive in comparative clauses (probably to be analysed as a compound form), where it allows, beyond a simple comparison from noun to noun, a comparison of processes. Two subtypes of this are found, namely absolutive plus āṅku and absolutive plus aṉṉa.

The āṅku type demands an absolutive connection and quite naturally implies a change of subject:

KT 18.4f.
ciṟu kōṭṭu perum paḻam tūṅkiyāṅkā, ivaḷ
uyir tava ciṟitu kāmamō peritē.
small twig big fruit hung-like she-
life very small-it desire big-itē
“Like a big fruit hanging on a small twig,
her life is very small, [her] desire, ah, it is big.”

The அன்ன anna type generally, though not always, corresponds to a peyareccam connection, as such justifying the question whether the analysis as absolutive plus அன்ன anna actually is correct, or whether it does not rather fall under the type of peyareccam form with irregular sandhi that is mentioned above on p. 29:

KT 386.5
nilam parantanna punkanōtu
ground spread-like sorrow
“sorrow that is as if spread on the ground”

A special type of absolutive forms a causal clause formed by adding the quotative என ena:

KT 42.2f.
karuvi mā maḷai viṇṭeṇa aruvi
viṭar akattu iyampum
amount big rain fallen-because waterfall
cave inside- sounding-
“the waterfall resounds inside the cave because rain large in amount has fallen.”

Another less frequent combination is a temporal clause of absolutive plus உடன் utoṇ in the sense of “as soon as”: 
NA 63.3f.

 пуṇṉai

 вிலாவு நாரும் விளங்கி என் விரிவுத்து கமழும்

mast-wood

festival smelling- shine- cluster expanded-together

being-fragrant-

“where shining clusters of mast-wood, smelling of festival, are fragrant as soon as they expand”
5. Infinitive (Different Types = Modalities)

There are a number of forms that mostly go by the designation of “infinitive”. Here the rule of thumb is the opposite to that for the absolutive: Expect a change of subject, although very occasionally the same subject can be found. The obvious exception is an auxiliary construction based on infinitive plus auxiliary (such as the passive with படுதல் paṭutal). The most frequent type and the only one to survive up to modern Tamil is the infinitive in -ஆ -a. Its primary functions are subordinate clauses that are resultative (“so that”) or simultaneous (“when, while”), but occasionally causal (“as, since”) or final (“in order to”), rarely conditional (“if”). In narrative poetry this form is used, rather than a finite verb, to advance the action when the subject changes.

forms of the infinitive

1. -ஆ -a added to the root in classes 1-8, to the imperfective stem classes 9-12:
   தீர்ப்பா tīrppa
   நிற்கா niṟka (later நிற்க niṟka)

2. -மார் -mār தருமார் tarumār, “in order to give” (less frequent)

3. -iya -iya காணிய kāṇiya, “in order to see”
   (often with alapedai: உணீஇய் uṇīiya, “in order to eat”

4. -iyar iyar கடியர் kaṭiyar, “in order to chase”

26. For this reason Jean-Luc Chevillard insists on calling the ceyya type infinitive an absolutive.

27. I.e., the metrically lengthened form explained in Chapter 20.
(often with alapetai) ககாடீஇயர் koṭīiyar, “in order to give”

5. -வான் -vāṇ, அைப்பான் alappāṉ, “in order to measure”
   -(p)vāṇ -(p)pāṉ (less frequent; rarely found in the old texts)

Type 2 seems to cover more or less the same function as type 1, but is much less common, while the types 3-5 seem predominantly to appear in final function (“in order to”). Final infinitives need not involve a change of subject. Note that type 3. -iya and type 4. -iyar are homophonous with the optative, type 3. also to the perfective peyareccam of the 5th class. Type 5. -வான்/-(p)vāṇ -(p)pāṉ is homophonous with the imperfective masculine singular.

A number of verbs take an infinitive:

KT 114.3 கேலा வியங்ககாண்சமா
   cela viyam koṇmō
   “take the order to go!”

The normal resultative function: “so that”

KT 65.1-3 வல்பரல் தைிதரு தண்கார்
   val paral tel aral parukiya iralai taṇ
   inp, uru tunaiyotu maruvant, ukala
taṇ vantandē taḷi taru tan kār
   hard pebble become-clear- water drunk- Iralai[-deer] own-
   joy have- companion-with mixed-up jump(inf.)
   self it-came⁸ drip- give- cool rainy-season
“It has come, the dripping cool rainy season, so that the Iralai deer that drank clear water between hard pebbles leaps in union with its joyful mate.”

-அ-

The normal temporal function: “while/as”

KT 195.1-3

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{cuṭar} & \text{ cinam} \text{ taṇintu} \text{ kuṇram} \text{ cēra} \\
paṭar & \text{ cumant} _u \text{ elutaru} \text{ paiyul} \text{ mālai} \\
yānt & \text{ ular-kollō}
\end{align*}
\]

sun anger decreased hill join(inf.)
affliction laden rise- give- sorrow evening
where he-is(h.) \text{kollō}

“Where is he, in sorrowful evening that rises laden with affliction, while the sun joins the hills, [its] anger decreasing?”

One special function is indirect speech: “that”

KT 24.5f.

\[
\begin{align*}
... & \text{ kotiyōr} \text{ nāvē} \\
kātalar & \text{ akala} \text{ kalenṟavē} \\
... & \text{ cruel-they tongue}'
\end{align*}
\]

lover(h.) depart(inf.) ‘kal’-they-said(n.pl.)'

“The tongues of cruel people foretold that [my] lover would depart.”
One rarer function is temporal bordering on conditional “when/if”. Note that Old Tamil does not have a clear-cut distinction between temporal and conditional; even actual conditional forms may express simultaneity.

KT 127.4f.  ஒருநின் பாணன் கபாய்ய அந்த வரத பாண கரல் எல்லாம்
             oru niṉ pāṇan poyyaṉ āka     uḷḷa pāṇar ellām
one your- bard liar become(inf.)
be(pey.) bard(h.) all
“If your one bard is a liar,
all bards that exist [are].”

Also causal function is attested: “since”

KT 212.1-3 ககாண்க நூர்ந்த ககாட்டியேக் கநடு சதர் கதண்
           koṇkaṉ ūrnta koṭuñci neṭum tēr
man-from-the-sea(?) mounted- handle long chariot
clear sea settle- shore clear bell sound(inf.)
see(inf.) come
“since clear bells are sounding on the set shore of the clear sea,
come to see
the chariot long with a pole(?) mounted by the man from the sea”
-மார் -mar:

KT 155.5f.  மலை நானி விறுத்த மயர்மார்

mālai nāṇi virunt u ayarmār
tēr varum
evening abundant feast be-engaged-in(inf.)
chariot coming-
“the chariot is coming
so that [she] will be preparing an ample feast for the evening”

The following three are examples of infinitive 3-5 in final function:
“in order to”

-iya -iya:

KT 269.4-6  யாயு

yāyum
uppa mārī vel nel tariya
uppu vilai kalani ceṇṟaṇal
mother
salt(acc.) exchanged white paddy give(inf.)
salt ripen- field she-went
“Mother
has gone to the field where salt ripens
in order to bring white paddy in exchange for salt.”

-iyar -iyar:

KT 141.1f.  கையாகாயிட்டு மீன்மை வெளியல்காய் மயர்கயர் | மயர்க}

Verbs
91
vaḷai vāy cīṟu kīḷi vīḷai tīnai kaṭīyaru | celka
curve- mouth little parakeet ripen- millet chase(inf.)
may-go(opt.)
“You may go in order to chase away parakeets with
curved beaks from the ripening millet.”

-வான் -vāṉ/(p)pāṉ:  
Pari  7.57  அவறை க் ரக  ப் பிறண நீக்குவான் பாய்வாள்
avalai kai pinai nikkuvāṉ pāyvāḷ
she(acc.) hand tie remove(inf.) she-jumps
“she jumps in order to remove the tie of [his] hand on her”

Finally there is one of the rarer examples for the
temporal infinitive not changing the subject:

KT 285.1-3  வான் வான் வான் வாரா
vaikal vaikal vaikal vaikavum vārār
ellā ellai ellaiyum tōṉrār
yāṉ, ular-kollō tōḷī
day day being-kept(inf.) come-not-he(h.)
all daylight edge appear-not-he(h.)
where he-is(h.) friend
“He who does not come as he is kept back day after day,
he who does not appear at all the borders of daylight
(~evenings),
where is he, friend?”
6. Peyareccam – Habitual Future/Temporal Clauses

What is called peyareccam (“that which needs a noun as a complement”) in the Tamil grammatical tradition is sometimes referred to as an adjectival participle, relative participle (etc.), but since it is another indeclinable with no counterpart in any Indo-European tradition it is best to stick to the Tamil word. It is the feature developed in Tamil to deal with relative construction. It establishes a connection between the verbal action and the head noun, and this relation may be any type of subject, object or modal relation. Peculiar in Early Old Tamil is the possible range of its influence. It frequently is merely attributive or governs one further noun besides its head noun, but it may also govern clauses, sometimes of considerable length. It appears that the distribution of “power”, so to speak is uneaven. While the perfective peyareccam is merely attributive or governs short clauses, the imperfective peyareccam may in addition govern long clauses. In early Akam poetry that capacity is linked to the poetic feature of the ulūrai, “inset” (cf. Chapter 19 below). As a later development, the present tense peyareccam does not differ from the other two and has a restricted scope just as the perfective one.

There are a number of formalised peyareccam + noun formations with the purpose of forming temporal and modal clauses:


The only postposition that forms a temporal clause with an absolutive, not with a peyareccam, is
- uḻi, a construction not yet found in the Cankam corpus: Cilap 11.14 ila marak känatt, irukkai pukk,-uḻi, “when they entered the seat in the forest with young trees”. 
modal -ஆறு -āru, “way”; -படி -paṭi, -வறக -vakai, -வண்ணம் -vaṇṇam, “manner”

the formation of the peyareccam:

perfective pey. past stem + a அஞ்சும் உணர்த்த “that did”
அஞ்சும் அஞ்சும் அஞ்சும் அஞ்சும் “that feared”
அஞ்சும் உணர்த்த “that informed”

imperfective pey. imperf. stem + -um அஞ்சும் உணர்கும் “that does/will do”
அஞ்சும் உணர்கும் “that fears/will fear”
அஞ்சும் உணர்கும் “that informs, will inform”

[present pey. root + -kiṉra அஞ்சும் உணர்கும் “that does”]

negative pey. root + -ā அஞ்சும் உணர்கும் “that does not”

negative pey. root + -āta அஞ்சும் உணர்கும் “that does not”

p.a. attributive:

KT 77.3 உளன்ற வம்பைர் uḷanta vampalar
died- traveller(h.) “dead travellers”

KT 35.3 காண்டல்கண்ட கரும்பின் kaṇaitta karumpiṉ
ripe- sugar-cane “ripe sugar cane”
p.a. in minor clauses:

KT 86.1  

*ciṟai pani uṭainta cē ari maḷai kan*
check- dew broken- red streak rain eye
“red-streaked rain eyes from which the checked tears broke forth”

KT 79.1f.

*kāṉam yāṉai tōl nayantuṇta*

*pori tāl ōmai vali poru netum ciṉai*

“wind-beaten long branch of the toothbrush tree with a parched trunk from which the forest elephant had eaten, desiring the bark”

KT 348.2f.

*pulam tēr yāṉai kōṭṭuṭai oḻinta ciṟu vi mullai kompiṇ*

“like a jasmine twig with little blossoms that had stayed behind between the tusks of an elephant searching the field”

adverbial clauses of time with *pey*. p.a. (i.a. also possible):

KT 25.5
kurukum uṇṭu tāṇ maṇanta ṅāṇrē
heronum it-is he united-time
“the heron was there at the time he united [with me].”

adverbial clauses for anterior time (“before”) with negative peyareccam:

KT 352.5f. "iṟṟēṟu nūn maṟṟaṟē
iyorūru ṟṟēṟuṟru vaṟṟuvaṟṟēṟē
ariven toli avar kānā-v-ūṅkē
little empty evening existence
know-I friend he(h.) see-not-before
“Before I see him I shall know, friend,
of the existence of small empty evenings.”

adverbial clauses of manner with pey. p.a. (i.a. also possible; late):

AiAi 26.1+4 "iṟṟēṟu nūn maṟṟaṟē ... ṟṟēṟuṟru vaṟṟu
peru nakai ākiṉṟē ... iṭar urṟavāṟu
big laughter it-became ... affliction experienced-way
“It became big laughter, ... the way [he] experienced affliction.”

i.a. attributive:

KT 58.1 iTikkum kēḻir
admonishing- friends “admonishing friends”

i.a. minor clause:

KT 143.2 paḷiyum aṇcūm payam malai nāṭaṉ
blame”um fearing- yield mountain land-he
“the man from the land of fertile mountains who also fears blame”

i.a. relative clause:

KT 25.3-5 திறன் த் தாைன்னேிறுபசு ங்
திறன் த் தாைன்னேிறுபசு ங்
tinai tall anna ciru pacum kāla
oluku nir āral pārkkum | kuruku
millet foot like small green legged
flow- water Āral(-fish) looking-out- | heron
“heron, with legs a little green like millet stalks, who looks out for Āral fish in the flowing water”

i.a. adverbial clause of place:

KT 38.1-3 கான மஞ்றஞ் யறையீ்ன் முட்றை
கான மஞ்றஞ் யறையீ்ன் முட்றை
kāṉam maññai aṟai īṉ muṭṭai
veyil āṭu mucuviṉ kuruḷai uruṭṭum
kuṉṟam nāṭaṉ
forest peacock rock bring-forth egg
sunlight play- langur young-one rolling- hill land-he
“man from a land of hills, where the young one of the langur playing in the sunlight rolls the egg laid on the rock by a forest peacock”

i.a. ambiguous relations:

KT 8.1f. கைனி மாத்து விறைந்துகு தீம்பைம்
“man from a village where the Vāḷai fish in the pond seizes the sweet fruit dropped ripe from the mango tree by the paddy field”

i.a. adverbial clause of time:

You would come at midnight in difficult darkness, when the green-eyed red dog looks out for the fallen carcass of the male, strong in taking, of the short-handed dark tiger.
that had borne the fierce enmity of the long-handed strong male (~ elephant)"

tōṇrum comparison clause:

KT 47.1f.  கரும் கால் சவங்றக வீயுகு துறுகலிரும்
  karum kāl vēṅkai vī uku tuṟu kal
  black leg Vēṅkai blossom shed-thick stone
  dark/big tiger young appearing-wilderness middle
“in the middle of the wilderness,
where the thick stone on which the blossom of the
black-trunked kino tree had fallen,
appears like the cub of the big tiger”

Since the habitual future in -um and the imperfective peyareccam in -um are homophonous and thus only distinguishable by syntax, the following examples are added to illustrate the practical problem. Possible indications that allow to distinguish one from the other would be found in the wider contexts of the source poems. In poetry at times, to be sure, both are possible. Again, note that the habitual future covers all 3rd persons singular (m./f./n.) as well as the neuter plural.

m.sg.

KT 8.2+6 ஊரன் ... | வெள்ளா வேண்புவர்கள் பசட்டப்பார்ம் நையக்கெ
 ūraṉ ... | mēvaṉa ceyyum taṉ putalvaṉ tāykkē
  village-he ... | wish-they(n.pl.) he does self-son
  mother(dat.)e
  “The man from the village does what is wished for by
the mother of his son.”
f.sg.  
KT 45.4  
மறுவரு மித்துவன் தயே
maruvarum ciṟuvaṉ tāyē  
is-upset little-he mother²  
“The mother of the little one is upset.”

n.pl.  
KT 193.6  
இன்று முல்லை முறகநா சம
inru mullai mukai nāṟumē  
today jasmine bud they-are-fragrant⁸  
“Today the jasmine buds are fragrant.”

n.sg. (or pey.)  
KT 4.1  
nōm en neñcē nōm en neñcē  
it-aches my heart⁶ it-aches my heart⁶  
“Ah, my heart aches, my heart aches.”

KT 6.3f.  
naiṟam ciṟuvaṉ eṉ neñcē  
naṉam talai ulakamum tuñcum  
“Ah, my heart aches, my heart aches.”

n.sg. (or pey.)  
KT 6.3f.  
naṉam ciṟuvaṉ eṉ neñcē  
naṉam ciṟuvaṉ eṉ neñcē  
“Ah, my heart aches, my heart aches.”

The whole world of vast area is sleeping.
I alone am the one who does not sleep.
“When the whole world of vast area is sleeping,
I alone am the one who does not sleep.”
7.a Verbal Roots for Peyareccam, (Absolutive, Infinitive, Verbal Noun)

The ubiquitous and extremely variable use of the verbal root is one of the most intriguing features of Early Old Tamil. Employed in attribution, compounds, and auxiliaries, the verbal root can moreover stand in for any nonfinite verbal form in any type of subordination. The simplest most common usage is simply attributive, that is, a verbal root stands in for an adjective. This is called vinaittokai, “verbal compound” in the grammatical tradition. According to Tamil grammarians, the most frequent function of a verbal root is that of a peyareccam, often with a discernible temporal/aspectual impact. As such it can also be clause-governing, but mostly not over more than three elements (N₁-v.r.-N₃). In an important article Chevillard puts forth the thesis of complementarity between marked and unmarked syntax, venturing to say that the scope of the verbal root does not exceed a single line of verse [Chevillard 2007]. More intriguing is the fact that it may also correspond to the other nonfinite forms, namely absolutive, infinitive and verbal noun [Wilden 2016]. Moreover it is used with some auxiliaries such as taru-tal or kil-tal (varai ili-tarum aruvi, “a waterfall that tumbles from the mountain”), and finally also with the indefinite toṟum: ōtal malku-torum, “whenever the flood increases” (KT 9.5).

attributive without aspectual impact: ōṅku malai, “high mountain”

attributive for pey. p.a.: AN 1.4 aru kōtu, “broken tusk”

attributive for pey. i.a.: KT 299.4 punar kuri, “sign for uniting”
minimal clause for pey. p.a.:

KT 79.2  
\(\text{vali poru neṭum ciṉa}\)  
wind beat- long branch  
“long branch beaten by the wind”

KT 118.3  
\(\text{palar puku vāyil}\)  
many(h.) enter- door  
“a door entered by many”

minimal clause for pey. i.a.:

KT 7.6  
\(\text{vēy payil aḻuvam}\)  
bamboo rustle- thicket  
“thicket rustling with bamboo”

KT 150.3  
\(\text{cāntu pular akalam}\)  
sandal dry- chest  
“chest on which sandal dries”

Less common is the verbal root in clause-governing function, but still some examples can be found:

KT 53.3  
\(\text{vēlaṉ puṉainta veṟi ayar kālam-torun}\)  
spear-he practised- Veṟi-dance immerse- floor-ever  
“on every dance floor where they are immersed in the Veṟi dance practiced by the spear-bearing [priest]”

KT 163.1-5  
\(\text{pūḻiyar ciṟu talai veḷḷai tōṭu parantanne}\)
Verbs

\[ \text{mīṉ ār kurukīṅ kāṅalam perum turai} \]
\[ \text{veḷ vi tālai tirai alai} \]
\[ \text{naḷḷeṅ kaṅkulum} \]

Pūliyar(h.)
little head goat multitude spread-like
fish become-full- egret\textsuperscript{sm} seashore-grove- big ghat
white blossom screwpine wave slap-
deep(id.)- night\textsuperscript{sm}
“at deep night,
when the waves slap against the white-blossomed
screwpine tree
at the big ghat with a seashore grove with fish-eating
egrets
spread like a multitude of small-headed white goats
of the Pūliyar.”

verbal root for infinitive:

KT 70.5  
\[ \text{அறண கமல்லிய} \]
\[ \text{அனைய்கள்} \]

“she is soft to touch”

NA 108.2c-3  
\[ \text{கடும்கண் யாறன} \]
\[ \text{அறணய} \]
\[ \text{க்கோண்டு குடிக் குைவர்} \]

“the hill people with [their] pretty hamlets,
who have seen a fierce-eyed elephant approach”
KT 398.8  கண்கலி புனர்மி  

eye weep- shed- dew  “dew shed while the eyes weep”

Verbal root for verbal noun:

KT 132.5  தாய் காண் விருப்பின்  

mother see yearning  “with yearning to see the mother”

AN 66.11ab  காண்ைல் விருப்பபாடு  

seeing desire-with  “with the desire to see”

KT 88.3  துன்ன ரு ஞ் ங்ஙல்  

approach- difficult slope  “a slope difficult to approach”

KT 344.7  பெறும் பொருள்  

obtaining difficult wealth  “wealth difficult to obtain”

But see also:

Tē 1.73.9.1  அந்தமாதி யயனு மாலு மார்க்கு மைிவாியான்  

end beginning Ayaṉum Mālum ārkkum aṟivariyāṉ  

“As for beginning [and] end, he is difficult to know for Brahmā, Māl and everybody.”

Verbal root for absolutive:

KT 134.5  கடல் விள் புறநி  

haste- descend- waterfall  “a hastily descending waterfall”

AN 19.13cd  கடல்நுது விள் அரால்  

hastened descend- shine- water  “hastily descending shining water”
The final examples are intriguing since here the verbal root stands in for a form that does not actually exist in Tamil, namely a gerundive:

**KT 63.2**  கேய் விறன  cey viṉai  “the work to be done”
**NA 24.8**  கேய்கபாருள்  cey porul  “the wealth to be made”
**TV 2.4**  கதாழுநீ நீள டி  toḻu nīr iṇai aṭi  “the foot pair of a nature to be worshipped”
7.b Verbal Nouns

Verbal nouns in -அல் -al and -(த்)தல் -(t)tal may be used as nomina actionis and as verbal complements, for example with வேண்டுதல் vēṇṭutal, “to be necessary”, or with வல்லுதல் vallutal, “to be able to”. In the oblique they stand for temporal/conditional ("when") or causal ("since") clauses, in the dative they have a final sense ("in order to"); verbal noun plus -ம் -um may be a sub-variety of temporal clause “as soon as”. Strangely, verbal nouns too can be found in attributive position, with unclear semantic impact. Note that the short form in -அல் -al is homophonous with the negative imperative: கேயல் ceyal, “doing” or “don’t do”. To express anteriority there is a perfective verbal noun in -அறம -amai. The negative verbal noun is formed with the verbal root plus -அறம -āmai. A very different type is formed in homophony with the participle noun n.sg. both perfective and imperfective (உணவுது/உணவுத்து ceyvatu/ceytatu), though very often the aspect does not seem to play a role. The most peculiar function of this n.sg. verbal noun develops in narrative texts where it can stand in for a finite verb with any person or number.

verbal root + -al உணவு ceyal, “doing”

verbal root + (t)tal உணவுதல் ceytal, “doing”, உணவு cel-tal, “going”

perfective stem + -amai உணவுத்தம ceytai, “having done”

verbal root + -āmai (neg.) உணவுற்றம ceyyāmai, “not doing”

perfective n.sg. உணவுது ceytatu, “doing” (homophonous to part.n. n.sg.)

imperfective n.sg. உணவு ceyvatu, “doing” (hom. to part.n. n.sg.)
Some verbal nouns are lexicalised like simple nouns: உண்கல் _uṇaṅkal_, lit. “drying”, but used to refer to something dried as fish or corn. There are examples without clear etymology such as _புதல்_ _paital_, “suffering”.

*nomen actionis*:

**KT 353.3** ஆடுதலினிசத āṭutal iṉitē

*bathing pleasant-it* “bathing is pleasant”

*verbal complement*:

**KT 79.8** ஆகைல் வல்லுசவாசர akaṟal valluvōrē

*departing able-he(h.)* “those who are able to depart”

*final, especially if marked as dative*:

**KT 100.7** மணத்தற்காியபறணப்கபருண்சதாசை maṇattaṟkariyai paṇai perum tōḷē

*uniting(dat.) difficult-they(n.pl.) bamboo big shoulder* “they are difficult to unite with, the big bamboo shoulders.”

*attributive*:

**KT 79.3** அங்கலுலவை alaṅkal ulavai “swaying twig”

**KT 35.5** தண்வரல்வாறை taṇ varal vāṭai “cool coming north wind”

**KT 28.4** அங்கலர்ஆசரல் alamaral acai vaḷi “whirling moving wind”

*[figura etymologica:]*

**KT 276.4** அறிலன் அரியார aritalum ariyār

*knowing-un know-not-they(h.)* “they don’t know at all”
From the bhakti period onwards, a verbal noun plus -um can be used as a temporal clause: “as soon as”

TVM 4.6.10.3f.  
\[
\text{val tuvarāpati}
\]

\[
\text{manṉanai ēttumī ēttutalum tolut, āṭumē}
\]
generous Dvāravati
king praise(ipt.) praising worshipped dancing- [she]³
“Praise the generous king of Dvārakā;
as soon as you praise [him] she will dance in worship.”

The oblique of the verbal noun in -alli/-tali can be temporal/conditional clauses: “when, upon”

KT 167.5f.  
\[
\text{init, ena kaṇavaṇ uṇṭalin}
\]
sweet-it say(inf.) husband eating
fine-it³ delighted-it bright forehead face
“when the husband ate it, saying ‘it is excellent’,
the face of [her with] bright forehead was subtly delighted.”

Occasionally other cases are marked, as the accusative in the following example:

KT 305.4  
\[
\text{kalaitalai avar āṟralarē}
\]
removing(acc.) he(h.) able-not-he(h.)³
“he is not able to remove.”
the perfective verbal noun:

NA 282.4 காதைன் தன்றமயி அறியுத்து
kātalaṉ tantamai ariyātu
lover having-given know-not
“not knowing that the lover has given”

KT 92.2,5 பாறவை ⋯ இறர் கேனசவ விறரயுமால்
pairavai ⋯ irai koṇṭamaiṉ viraiyumāl celavē
bird ⋯ food having-taken hurrying-going
“The birds, because of having taken up food, hurry in going.”

the negative verbal noun in -ாமீ -āmai:

NA 50.1 அறியாமீயா அண்டமயி அங்கி
ariyāmaiyin añṉai añci
not-knowing mother feared
“being afraid of mother for her not knowing”

In this function, in some bhakti texts (?) the suffix -ாமீ -āmai can be weakened into -ாமே -āmē:

Tē 1.80.1.1f. கற்றைாங் காிசயா ம்பி கலிறய வாராமே
karrṝṅk, ērī o mpi kaliyai vārmē
cerrār vāḷ tillai
learned-like fire protected Kaliyuga(acc.) coming-not prevented-they(h.) live-Tillai
“Tillai where live [the brahmins] who have prevented the Kaliyuga so that it may not come, protecting the fires like they have learned”
The verbal noun in neuter singular:

verbal noun as a subject:

NA 272.9 אמרון י︱אュינתקנ קי(Duration of verb) 
אמרון י︱אュינתקנ קי(Duration of verb)  אמפני

ampal mūt, ūr arintatu

nōy ākiṉṟatu nōyiṉum peritē.

rumour old village knowing

pain became-it paininm big-itε.

“That the gossiping old village should know

has become a pain greater than pain.”

relative construction of n.sg. verbal noun plus ōr (the numeral):

KT 377.4f.  נרי.🙃קרתנ

nāṭaṉoṭu

ceytu koṇṭatōr ciṟu nal naṭpē

land-he-with

made taken-it one little good friendshipε

“A good little friendship that has been made

with the man from the land.”29

verbal noun in place of a finite verb:

PV 172.2f.

ceruvil | valiyār valiyār āy man ālvatu

29 Note that this is an early example also of the auxiliary ककच-कव kol-tal in
medial function: a friendship that has been made by the girl for herself with the
man.
Verbs

fight(loc.) | strength-they(h.) strength-they(h.) become(abs.) earth ruling

“Those strong in battle, being strong, they rule the earth.”

A similar impersonal construction occurs with the verbal nouns of the ஆசம் ceyal or the ஆச்சக் ceyal types, but this is more frequently found in theoretical texts:

TC 19i  இயற்றக்கப்பறையிற்கைனக்கில்தல் iyarkai porulai irer ena kilattal
nature meaning(acc.) this-it say(inf.) stating

“[There is] stating about the natural meaning: ‘[it] is such.’”
9. The Moods (Imperative, Optative, Subjunctive?)

Moods are weakly developed in Early Old Tamil and further weaken in the course of time. At the same time the old texts record a bewildering variety of forms for the same simple function of, say, imperative, probably letting shine through some of the original regional and dialectal variation that was gradually eliminated with the creation of a supra-regional poetic idiom. In short, we find many imperatives, traces of two very different varieties of optatives and probably an old, disintegrating paradigm of what might have been a subjunctive.

**imperative (2\textsuperscript{nd} person)**

1. verbal root எழு eḻu “rise!” (KT 11.4)
   
   pl: v.r. + -ir கோலீர் colīr “speak!” (Tē 2.2.8.3) post-Caṅkam

2. -m-ō/-ē/ena மோலிமோ kolimō “speak!” (KT 2.2)

3. -miṉ ஓம்புமின் ōmpumiṉ “beware!” (KT 184.2)

4. -mati இறனமைசமா teḷimē “let it be clear!” (KT 273.8)

5. -āyசகைாய் kēḷāy “hear!” (KT 390.1)

6. v.r. + -um கோல்லும் collum “speak!” (PK 4.3) post-Caṅkam

**negative imperative (2\textsuperscript{nd} person)**

7. v.r. + -al வைரைல் cellal “don’t go”! (KT 179.3)

With the imperative it is especially difficult to distinguish between singular and plural, because probably many forms expressed degrees of politeness and/or familiarity. Definitely type 1, the root imperative, was impolite then as it is now, although an exception has to be made for the bhakti works where god is often addressed with the mere verbal root. Note that the plural suffix -kai(ē) may be added to type 1b and 3: உறரயீர்கள் uraiyērkaḷ (TVM 9.7.10.1),
Verbs

ariminkaḷē (PK 201.4). Type 2 ending in simple -ē-m is always followed by a particle -ō ē or -ē ē, unless embedded in direct speech with ēna. Type 5 in -arkāy is homophonous with the negative 2nd singular: ēmaarkāy kūṟāy, “you don’t talk” or “talk!”.

Later further imperative suffixes such as -ēnmi may be added to the negative imperative: ēnmiṟamān “don’t approach!” (Cint 799.4).

Perhaps an isolated form is a negative imperative plus a suffix of the 3rd person plural attested in NA 64.13: ēnmiṟamār kān-al-mār, “may they not see”.

The early bhakti texts and Kīḻkkaṇakku show the first occurrences of an imperative based on a perfective stem, although seemingly without aspectual impact. Note that these forms are homophonous with the perfective of the 2nd person: ēnmiṟāy kāṇṭāy, pl. ēnmiṟīr kāṇṭīr, “you saw” or “see!”.

Optatives

One of the forms called optative in modern times is used frequently and with all person and numbers:

1. -iya ēnmiṟāy vāliya “may you live” (KT 19.3)
2. -iyar ēnmiṟūryiīrīyarō “may they break” (KT 169.2)

It is homophonous with the second type of infinitive and has to be distinguished by context and sentence-final position. As the infinitive it often is metrically lengthened, and especially the form in -ō -iyar adds a particle -ō ē, perhaps of politeness.

An isolated survivor of the same form in the first person plural may be ēnmiṟāy uraikkiyam, “we will tell” (TV 55.2).
Another independent form exists that is difficult to analyse, with many occurrences and presumably an optative impact:

perfective stem + -இேின் -iciṇ

It is used predominantly for 1st and 2nd, but occasionally also for 3rd person. As a rule of thumb it goes with a 2nd person unless another person is specified by adding a pronoun: உறரத்திேின் கநஞ்சே uraitticiṇ neñcē, “may you speak, heart” (KT 63.2), but யாசன ... பாற் குர்ந்திசன yāṉē ... paṭar kūrnticē, “let me have affliction in abundance” (KT 216.3f).

Subjunctive/Optative?

Finally there is the already mentioned row of further stray forms which adds up from two incomplete, but complementary paradigms, as suggested by Chevillard 1991. In my view they are best described as a subjunctive paradigm already weakening in the Caṅkam period itself and slowly merging into the “modern” optative in -க -ka for all persons. The main reason for that suggestion is that, although occurrences exist that seem to express a future, the majority of cases suggest a possibility, an uncertainty, a wish for something to happen.

1.sg. -ku/kku யான் எவன் கேகா yāṉ evaṉ ceykō,
   “what will/can I do?” (KT 25.2)

2.sg. -(t)ti எம்றாம யுட்டிசயா emmai uyttiyo,
   “will you send us?” (KT 63.4)

3.sg. -ka வான்வ வல்சை வருக nāṭaṉ | vallē varuka,
   “let him come fast” (KT 111.5f.)

1.pl. -kam சகட்கும் நின் குரசை kēṭkum niṉ kuralē,
   “we may be a little ashamed” (KT 14.6)

-kum சதா்கும் குரவ் கூர்ந்தி kekum niṉ kuralē,
   “we can hear your voice” (KT 163.5)
-tum  எவ்வைி ய அவற்று எவ்வல்ள, “how can we know?”  (KT 40.3)
2.pl. -(t)ir  சேைிசரா, “will you go?”  (KT 268.1)
3.pl. -ka  பைருங் கூறுக, “let many people talk”  (KT 170.1)

In the ubiquitous formulaic address of the female friend வாைி சதாைி, literally “may you live, friend”, but actually no more than a pronounced vocative “o friend”, வாைி vāli might be analysed as an irregular (simplified) form in -இ- -ti; cf. ஆைி āḻi, “immerse yourself” (TVM 1.4.10.4).

However, already in the Caṅkam corpus itself “modern“ optative forms occur where -இ- -ka can be used for all persons and numbers:

KT 14.2f. கிள் மோழி அறிவையை போற்று மத்திய:  
cil moli arivaiyai | peṟuka-tillamma yāṉē  
“Ah, let me obtain the girl of few words!”

KT 23.3  ஆகவல் மகாலே பாதுக பால்லே  
akaval makaḷē pāṭuka pāṭē  
“Akaval woman, please sing a song!”

Moreover, the 2nd person singular in -இ- -ti sometimes goes in the direction of a request and is counted by most modern grammars among the imperative suffixes:

KT 63.2  கேய்விறன றகம்மிக கவண்ணுதி  
cey viṇai kai mika eṇṇuti  
do- work action much consider-you  
“Consider well the work to be done!”
The corresponding negative forms certainly seem to go in the direction of a negative optative:

v.r.-al-ka வரற்க தில்லை vararka-tilla, “may you not come” (KT 198.8)
v.r.-ā-ti கேறாதி citaiyāti, “may you not waste” (AiAi 42.4)

In the bhakti corpus, hybrid forms of indicative and subjunctive are found:

என் கேய்சகன் என் திரு மகட்சக eṉ ceykēṉ eṉ tirumakaṭkē, “what can I do for my splendid daughter?” (TVM 7.2.8.4), a clear sequel to the Caṅkam formula மேன் மேன் திருமேன் yāṉ evaṉ ceykō, “what can I do?”.

A presumable periphrastic construction of a perfective stem plus ஈதல் ītal, “to give”, as root, imperative or optative, is in existence, though rare: வந்தீக va-ntū-īka, “come!” (NA 221.12), also attested with a short vowel நேதல் ceṇ-ṟ-ika, “go!” (NA 321.8). Corresponding forms continue in the early Kīḻkkaṇakku, Kalittokai and Cilappatikāram: வந்தீ kañṭu-īka, “may you come!” (Kali 85.20), வந்தீக va-ntū-īka, “may you rise!” (Kali 86.10), சகட்டீமின் kēṭṭu-īmiṉ, “listen!” (Cilap 21.40). The negative counterpart, based on negative absolutive plus ஈதல் ītal, is fairly common in the Caṅkam corpus: நேதல் கேலாம் cellātīmō, “don’t go!” (KT 390.2), வாராதீசம vārātīmē, “don’t come!” (NA 336.11).

In an intermittent period of Kīḻkkaṇakku into the bhakti period -ēl may be added to verbal roots and even finite forms in order to express a negative imperative: போகேல் pōkēl, “don’t go!” (TVM 10.3.8.1), but also, and here with a 1st person plural, கேறுமேல் collutumēl, “let us not speak!” (PK 297.1), கேறுமேல் kāy-ntū-ī-y-ēl, “don’t be angry!” (AiE 7.1v).
10. Coordination and Questions

Among the basic syntactic structures that are marked by particles there are coordination and interrogation. One of the few surviving forms from Old Tamil to modern days is the enclitic -um, used on word level for the indefinite (“any”, “every”), for completion (“all”), for accentuation (“too”) and on phrase level for coordination of nouns and clauses. Contrary to the rule taught in any modern Tamil grammar book, however, in Old Tamil -um also coordinates sentences. A question may be marked, first of all, by an interrogative pronoun, often in combination with -ē to mark the end of the sentence or to focalise. The old interrogative particles are -ō and -kol, generally the former for questions of evaluation and the latter for questions of information. Both of them can be combined into the rhetorical question kollō, while -ō coordinated with another -ō marks an either–or question. Note that from bhakti times onwards -ē can also be used to mark a question, and very rarely -ā (the modern interrogative) can be seen in the same function.

-um, “and” enclitic, coordinates not only nouns and clauses, but also sentences; on all members or only on the last

inter. pr. + -ē question and focalisation

-ō (question of evaluation)

-kol (question of information)

kollō rhetorical question

-ē interrogative particle in bhakti texts

noun coordination with -um:

KT 20.1 அருளுமன்பு நீக்கி
arulum anpum nikki
consideration love discarded
“having discarded consideration and love”

For the coordination of two items there is a possibility of using sociative -oṭu instead:

KT 190.1 neri irum katuppoṭu perum tōl nīvi
curl- dark hair-with big shoulder stroked
“stroking the big shoulders and the curly dark hair”

-um can occur on every member of a long row of coordinated nouns:

Poy 29.1f. iraiyum nilaṉum iru vicumpum kāṟrum
arai puṉalum cem tīyum āvāṉ
lord ground dark sky wind
dash- flood red fire he-becomes
“The lord, the ground, the dark sky, the wind
the dashing flood and the red fire is he.”

When -um coordinates clauses it is added to the nonfinite verb forms (infinitives or absolutives) to be coordinated:

Pēy 76.1f. poruppu iṭaiyē nirrum puṉal kuḷittum aintu
neruppu iṭaiyē nirkavum nir vēntā...
“Without that you must stand on heights, bathe in floods and stand between five fires, ...
[your] evil deeds will dwindle [and] pass away.

When -um coordinates sentences, it is usually added to the first member of the main clause (that is, not to an attribute but to the subject or object).

simple coordination:

KT 31.4,6  மட்டும் எள்ள மாகன் மகன் ...
பின்னரும் அர்த்தம் எள்ள மாகன் மகன்
yānum ōr āṭukalam makaḷē ...
pīṭu keḻu kuricilum ōr āṭukalam makaṉē
Ium one dance-floor daughter... ... excellence have- lordum one dance-floor son
“I am a woman on the dance floor ...
and the excellent lord is a man on the dance floor.”

KT 51.3-6  கொலையாளை
மட்டும் தமதுவழி மூன்று தினம்
நார்வையாள் காணியவிள்ளம் செய்தம்
மேவை நேரமித்தங்கி மிதமுகை
cērppaṉai
yānum kātalen yāyum naṉi veyya!
entaiyum koṭiyyar vēṇṭum
ampal ūrum avaṇoṭu molimē
coast-he(acc.)
Ium love-I my-motherum abundant hot-she
my-fatherum give must(hab.fut.)
rumour villageum he-with it-speaks⁶
“The man from the coast,
I love him and my mother is very keen on him
and my father must give [me to him]
and [even] the gossiping village is speaking in his
favour.”

However, poetic license comes into play for example if one of the
coordinated clauses does not contain the required element or for the
sake of poetic parallelism (-um -um added to the first foot of the line).

KT 17  மா கவன மைலும் பூ கவன
தனியின் அனுப்பச்சாம் கலங்களேறும் அரகம்
மா கவன பூ தோன் பிரித்து
ப்பொருள் மாற்றாமல் பூ தோனிட
mā ena maṭalum ūrpa pū ena
kuvi mukil erukkam kaṇniyum cūṭupa
maṟukin ārkkavum paṭupa
piritum ākupa kāmam kāḷkkoṁē
horse say Palmyra-stemum they-mount flower say
heap- bud Yarcum chapletum they-wear
streetin shoutum they-suffer
other-itum they-become desire coming-to-a-climax-if⁶
“They will mount palmyra stems as horses and they
will wear chaplets of heaped Yarcum buds as flowers
and they will be shouted at in the streets
and another thing will happen, when desire is over-ripe.”

KT 113.1f.

"Close to the village is the pond and from the pond not far is the little forest river.”

-um only on the second member:

KT 62.4f.

"The body of the good one, it surpasses a sprout [in softness] and is pleasant to embrace.”

KT 74.2f.,5

"The body of the good one, it surpasses a sprout [in softness] and is pleasant to embrace.”
hill land-he
we him-thought-we(acc.) know-not-he self^m ...
he-was-emaciated they-say
“The man from the hilly land
does not know that we have been thinking of him
and he himself has become emaciated, they say.”

Rarely coordination can be asyndetic, that is, coordinate unrelated sentences of different syntactic structure:

KT 161.1f.,4 கபாழுது கமல் லி கபயலு சமாவாது
ஹிச்செம் டெக்சுமென் மூட்டுது ...
அர்த்தப் இலயார்ஜென் வராயசு வரல்லாத
polutum el inru peyalum övātu
kalutu kan paṇippa vicum atanjralai ...
annā ennum annaüyum annō
time^m light is-not raining^m stop-not-it
demon eye shiver throwing- that(obl.+loc.) ...
mother(voc.) saying- mother^m alas!
“Time without light and the rain without stopping
hurls down, so that demon eyes shiver, and on top of
that
mother, who says “mother!”, alas.”

interrogative pronoun:

KT 158.6 இஃகதவசன ikṭ, evanē
this what^e “What is this?”

KT 18.3 யார்டை ஆரிதையினேரீ yār akt, arinticinōrē
who that known-they(h.)^e “Who are those who
understand that?”
int.pron. + focalisation:

KT 140.4f. எவ்வம் யாங்கைிந் வழுங்கலூசரீ
evvaṁ | yāṅk,a arintaṇru i alunkal ūrē
trouble | what it-knew this- noise village
“What has it understood of the trouble, this noisy village?”

questions with -ககால் -kol:

KT 28.1 முட்டுசவன்ககால் வாைிசதாைி
muṭṭuvēṉ-kol tākkuvēṉ-kol
I-attackkol I-strike-againstkol
“Shall I attack? Shall I strike?”

KT 177.4f. இன்ைவர் | வருவர்ககால் வாைிசதாைி
iṉṟu avar | varuvar-kol vāḷi tōḷi
today he(h.) | he-comes(h.)kol live(sub.) friend
“Will he come today, oh friend?”

Also -ககால் -kol and -அ -ō can appear in coordination with -எ -ē for focalisation:

KT 5.1 அதுககாசைாகாமசநாசய
atu-kol tōḷi kāma nōyē
thatkol friend desire pain
“Is that, friend, the pain of desire?”

KT 160.6 இஃசதாசதாைிநங்
iktō tōḷi nam kātalar varaivē
thisō friend our- lover(h.) marriage
“Is this, friend, the marriage with our lover?”
 KT 2.4f. ஆரியப் குந்தலின்
arivai kūntaliṅ

நாற்றும் உளவேதிஹ்நாரியப் புவே
nāriyavum ulavō nī ariyum pūvē

young-woman tresses

கூந்தலின்
nāriyavum

தல்தவும் பூவே
țalțavum pūvē

they knowing

நாற்றும்
nāraṇum

தைசவாநீ
țaisavānī

"Do [flowers] exist that are as fragrant as the tresses of the young woman, among the flowers you know?"

Double -ஓ -ஓ can be employed for either-or:

 KT 142.2f. பூங் காண் சபறத
pūm kaṇ pētai
flower eye innocence

தந்தை
tāṉ

நீ்
naṟintaṉaḷō

எலோ
ilaḷō

self she-knew not-she

"The flower-eyed innocence, did she know or did she not?"

A rhetorical question, that is, a question that does not really ask for information but is meant to vent the speaker’s feelings, can be marked with ககால்சைா kollō:

 KT 16.1 உள்ளை் ககால்சைா
uḷḷār-kollō tōḷi

remember-not-he(h.)

"Does he not remember, friend?"

 KT 279.4 இதுபொழுது சாலைமூத் வார் ககால்சைா
itu pōḷuṭē ākavum vārār-kollō

this time become(inf.)

come-not-he(h.)

"Although the time is this, will he not come?"
KT 180.5  எய்தினர் ககால்சைா கபாருசை எயினோகொல்லோ porulē
he-obtained kollo wealthē “Did he obtain it – wealth?”

In bhakti texts also -ē may be found as an interrogative particle:

Poy 95.2f.   மூவாத மாகதிகண் கேல்லும் வறகுண்சை
mūvāta | mā kati-kan cellum vakai unṭē
age-not great way(loc.) going- means it-isē “Is there a means to go on the ageless great way?”
11. Embedded Clauses with ākutal, ennutal and pōl-tal

As a rule, Old Tamil has one finite verb per sentence. However, there are four productive exceptions, namely an insertion (of an imperative or optative: காண் kāṇ, “see!”, என்ப eṉpa, “they say”), a murreccam (a finite form standing in for a nonfinite one), a double verb form (such as some forms of negation), and finally embedding – a small number of verbs have special dispensation to be preceded by a finite form. The former three are treated in Chapter 15; both on serial verbs and embedding see Steever 1988, 1993.

The three primary embedding verbs are:

- என் eṉ, “to say”
  - verbal root (என), infinitive (எனா),
  - absolutive (என்று), perfective peyareccam (என்றா), finite forms, Skt. “iti”, [other verba dicendi: direct speech or thought]

- ஆகு āku, “to become”
  - verbal root (ஆங்), absolutive (ஆகி/ஆய்),
  - infinitive (ஆக்), perfective peyareccam (ஆய/ஆகிய),
  - verbal noun (ஆகுதல்): concittance and attribution “when”, “since”, “that”

- சபால் pōl, “to be similar”
  - verbal root (சபால் pōl), absolutive (சபால்/சபான்று),
  - infinitive (சபால்), perfective peyareccam (சபால்/சபான்),
  - comparative clause; habitual future (pōlum): “it seems that”

direct speech/thought:

KT 82.2  அலால் என்று நம் அறு காண்டு தையிப்பார்
alāal enru nam aḻuta kaṇ tuṭaippār
don’t-cry said our- cried- eye he-wipes(h.)
“‘Don’t cry!’ he says [and] wipes our eyes that cried.”

KT 141.1-3
valai vāy ciru kili vilai tinai kaṭṭiyar
celka enrōḷē annai ena nī
collin evaṇō tōḷi
curve- mouth little parakeet ripen- millet chase(inf.)
may-go said-she° mother say(inf.) you
say-if what° friend
What if you said, friend:
“Mother is one who said, ‘let her go
in order to chase from the ripening millet
the little parakeets with curved beaks’”?

KT 187.5
valiyaṉ eṉṉātu meliyum eṉ neñcē
hard-he say-not softening-it my- heart°
“Without saying, ‘he is hard’ my heart is softening.”

The quotative verb என்னுதல் enṉutal may on occasion be replaced by an other verbum dicendi:

KT 148.6
kaṉavō marṟu iti viṉavuvalu yāṉē
dreamēmaru this I-ask I°
“‘Is this but a dream?’ I ask.”
An additional possible function of the quotative is that of concluding an enumeration:

KT 32.1-3  காறையும் பகலு மாலியும் காலம்
மூர்த்தத்தில் விலும்பது சொல்லத்தில்
இருபத்துனொருகில் வில்லப்பினானது
kālaiyum pakalum kai aru mālaiyum
ūr tuṅcu yāmamum viṭiyalum enṟu i
polūtu, ḫāi teriyin poyyē kāmam
morningum middayum action cease- eveningum
village sleep- midnightum dawnum said this-
time-of-day between distinguish-if lie6 desire
“Morning, midday, action-ending evening,
midnight when the village sleeps and dawn –
when one [still] distinguishes between these times,
desire is only a lie.”

An additional special function of the embedding verbs is as a quasi-postposition in the sense of taking something for something else (என ena) or using something as an instrument (ஆ, ஆக ā, āka):

KT 17.1f. மாகவின் மலை வீடு, சிகிச்சா
மாற்று மூடும் காலமினும் குதி
mā ena maṭalum ūrpa, pū ena
kuvi mukil erukkam kaṇṇiyum cūṭupa
horse say(inf.) Palmyra-stemum they-mount flower say(inf.)
heap- bud Yarcum chapletum they-wear
“They will mount palmyra stems as horses and as flowers
they will wear chaplets of Yarcum in heaped buds.”

Poy 1.1-3  காறையும் மாலியும் காலம் மூர்த்தத்தில்
“With the earth as the bowl, the flowing sea as oil [and] him with hot rays as the light I put a word garland on the feet of him with the red-glowing discus.”

The use of the infinitive ஆக aṭa in an embedding construction allows more or less the same range of shades as the verbal + a-type of infinitive sub-clause, with the advantage of being able to clearly mark person, number, aspect and mood:

“when”

KT 265.7f. பாய்ந்தான் உட்க்குழி உண்டு
உண்டு உட்குழிக் காணிப்புண்டு
yāṉ taṉakk_u uraittanēṇ āka
tāṉ nāṇinēṇ
I him(dat.) I-told become(inf.)
he he-was-ashamed
“When I told him
he himself became ashamed.”

“so that”

KT 172.3f. முருகன் மரத்தாக குட்டி வர்த்தான்
அதிய தாக வழிந்த அதனிலியா
muraḵkan mṛcchākaguttī varṭṭān
athaṭhā kaṭa vārṭṭāṇēṇ āka
I told become(inf.)
when I told
he himself became ashamed.”
emiyam āka înku turantōr
tamīyar āka iniyar-kollō
our-we become(inf.) here abandoned-he(h.)
alone-he(h.) become(inf.) pleasant-he(h.)kollō
“He who abandoned [us] here so that we are on our own,
is it pleasing to him to be alone?”

The absolutive ஆகி āki allows the correlation of independent events and can often be rendered by “since”:

KT 329.5,7 பயிலி ருண டுநாடு டுடுயில் ஆகி ...
payil iruḷ naṭunāl tūyil arit āki ...
nal malar malai kanirktel iyavai paṇiyē
be-dense- darkness midnight sleep difficult-it become(a.)...
good blossom rain eye(dat.) easy-they(n.pl.)śl dewś
“Since sleep is difficult at midnight in the dense darkness,
tears [come] easy indeed to the rain eyes, good blossoms.”

“since” (~ apposition)

NA 215.8f. இன்றுநீ யிவறண யாகி கயம்கமாடுதங்கி கனவசனா கதய்ய
iṉṟu nī ivaṇai āki emmoṭu
தங்கி கனவசனா கதய்ய
taṅkiṉ evaṇō teyya
today you here-you become(abs.) us-with
stay-if whatteyya
“Since you are here today,
what if you stayed with us, please?”
The perfective peyareccam ஆயா/ஆய்கியா can be used for specified attribution.

**KT 181.1,7**

*இதுமற் கைவசனா சதாைி ...*  
*itu-marru evanõ tõli ...*  
*peru mutu peṇtirēm ākiya namakkē*  
*big old women-we become(p.)- us(dat.)*  
*“What is this, friend to us who have become great old women?”*

**temporal clause**

**KT 178.5-7**  
*மாறை நிைம் பரந் தன்ன புன்ககணாடு*  
*yām numakk u| ariyam ākiya kālai*  
*we you(dat.pl.) | difficult-we become(p.)- time*  
*big-they(n.pl) you-suffered(pl.).*  
*“At the time we were difficult for you [to reach], you suffered greatly.”*

Less frequently the verbal noun அங்க அகுதல் can be found to express indirect speech or thought content:

*“that”*

**KT 386.4-6**

*மாறை நிைம் பரந் தன்ன புன்ககணாடு*  
*we you(dat.pl.) | difficult-we become(p.)- time*  
*big-they(n.pl) you-suffered(pl.).*  
*“At the time we were difficult for you [to reach], you suffered greatly.”*
mālai
nilam parantaṉṇa pūnkanotu
pulampu, utaittu, ākutal ariyēṇ yānē
evening
ground spread-like sorrow-with
loneliness possess-it becoming know-not-I īē
“That the evening would possess loneliness
along with sorrow as if spread on the ground
I did not know.”

Embedded comparison clauses with சபால்-தல் pōl-tal are considerably less frequent:

KT 147.3f. நுண்பூண் மைந்றதறய த்தந்சதாய சபாை
நுண்பூண் மைந்றதறய த்தந்சதாய
tuṇ pūṇ maṭantaiyai tantōy pōla
in tuyil ᵀฎயே கனசவē
fine ornament girl(acc.) given-you be-similar(inf.)
pleasant sleep you-arouse(sub.) dreamē
“As if you brought [my] girl with fine ornaments
you would rouse [me] from sweet sleep, dream.”

AN 177.13 வல்சை வருவர் சபாலும்
vallē varuvan pōlum
quickly come-he(h.) it-seems
“He will come quickly, it seems.”
12. Conditional (Factual and Hypothetical), Concessive, Causal Clauses

Old Tamil starts off with two clear forms for the conditional, one the simple verbal root plus the suffix -இன் -iṉ, the other based on the frozen conditional form of the embedding verb ஆகுதல் ākutal, i.e., ஆயின் āyiṉ, “if”. The former does not allow for marking aspect, tense or mood, but can take a subject; the latter embeds a finite verb. Already the frozen conditional of the embedding verb என்னுதல் ennudal is rarely found in the same function, i.e., எனின் eṉiṉ, “if”. From the early Kilkkanațkku corpus onwards for a number of centuries we find a bewildering variety of further suffixes and postpositions, some on the verbal root as was the case with -இன் -iṉ, some on finite forms, and some already on the absolutive. Almost all of them are transitional, but one of them is the one form destined to make it into modern formal Tamil, that is, absolutive plus -ஆல் -āl. As mentioned before, the distinction between a conditional and a temporal clause has never been clear-cut, and often “if” rather means “when”.

By adding -உம் -um to any conditional form a concessive can be formed (“although”), but also absolutive or infinitive plus -உம் -um can stand either in coordination or for a concessive.

One further form of the embedding verb ஆகுதல் ākutal, the oblique of the verbal noun, under the two forms ஆகலின் ākaliṉ and ஆதலின் ātaliṉ, is frozen into a postposition that allows forming causal clauses (“because”). Moreover there are a few of demonstrative pronouns from the அ- a- stem that are frozen into quasi-conjunctions, namely அநல் ānāl, அன்றால் atanāl (“therefore”), அதன்ைறை ātanṟalai (“moreover”, literally “on top of that”) and அதகனதிர் ātanetir (“in view of that”).
forms of the conditional

verbal root + -இன் -in
( strong verbs + -ppin)

finite verb + இன் iṉ

finite verb + எனின் eṉiṉ
(rare in the old corpus)

finite verb + ஆகில் ākil (embedding)

finite verb + ஆயின் āyiṉ (embedding)

finite verb + கபாய்ப்பின் poyppiṉ,
“if he lies”

finite verb + வாரார் ஆயின் vārār āyiṉ,
“if he does not come”

finite verb + எனின் eṉiṉ (embedding)
(rare in the old corpus)

finite verb + ஆகில் ākil (embedding)
later (bhakti)

verbal root + -இல் -il, -எல் -ēl
(strong verbs + -ppiṉ/−ppēl)

(finite form + -எல்/-ஏல் -ēl/-āl)
transitional

abs. + -ஆல் -āl

abs. + -ஆல் -āl

forms of the concessive

abs. + -ஆல் -um
coordinated or concessive

inf. + -ஆல் -um
coordinated or concessive

v.r. + -இனும் -iṉum (strong verbs + -ppiṉum)
f.v. + ஆயினும் āyiṉum (embedding)

f.v. + எனினும் eṉiṉum (embedding)
(rare in the old corpus)

f.v. + ஆகிலும் ākilum (embedding)
later (bhakti)

f.v. + -எலும் -ēlum (embedding)
later (bhakti)

v.r. + -இலும் -ilum (strong verbs + -ppiṉum)
transitional

abs. + -ஆலும் -ālum
post-Caṅkam up to modern

postpositions and conjunctions of reasoning

ாகலின்/ஆதலின் ākalin/ātalin
causal clause: “because”

30 A few isolated forms such a kaṇṭāl in PN 390.25 can be found.
Verbs

“therefore”

“moreover”

“in view of that”

conditional clauses

-āṉāl -iṉ type impersonal:

KT 102.1  

 ullin ullam vēmē  

remember-if inside burn(hab.fut.)

“when remembering, the inside burns.”

-āṉāl -iṉ type unmarked for subject:

KT 280.4f.  

 arai nāḷ vālkkaiyum vēntaleṉ yāṉē  

one day unite(inf.) unite-if half day life I-need-not I

“If I can be in union [with her] for a single day, I will not need living for [another] half day.”

-āṉāl -iṉ type marked for subject:

KT 316.2f.  

 mother know-if | be-I live(sub.) friend  

“If mother gets to know, will I [still] exist, friend?”

āyiṉ type:

KT 174.5f.  


porulvayin pirivār āyiṉ i ulakattu

wealth-for he-separates(h.) if this- world-
wealth

“If he separates for the sake of wealth, in this world
truly only wealth is wealth.”

āyiṉ type hypothetical:

KT 148.5f.

kār amṟ, enri āyiṉ

“If you were to say ‘this is not the rainy season’,
I should ask ‘is this but a dream?’”

āyiṉ type with past tense and hypothetical:

KT 350.2f.

collīnam āyiṉ celvar-kollō

don’t go say(inf.)

“If we were to say ‘don’t go!’,
would he [still] go?”
Verbs

KT 274.8

ani mulai ākam uṭkiṇam celiṇē
adorn- breast bosom we-remembered go-ifē
“If we were to go, we would remember [her] bosom with adorning breasts.”

உணியையின் aṇi type as subject clause:

KT 98.1-3

avar | tuṇṇa cenru ceppunar perinē
naṇru-man vāli tōḷi
he(h.) | approach(inf.) gone saying-he(h.) obtain-ifē
good-ifē” live(sub.) friend
“If we were to obtain someone who goes to approach [and] talks to him, that would be good indeed, oh friend.”

எனின் eṉī type:

NA 334.8f.

miṉṉu vaci vilakkattu varum eṉī
en-ō tōḷi nam in uyir nilai-ē
lightning split lamp- coming- say-if
whatē friend our- pleasant life stateē
“If he comes with a split of lightning for a lamp, what, friend, will be the state of our sweet life?”

ஆகில் ākil type:

Poy 88.4

en ākil eṇṇē enakku
what if what's me(dat.)
“If anything should happen, what [is it] to me?”

finite verb plus -ēl:
AiAi 9.2 அல்லா தோன்று தம்முண்டு
aliya vēntā teritiyēl
be-desolate(inf.) need-not(n.sg.) understand-you(sub)
“If you understood, it wouldn’t be necessary [for you] to be desolate.”

verbal root plus -il:
Pēy 82.1 உணாறு லுணர்வா அரியன்
unaril uṇarv ariyan
perceive-if perception difficult-he
“When perceiving, he is difficult to perceive.”

absolutive plus -āl:
Pēy 25.1 தொல்லதால் பூளுண்டு
tolutāl paḻut uṇṭē
worshipped-if mistake it-is
“If you worship, is it a mistake?”

concessives
absolutive plus -um:
KT 64.4f. நேயம் அகுதல் ஆற்றும்
nōyēm ākutal arintum
ceyar tōli cēy nāṭṭōrē.
pain-we becoming knownum
distance-he(h.) friend distance land-he(h.)
“Even though knowing that we would feel pain, he is distant, friend, in a distant land is he.”

infinitive plus - commodo:

KT 311.2f. வைவன் வைவன்
vaiyavan vaiyavan
tilavān tankavum
nillātu kālīnta kalleṁ kaṭum tēr
chārioter restraint(inf.)
stand-not passed-by noisy fast chariot
“Even though restrained by the charioteer [there was] a noisy fast chariot that passed by without stopping.”

verbal root plus -cidr -in:

KT 210.4,6 விருந்து வராந்த காக்ககயதுப்பலியே
viruntu vara karainta kākkeiyatu paliyē
seven pot-offer-if-even little-it my friend ...
guest come(inf.) cried-crow(gen.) offering
“Even if we were to offer seven pots [of rice], small, my friend, would it be as a gift to the crow that cawed a guest would come.”

āyinum:

KT 42.1,4 மடம் மடம் மடம் ...

Kalam கடம் கடம் கடம் மடம் ...
“Even if passion is something that ceases, will our attachment dwindle, too?”

Poy 55.1f.

“His people, whatever [their] karma, are our king’s people.”

-Pey 81.1f.

“Though he is difficult to think of by the heart, take a stand, my heart, speak.”
causal clause with ஆகலின் ākaliṉ:

NA 99.9f. பிடவும் கொண்டையும் கோளும்
piṭavum koṇaiyum kōṭalum

large-flowered-jasmine laburnum white-Malabar-lily

 ignorance因为他们他们花然后

“large-flowered jasmine, laburnum and white Malabar lily, because they are foolish they have flowered, many [of them].”

அதனால் atañāl: “therefore”

NA 67.9f. எமாரும் வெட்டும் புக்கானர். அதனால்
emarum vēṭṭam pukkaṉar. atañāl

our他们(h.) entrance因此

““All our people have entered the hunt. Therefore, what if you stayed?”
13. Negation

Old Tamil knows no less than six distinct forms of negation. It is not clear whether they are vestiges of older regional forms or whether there are fine semantic distinctions which remain elusive today. There were two verbs of negation to begin with; the difference between them was clear-cut since one negated quality and the other negated existence, but the border between them became blurred in the course of time:

அல் al, “not to be so”   (complementary to இரு iru “to be present”)
இல் il, “not to be”     (complementary to உள் uḷ “to exist”)

Derived from இல் il there is an indeclinable form இல்லை illai, “not”, valid for all persons, attested already, if rarely, in the Caṅkam corpus and the main negation form surviving until today. All other forms are inflected. With one exception negation does not mark aspect or tense. The simplest form is just the verbal root, without aspectual suffix, followed directly by the pronominal ending for person and number. The same can be done with the long negative stem (கேய்யாது ceyyātu). Next, the negative verbal root அல் al can be added between the verbal root and the pronominal suffix. The use of இல் il is more difficult to describe. To begin with, it was employed in several subtypes of nominal negation, denoting people who are without something. There also was an additional construction of perfective aspect plus இல் il followed by pronominal noun, more frequent from early bhakti on, however, the aspect does not appear to influence semantics. Finally, for the cases where it seemed important to mark aspect, tense or mood, there was a double verb form consisting of an ordinary positive finite verb followed by the corresponding form of அல் al. With negative forms the distinction between finite form and participle noun is almost totally
absent; all forms are ambiguous, except for those that make use of pronominal endings with the vowel ஒ/ஓ o/ō.

(1. இல்லை illai “not” up to modern Tamil)
2. zero suffix v.r.-pron.suff. அறியாதேய் ariyēṇ, “I don’t know”
3. negative stem v.r.-ā-pron.suff. ஓவாதே ஓவாtu “it does not stop”
4. -அல் -al as a suffix v.r.-al-pron.suff. காணாதேய் kānalar, “they don’t see”
5. -இல் -il as a suffix perf. stem-il-pron.suff. கேண்டிறேய் koṇṭilai, “you do not take” (late)
6. double verb forms positive + negative form ஒள்வள் அல்ைள் olvāḷ alāḷ, “she will not agree”

For type 2 in the third person there is a marked preference for forms with -அல் -ā before the ending (நிறையாதேய் ceyyāṉ, நிறையாதேய் ceyyāl, நிறையாதேய் ceyyār) which might be analysed in two ways, namely either as a verbal root plus pronominal suffix, to which the rarer alternative would be நிறைவாதேய் ceyyan, etc., or, tentatively, as a short negative stem நிறைவாதே ceyyā plus just a pronominal ending -ன் -ṉ, that is, as an intermediate form between type 2 and 3. Note that type 3 is mostly restricted to negative neuter singular and plural and to negative participle nouns: அறியாதேய் ariyāṭor, “those who do not know”. The mere negative stem is one of the most ambiguous forms that exist: நிறைவாதே ceyyā corresponds to neg. pey. (“who does

31 A variant form with -கல் -kal instead of -அல்(ல்) -al(l) is fairly well attested in the Kalittokai: அறியாகல் arikallāy, “you don’t know” (Kali 47.17).
not do”), neg. abs. (“not having done”), negative n.sg. (“it does not do”) and negative n.pl. (“they do not do”).

இல்லை illai:

KT 25.1  யாரும் மில்லையா யாரும் illai  
who not  “Nobody is there.”

zero suffix:

KT 200.4  மாறார் மன்னர் மறாய் மாறம்  
marantōr manaṟa maravām nāme  
forgot-he(h.) manaṟa forget-not-we we  
“He has forgotten indeed. We, we won’t forget.”

neg. stem, long (more often neg. part.n.):

KT 6.4  ஒர்யான் மன் துஞ்சாதான் துஞ்சாதான்  
ōr yāṉ maṉṟa tuñcēṭēṉē  
one I maṉṟa sleep-not-I  
“I alone, indeed, am one who does not sleep.”

neg. stem, short, for n.sg.:

KT 254.2df.+7  தறையைர் வந்தன வாரா சதாைி  
kōṅkiṉ talai alar vantaṇa vārā tōṭi  
head blossom they-came(n.pl.) not-come-it friend  
Kōṅku  
Kōṅku  
head blossom they-came(n.pl.) not-come-it friend  
he-reached(h.) say(inf.) coming- messenger  
“He has forgotten indeed. We, we won’t forget.”

head blossom they-came(n.pl.) not-come-it friend  
he-reached(h.) say(inf.) coming- messenger  
“The first Kōṅku buds have come. Not come, friend
has the messenger who comes to say [our man] has reached.”

neg. stem, short, for n.pl.:

KT 261.5f.  என்கண் துஞ்ோ வாைி சதாைி

en kan tuṅcā vali töli

my- eye | sleep-not-they(n.pl.) live(sub.) friend

“My eyes don’t sleep, oh friend.”

verbal root -அவ் -al as a negative suffix:

KT 290.1f.  காமம் தாங்குமதி ஒட்டி தாம் அல்

kāmam tāṅkumati enpōr tām aḵt, a

ariyalar-kollō anai matukaiyar-kol
desire bear(ipt.) say-they(h.) they(pl.) that

“Those who say ‘bear desire’, do they not know it? Are they that strong?”

Here there are two examples for Caṅkam precursors with the negative verbal root -அவ் -il, first on a verbal root, then on a perfective stem as is fairly normal from bhakti onwards:

KT 113.3f.  கணால் கவண் குரு கல் தைது யாவது

kāmam tēr veḷ kuruk u allatu yāvatum

tuṉṉal pōkiṉṟāl poḻilē

prey search- white egret except anything

approaching go-not-itā groveē

“Nothing except the white egret searching for prey
will go near the grove.”
(lit. “anything other than the egret will not go”)

Pari. 9.25 ஆய்வந் திைர் அய்வங்லோர்
research-not-they(h.) “The don’t research.”

There are rare occurrences too of a negative present tense – unclear, again, whether with temporal impact or not:

TVM 7.7.5.4 ஒன்று மைிகின்ைிசை நன்றனமீகர்க்குய் விைசம
one know-not-I mother(2.pl.) me(dat.) escaping place
“I don’t know of any place, mothers – for me to escape to.”

Special Constructions with -இல்-il

negation of action (v.n.):

KT 168.6 மணத்தலு ந் தணத்தலு மிலமீ
uniting departing not-we
“We can neither unite nor depart.”
(lit. “we are without...”)

negation of quality:

NA 143.6 வாழு விலைந் தன்சைாவிைசம
fault not-she amma self
“She, alas, is without fault.”

negation of fact:

NA 193.5 திரும்பத்தைந் தைைலையையில் தியு சிரண்டைை இலமீ
evil-it it-knew not-we “We did not know of any evil.”
(lit. “we were without knowing...”)


nominalisation:

KT 93.4

pulavi aḵt u evanō anp u ilam-kaṭaiyē

sulking that what⁵ love not-we(loc.)⁶

“What is that, sulking – in us who are without love?”

KT 115.6

nal malai nāṭa niṉ alatu ilāḷē

good mountain land-he(voc.) you- not-so-it not-she⁵

“Man from a land of good mountains, without you she does not exist.”

Probably an isolated case is an impersonal construction with ilam instead of illai:

TV 31.1

tūt u enru icaittāl icai ilam

messenger said speak-if speak-absence

“If [I] speak ‘speak as [my] messenger!’ there is no speaking.”

double verb forms with -al

negation of quality with a pronominal noun:

KT 47.4

nallai allai neṭu veḷ nilavē

good-you not-so-you long white moonlight⁶

“You are no good, long white moonlight.”

past tense negation:

AN 98.6

arintaṇal allai annai

she-knew not-so-she mother “Mother did not know.”
verbal negation with a neg. v.n. as direct object:

NA 376.11f. வறும்புன் காவல் விடம்

vaṟum puṉam kāval viṭāmai

arintanir allirō aran il yāyē

poor field guarding letting-not
you-knew(pl.) not-so-you(pl.)' duty- not- mother⁸

“Haven’t you understood that [our] virtueless mother won’t let [us] guard the empty field?”

subjunctive:

KT 224.6  துயர்குறுக் கல்லைச்சன்
tuyar poṟukk, allēṉ
misery I-bear(sub.) I-not-so

“I cannot bear the misery.”

Negative double verb forms allow for multiple rhetoric ambiguity:

KT 52.5  பாித்ததன் லல்லசை
parintaṉeṉ allēṉ
I-sympathized not-so-I⁸/no-so-he⁸

“Did I not sympathise?”

“I sympathised, did I not?”

“I sympathised, did he not?”

A double negation is to be understood as an emphatic positive:

KT 244.3  சகசை மல்லசை. சகட்டன் கபரும
kēḷēm allēm. kēṭṭaṉ peruma
hear-not-we not-so-we we-heard great-one(voc.)

“It is not that we did not hear. We heard, great one.”
15.a Double Verb Forms, *Murreccam*, Complex Verb Forms

Old Tamil knows a considerable variety of complex verb forms, both in the sense of lexical compound verbs and of auxiliary constructions. These usually consist of a nonfinite item (noun or verb) followed by a finite item. Apart from those there are a number of exceptions to the rule of having only one finite verb per sentence. First, there is the possibility of insertions; these usually consist in *verba dicendi/sentiendi* and in optatives or imperatives. Double verb forms, that is, two finite verbs following directly upon each other, occur with the negatives (see Chapter 13), with emphatic verbs of existence (இருதல் *irutal*/*u-tal*/*ākutal*) and with some exceptional constructions, for example with இருதல் *cel-tal*, later also வருதல் *varutal*. Moreover there is the *murreccam* (“what demands a finite verb as a complement”), a construction where a finite verb is integrated somewhere in the clause but understood as nonfinite.

insertion of *verbum dicendi*:

KT 12.4  கவறைத் கதன்பவர்கேனைவாசை
*K* 12.4  kavalaitt pa avar ceṉṟa āṟē
   crossroad-it they-say he(h.)- gone- way
   It has crossroads, they say, the way he has gone.”

insertion of optative:

KT 19.3  இறனமதி வாழி கநஞ்சே
*K* 19.3  inaimati vāḻiya neṉcē
   despair(ipt.) may-live heart
   “Despair, may you live, heart!”

An added verb of existence, especially if it does not concur in number and gender with the main verb, can mean an emphatic
presence, if it is in agreement with the main verb it may also signify a change of state. In such cases one might take the main verb as a participial noun:

Pū 20.1f.  

\[ \text{மாசதா பல்காலு நின்றன} \]
\[ \text{valī vālvār vālvar ām-mātō} \]
many time'acc you(acc.)
way live-they(h.) live-they(h.) becoming-it
“Is it not that those, who walk (lit. live) you as the path
for a long time, shall live?”

NA 128.3  
\[ \text{எனக்கு நீ யுறரயா யாயிறன} \]
me(dat.) you talk-not-you you-became
“You have become one that does not talk to me.”
“It is the case that you don’t talk to me.”

The special construction with கேல்/வரு cel/varu seems to express a summons:

KT 198.5  
\[ \text{படுகிைி கடிக ஞ்} \]
\[ \text{paṭu kiḷi kaṭika m} \]
happen- parakeet we-chase we-go
“We let us go and chase parakeets that come down [into the millet].”

\[ ^{32} \text{Here the negation is an attempt at rendering the flavour of the particle -மாசதா - mātō, politely suggesting that something is the case.} \]
Verbs

*muṟṟeccam* with aspectual impact:

**KT 275.2**

kaṇṭaṇam varukam ceṁmō tōli

we-saw we-come go! friend

“Up! Let us come [back] after we have seen, friend.”

**AN 398.20f.**

pal pūm kāṇatt, alki inṟa ivañ
cēmtañai celinē citaikuvat, ūntō

many flower forest- abided today here
you-joined go-if being-wasted-it is-it

“If you were to go after joining [us] here today, abiding in the forest with many flowers, would there be [any] harm?”

epic *muṟṟeccam* with an infinitive for a change of subject following:

**Cilap 12.53**

viruntin mūral arumpinañ nirpa

feast smile budded-she stand(inf.)

“while she stood, as one who broke out in a smile like a feast”

*muṟṟeccam* for rhetoric effect:

**NA 373.3f.**

mai paṭu māl varai pāṭinañ koṭičci

daiveñam veḷ nel kuṟūm nātan

kohl happen- big mountain she-sang creeper-she
wild-rice white paddy pounding- land-he
“the man from a land, where the creeper woman pounds white paddy, singing about the cloud-covered big mountain”

Compound Verbs

The simplest type of compound verb combines a noun or an adverb with a verbal root. While the former mostly can be understood by their etymology, the latter can be employed in a merely intensive sense of the simple verb or can be semantically productive. Many are lexicalised but by no means all of them, and with some the meaning depends on the context. The verbal class remains that of the simplex. The “prepositions” are மேல் mēl, “upon”; கிள் kīl, “beneath”; முன் mun, “before”; பின் pin, “after”; உடன் utan, “along with”; உல் ul, “inside”; எதிர் etir, “opposite”; வெளி veli, “outside”. The most frequent nouns are basic words for body parts such as தலை talai, “head”, கை kai, “hand”, புரம் puram, “back”, but see the following (incomplete) list of examples:

| எதிர்ககாள் | etir-kol | 2. “to receive” |
| வெளி-படு | veli-paṭu | 6. “to come out” |
| ஆர்ப்படு | āṟṟu-paṭu | 11. “to bring on the way” |
| கண்படு | kaṇ-paṭu | 6. “to close one’s eyes” |
| தலை-பிரி | talai-piri | 4. “to separate” |
| புரம்-டா | puram-tā | 13. “to protect; to defy” |
| வாலி-படு | vali-(p)-paṭu | 6. “to follow, to worship” |

A small group of verbs, in the early time most frequently உருதல் urutal, “to experience”, may function as a verbaliser by incorporating a noun, occasionally lexicalised: உறு impu-uru, “to feel pleasure”; கம் kām-uru, “to desire” (contracted and lexicalised from கம் வரு kāmam varu); அலம் alam-varu and அலம்-
almaru, “to be agitated” (lexicalised in both the uncontracted and the contracted form).

In this context the phenomenon of spontaneous noun incorporation should be mentioned, frequent especially in devotional and epic Tamil, recognisable by an accusative mark where a genitive would be expected:

Kul 1.4.1 ் மாவிறன வாய்பிைந்து māvinai vāy-pilantu
horse(acc.) mouth ripped “mouth-ripping the horse”
~ “ripping the mouth of the horse”

Verbal compounds also exist, such as ் பொதா ru pōtaru, “to come”; ் மேவா ru mevaru, “to be fitted for” (contracted from ் மே வா vu-varu), but there are cases where it is difficult to distinguish between a verbal compound and an auxiliary construction.

As in any language, there are also a number of verbs that take verbal complements, in which case there is a frequent variation between the infinitive and various forms of the verbal noun, occasionally also with the absolutive. Some of them are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>அயாங்கல் ayartal</td>
<td>4. “to be engaged in”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ஆ(கு)தல் ā(ku)tal</td>
<td>13. “to be possible” (bhakti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அர்த்ரு�ல் āṟṟutal</td>
<td>5. “to bear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>இரைதல் icaital</td>
<td>4. “to be possible”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ஆயல் iyal-tal</td>
<td>3. “to befall”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>இயைதல் iyaital</td>
<td>4. “to be agreeable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>உவத்தல் uva-ttal</td>
<td>12. “to rejoice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>எய்தல் eytal</td>
<td>11. “to grow weary”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ஓல்லதல் ollutal</td>
<td>5. “to be possible”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ஓைதல் oḻital</td>
<td>5. “to stay behind, to cease”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ஓவுதல் ὰvutal 5. “to stop”

குைித்தல் kurittal 11. “to intend”

கூடுதல் kūṭutal 5. “to be appropriate”

சேகைா/சபாகா cellā/pōkā 3./13. “not to be possible”

துைங்குதல் tuṭaṅkatal,

தூத்தல் toṭaṅkatal 5. “to begin”

பிலைத்தல் pilaittal 11. “to fail”

மருத்தல் maruttal 11. “to refuse”

மாட்ைா māṭṭā 5. neg. “not to be able”

வல்லுதல் vallutal 5. “to be capable, to master”

சவண்டுதல் vēṇutal 5. “to be necessary”
15.b Auxiliaries

Old Tamil already has a complicated system of auxiliary verbs. Some of them are still employed in the same function in modern Tamil, most notably the passive and the medial form, but the majority is transitory, in fact each period and often each genre has certain favoured constructions. Not much useful work has been done in this area and the following can only be counted as a few preliminary remarks and observations. The three most frequent nonfinite forms that enter into an auxiliary construction are verbal root, infinitive, and absolutive.

Auxiliaries that more or less seem to vanish with the Caṅkam corpus:

- v.r. + கிள் தல் kil-tal “to be able to”
- v.r. + வருதல் varutal starting an action
- abs. + உறைதல் uraital remaining in a stable state
- abs. + அமைதல் amaital reaching a new stability
- [abs. + இயற்டல் ītal benefactive: already frozen into imperatives]

Auxiliaries that start in or continue into later Old Tamil:

- v.r. + தருதல் tarutal an action outside the control of the speaker or moving towards the speaker (since Caṅkam, prevailing, though ignored by tradition)

credible ceyyā abs.

+ நிள் தல் nil-tal continuous form

33 Both ஓல்குதல் oḷukutal, “to flow” and இருதல் irutal, “to be”, have to be regarded as less successful predecessors of nil-tal for the continuous form; both are occasionally to be found, preceded by an absolutive, from the Caṅkam corpus
abs. + அருள்தல் aruṭutal  general benefactive (bhakti)  
abs. + இடுதல் iṭutal  completion of an action (Kīlkanakku)  
abs. + விடுதல் viṭutal  completion of an action (late Caṅkam)  
abs. + சபாகுதல் pōkutal  concluding an action with negative outcome  

Auxiliaries that appear to be fairly stable:  
inf. + படுதல் paṭutal  passive (stray occurrences already in Caṅkam)  
abs. + கைல் kol-tal  medial (stray occurrences already in Caṅkam)  

கில் tal, “to be able to”:

KT 22.1f.  
nī ivaṇ oḻiya  
yārō piri-kirpavarē  
you here stay-behind(inf.)  
who(h.) separate- able-he(h.)
“Who will be able to separate while you stay behind?”

வருதல் varutal (inchoative/inceptive; onset of an action):

NA 298.5  
arum curam kavalai aṅcu varum naṉam talai  
difficult desert crossroad fear- coming- wide place

onwards.

34 In the bhakti period infinitive plus உறுதல் urutal can rarely be found as a passive instead of படுதல் paṭutal.
“the vast area where the crossroads in the difficult desert become frightening”

உறைதல்  uṟaital for remaining in a stable state:

KT 65.4  வாரா உறையுனார் வரால்காய்
 vārā, uṟaiyunar varal nacaii
come-not staying-he(h.) coming longed-for
“longing for the coming of him who stays away”

அமைதல் amaital for reaching a new (stable?) state:

KT 137.2-4  நிற்று தற்று வாரா றவால்
 nin tuṟant, amaikuven āyin en tuṟantu
iravalar vārā vaikal
pala ākuka
you- abandoned I-become-quiet if my- abandoned
beggar(h.) come-not day
many(n.pl.) may-become
“If I were to abandon you completely,
may the days the beggars abandon me [and] don’t come
become many.”

தருதல் tarutal for an action outside of the control of the speaker:

KT 95.1  மால் வரை இறும் தட்டு வெள் ஆரு
 māl varai ili-tarum tū veḷ aruvi
big mountain fall-giving- purity white waterfall
“the pure white waterfall that tumbles from the tall mountain”
continuous form with சேய்யாநிற்ை ceyyā + nil-tal:

Poy 43.1+4 மனமாசுதீருமருவிறனயுஞ் ோரா maham ācu tīrum aru viṇaiyum cār ... 

mind blemish end-it difficult karma approach-not-it they(pl.) worship-stand-they(h.) his-people(h.)

“Blemishes of the mind will end, and difficult karma will not approach those of his people who keep worshipping.”

[Here a rare example of a Caṅkam predecessor with another type of absolutive:

NA 242.10 தைத்தைைrnā iralai ēṛē tēṭūu-nirpar tamar sought stood- Iralai stag “the Iralai stag that kept seeking”]

arulatal as a benefactive:

Tē 7.70.4.4 எனை அங்கில் எறனயைய்வு enai añcal enṟ-arulāy me(acc.) don’t-fear said grace(ipt.)

“Graciously tell me “do not be afraid!”

iṭutal for the completion of an action:

TVM 6.2.7.1f. காதல் நாளம் உன்னோடிட்டா | நின்மலா

sea world eaten-placed | spotless-one(m.voc.)

“o spotless one who has eaten up the ocean[-girded] world”
**Verbs**  

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**viṭutal** for the completion of an action:

*Kali* 94.44f.  


tukal tīrpu kāṭci avaiyattār ōlai

---

**poṉutal** for the completion of an action with negative outcome:

*Pēy* 74.1f.  

---

**paṭutal** for the passive:

*KT* 288.5  

---

*35* Clear examples for *viṭutal* as an auxiliary are difficult to find in the early period, except in similes such as this, attested since the early anthologies (cf. *KT* 168.3 *viṭival virittu-viṭṭaṉku*).
pleasent-it say(inf.) it-happens god land\textsuperscript{6} “The land of the gods is called pleasant.”

[passive with உறுதல் uṟutal instead of படுதல் paṭutal:]

Cilap 12.13.1  சிறு உற உரு மகணண் நிறை கோள் உரச்
śīṟu ur oru makanṇāṇ nirai koḷḷa-uṟṟa-kālai
little village son(inst.) herd take(inf.)-experienced-time
“at the time the herd was taken by one man from the little village”]

ாத்தல்-கல் kol-tal for medium (Skt. ātmanepada):

Poy 36.4  மண் இருந்து கோண்டா வகை
maṇ irantu-konṭa vakai
earth begged-taken manner
“the way that he (Vāmana) took the earth for himself”

TVM 9.4.8.4  கண்ணனை குண்டே
kaṇṇaṉai kaṇṭu-koṇṭēṉē
Kaṇṇan(acc.) seen-taken-I\textsuperscript{6}
“I have for myself seen Kaṇṇan.”
Syntax

16. Particles and Word Order: -ē as a Full Stop and as Rhetorical Mark

The observation of syntactical patterns reveals the distribution of particles: the majority are found in main sentences, not in subordinate phrases [Wilden 2006]. These are patterns fairly strictly observed (though not without deviation) in the early Caṅkam texts. Afterwards things start to disintegrate: Already in the Aiṅkurunūru constructions may be found that would not be possible in the Kuṟuntokai, and by the time of the Kuṟal confusion prevails. [Note: this is also true of the sūtra-s in the theoretical texts (why?).]

The end of a sentence, i.e., a full stop, used to be marked by the particle -ē. Main sentences may be verbal and nominal clauses, including exclamation and address. Subordinate clauses comprise absolutive, infinitive, peyareccam, verbal root, conditional, concessive, causal, comparison, and embedded constructions (which can evidently contain other main sentences marked by particles, though rarely by -ē, since the sentence-final function is taken over by the embedding verb or particle). The exceptional finite verb forms not marked by particles are the unambiguous forms like imperative or optative, negative forms (which consequently often cause problems, since they mostly do not distinguish finite verb from participial noun anyway) and also double verb forms. A rhetorical exception is a following sentence beginning with the predicate; the end of a poem (depending on the metre) is always particle-marked. A similar exception is the poetic subtype beginning with an aphoristic prelude, usually not marked by a particle. Sentence-final -ē can be accompanied or substituted by a vocative (since vocative for most nouns does not have a separate form, it can be marked by -ē).
The basic distribution patterns account for “normal” word order and various types of focalisation:

normal word-order: \( S \ O \ P (= f.v./pr.n.)-\tilde{e} \)
postposition of subject: \( O \ P \ S-\tilde{e} \)
postposition of object: \( S \ P \ O-\tilde{e} \)
postposition of adverb: \( S \ O \ P \ \text{adv.-}\tilde{e} \)

focalisation:

focalisation of subject: \( S-\tilde{e} \ O \ P(-\tilde{e}) \)
anteposition of object: \([O-\tilde{e} \ P \ S]\) rare
anteposition of adverb: \([\text{adv.-}\tilde{e} \ O \ P \ S]\) rare
anteposition of predicate (closed): \([O] \ P-\tilde{e} \ S-\tilde{e} \)
anteposition of predicate (open-ended): \([O] \ P-\tilde{e} \ S \)
address: \( N-\tilde{e} \)

\( S \ O \ P-\tilde{e} \) verbal sentence:

KT 13.3f. \( நாை | சனா \ yந் \ தனசன சதாைி \)
\( nāṭaṉ \ | \ nōy \ tantanaṇē \ tōli \)
land-he | pain he-gave friend
“The man from the land gave pain, friend.”

\( S \ O \ P-\tilde{e} \) nominal sentence:

KT 35.5 \( வாறையும் பிாிந்திக் காழ்க \)
\( vāṭaiyum \ pirintinörkk, \ alalē \)
north wind separated-they(dat.) fire
“Even the north wind is fire to those who are separated.”

\( S \ O \ P \) with an unmarked imperative:

KT 2.1f. \( தும்பி | காம் \)
\( tūmipp \ | \ kāmā \)
“Even...”
“O bee, speak of what you have seen without speaking according to [my] desire.”

S O P unmarked double verb form:

KT 80.3

yāṁ akī, ayaṟkam cēṟum

“Let us go immerse ourselves in that.”

O P S-ē subject postposition:

KT 170.4f.

malai keḻu nāṭaṉ keṇmai
talaipōkāmai narku aṟintaṉeṉ yāṉē

“Me, I knew well that the intimacy with the man from a land having mountains had not come to an end.”

S P O-ē object postposition:

KT 50.5

pulampu aṟintaṉe avar maṇanta tōḷē

“Loneliness has come to adorn the shoulder he united with.”

S O P adv.-ē adverb postposition:

KT 14.6
yām nāṇukam ciṟitē
we be-ashamed(1.pl.sub.) small-it
“We may be ashamed, a little.”

S-ē O P-ē subject focalisation (emphasis):
KT 24.5f. ... 둡다푸라வ யாம
אמרת ראה וסלחו יאמ
... koṭiyōr nāvē
kātalar akala kalenṟavē
cruel-they tongue
lover(h.) depart(Inf.) ‘kal’-said(n.pl.)
“The tongues of the cruel ones, they foretold that the lover would depart.”

O-ē P S anteposition of the direct object (rare):
KT 73.1 makiḻnaṉ mārpē veyyaiyāl nī
delight-he chest hot-you you
“On the delightful man’s chest you are keen indeed.”

O-ē P S anteposition of the indirect object (rare):
KT 140.3 curanē cēṟaṉar kātalar
desert he-went(h.) lover(h.)
“To the desert the lover has gone.”

P-ē S-ē predicate anteposition (strong emphasis):
KT 112.4f. arrē | kantciṉ tōḷi avar unţa en nalanē
thus-it see(ipt.) friend he(h.) eaten- my- innocence
“Just like that – look, friend – is my innocence, which he had eaten.”

P-ε S predicate anteposition without particle to mark the end of the sentence, i.e., the sentence goes on by coordination:

KT 113.1f. உர்க்கும் அணித்து போய்கை போய்கைக்கு
cēyttum anittē poykai poykaikkku
village(dat.)um close-it⁶ pond pond(dat.)
distance-it⁶um is-not-so⁶ little forest river⁶
“Not far from the village is the pond, and from the pond the little forest river is not distant.”

P-ε S predicate anteposition as a rhetorical device, when the subject is part of the next sentence too:

KT 92.2.5 அல்லைய தாமே கோடும் பாறை...
irai koṇṭamaiyiṅ viraiyumāl celavē
pity-they(n.pl.) self(pl.)⁶ curved wing bird...
food having-taken⁶ they-hurry(n.p.)⁶ going⁶
“Pitiful are they, the bent-winged birds, in a hurry indeed in [their] going since they have taken up food...”

S-ε = address:

KT 23.1-3 அச்சார் பாறை பாறை பாறை
நயப்புறம் பாறை நயப்புறம் பாறை
Pitiful are they, the bent-winged birds, in a hurry indeed in [their] going since they have taken up food...”
akaval makaḷē akaval makaḷē
manavu kōpp, anṉa nal netum kūntal
akaval makaḷē
Akaval woman Akaval woman
chank-bead string like good long tresses
Akaval woman
“Soothsaying woman, soothsaying woman,
with good long tressess [white] as strings of chank bead,
sooth-saying woman!”

A rare exception in the old corpus is -ē in a subordinate phrase, here attached to the absolutive:

KT 52.2 சூர்நறேந் தறனறய யாயா நடுங்கல் கண்சை
cūr nacaintañaiyai āy naṭuṅkal kaṇṭē
fearful-spirit longed-for-thus-you become(abs.)
trembling seen
“seeing [you] tremble as one longed for by a spirit”
17. Modal particles

In early Cankam Tamil, particles are employed also to achieve modal modulation. Usually they work in coordination with -ē. The interrogative particles -ககால் -kol, -ஓ -ō and ககால்சைா kollō have already been treated in Chapter 10. In chapter 1.7 there is a list of particles, which is not complete and does not list the various particle combinations that are possible. For many of them no hypothesis as to their function has been ventured so far; some are not attested in a number sufficient to form a hypothesis.\(^{36}\) Some of the more important particles that seem fairly comprehensible are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particle</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>மன் maṉ</td>
<td>assertive with shades of evaluation; irrealis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>மன்ை maṉṟa</td>
<td>assertive with shades of evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>உல் āl</td>
<td>assertive with shades of evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அம்ம amma</td>
<td>lament; inviting attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>தில்லை tilla</td>
<td>wish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>தோய்ய teyya</td>
<td>admonition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>மாசதா mātō</td>
<td>particle of emphatically doubtful (rhetorical) question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>மற்று maṟṟu</td>
<td>adversative/contrastive? (also change of subject, topic/perspective)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the unexplained particles remain: அத்றத attai, -அசரா -arō, -அசரா -ārum, பொருள்- kon-, உயர் māḷa, உரு yāḷa. From the middle Cankam texts onwards the system deteriorates and from the bhakti texts onwards very often the old patterns are no longer heeded and the old functions often do not appear to make sense anymore. However, it is important to bear in mind that particles

\(^{36}\) For ககால் kol as an interrogative and மன் maṉ and மன்ை maṉṟa as assertative particles see also Sivaraja Pillai 1932, appendices.
actually have to be described in two ways. They form syntactic patterns which can easily be demonstrated. The function then, is a second step, and one that may be controversial. The Tolkāppiyam Collatikāram contains a chapter on particles, Iṭaiyiyal, which does not describe syntactic patterns and which in an additive manner names ways in which particles have been used; the commentators accordingly had the choice of identifying one of those uses in a given passage or of calling the particle “expletive” (அச்ேம் acai). Notable is, first of all, that the vast majority of particles is either enclitic (if it is shorter than a regular metrical foot) or it is added in a separate metrical foot (cīr) after the predicate or focalised noun. Exceptions are the particle மற்று maṟṟu, which may appear between sentences, and the particle ககான் koṉ, which appears to be proclitic and entered into the dictionaries like a noun with the four functions identified by the Tolkāppiyam (TC 249i: அச்ேம் accam, “fear”, பயமிலி payamili “uselessness”, காைல் kālam, “time”, கபருறம perumai, “greatness”).

Syntactical patterns:

-மன் -maṉ:
  S PrN(/f.v.)-maṉ
postpositions marked by -ē; combinations: மன்றில் maṉṟilla, மன்னா maṉṉō, மன்னை maṉṉē

மன் maṉra:
  PrN(/f.v.) maṉra S-ē
  P maṉra
combinations: மன்றில் maṉṟamma

-அல் -āl (surprising fact): [O] P-āl S-ē
focalisation: [S] P-āl O-ē;
[S] P-āl adv.-ē
S-ē O P-āl
O-ē P-āl
combinations: -āl-amma, -āl-illa

āl amma (“alas”): P amma S-ē(.)
focalisation in combination: P māṟ’ amma S-ē
P-āl amma S
call for attention: āl amma vāḷi tōḷi (?)

tilla (wish): P(opt./sub.) tilla
(“would that...!” – desire)
P(opt./sub.) tillamma (“if only...!” – irrealis)

teyya (admonition): S O P-ē/ō teyya (“please”)

mātō: S O P-mātō (“is it not that...?”)
marru: S-marru
marru-S
(not restricted to main sentence; also in a period; position more fluid)

combinations (always on the predicate): mārē marrē, ōmārē, marrē marrilla

Examples:

assertive mān:

 KT 153.3  añcum maṇ amm inî thē amm
            aṇcum-maṇ alitt, en neṇcam inîvē
to fear-it我的心 pity-it my- heart now
“Fearful indeed, pitiful is my heart now.”
மன் in combination with நன்று naru for an irrealis:

KT 98.1-3 அவர் முன் நன்று கேன்று கேப்புநர் பகபைசன்

avar tunga cenu ceppunar perine

naru-man vāli tōli

he(h.) approach(inf.) gone saying-he(h.) obtain-if

good-itman live(sub.) friend

“If we were to obtain someone who goes to approach
[and] talk to him, that would be good indeed, oh
friend.”

மன்சனē:

KT 191.6f. ஒதியும் புறநயகை ம்மு ந்தாஅ கை

ōtiyum punaiyal

emmum toṭāal ēṉkuvem maṉē

hairum don’t-adorn

usum don’t-touch we-saymaṉē

“Don’t adorn [our] hair
and don’t touch us, we shall indeed say.”

மன்சனō:

KT 229.4 ஏதி ல் ிறுகேரு வுறுப மன்சனō

ēt u il ciṟu cer uṟupa maṉō

reason-not little quarrel they-havemaṉō

“For sure they have a little quarrel without reason?”

assertative மன்ற maṟa:

KT 35.1 போர்ச்சில் மன்றிலேவேன் கேப்புநர்
nāṉ ila maṉṟa em kaṇṇē
shame not-they(n.pl.)maṉṟa our-eye
“Our eyes indeed, they are without shame.”

assertative -āl:
KT 120.2
āluṭaṭulam kātu kōṇṟa kēṟutē
aritu veṭṭañaiyāl neñcē
difficult-it wanted-you heart
“Iindeed you wanted something difficult, heart.”

lamentative amma:
KT 45.5
kēṟuvaṭam aiṟumaiṇṟa kēnṟa
teruvat, amma i tinai pirattalē
scorch-it this family being-born
“A torment it is, ah, to be born into this family.”

 tamilam tillamma for an irreal wish:
KT 56.4
varuka tillamma tāṉē
may-come self
“Would that she came, she herself.”

tilla for a wish:
KT 57.4
utāṉ uyir pōkuka tilla
together life may-go
“May we go from this life together.”

 teyya for (gentle) admonition:
NA 215.8f
iṉṟu nī ivanai āki emmoṭu
taṅkiṉ evaṉō-teyya
today you here-you become(abs.) us-with
stay-if what
“Since you are here today,
what if you stayed with us, please?”

ωττά mātō as a question suggesting that something is the case:

KT 253.4
nāḷ tuyar kēta piṇ nīṭalar mātō
day misery be-lost(inf.) after delay-not-he(h.)
“Surely he will not delay further, so that [your] days are lost in misery?” ~ “Will he delay further...?”

adversative marru:

KT 299.1
itu marr, evanō tōli
“This again, what is it, friend?”

marru as a mark of subject change, frequently used in narrative Tamil:

Kuṟaḷ 1155
ōmpiṉ amaintār piriv, ompal marr, avar
nīṅkiṉ arit,āl puṇarvu
protect-if suitable-he(h.) separation protecting marru he(h.)
leave-if difficult-itth union
“If [you want to] protect [me], protect [me] from
separation from the one suited [to me]. When he, on his part (marru), leaves [re-]union will be difficult indeed.”
Supplement on -ō

The particle -ō is one of the most complex ones. There is an old layer (shared by Akam and Puṟam) where -ō is a tonal particle of lament or mourning. This concerns metrical patterns within the old stock of Akam and Puṟam formulae: திட்டூ திட்டூ ut uṭu nōkō yāṉē, “ah, I ache”. Its main function, however, as already shown, is that of an interrogative particle (for examples, see chapter 10). The syntactical pattern is:

\[ S \ [O] P-ō \] (interrogative pronoun possible)

\[ S-ō \ [O] P-ē \]

All types of postposition are possible ([O] P-ē S-ē, S P-ō O-ē, S [O] P-ē adv.-ē), but anteposition is rare. Perhaps as such -ō is a possible addition to some types of imperative or optative forms, presumably adding a nuance of politeness (a doubtful “would you?”):

KT 169.2 இைீியார வாரார இைீியார வாரார, “let them break”. Moreover, -ō is frequently used for a demarcation of topic, also plausibly to be developed out of the interrogative function.

KT 221.1 இைீியார வாரார இைீியார வாரார avarō vārār
he(h.)⁰ come-not-he(h.) “He? He did not come.”
~ “As for him, he did not come.”

KT 21.4f. இைீியார வாரார இைீியார வாரார இைீியார வாரார kār ena kūrinum
yāṉē tērēṉ avar poy valaṅkalārē
rainy-season say talking-if-even
I⁰ believe-not-I he(h.) lie use-not-he(h.)⁰
talk, “Even if you say it is the rainy season,
I for one don’t believe it. He does not use lies.”
18. Circular Construction (pūṭṭuvil)

One of the traditional patterns of syntax within the poem is of utmost importance, as it is followed, in the old corpus, by roughly 30% of the material. Its Tamil name பூட்டுவிள் pūṭṭuvil (“the drawn bow”), first attested in Nakkīraṉ’s commentary on Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ 56 (under the name of விற்பூட்டு viṟpūṭṭu), then obtaining its own sūtra in Naṉṉūl 414. It concerns special poetic licences for postpositions which distort regular word order. The normal word order can be restored by re-connecting the end of the poem to the beginning, just as the bow string connects the two ends of a bow. [In the editions and translations published by the NETamil team a special punctuation mark has been used to mark this phenomenon, namely ∞, the mathematical infinity sign.]

If the same phenomenon is described in terms of particle syntax, we can say that the -ே ஏ at the end of the poem is exempt from the rules of postposition: not only nouns, that is, subject or subject apposition, object and adverbial phrases, can be post-posed, but also nonfinite verb forms, such as infinitive, absolutive and conditional.

Nominal postposition varies only with respect to length, that is, the final noun at the end of a poem can be the head noun of a longer phrase.

subject/subject apposition:

KT 16.1.5 உள்ளார் ககால்சைா சதாைி ... அங் காற் கள்ளியங் காடி ... அங் காற் கள்ளியங் காடி நெட்டிகள் நெட்டிகள் நெட்டிகள் 

uḷḷār kollō tōḷi ... 

am kāl kalliyan kāṭ irantōrē∞ remember-not-he(h.)kollō friend ... pretty leg spurge- wilderness traversed-he(h.)²

“Won’t he remember, friend, ...
the one who has gone to traverse the wildernes of pretty-trunked spurge trees?”

object:

KT 181.1,7 ॐ மரும கைவசனா சதாைி ... ॐ

iti maṟṟu evanō tōḷi ...

peru mutu peṇtirēm ākiya namakkē∞

this what friend ...

big old women-we become(p.)- us(dat.)

“This, what is it, friend, ...

for us who have become great old women?”

adverbial phrase of location:

KT 85.1,6 யாாினு மி நியான் பினசன ... ॐ

yāṇuṉ iṉiyaṉ pē r aṉpiṉaṉ ē ...

yāṇar ūraṉ pāṇaṉ vāyē∞

who pleasant-he big love-he ...

fertility village-he bard mouth

“This, sweeter than all [and] great in loving is he ...

in the mouth of the bard, the man from the fertile village.”

nonfinite postpositions

absolutive:

KT 66.1,5 இவள் என்று தணுத்தம் கைவசனா ... ॐ

maṭava maṟṟa tatavu nilai koṟrai ...

vampa māriyai kār ēna matittē∞
foolish-they(n.pl)\textsuperscript{māra} breadth standing Laburnum(-tree) 
... 
new-they(n.pl.) shower(acc.) rainy-season say estimated\textsuperscript{d}

“Foolish indeed are the broad-standing laburnum trees, 
... 
having taken the unseasonal shower for the rainy season.”

infinitive:

KT 157.1,4 \textit{குக்கூ கவன்ைது சகாைி ...} 
\textit{kukkū enratu kōli ...} 
\textit{vāḷ pōḷ vaikarai vantanzūl enavē} \textsuperscript{c} 
‘kukkū’ said-it fowl ... sword similar dawn it-came\textsuperscript{al} say(inf.)\textsuperscript{e} 

“Kukkū crowed the rooster ... to say dawn has come like a sword.”

conditional:

KT 245.2,6 \textit{நை மிைந் ததனினு நனி யி ...} 
\textit{nalam ilantatāṉiṉum naṉi iṉṉātē} \textsuperscript{c} 
\textit{pallōr aṟiya parantu veḷipatiṉē} \textsuperscript{c} 
innocence lost-it\textsuperscript{inm} abundant pleasant-not-it\textsuperscript{c} ... many(h.) know(inf.) spread come-out-if\textsuperscript{f} 

“Much more unpleasant that [our] innocence’s being lost ... if it comes out, spreading for many to know.”
It appears possible to distinguish several stylistic types of circular construction:

1. The most frequent and simple type is a poem that contains one single sentence where the head fits to the tail. Occasionally, if the poem contains more than one sentence, the end of the poem will fit to its first sentence.

2. The poem contains more than one sentence (two, three, four), but one central element, perhaps the (logical!) subject or an apposition to this subject, follows in postposition. A subtype of this is a conditional post-positioned to the end, which is nevertheless valid for all preceding clauses.

In addition there is something that may be called the status of a visual circular structure, where what is postponed to the end grammatically cannot be counted, strictly speaking, as part of the first sentence of the poem, but of a subsequent sentence, although its presence is necessary in order to understand what is going on at the beginning of the poem, too:

3. The part of the poem postpositioned to the end is, grammatically speaking, an element of the immediately preceding sentence, but should, according to the normal word order, be read in front of it. It is also relevant to the sentence/s at the beginning of the poem.

4. The poem consists of grammatically and syntactically clear-cut and well-ordered sentences, which nevertheless seem to lean on one another, because, for example, the keyword for the understanding of the whole poem is its very last word.

The last type can be exemplified by Kuruntokai 1:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{கேங்கைம் பைக்ககான் ஈவுணர்த் சதய்த்த}& \\
\text{கேங்சகா ஈம்பிற் கேங்சகாட் டியாறனக்}& \\
\text{கைகைாடிச் சேஎய் குன்ைங்}&
\end{align*}
\]
Red field happen(inf.) killed demon(h.) reduced-
red stem arrow\(^n\) red horn elephant
anklet bracelet redness hill
blood flower\(^n\) bunch Malabar-glory-lily-it\(^e\).
“Red the ground from killing, the demon reduced
by red-stemmed arrows, red-tusked [his] elephant,
anklets, bracelets – the Red One’s hill
is full of Malabar lilies, bunches of blood-flowers.”

Note that in contradistinction to verses in Āciriyappā, stanzas in
Veṇpā metre end in a short metrical foot (see Chapter 20) and are
exempt from “normal” postposition rules. They may finish with an
absolutive postpositioned to the main verb:

Pū 5. அண்மற்று ஜியாணறை பெரியக்கறையா எம்பெற
மாழு தெற்கை கூட்டும் காத்து கூட்டும் – மாழுகள்
மாழு மாழு கூட்டு கூட்டும் காத்து காத்து
மாழு மாழு கூட்டு கூட்டும்
ați mūnṟil i ulakam aṉṟ aḷantāy pōlum
ați mūnṟu irantu avāni konṭāy – paṭi ninṛ
nīr ōtam mēṇi neṭu mālē nīn aṭi
yār ōta vallār arintu
foot three-it(loc.) this- world that-day measured-you
seeming-it
foot three-it begged earth taken-you earth stood
water flood body tall Māl⁶ you foot(acc.)
who recite(inf.) capable-they(h.) known
“You who, it seems, that day in three steps measured
the world,
you who took the earth by begging for three steps, tall Māl
with the water flood body who stood on earth,
who knows [and] can sing your feet?”
19. Formulaic Repertoires and Formulae as Syntactic Matrices

Old Tamil has in fact several sets of formulaic repertoire, beginning with Cankam poetry, but then also epic and devotional poetry. Only the former has been to some degree described, but it will be sufficient to point out the basics which can then be adjusted to various metrical conditions and delimitations of content. To recall briefly Lord’s famous definition: a formula is a repetition under identical metrical conditions. As already discussed in the introduction, it is highly likely that Old Tamil poetry originated in an oral tradition since it is easy to show that its basic elements of composition have been formulae, however, clearly overlaid with a written tradition since it can be shown how fomulaic systems disintegrate. Another aspect important to stress is that formulae function as signals in the interaction between bard and listener: today an educated reader will know what to expect from the way keywords of the construction are positioned within a poem. Formulaic attribution and the interplay between formula, theme and system has first been described by Kailasapathy 1968, and has since been supplemented by more than a dozen publications by Vacek 2000ff.

A few examples are the descriptions of birds, forests and warriors:

KT 246.1 ேிறுகவங் காக்கக ciṟu-veṇ kākka, “small white crow”
KT 103.3 ழறரசதர் நாறர irai-tēr nārai, “prey-searching heron”
KT 163.3 பினா காறி mīṉ-ār kurukiṇ, “fish-eating heron(obl.)”
KT 16.5 அங்காற் கள்ைியங் காடு aṅ-kāṟ kaḷḷiyaṅ kāṭu,
“pretty-trunked spurge forest”
KT 67.5 மீனார் குருகின் mīṉ-ār kurukiṉ
“spurge forest with parched ground”
KT 216.2 வாைா வள்ைியங் காடு vāṭā vaḷḷiyaṅ kāṭu,
“unfading Vaḷḷi forest”
(KT 124.2 ஒறமயம் கபருங்காடு omaiyam peruṅkāṭu,
“a big forest of toothbrush-trees”)

KT 15.5 சேயிறை கவண்சவல் விைறைகயாடு
cēy-ilai vel-vēl viṭalaiyoṭu
“warrior(soc.) with a red-tipped white spear”

KT 378.4 குன்ை நாைன்
cuṭar-vēy neṭu-vēl kālaiyoṭu
“young man(soc.) fire-tipped long spear”

A case in point are also the designations of the hero belonging to a particular tiṇai each, such as தண்ண்ந் துறைவன் taṇṇan tuṟaivaṉ,
“the man from the cool ghat”, கமல்ைம் புைம்பன் mellam pulampaṉ,
“the soft giver of loneliness”, நன்மறை நாைன் nal-malai nāṭaṉ, “the man from a land of good mountains, which then can fall again into sub-systems (புையை நாைன் peru-varai nāṭaṉ, “the man from the land of big mountain”, குன்ை நாைன் kuṉṟa nāṭaṉ, “the man from a land of hills). How close the relation is between Akam and Puṟam is also revealed by formulaic analysis; there are clear structural similarities in, say, the epithets used for warriors, women, and trees. Equally similar is the repertoire of mourning: there is no fundamental difference between an absent lover and a king fallen in battle.
The distribution of just one productive formula demonstrates the close relation between the old anthologies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person/text</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>KT</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>AN</th>
<th>AiN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>அைியான் யாசன</td>
<td>228.5</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(14.12)</td>
<td>383.14</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைியான் நீசய</td>
<td>257.5</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைியான் தாசன</td>
<td>143.7, 254.11, 293.6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(324.1), 352.12</td>
<td>(73.7), (118.4), 146.8, 153.4, (224.18), 287.3, 339.11, 373.19, 381.18</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைியள் தாசன</td>
<td>5.8, 109.1, 243.11</td>
<td>149.1, 212.4, 276.8, 395.7</td>
<td>101.6, 114.5</td>
<td>239.1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைிசதா தாசன</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>368.10</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைிம் யாசம</td>
<td>51.8, 52.8, 81.3, 237.8, 345.12</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>43.13, (78.12)</td>
<td>381.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>அைிந் தாசம</td>
<td>248.1</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>163.7</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>284.1, 455.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific about the Tamil repertoire is the employment of formulae for structuring (and announcing) syntax, with sensitive spots
especially at the beginning of a poem (அம்ம வாழி சதாி amma vāḻi tōḻi) and the poem end (சநாசகா யாசன nōkō yāṉē), described in Wilden 2006: 235ff.

A typical and very productive formula of the poem ending is:

அற்கு “wilderness”\textsuperscript{37}

அற்வர “waste land”\textsuperscript{38}

இைந்சதாசர “he who traversed” \textsuperscript{39}

malai “mountains”\textsuperscript{39}

குந்று “hills”\textsuperscript{40}

This formulaic end appears complementary to the following poem beginnings or main sentences:

“won’t he remember, friend?”\textsuperscript{41}

“where is he, friend?”\textsuperscript{42}

“he doesn’t hear, friend”\textsuperscript{43}

“will he come, o friend?”\textsuperscript{44}

“he hasn’t come, oh friend”\textsuperscript{45}

“cruel [is] he, oh friend”\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{37} KT 16.5, 67.5, 216.2; NA 14.11, 189.10; AN 1.19, 25.22, 133.18, 151.15, 395.15.

\textsuperscript{38} KT 211.7, 215.7, 260.8, 314.6; NA 92.9, 274.9; AN 141.29, 171.15, 201.18.

\textsuperscript{39} KT 232.6, 253.8, 287.7, 285.8; AN 111.15, 155.16, 173.18, 185.13, 291.16, 247.13, 249.19, 313.17, 321.17, 347.16, 389.24.

\textsuperscript{40} NA 18.10.

\textsuperscript{41} KT 16.1, 67.1, 232.1; NA 92.1, 241.1.

\textsuperscript{42} KT 195.3, 176.5, 285.3, 325.4; cf. AN 47.14.

\textsuperscript{43} KT 253.1.

\textsuperscript{44} KT 177.5, 215.3, 260.4.

\textsuperscript{45} KT 314.4.
“we have left behind, oh friend”:

Other elements to be taken into consideration are optical strategical points, such as the end of a penultimate line, where so often an imperfective peyareccam with a long sub-clause is found, or topical strategical points, such as the designation of the hero, for example ḫaṭr nāṭaṉ, giving rise to the expectation of the same type of sub-clause.

46 KT 278.4.
47 KT 211.3.
20. Metres: Āciriyappā and Veṇpā – Theoretical and Practical Rules

Metre is a very complex topic, and here only a most basic introduction can be given.\textsuperscript{48} The primary sources for the traditional descriptions of metre are the Tolkāppiyam Ceyyuḷiyal, the Yāpparuṅkala Virutti and the Yāpparuṅkala Kārikai. The former started on the basis of the old system relevant for the metres of the Caṅkam, that is, basically Āciriyappā occasionally contrasted with Vañciippā. The latter never appears independently, the former has been used also later in epic and epigraphical Tamil, for treatises, as well as for a few archaising texts such as the Kallāṭam. The Tolkāppiyam Ceyyuḷiyal also accounts for Veṇpā – the main metre of the Kīḻkkaṇṇakku still used for some early bhakti works and the metre through the ages to write mnemonic stanzas such as author stanzas – as well as for Kallipā and Paripāṭal, the metres for the two latecomers in the Eṭṭuttokai. Metrical calculation or scansion underwent a profound change during that period, and the bhakti corpus sees an explosion of new metres based on rhythm and music with a fair amount of disregard for the wording of a verse, described in the two later works (one treatise with two commentaries).

The metrical units:

- எழுத்து eluttu graphic unit that in Tamil may be either a vowel, a consonant or a consonant with a vowel
- அறே acai smallest unit which can have up to three syllables
- சி cīr metrical foot
- அடி aṭi line

\textsuperscript{48} For further reading consult the introductions of Niklas 1988 and Zvelebil 1989, for details on classical Āciriyappā see Wilden 2014, for a detailed account of the bhakti metres see Chevillard 2014a+b.
Early metres regulate the number of metrical units per foot, the number of feet per line and the number of lines. It is only from Veṇpā onwards that stanzas are formed.

According to the old metrical system, two pairs of metrical units exist, நெர் nēr and நெர்பு nērpu along with நிறர்பு niraipu. The later system of scansion does away with the two latter sub-types, in other words, while originally overshort -u was discounted metrically, later it is simply calculated as a short vowel.

The அசை units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>நெர் (C)V&lt;sub&gt;ω&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>நெர்பு (C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(C)V&lt;sub&gt;ω&lt;/sub&gt;C</td>
<td>(C)V&lt;sub&gt;ω&lt;/sub&gt;C-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)V</td>
<td>(C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)V&lt;sub&gt;ω&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>(C)V&lt;sub&gt;ω&lt;/sub&gt;C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>நிறர் (C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>நிறர்பு (C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>(C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>(C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)V&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>(C)V-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;υ&lt;/sub&gt;-C&lt;sub&gt;u&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are two possible “anomalies”, namely aḷapeṭai, that is, a metrical lenghtening to three morae (spelled by adding a short vowel to a long vowel: கேய்ம்ம் ceyym). Metrical lengthening may in rare cases be a lexical feature of a word, is often done as a poetic adornment or for musical reasons, but it is also a means of stretching what is metrically too short into an acceptable cīr. It is also possible to have a hypermetrical foot or a கூன் kūṉ, literally a “hunch”.

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A rare special case is a metrical foot that is complemented by a nēr consisting of a consonant cluster: NA 98.2 கேய்ம்ம் ceyym, which has to be analysed as ceyym = nēr-nēr.
The possible combination of acai-units in a metrical foot (cīr) in Āciriyappā:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>nēr</th>
<th>niraï</th>
<th>nērpu</th>
<th>niraipu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nēr</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niraï</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nērpu</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niraipu</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Āciriyappā allows two acai in any combination of niraï, nēr, niraipu, nērpu – regular (black), permitted (blue), irregular (red). In exceptional cases there may be three acai (listed below). The figure in brackets refers to the number of syllables they comprise. In theory combinations between niraipu and nērpu are irregular; in fact they do occur, but rarely. Lines have four cīr, the penultimate only three cīr, with the exception of Nūrpu, the adaptation of Āciriyappā for theoretical texts. The number of lines is almost unrestricted, ranging from three-line poems in the Aiṅkuṟunūṟu up to 782 in the Maturaikkāñci, although often an anthology fixes the number of possible lines (4–8 for the Kuṟuntokai). A poem ends in the particle -ēr (rarely in -ōr or -ūy).

Practical Rules for Āciriyappā:

There is a close interaction between metre and sandhi. The end-consonant of a cīr often merges with the beginning consonant of the next. A cīr can start with a vowel only at the beginning of a poem. Inside the poem every cīr must begin with a consonant; the preceding final consonant or final consonant with elided over-short -u go to the next cīr and bear the vowel.
1) An *acai* should not be counted across word-boundaries (this being the second fundamental difference between early and later metrical theory).

2) A *nēr* consisting of a like syllable can never begin a *cīr*.

3) Words should not be split across different *cīr*, apart from the final consonant or the final consonant plus over-short 
- *u*. Exempt from this rule are word forms of four *acai* and more (very rarely nouns, frequently finite verbs and participial nouns).

4) Word forms of three *acai* are borderline cases and can be accepted as a *cīr* in basically three situations:
   a) verb form + particle: வருவர்-ககால் varuvar-kol (KT 177.5) = nirai-nēr-nēr, விடுநண்ம விடுநண்ம (NA 68.7) nirai-nēr-nēr.
   b) noun + case ending: வருவிருந்தின் varu-viruntiṉ (NA 53.8) = nirai-nirai-nēr.
   c) inserted pronoun: யிறுத்தனைவர் (y)iṟuttaṉṟ avaṟ (NA 68.10) = nirai-nirai-nēr.
   [d) problematic *cīr*: நறையறையாத் (ṉ)aṟaiyaiyāt (NA 46.7) = nirai-nēr-nēr.]

For verb forms plus particle of three *acai* there are different ways to lengthen them to four *acai* which can be split into two *cīr*:

   a) nominal or pronominal complement: காடிைந் சதாசர kāṭ'iṟan tōrē (KT 16.4) = nēr-nirai nēr-nēr; அவராற் கைசர avar āṟṟalarē (KT 305.4) = nirai-nēr nirai-nēr.
   b) metrical doubling of consonants: முறகநா றும்சம mukai nāṟumē, “the buds are fragrant” (KT 193.6).

5) Similarly a number of hypo-metrical feet can be accepted, especially with *viṇaiyeccam*-s (ceyu/ceypu type = absolutive)
that make up a cīr: ceṉṟu, vantu... (i.e. analyse not as nērpu, but as nēr-nēr). This does not exclude, however, having cīr like vēṟṟuvēṟṟuk (PN 35.22) that count as nērpu-nērpu. Somewhat less frequent is the nirai/niraipu variation: taṉtu (KT 195.1) = nirai-nēr against puṉantuḷarntu (KT 214.1) = nirai-niraipu.

[For niraipu/nērpu nouns similar allowances can be made, but they are rare. Verbal roots in niraipu/nērpu are not acceptable. Their occurrence before a cīr beginning in nasal has to be understood as peyareccam in -um.]

6) Aḷapeṭai and sandhi gemination can be metrically disregarded if necessary.

The rules for Veṇpā:

Veṇpā allows for two or three acai in alternating combinations of value, that is, a two-acai cīr ending in nirai must be followed by one beginning in nēr and vice versa, a three-acai cīr, always ending in a nēr, must be followed by a nēr. Veṇpā accepts four cīr per line, but only three in the last, and that last cīr is short, i.e., a mere acai, no full cīr. Veṇpā stands on the border between the old and the new type of metrical calculation. Within the verse it no longer counts நிறரபு niraipu and சநர்பு nērpu, but the short third foot in the final line allows them, under the designations of பிரப்பு piṟappu and காசு kācu. The short foot at the end has syntactic consequences: a Veṇpā does not follow the “normal” postposition rules and frequently ends in an absolutive even outside a pūṭṭuviḷ. The number of lines may vary, but the standard Veṇpā stanza has four lines; the Kuṟaḷ with only two lines is counted as a “dwarf Veṇpā”.

An earlier poetic figure occasionally encountered becomes regular and obligatory from Veṇpā times on, namely etukai, a rhyme pattern that concerns the first feet of each line. The minimum is a rhyme between the second syllables of the foot, but often the repeated parts
will be longer. The two most frequent patterns are 1a+2a+2d and 3a+4a (Nēricaivenpā) or 1a+2a+3a+4a (Iñncicaivenpā). In a Nēricaivenpā the rhyme word in line 2d is counted as a taṅiccol, a “solitary word”, which often entails a syntactic caesura after the third foot of line 2, as is indicated in print by a hyphen before 2d. Etukai gives rise to two forms of poetic licence, namely semantic weakening of the repeated elements or changing letters by insertion or deletion for the sake of the rhyme: Pey 12.3f. ṇāṅk-,ōti – paim-ōta, with -k- inserted for the rhyme. Note that also the word order can be affected: Poy 100.1 ṇaṅkōti paim-ōta, “one foot that kicked the cart”, with a peyareccam following its head noun because of etukai with line 2 ēr-āṭiyum ēr-āṭiyum.

The second possible and frequent but not obligatory feature is mōṇai, alliteration within a line.

From bhakti times onwards metrical feet form rhythmical patterns based on combinations of cīr made from mostly two or three acai, traditionally using standard examples as autonyms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cīr with two acai</th>
<th>tēmā</th>
<th>nēr-nēr</th>
<th>nīrai-nēr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pulimā</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nīrai-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>karuvilam</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nīrai-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kāvilam</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nīrai-nēr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cīr with three acai</th>
<th>tēmāṅkāy</th>
<th>nēr-nēr-nēr</th>
<th>nīrai-nēr-nēr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pulimāṅkāy</td>
<td>nēr-nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nīrai-nēr-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>karuvilāṅkāy</td>
<td>nēr-nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nīrai-nēr-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kāvilāṅkāy</td>
<td>nēr-nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nīrai-nēr-nēr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequent stanza type still has four lines, but the number of cīr is variable from two to eight. With the disappearance of niraipu and nērpu over-short -u is counted as a normal syllable and word boundaries often become blurred by musical patterns. There
also is an influence from the syllable-counting Sanskrit metres, and some metres count both, cīr and syllables.

Possibilities of metrical adjustment become more numerous in the later metres. Frequently there are doublets like என்று (inf.) for என (inf.): ஒருட்வைண்டு எ - வைண்டு (Tē 1.1.3.3), or the reverse, அனா for அன்னா: வலாணா (Tē 7.20.1.2).
Metrical analysis of a verse in Āciriyappā: KT 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nirai-nirai</td>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nirai</td>
<td>nīra-nērpu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nilat-ṭīnum</td>
<td>peri-ṭē</td>
<td>vāṅ-ṭīnum</td>
<td>mūyarn-ṭanṭu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nēr-nirai</td>
<td>nēr-nirai</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>nī-ṭīnum</td>
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<td>vīn-ṭē</td>
<td>cā-ral</td>
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<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nērpu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karum-kōl</td>
<td>kūrin-čip</td>
<td>pūk-koṇṭu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nirai-pu</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perum-ṭē</td>
<td>nilaik-ku(m)</td>
<td>nā-ṭaṇṭu</td>
<td>nat-pē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metrical analysis of a verse in Veṇpā: Poy 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Tamil Transliteration</th>
<th>Tamil Transliteration</th>
<th>Tamil Transliteration</th>
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<td>vār-kaṭa-lē</td>
<td>ney-yāka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>நெர்நெர்</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>வய-வய</td>
<td>vey-ya</td>
<td>kati-rōṅ</td>
<td>cey-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>நெர்நெர்</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
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<tr>
<td>வய-வய</td>
<td>vey-ya</td>
<td>kati-rōṅ</td>
<td>cey-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>நெர்நெர்</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nirai-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>வய-வய</td>
<td>vey-ya</td>
<td>kati-rōṅ</td>
<td>cey-ya</td>
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<td>நெர்நெர்</td>
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Metrical analysis of a verse in (slightly irregular) Ārucīr
Āciriyaviruttam: TVM 5.5.1

<table>
<thead>
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<th>நேர்-நேர்</th>
<th>நேர்-நேர்</th>
<th>நேர்-நேர்</th>
<th>நேர்-நேர்</th>
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<td>nēr-nēr</td>
<td>nēr-nēr</td>
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</tr>
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<td>mēr-kā-</td>
<td>len-nai</td>
<td>muṇi-vatu-</td>
<td>nēr-</td>
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<td>tiruk-kuṟuṅ</td>
<td>kuṭi-nam-</td>
<td>piyai-nāṉ</td>
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<td>yō-ṭum</td>
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<td>kiṅ-ya-</td>
<td>tey-neṉ-</td>
<td>cēmē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metrical analysis of a verse in Kaṭṭaḷaikkalitturai
(5 cīr and 16 syllables): PK 1

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abbreviations:
AN Akanāṉūṟu
AinE Aintiṇai Elupatu
AiAi Aintiṇai Aimpatu
Cilap Cilappatikāram
Kali Kalittokai
Kul Kulacēkaraṇāḻvār Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi
Kuṟal Tirukkuṟaḷ
KT Kuruntokai
CC Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi
PeTM Periyāḻvār Tirumoḷi
TVM Tiruvāymoḷi
TV Tiruviruttam
Tē Tēvāram
TC Tolkāppiyam Collatikāram
NA Narinai
Pari Paripāṭal
PK Pāṇṭikkōvai
PV Pārataveṇpā
PN Puṟanāṉūṟu
Pū Pūtattāḻvār Antāṭi
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-ма́лъ -māṟtu locative (p. 27)
-мāттъ -māṭṭu unexplained particle (p. 51)
-мāттъ -māṭṭu particle of rhetorical interrogation (p. 51, 167)
-мāр -mār imperfective 3rd person plural (p. 3, 76, 77), infinitive (p. 87)
-мāлъ -māḷa unexplained particle (p. 51)
-мēн -miṇ imperative (p. 112)
-мēнълъ -mēṅkal imperative plural (p. 4)
-мēр -mēr 2nd person plural (p. 3, 32, 76)
-мēрълъ -mēṟkal 2nd person plural (p. 32)
-мутъ -mūtal locative (p. 27)
[-мē -mē imperative (p. 112)]
-мēнъ -mēṇa locative (p. 27)
-мēнъ -mēṇo imperative (p. 112)
-мēръ -yāḷa unexplained particle (p. 51)
-ва́тъ -vatu (imperfective) verbal noun (p. 106)
-ва́йнъ -vayin locative (p. 27)
-ва́лъ -vāḷal imperfective 1st person singular (p. 77)
-ва́лъ -vāḷa infinitive (p. 88)
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