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கொங்குதேர் வாழ்க்கை:
Cross Pollination of Ideas and Imagination

'No man is an island' is a wise saying. So is language, except the ones in impenetrable jungle or in an inaccessible island with its community shooting poisoned arrows at outsiders including missionaries and tradesmen. Tamil never lived in such a place! From the beginnings of its recorded history Tamil speakers interacted with speakers of Prakrit (Julie 2018) and Sanskrit (), for which inscriptions and literature bear evidence. But like most things about language, language ideology sifts and recasts any evidence about language.

The dominant ideology of Tamil in the twentieth century is that Tamil lived in seclusion from the imagined first Sangam and its chastity arising from it came to be assaulted ever since the migration of speakers of the Aryan language par excellence, Sanskrit, as mythologized in the story of Akattiyar. This migrant language was a threat to Tamil chastity and to Tamil uniqueness which was conspired against to change its face. The ideology of Tamil in the preceding twenty centuries was not the same and was changing, and it was not monolithic at any given time. The ideologies were multiple and were nuanced. This is not the subject of this paper.

This paper is about cross pollination between Tamil and Sanskrit / Prakrit, which subject is couched in the metaphor (from KuRuntokai 2) in the title: the bees, the *pulavars*, who hopped from flower to flower in pursuit of honey, which is their way of life. The cross pollination illustrated in this paper is in one direction with Tamil drinking and rejecting (தேர் 'select') honey. The paper leaves out the other direction where the Tamil pollen impregnates alien flowers for want of competence on my part. This is left to other able hands (Hart, Shulman, Whitney

and others). I need to state this to dispel another language ideology of the belief that pollination has a hierarchical order and the gravitation is in one direction.

I will illustrate two instances of cross-pollination from a very early period, but from the point of view of later commentators and their language ideologies. One is from grammar and the other is from literature. Tolkappiyam is the first available grammar of Tamil language and Tamil poetry available to us and it is legitimate to ask if his conceptualization of grammar is self-generated or imbibed from elsewhere or both. The simple answer is that it is both. One of the many parameters of doing both by a grammarian is that he uses the grammatical ideas floating around in the studies of the grammars of Sanskrit and he selectively adapts some of them ensuring that this process does not mar or obscure the aspects unique to the Tamil grammar. The first part of this exercise of exposure to floating ideas suggests itself when one is aware of the multilingual intellectual milieu of the times of Tolkappiyam, which is reflected in the effort to develop a script for Tamil and to code the poems circulating around from mouth to mouth. The second part of the exercise of adaptation of those ideas is evidenced by a comparative grammatical analysis and the validity of the insights of the grammatical analysis of Tamil in Tolkappiyam for more than two millennia.

Compound words are a subject of interest to the grammarians of the past including those of Sanskrit and Tamil. And there are variable analyses by different grammarians. Sanskrit and Tamil are the two ancient languages of South Asia that analyzed the compounds. There were three questions they sought to answer which relate to identifying and classifying the compounds, the principles of their formation and delineating their meaning.

Given the assumption that during the time of Tolkappiyam there was circulation of texts in the Tamil speaking region enabled by scholarly fraternity (Sangam), courts of rulers (that patronized praise poetry and probably others) and preceptor- centered leaning arrangements (Tolkappiyar, according to a legend, was one of the twelve students under one teacher). The texts, in all probability, included texts in Sanskrit and they were from more than one author over a period of time. In grammar, Panini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the most influential, its equally

influential commentaries that elaborated in original ways and grammars by others (D'Avella To be published). Circulation of texts means circulation of ideas, which were received, elaborated, questioned and reformulated. In this process, language boundaries were not impenetrable, at least for the intellectual elites (practitioners of shastras like the study of language, i.e. grammar). Tolkappaiyam often uses expressions similar to 'so say others' (*enpa* 'they say', *enmanaar pulavar* 'so say the scholars' etc.) when it gives an idea in a sutra. The others may be scholars of Tamil of different persuasions or schools of thought and it may not be far from reality to count among others scholars of Sanskrit and Prakrits. The significant point is that there is no mention of specific referents in Tolkappaiyam and its commentaries; the other scholars hinted at are nameless. Modern research may trace a particular idea to a particular author, but in traditional scholarship the choice is to be anonymous when a 'cross-reference' is made. The references in the texts are to the honey without mentioning the name of the flower. It is all about the flavor, not about the source of it.

Tolkappaiyam identifies six kinds of compounds in Tamil. They are *vērrumait-tokai* "case compound", *uvamat-tokai* "comparison compound", *viṇait-tokai* "action compound", *paṇput-tokai* "quality compound", *ummait-tokai* "coordinate compound" and *aṇmolit-tokai* "absent word compound". A *tokai* is neither a word nor a phrase, but it has some features of the phrase and some features of the word. It is made of more than one word in it formally but at the same time has the behavioral property of a single word phonetically and semantically (*oru col niirmaittu*, in the words of Tolkappaiyam). The grammarian needs to relate these two properties of the compound. Tolkappaiyam invokes two concepts, assembling and eliding, or collating and condensing, drawing on the polysemy of the root word *toku*, which has both these meanings (in its transitive (conjugated *tokuttaar*) and intransitive (*tokkatu*) forms. A compound involves a syntactic assembly of two words and elision of the elements that glue the assembly. Not all six compounds identified in Tolkappaiyam, as above, are identical in their formation and constitution of meaning. The question then is why the six are treated as a unitary phenomenon in the description of compounds in Tamil.

Tolkappiyar had before him two knowledge systems, or systems of grammatical enquiry, to draw on for his description of Tamil. One is the knowledge system of his predecessors and contemporaries in Tamil, about whom we do not have much information. The other is the knowledge system in Sanskrit, which is anterior as well as contemporaneous to him and is not monolithic (D'Avella To be published).

Let us look first at the names of the compounds (Chevillard 2009 discusses the terms used by Tamil grammarians and commentators and their comparison with terms used by Sanskrit grammarians and commentators). Besides adopting the Sanskrit terms and refitting them to the rules of Tamil phonology, there are two other productive methods to create grammatical terms in Tamil. One of them is employing the existing terms in the technical Tamil or giving the technical meaning to a word in the ordinary language. The other is creating or calquing a new technical term informed by the meaning of the parallel term in Sanskrit. These methods of technical term creation are not different with regard to the technical terms in English that are needed to be created in Tamil. These are also the methods put into service universally by most languages that are in contact. The relative differences in the preference between methods across languages or within a single language at different periods are a result of language ideology. Without a statistical analysis, the preference in Tolkappiyam, impressionistically, is creating technical terms out of the words of the ordinary language (eccam 'participle', muRRu 'finite', ezuvaay 'subject', payanilai 'predicate' are just a few examples) and calquing. The former, of course, is not motivated by the terms in use in Sanskrit alone, but also is motivated by the need to codify an original concept.

The terms used in Sanskrit grammars for compounds, as used in *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, are these (D'Avella 2012): *avyayībhāva* "adverbial compound," *tatpuruṣa* "determinative compound," *dvandva* "coordinate compound," and *bahuvrīhi* "exocentric compound", *karmadhāraya* "appositional compound" and *dvigu* "numeral compound", the last two being sub-divisions of *tatpuruṣa*. The similarity of six categories compounds is superficial. The equivalents in Sanskrit to the compounds in the Tamil list are four, which are *tatpuruṣa*, *karmadhāraya*, *dvandva*, and *bahuvrīhi*. Three of these excepting the second one can be

correlated respectively with the Tamil compounds *vēṛṛumait-tokai* , *ummait-tokai* and *aṇmoḷit-tokai* . *karmadhāraya* includes sub-types of *vēṛṛumait-tokai* and *uvamat-tokai* determined by the principle of co-reference and similarity respectively between the parts of the compound as well as specification of an object from the general, which is *paṇput-tokai* (DA'vella 2012). This shows that Sanskrit and Tamil grammarians arrive at their lists of compounds based on their own definitions, but they share much between them.

Examples from modern Tamil that illustrate the six types of compounds in Tamil are below.

vēṛṛumait-tokai : *kacaiyaTi* ‘whip lash’. The case relation between the two words *kacai* ‘whip’ and *aTi* ‘lash’ is instrumental, which is a case. The equivalent phrase with the case suffix is *kacaiyaal aTi* ‘lash by a whip’. The compound is generated by eliding the case suffix in the phrase, which is a process view, or the compound and the phrase differ in the absence and presence of the case suffix, which is a matrix view. The syntax and semantics of the compound and the phrase remain unaltered in a sentence. One could replace the other; in the phrasing of Tolkappiyam the compound without the case suffix has the function or nature of (*iyala*) the phrase with the case suffix (TC 407: *avaṛṛul, vēṛṛumait tokaiyē vēṛṛumai iyala*)

uvamat-tokai: *malar vizi* ‘flower-eyes’. The relation of comparison between the two words *malar* ‘flower’ and *vizi* ‘eye’ is similarity of some kind. The equivalent phrase is *malar poonRa vizi* ‘eyes like a flower’. The other descriptions of the previous case apply in this case also.

viṇait-tokai: *vaLar piRai* ‘waxing moon’. The relation between the two words *vaLar* ‘grow’, which is a verb root and *piRai* ‘crescent moon’ is of description of action attributed to the second word. There is no form that is elided. Two words are collated but there is no formal condensation; the condensation is lexical and semantic referring to a unitary concept. The commentators, in order to keep this compound on par with other compounds, bring in elision and say that the tense

suffix is deleted. For them, one of the equivalent phrases is vaLarum piRai ‘the moon that grows’. The example of the preceding compound, malar vizi, could be considered to be an example of this compound and given the meaning ‘blooming eyes’. Meaning does play a role in determining the kind of compound.

paṇput-tokai: cemmalar ‘red flower’. The relation between the two words cem ‘red’ (a variant of the modern form civappu) and malar ‘flower’ is one of description of quality. For the commentators, no tense suffix is involved, unlike in *viṇait-tokai*. But they bring in elision by constructing a noun of quality and eliding the nominal suffix. The equivalent phrase of cemmalar is cevviyatu malar ‘the red thing- flower’; it could be civanta malar ‘reddened flower’ as well. This analysis is to maintain theoretical consistency with regard to elision as a defining feature of a compound.

ummait-tokai: appaa ammaa ‘father, mother, i.e. parents’. The relation between the two words appaa ‘father’ and ammaa ‘mother’ is one of equity. The equivalent phrase is appaavum ammaavum ‘father and mother’, which is without the conjunctive suffix –um in the compound.

aṇmoḷit-tokai: karai veeTTi ‘one of dhoti with a border (of party colors)’. This compound refers to a person, who is not morphologically marked. This could be treated as an instance of deletion of an agentive suffix, which could be –kaaran. The equivalent of karaiveeTTi is karaiveeTTikkaaran ‘one of color bordered dhoti’, which however, is not a phrase like the other equivalents of compounds. *aṇmoḷi* ‘absent word’ in the name of this compound suggests that the equivalent of karai veeTTi is considered to be karai veeTTi aaL ‘the man with color bordered dhoti’. malar vizi, *uvamat-tokai*, could also be considered an *aṇmoḷit-tokai* and given the meaning ‘one / a girl of eyes like a flower’. It is the meaning that will decide the kind of compound a word collation is.

Tolkappiyam, however, analyzes *paṇput-tokai* and *aṇmoḷit-tokai* differently without invoking elision.

Going back to the names of the compounds, D’vella’s (Unpublished) statement that “unlike the names given to the categories of Sanskrit compounds, all the

names for Tamil compounds are descriptive and based on a clear pattern” makes the point that Tolkappiyam systemizes the analysis of Tamil compound using a consistent feature. The naming reflects the fact that the compound has the function or nature of its counterpart phrase. This is a defining feature of compounds in Sanskrit grammars. The names indicate what is consistent and significant between the two forms. It is *vērrumai* in *vērrumait-tokai*, *uvamam* in *uvamat-tokai*, *viṇai* in *vinait-tokai*, *paṇpu* in *paṇput-tokai*, *umami* in *ummait-tokai* and *aṇmoḷi* in *aṇmoḷit-tokai*. Though Tolkappiyam does not state explicitly the Sanskrit definition of analytical equivalence, it is underlying in his use of iyala: compounds have the nature of the analytical phrases. The name *vērrumai*, for example, does not refer to *vērrumai urupu* ‘case suffix’ and so does not suggest to the elision of the suffix; it is not named by what is elided, as D’vella (2017) argues for some names, and finds another pattern for some other compounds such as *vinait-tokai* and *paṇput-tokai*, which are not named after elided suffix such as tense suffix and modifying suffix. In *ummait-tokai* *ummai* does not stand for the suffix –um but stands for conjunction just as in the sutra (Tol. Col. 71) *ai*, the case suffix, is also the name of the case itself and its function. *aṇmoḷit-tokai* is about the word that is absent, not elided, and is retrievable from the context. *kuTTaik kazuttu* ‘short neck’ could refer to a human or animate depending on the agreement marker in the predicate whether it refers to a short necked person or animal.

The point is that a principle to define a compound stated in the Sanskrit grammar is not used in it to name the compounds neatly, but the Tamil grammar, though does not state this principle explicitly, uses it to name the compounds consistently. This is not a feature of imitation in the situation of intellectual contact between language analysts.

The consistency is more than in naming the compounds. *tatpuruṣa* compounds include all case compounds but also include the subclasses *karmadhāraya* and *dvigu*. *vērrumait-tokai* of Tolkappiyam parallels *tatpuruṣa* and this is the way the commentators of Tolkappiyam understand it and interpret *vērrumait-tokai* (D’vella Unpublished). But for consistency the system developed in Tolkappiyam

takes out the two sub-classes of *tatpuruṣa* and names them separately as *paṇput-tokai* and *ummait-tokai* .

Simile compounds in Sanskrit are treated as one of the many subtypes of *karmadhārayas* in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and, with more importance in *Samāsacakra* . This development continues in Sanskrit in the works on poetics (D’vella 2012). Tolkappiyam gives *uvamat-tokai* full category status on par with other compounds and aligns it with interpretation with the presence of the form comparison, which *Aṣṭādhyāyī* does not do.

Sanskrit grammars do not recognize *viṇait-tokai* other than in a minor way (D’vella 2017). Tolkappiyam treats it on par with other compounds and brings it under the definition and pattern of compounds, as shown above. Tamil poetry as evidenced by Sangam poetry employs this compound abundantly and deserves attention and treatment, which Tolkappiyam gives to it. Its analysis is sensitive to the facts of the Tamil language and gives it importance even when the grammatical theory used as a frame of reference does not foreground it.

In the sutra describing *paṇput-tokai*, Tolkappiyam does not mention any suffix of quality (such as -mai) or modification (such as -a), but gives a formula that identifies this compound. The formula is ‘iṇṇatu itu’ eṇa varūum, which means that the non-compound will have the form ‘this is this’. This may be taken to mean the predicative relation between the quality and the object. The standard example of *paṇput-tokai* is *karun kutirai* ‘dark horse’. The nominal form of the quality of blackness is *karumai* and the inflected modifier form is *kariya*. According to the formula, *karun kutirai* paraphrases as *kariyatu kutirai* ‘the black thing is horse’, which could also be a variant of *kutirai kariyatu* ‘the horse is dark’. Tolkappiyam considers this formula to be the equivalent phrase of this compound rather than the expanded modifier such as *karumaiyaakiya kutirai* ‘the horse which has darkness’. The reason for this could be the way this compound, which is not an independent one, but a sub-class of *karmadhāraya*, is treated in Sanskrit grammar. This broad category of compound (which includes the sub-class *uvamat-tokai*) is of two words that have the same referent. The formula that expresses it is both x and y; i.e. x and y are the same objects (D’vella). Blackness

and horse are the same; they refer to the same object; this horse cannot be referenced without its blackness. The formula given in Tolkappiyam may be taken just as the analytical equivalent (*vigraha-vākya* in Sanskrit terminology) of the compound.

aṅmolit-tokai is different from other compounds in the following way. It is any of the other compounds but misses the referent of the compound. It is not elided; it is absent. The absent referent is anticipated in the context. Though this compound is different in this way, it is classified as one like other compounds because one brings in the missing referent to interpret its meaning. To claim a formal difference in the form of this compound, which is isomorphic with other compounds, Ilampuranar, the first commentator of Tolkappiyam, claims an accent to be present in the pronunciation of this compound. An accent was noted and stated for comparable *bahuvrīhi* compounds in Sanskrit. There is no way to know whether this is a phonetic fact about Tamil or a carryover from Sanskrit to make a point.

The above comparison shows that there is push and pull of ideas when Tamil is in contact with another language of similar intellectual pursuit. The idea of semantic parity between the compound and phrase is shared and so the process of condensation of the compound through elision, but the analytical results with regard to empirical systemization through classification and naming differ but with contestable overlaps. This is an outcome discernable throughout the intellectual history of Tamil with varying differences in every one of these aspects at different periods.

The goals of the grammar for Panini and Tolkappiyar are different. The former aims to generate the compounds that are grammatical in Sanskrit. The latter, on the other hand, aims to help interpreting literature, which favors an elliptical language and use of compounds. The grammatical analyses of compounds by both these grammarians differ and share between themselves; they according to their conception the purpose of grammars. Tolkappiyar's grammar has distinctive markings of the interaction with Sanskrit grammars and of an independent analysis that is true to the facts of the Tamil language. Occasionally, the

grammatical ideas of in Tolkappiyam override the facts of the language it analyzes, which is on the increase with the commentators.

The metalanguage of Tolkappiyam is different from that of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* but the language of the commentaries has a similar register in Tamil. This is the register of the science of grammar (Chevillard 2009). It is a subject matter worthy of a separate paper.

The Tamil theory of literature classifies the literary universe into akam, matters of private or of inner domain and puRam, matters of the public or of outer domain (which may include private emotions, such as mourning over death, that are publically expressed). This is how Sangam poems are viewed and classified; the inadequacies of this way of organizing the literary universe were accommodated with new theoretical concepts such as akappuRam 'an overlap of both'.

When the literary universe changes with emphasis on ethical and devotional content and the form or genre of literature changes from individual poems to a long narrative with a story line to depict multiple aspects of life, literature's classification becomes four fold. The changes in the form and content of literature took place not just in Tamil but elsewhere as well. Tamil literary grammarians had the challenge of not only accommodating the changes in the theory but also to integrate the changes with the earlier theory, or at least, to relate the two to show that there is no contradiction. The tendency is not to reject one in favor of another, but rather to maintain some continuity between the old and new theories.

The four way classification of the literary universe, called purushartha in Sanskrit, brought with it a different view about the content and purpose of literature. The new four are aRam, poruL, inpam and viiTu, which are dharma, artha, kama and moksha respectively in Sanskrit. These are not merely classificatory tools but they provide a framework to experience and interpret literature.

Tolkappiyam's third chapter is the grammar of poetry. The framework provided in it to approach literature is the two fold one mentioned above. The details of each

one is exhaustively described and theorized. There is, at the same time, a passing reference (Tol. PoruL. 411) to the four content areas of literature in the context of talking about four prosodic types of verses in Tamil. It states that these verse types may be about the first three contents; salvation is not included. Later literary grammarians include the fourth (Commentary on Yapparunkalam (Sutra 211) of the tenth century), which suggests that the reformulations are an ongoing exercise. These three are called primeval contents (mutal poruL) by Tolkappiyam meaning that all other contents emanate from these three. This may be taken to suggest that akam and puRam are related as derived or as manifesting from the four way classification of the literary content. This is one way of relating the old and the new.

Ilampuranar (11th century), the first commentator of Tolkappiyam, takes pains to make a reformulation. He raises the question how the four fit in the two fold classification. His answer is that the description of content belongs to urip poruL, which is the subject of akam poetry and is paralleled with the subject of puRam. By definition the subject (urip poruL) is of love and war themes, but it is generalized by Ilampuranar to include any content. To support his generalization, he cites sutras of Tolkappiyam from the chapters on puRam and akam to relate aRam, poruL and viiTu in one way or another to the sub-themes of puRam and to relate inpam to the themes of akam. He raises another question why Tolkappiyam does not have separate chapters on aRam and poruL (which Thirukkural does) and answers that other authors (he probably includes authors in Sanskrit) have written about them and Tolkappiyam chose not to cover the full range of the four literary subjects but chose to elaborate on (may be, Tamil specific) two, viz. akam and puRam; they are related in the sense that the war helps to increase wealth which is necessary to have a family life to do aRam.

The change of literary content from akam and puRam to aRam, inpam, poruL, (viiTu) is not a simple numerical increase. If the latter is a response to the happenings in the literary world by the literary grammarians in the Tamil region and in other regions, Ilampuranar's is an effort to synthesize without compartmentalizing the synthesized theory to the Tamil view and the other view.

The new view about literature and the theory of it is that it is encompassing. This is a consequence of interaction of Tamil literary community with other literary communities of the land throughout the history.

The synthesis takes different forms. One form, probably a minority view, is that there is a whole from which specifics relating to Tamil emerge in contrast to the view that the specifics intermingle to create a whole. Such is the view of Sivagnana Munivar (of the eighteenth century) regarding grammar of language (Annamalai 2018)

Munivar defines intellectual lineage (marapu nilai) by the relationship between texts. The texts include those in Tamil and in Sanskrit; the lineage of knowledge is not restricted by language. This stems from his stand that Akattiyar is the progenitor of knowledge in Tamil and in Sanskrit. He acknowledges the difference between the grammar of Tamil and the grammar of Sanskrit and thus between the knowledge of Tamil and of Sanskrit. There are two kinds of relationship between the texts of the same lineage. One text is the original text or Ur text (mutal nuul). Munivar takes Akattiyam to be this text. A derivative text from the Ur text is called the follower text (vazi nuul). Different texts of the same legacy may employ different processes and may not deviate from the legacy when the final product is not altered. The final outcome is the essence of a body of knowledge, not the route taken to arrive at. This is Munivar's philosophical position that not everyone holds about the interactive relation between Tamil and Sanskrit.

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