

TICAICCOL - VAṬACOL

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Tamil traditional grammarians have been classifying Tamil words in two different ways. According to one classification words are divided into four categories, namely peyar noun', viṇai (verb), itai (particles & suffixes) and uri (word roots/stems). The other classification also divides words into four categories, namely, iyaṛcol (native words which can be comprehended easily)', tiriṇcol (native words which have many synonyms or many meanings), ticaiccol (loanwords) and vaṭacol (Sanskrit loanwords).

The two distinguished traditional grammarians, **Tolkāppiyar** and **Pavaṇantiyar**, have also taken both types of classification into account though there is an interval of more or less 10 centuries between both of them. Nevertheless, the way in which both of them have handled the facts of the two types of classifications is different. **Tolkāppiyam**, the earliest extant Tamil grammar, gives the four-fold classification of noun, verb, particles and suffixes, and word roots¹, in the fifth chapter, **peyariyal**, of its second part **collatikāram** which deals with the morphology and syntax of Tamil. The fifth chapter speaks about noun. This four-fold classification is given in the beginning of this chapter before the author goes on to explain each of the 4 classes in this and the following three chapters. Classification on the basis native vs loanwords² is given in the ninth chapter, **eccaviyal**, of the second part of **Tolkāppiyam**. The four kinds of words of this classification are introduced as words used in the composition of verses/poems. On the contrary, **Nannūl**, a grammatical work belonging to 13th A.D., combines both types of classification, and says words can be classified in ten categories, namely, peyariyaṛcol, viṇaiyaṛcol, itaiyaṛcol, uriyaṛcol, peyarttiriṇcol, viṇaittiriṇcol, itaittiriṇcol, urittiriṇcol, ticaiccol and vaṭacol.³ The author of **Nannūl** introduces this classification in the first chapter, **peyariyal** 'Chapter on nouns' of its second part, **collatikāram**, which deals with the morphology and syntax of Tamil.

Though they had given the information from their own point of view, both our great grammarians had been aware that the classification of words into nouns, verbs, particles and suffixes and word roots, was grammatically oriented, whereas classifying words into iyaṛcol, tiriṇcol, ticaiccol, and vaṭacol was done, mainly on the basis of sociolinguistics, i.e. linguistic borrowing. The latter classification distinguishes words in Tamil as native and non-native. It seems that there should be only two categories instead of four, in this classification; or else there should be some justification to have four categories of words in this classification.

On close analysis, it can be realised that iyaṛcol and tiriṇcol are native words while ticaiccol and vaṭacol are loanwords. The native words are divided into two classes basing on their degree of comprehensibility; words which have to be comprehended with a bit of effort, i.e. with the help of the dictionary and context of occurrence, have been classified as tiriṇcol. As regards the loanwords, vaṭacol denotes those words that have been borrowed into Tamil

from Sanskrit. When the definitions given by our traditional grammarians, for the term, **ticaiccol**, are seen closely, it can be clearly realised that **ticaiccol** is the technical term used by our grammarians for 'loanwords', in general. **Tolkāppiyam** defines **ticaiccol** as,

centamiḷ cērnta paṇṇiru nilattum
taṅkuṛip piṇavē ticaiccoṛ kiḷavi

(Tol. Co: 400)

Śubrahmanya Sastri translates this couplet thus:

Ticaiccol is the word borrowed in Tamil from the languages current in the twelve countries bordering the Tamil land'⁴

The phrase, 'centamiḷ cērnta paṇṇiru nilam' is well understood as 'the twelve countries which belong to the land of Tamil'. Hence it can be obtained from this couplet that words, that have come into Tamil from the various districts of Tamil speaking land and those districts bordering the Tamil speaking land, are to be called **ticaiccol**.

Nannūḷ gives a clear definition of **ticaccol**:

centamiḷ nilaṅcēr paṇṇiru nilattiṇum
onpatir riraṅṅiṇir ramiloḷi nilattiṇum
taṅkuṛip piṇavē ticaicco leppa.

This verse clearly indicates that words, which have come into Tamil from the twelve countries of Tamil-speaking land and the eighteen countries of non-Tamil-speaking land are known as **ticaiccol**. Commentators of **Nannūḷ** give two verses which list out the twelve and eighteen countries separately. It is interesting to find that countries like China, Jawa and Kadaaram (equivalent to Kedah) are listed amongst the eighteen countries.

Therefore it becomes very clear that our traditional grammarians had used the term **ticaiccol** to denote 'loanwords' generally. With this clarity comes the curiosity: Why Sanskrit loanwords in Tamil are distinguished separately as **Vaṭaccol**. There should be an objective justification rather than a subjective one.

Tamil grammarians speak about Sanskrit morphophonemic rules apart from the bulk of Tamil morphophonemic rules. Sanskrit morphophonemic rules are given as appendix in **Nannūḷ Kāṅṅikaiyurai**.⁵ When we go through the Sanskrit morphophonemic rules and the list of words given as examples, one point becomes clear. As far as Sanskrit loanwords are concerned, Tamil has borrowed a lot of simple words along with a number of compound words that have been formed by the combination of any two of those simple words. Hence Tamil speakers have been able to distinguish the compound words from the simple words as far as Sanskrit loanwords are concerned. Therefore, they have also been including Sanskrit

loanwords in the list of words given for grammar exercise based on Tamil Morphophonemic Rules / Sandhi rules. One unique characteristic of Sanskrit loans is that all of them only require Sandhi rules for combining a 'vowel' with another 'vowel'. Compound words borrowed from Sanskrit are made up of two words, the first of which ends in a vowel and the second begins with a vowel. On careful scrutiny it can be noticed that Sanskrit compound words and Tamil compound words use different sets of morphophonemic rules for combining a 'vowel' with another:

Tamil: : potu + uṭaimai → potu-v-uṭaimai
 (public) + (possession)
 paṇi + itaḷ → paṇi-y-itaḷ
 (dew) (petal)

Sanskrit
 loan : kiri + īcaṇ → kiri-caṇ
 (mountain) (lord)
 kuru + upatēcam → kurū-patēcam
 (teacher) (advice)

In Tamil a 'v' or 'y' is introduced between two vowels to break the occurrence of a vowel cluster. The choice of 'v' or 'y' depends on the last vowel of the first word in the compound. As regards the Sanskrit loans in Tamil, it can be seen that the two vowels are replaced by one corresponding long vowel. This process is in accordance with Sanskrit Sandhi rules. Therefore, it becomes obvious that Tamil Sandhi rules are to be used when separating a Tamil compound word, and Sanskrit Sandhi rules are to be used when separating a compound word borrowed from Sanskrit. Hence, our traditional grammarians had to single out the Sanskrit loanwords so that their grammatical analysis can be based on Sanskrit Sandhi rules. As regards the non-Sanskrit loanwords in Tamil, they follow the normal phenomenon of linguistic borrowing whereby mostly simple words are borrowed, and, even if compound words are borrowed they are treated as single units and the individual words in the loan compounds are little noticed. Hence, non-Sanskrit loanwords are never used in exercises used for revising morphophonemic/sandhi rules in Tamil.

From the foregoing observations it becomes clear that Tamil traditional grammarians had distinguished Sanskrit loanwords separately from the other loans, for grammatical purpose, i.e., Sanskrit loan compounds, which are made up of Sanskrit loan simple words, have to be analysed or combined using Sanskrit sandhi rules.

This justification for treating Sanskrit loanwords separately from other loanwords, will also remove some controversies that arise while applying sandhi rules to compound words, specially those borrowed from Sanskrit. As for instance, when compound words like **narēntiraṇ** and **cūriyōtayam** are to be separated there is controversy in the principle to be used for

the purpose.

(i) **narentiran** → (a) **nara** + **intiran**
or
(b) **naraṇ** + **intiraṇ**
(man) (king)

(ii) **cūriyōtayam** → (a) **cūriya** + **utayam**
or
(b) **cūriyaṇ** + **utayaṇ**
(sun) (rise)

It can be proved that (i) (a) and (ii) (a) are proper answers; **narēntiraṇ** and **cūriyōtayam** are compound words borrowed from Sanskrit. When the individual words are borrowed and used in Tamil, their forms are **naraṇ**, **intiraṇ**, **cūriyaṇ** and **utayam**. Consonants like 'ṇ' and 'm' are added to Sanskrit loanwords to conform them with the phonemic structure of Tamil; these words end in vowels in Sanskrit. Hence, scholars who are well-versed in Tamil Sandhi Rules, which separate compound words into independently occurring free morphemes, tend to separate the Sanskrit loan compounds, too, in similar manner. Therefore they separate words like **narēntiraṇ** as **naraṇ** + **intiraṇ** and **cūriyōtayam** as **cūriyaṇ** + **utayaṇ**. If this process of separating these compound words is accepted, there will be discrepancy in the application of sandhi rules. To combine the two words into the corresponding compound word, two steps are needed. As for instance,

Step 1 **naraṇ** + **intiraṇ** → **nara** + **intiraṇ**
Step 2 **nara** + **intiraṇ** → **narēntiraṇ**

Neither Sanskrit sandhi rules nor Tamil sandhi rules can justify step 1. There is no provision in Tamil sandhi rules to drop the final 'ṇ'. According to Tamil Sandhi rules, **naraṇ** + **intiraṇ** should become ***naraṇintiraṇ**. Likewise, there is also no provision in Sanskrit sandhi rules to drop the final 'ṇ' because in Sanskrit the word is written as **naraṇ**. Moreover it is the Sanskrit sandhi rule which allows **nara** + **intiraṇ** to become **narēntiraṇ**. If Tamil sandhi rules are applied to the words **nara** + **intiraṇ**, the final form should be ***nara-v-intiraṇ**. If Sanskrit loan-compounds are studied with the help of Sanskrit sandhi rules, no controversy and confusion will appear. By doing so, a word like **cūriyōtayam** can be consistently broken into **cūriya** + **utayam** and conveniently recovered as **cūriyōtayam**. This is why our traditional grammarians had kept the Sanskrit loanwords distinctly apart. It is gratifying to know that they gave special recognition to Sanskrit loanwords not for any subjective reason but for purely grammatical purpose.

Notes:

1. **Tolkāppiyam mūlam**, Saiva Siddhanta Nurpatippuk Kalagam Limited, Madras - 1, 1967 (Tol: 643 & 644).
2. **Ibid.** (Tol: 880)
3. **Nannūl Kāṅṭṭikaiyurai**, Saiva Siddhantra Nurpatippuk Kalagam Limited, Madras - 1, 1974 (Nan : 270)
4. Subrahmanya Sastri, P.S. **Tolkāppiyam Collatikāram**, 2nd edition, Annamalai University, 1979, p: 283.
5. **Nannūl Kāṅṭṭikaiyurai**, pp: 412-414.