A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

45ᵗʰ ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS & INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
on
Case, Agreement and Postpositions
(23-25 June 2017, University of Delhi)
Requests Nominations for
AWARDS & PRIZES

CONTENTS

Every year we honour researchers by giving awards and prizes for their outstanding academic contributions. We request that nominations for such awards and prizes (except for award no. 12) may be sent to us before **23ʳᵈ May 2017** with copies of relevant publications and documents. The details are listed below.

1. **Mrs. Susheela P. Upadhyaya Award** for a young researcher below 40 years who has produced a good monograph or Ph.D. research thesis or a good article on any branch of Modern Linguistics, within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**. Joint authorship will also be considered but in that case, the award amount will be equally shared by the authors.

2. **Mrs. S.M. Katre Memorial Prize** for M.A. topper in Linguistics (2015-2016). The mark-list should be duly forwarded by the Head of the Department.

3. **Award in the name of Prof. K. Anbazhakan** for Translation of Tolkappiyam in any international language. The book should have been published within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

4. **Award for the Best Monograph on Dravidian Tribes**. It should have been published within a period 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

5. **C. Achutha Menon Prize** for the Best Article or Book published on *Computer and Language*. It should have been published in an Indian journal and by an Indian within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

6. **Dr. George Jacob Award** for the Best Monograph on Dravidian Linguistics in any Indian language other than Dravidian. It should have been published within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

7. **Prof. K.M. Venkataramaiah Award** for the Study of Linguistic Minorities. It should be an Indian publication written in any international language other than Indian, and published within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

8. **Hermann Gundert Endowment** for the Best Dictionary, Lexicon or Encyclopaedia on any major Dravidian language and Dravidian Tribal language including Brahui. It should have been published within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

9. **Endowment of the Phonetic Society of India** for a Monograph or a lecture.

10. **Panneerselvam & Thavamani Panneer-selvam Award** for the Translation of a Book from Tamil to Kannada and vice versa. The book should have been published within a period of 3 years before **1ˢᵗ May 2017**.

11. **K.N. Kuppuswamy Award** for a Lecture/ Comparative Study of a Grammatical Text of Tamil, Sanskrit, Prakrit or Pali.

12. **Award for the Best Paper in the Conference** by a young full-time student or a research scholar. (Only bona fide students and full-time research scholars, who have produced certificates from their respective Heads of Departments/Supervising Teachers, can take part in the competition.)

Earlier recipients of award/prize in a category are not eligible to apply for the same award/prize.

NO SHORT VOWELS *e* AND *o* IN PROTO DRAVIDIAN

It is opined that there were five short vowels in Proto Dravidian according to scholars of Dravidian linguistics. However, it is uncertain whether there were five vowels in Proto Dravidian because the early written records confirm only three short vowels in the languages pertaining to the Dravidian language family. Hence, it is reasonable to suppose that the other two short vowels *e* and *o* are, perhaps, the later innovation in Tamil in particular and in other Dravidian languages in general i.e., the five-short-vowel system might have been developed from early Tamil to the other periods of Tamil a little by little, according to evidences available in hand. Thus, as far as the writing symbols available in *Tolkappiyam* (the early extant grammar not only for Tamil but also for the Dravidian languages as a whole) are concerned, separate symbols are available only for 10 vowels – a, aa, i, ii, u, uu, ee, ai, oo and au – of which ai and au are, according to linguistic analysis, treated as diphthongs, and there were no separate symbols for short *e* and *o* in *Tolkappiyam* but they were represented by the dot on their respective long vowels *ee* and *oo* in *Tolkappiyam* (belonging to 2ⁿᵈ century B.C. to 1ˢᵗ century A.D., according to the views of the majority of Tamil scholars). Hence, it is likely to be assumed that before *Tolkappiyam* period, there might have been no short *e* and *o* in Tamil and later they might have developed in the language. In other words, in *Tolkappiyam*, physically there were no separate written symbols for representing short vowels *e* and *o*. The author of this grammar claims that the short vowels *e* and *o* should be represented by the dot on the symbols of their respective long vowels *ee* and *oo*. Actually, such a writing system could not have been imposed upon authoritatively by the author himself but, according to the early writing system which prevailed in the contemporary period (according to my own view), of which he might have composed this grammatical treatise, it could be claimed that he descriptively explains the writing system of those periods in Tamil in a systematic manner. In other words, it is evident that there was no dot system available in the *Early Tamil-Brāhmi* records available in the inscription corpus and nevertheless, the dot

system was gradually developed in the period of *Later Tamil-Brāhmi* in the inscription records. Hence, it is believed that Tolkappiyar might have followed this system in his grammatical work of *Tolkappiyam* only based on the script development prevailing in those periods.

The close watch on the separate vowel symbols employed in the *Early Tamil-Brāhmi* records, belonging to 3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D. shows that there was no distinction between the respective short and long vowels *e* and *o*, i.e., no symbol for either short *e* or *o* has been recorded in the *Early Tamil-Brāhmi* period (from 2nd century B.C. to 1st century A.D.), (ref. the book on *Early Tamil Epigraphy (from the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.)* written by Iravatham Mahadevan (2003), Harvard University Press). Considering the short vowels *e* and *o*, they were actually not developed to graphemic status until the *Early Tamil-Brāhmi* (from 2nd century to 4th century A.D.) as far as the palaeographic status is concerned. Considering the corpus of *Late Tamil-Brāhmi* and *Early VaTTeḻuttu* (from 5th century to 6th century A.D.), on the other hand, the symbol *ē* with the dot to represent the primary short vowel *e* occurs in only one inscription (No. 85, belonging to 4th century A.D.) of *Late Tamil-Brāhmi* and in the inscription (No. 117, belonging to 6th century A.D.) of *Early VaTTeḻuttu*. The secondary symbol of the short vowel *o* has a dot on the combination of the consonant symbol with the long vowel *ō* though the primary symbol does not have the dot on the basic symbol of the long vowel *ō* to represent the short vowel *o* in the early inscriptions. Only at a later stage, as far as the records on *Late Tamil-Brāhmi* and *Early VaTTeḻuttu* are concerned, the secondary short vowel *o* with the dot was attested in three inscriptions – one in 77 of the *Late Tamil-Brāhmi* inscriptions (belonging to 3rd century A.D.) and two in 102 and 104 (belonging to 5th century A.D.) of the *Early VaTTeḻuttu* in the inscription corpus. What we understood from this study is that there had been no separate symbols for the

short vowels *e* and *o* in *Tolkappiyam*. Instead, it insists on the dot on the respective long vowel to represent the short vowels *e* and *o* in terms of the availability of data prevailing in those periods.

Moreover, coming to other literary languages, as far as early Kannada language is concerned, there is no evidence to show the records of availability of short vowels *e* and *o* in the early inscriptions even though it has a prolonged history of inscriptions from the period of 5th century A.D. Similarly, there are inscriptions available from the period of 7th century A.D. in Telugu. However, it is reasonable to believe that the short vowels *e* and *o* did not exist in both Telugu and Kannada languages until 15th century A.D., according to the evolution of Telugu-Kannada script (as shown in table 3.1a: Evolution of the Telugu-Kannada script from the 3rd century B.C. to the 16th century A.D. [a-ḍ]) displayed on page 79 in *The Dravidian Languages* by Bh. Krishnamurti and published by Cambridge University Press in 2003. From this table, it is understood that there was no existence of the short vowels *e* and *o.* There are also the evidential written records from written languages of the Dravidian language family.

Surprisingly, Kurukh and Malto, belonging to North Dravidian language family, show less number of DED (*Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*) entries that involve the short vowels *e* and *o*. In other words, it is to be noted that out of 380 DED entries which comprise the vowel *e*, only 6 entries in Kurukh and 9 in Malto (both of these languages are closely related to Brahui) have the short vowel *e* whereas out of 374 entries that consist of the vowel *o*, only 3 entries in Kurukh and 10 in Malto have the short vowel *o*. These important attestations raise the doubt whether the short vowels *e* and *o* in Kurukh and Malto existed in the Proto North Dravidian period. Supporting this point, another predominant concept in Dravidian

linguistics is the loss of Proto Dravidian short vowels *e and *o in the Brahui language of the North Dravidian subgroup. Similarly, only poor entries of the Proto Dravidian short vowels *e and *o have been noted in Toda language of South Dravidian and in Parji language of Central Dravidian language family.

In this regard, it is to be noted that unfortunately, several studies point out the loss of Proto Dravidian short vowels *e and *o in Brahui (which is the first language that might have, according to scholars of Dravidian linguistics, been separated from Proto Dravidian at the earliest stage). It is significant to divulge that "*e results in Brahui in either i or a, and *o results in Brahui in either u, a or oo. It is very probable that this irregularity in Brahui vocalic system is the result of the pressure or impact of Indo-Iranian or some other neighbouring group of languages", according to Emeneau (1970:25) in his book *Dravidian Comparative Phonology – A Sketch* (Annamalai University Press). Nevertheless, while comparing the short vowel system of early written records in Dravidian languages with that of Brahui language, the Dravidian theory states that a loss of Proto Dravidian short vowels *e and *o in Brahui is not only questionable but also unbelievable because more authentically, a close observation on early records in Dravidian reveals that there had been no loss of short vowels *e and *o i.e., because of such evidences of the written records in our hand, one can conclude that only three short vowels – a, i and u – must have existed in Proto Dravidian (discussion only for the short vowel system alone, not for the long vowel system here). Hence, from the point of view of such testimonies, it is reasonable to arrive at the judgement that such a Proto Dravidian short-vowel system alone might have been retained in the Brahui language of North Dravidian. Moreover, in such a scenario, how is it possible to claim that there is a loss of short vowels e and o in Brahui? Hence, taken as a whole, there is a chance to arrive at the conclusion that the short vowels e and o in other languages might have been developed in the later period alone or considered to be a later innovation.

Hence, the First Information Report (FIR) of all the authentic evidences compels one to ascertain that there is no loss of Proto Dravidian short vowels *e and *o in Brahui but might have been the retention of Proto Dravidian vowel system which possessed only three short vowels – *a, *i, *u – and not the short vowels e and o during the period of Proto Dravidian stage.

[**Note**: Please send comments and suggestions if any to *ijdlisdl@gmail.com* or *kamatchi75 @gmail.com*.]

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NEW CHOLA INSCRIPTION FROM MELPARA, NEAR RAJAKUMARI, IDUKKI DISTRICT

Chola inscriptions have earlier been reported only from the erstwhile south Travancore, now comprising the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. For the first time, a *praśasti* of a Chola ruler has come to light from Melpara, near Rajakumari in Idukki hill range of central Kerala.

The inscription, a *praśasti*, is carved on a megalithic menhir of genesis granite nearly 16 feet high. It has 13 lines in Tamil language and script interspersed with a few Grantha words or alphabets. It starts with the invocation *Swasti Śrī*. It is assignable to Rajendra I (1012 CE – 1044 CE), the son of Raja Raja Chola. He is cited in the inscription as Ko-Parakesarivarman alias Udaiyar Sri Rajendra Chola-deva and dated to his 10th year of reign (1022 CE).

The conquest of Kerala region by Raja Raja Chola and Rajendra Chola, especially the towns of Vilizhinjam, Kollam and Makodai or Mahodayapuram is already known from inscriptions. Rajendra I in his inscription dated to

the 10th year from Brihadeshwar temple and 13th year from Tirumalai mentions the conquest of the hill ranges. The English transcript of the 6th line in Tirumalai inscription provided by Hultzsch reads as "*… el-arai ilakkamu=nava-nedi-kkula-pperu-malaigalum vikkiram-virar …*". The phrase *Nava-nedi-kkula* possibly carries a connotation to the Yadava Kula or Vrsni race or the Ay-Venad kings. (*Navani* = (butter) *di*=(of) *kkula* = (lineage) = perumal (perumal = king)-igalum (ruling/belonging to Vikrama Vira). The Vikrama Vira mentioned is possibly a reference to the Ay-King Vikramaditya Varaguna, the most renowned king of the Ay *kula,* who was defeated by the Chola kings earlier. The Tamil literary work *Purananuru* too mentions the family of Yadava or Ay kings residing in the hilly regions and king Ay-Andiran is referred to as the 'lord of Podiya mountains ranges'.

The hill ranges of Idukki ranges were conquered by Rajendra Chola I from the Ay-Chera kings apparently to gain hold of the spices production centres and the arterial trade route traversing through the region. The early historic antecedents of spices trade in the region can be inferred from the Roman hoards reported from Nedumkandam, Idamakuduru and Poonjar, all located in Idukki district of Kerala.

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ON DRAVIDIAN POETICS

> *māyōn mēya kāṭuṟai ulakavum*
> *cēyōn mēya maivarai ulakavum*
> *vēntan mēya tīm puṉal ulakavum*
> *varuṇaṉ mēya perumaṇal ulakavum*
> *mullai kuṟiñci marutam neytal eṉa*
> *ccolliya muṟaiyāṉ collavum paṭumē*

(Poruḷ - Sūtram 5)

Mullai (forest region), *kuṟiñci* (dark hilly region), *marutam* (riverine region) and *neytal* (sandy region) are the *tiṇai*-s (poetic land divisions) on which Tolkāppiyar constructed his poetic theories

which are unique in the world of poetics. In *Poruḷatikāram*, the third part of *Tolkāppiyam*, the great Tolkāppiyar elucidated his vision on the role of surrounding geographical nature on the aesthetic conscience of the human mind, particularly in poetic theme. In his descriptions, he stressed more on the poetic theme rather than on the form. He divided the poetic theme into

two groups - *puṟam* (exterior) and *akam* (interior). The elaborate discussions followed in *Poruḷatikāram* underline the fact that every human action is an art which is deeply rooted in geographical and climatical sensibility of nature. Tolkāppiyar developed *tiṇai* concept by analyzing Sangam songs.

Poruḷatikāram contains nine divisions or chapters - *akattiṇaiyiyal, puṟattiṇaiyiyal, kaḷaviyal, karpiyal, poruḷiyal, meyppāṭṭiyal, uvamaiyiyal, ceyyuḷiyal* and *marapiyal*. Each of them deals with the following aspects:

akattiṇaiyiyal: general theory of mind (*akam*) theme; through 58 *sūtrā*-s, he explains it.

puṟattiṇaiyiyal: *puṟam* theme; 29 *sūtrā*-s in this division.

kaḷaviyal: poetic situations; 50 *sūtrā*-s.

karpiyal: pre-marital and marital stages of *akam* theme; 52 *sūtrā*-s.

poruḷiyal: *akam* theme which was unfit; techniques and moods of expression; 49 *sūtrā*-s.

meyppāṭṭiyal: deals with the theory of *meyppāṭṭu* i.e., rasam.

uvamaiyiyal: deals with simile; definition; varieties; 37 *sūtrā*-s.

ceyyuḷiyal: description of various verse forms and the structure of a poem; 234 *sūtrā*-s.

marapiyal: deals with the traditional usage of words; 111 *sūtrā*-s.

It was in 1920 that *Tolkāppiyam* became part of the syllabus of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in Tamil language and literature. For a long period, studies on *Tolkāppiyam* centered around *Eḻuttatikāram* and *Collatikāram* only. P.S. Subrahmanya Sastri was the first scholar who attempted a detailed study on *Poruḷatikāram*. It appeared in three volumes in 1949, 1952 and 1956 respectively. He called his work as *Tamil Poetics* instead of *Poruḷatikāram*. Sastri's *Tamil Poetics* proved that the Dravidians had a strong literary vision in the world of poetics. For a long period, Indian poetics was centered on Sanskrit rhetorical works. Nobody was bothered about poetics other than Sanskrit or Western literary criticism. T.P. Meenakshisundaram published a book on *Dravidian Poetics* in 1961. His dissertation was on *Poetics in Tolkāppiyam*. Following the path paved by T.P. Meenakshisundaram, T.S. Natarajan (1974), Sundara Moorthy (1975), Arunachalam (1975), Periyakaruppan (1976) and Kadir Mahadevan (1977) bestowed new light on Dravidian poetics. Indira Manuel's *Literary Theories in Tamil* appeared in 1997. In 2010, L. Gloria Sundaramathy and Indira Manuel published *Tolkāppiyam - Poruḷatikāram* in English with a critical study of poetics depicted in *Poruḷatikāram*.

[To be continued]
Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan

INDUS SCRIPT DECIPHERMENT – A NEW APPROACH

Ronojoy Adhikari of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Satish Palaniappan of Sri Sivasubramaniya Nadar College of Engineering have developed a 'deep-learning' algorithm that can read the Indus script from images of artefacts such as a seal or pottery that contain Indus writing. Scanning the image, the algorithm smartly recognizes the region of the image that contains the script, breaks it up into individual graphemes and finally identifies these using data from a standard corpus. It is hoped that the algorithm may be of great help to decipher the Indus script.

[**Courtesy:** *The Hindu*, 12.3.2017]