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46th ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS & INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM on Linguistic Ecology & Language Technology (21-23 June 2018, Jadavpur University, Kolkata)

REPORT

(Continued from the last issue)

The post-inaugural session on the first day of the conference, 21st June 2018, commenced with *Prof. V.I. Subramoniam Memorial Lecture*.

Prof. G.K. Panikkar, former Professor of Linguistics, University of Kerala and Hon. Director, International School of Dravidian Linguistics chaired the session. He highlighted the contributions of Prof. V.I.S. as an academician, as an administrator and as an institution-builder. Prof. V.I.S. was one of the topmost Dravidian linguists respected both in India and abroad. The Chairman then introduced Prof. Arun Ghosh, Professor of Bengali, former ICCR Tagore Chair, Georg-August University, Goettingen, Germany and former Visiting Scientist, Department of Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany.

After the introductory remarks, Prof. Arun Ghosh delivered *Prof. V.I. Subramoniam Memorial Lecture* titled *Case, Agreement and Argument-marking in Munda*. His lecture highlighted the agreement pattern and argument-marking in Munda, drawing data from twelve languages from the Munda group. While dealing with the agreement phenomenon, an attempt has been made to revisit the controversy regarding whether the markers on the verb involving agreement could really be called so. The areas of enquiry also cover argument-marking beyond agreement and how those are lexically marked as also like featured arguments and entailment thereof in some of the languages. His data from different Munda languages showed varying patterns of agreement and argument-marking and thereby making a decision between

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the North, represented by Santali, Mundari, Ho, Birhor and Korku and the South Munda group represented by Sora, Gorum, Gutob, Remo and Gta with flip-flops with the intermediary Kharia and Juang. While the verb agreement of the subject, object and indirect object sometimes even possessor object is elaborate in the North group, especially Santali and Mundari, it is minimum in the South group, agreement being restricted to subject uniformly. Of the South Munda languages, Gorum differs from the other languages of the southern group by triggering direct object and indirect object agreement on the verb. In other languages like Sora, Kharia, Juang, Remo, Gutob and Gta, direct object and indirect object are lexically marked in the sentence with oblique marker. The experiencer as subject controls agreement in the verbs in Santali, Mundari and Kharia and as object controls agreement in Santali, Mundari, Kharia and Gorum. Unlike subject, the object controls agreement on the verb in Korku.

Concluding his presentation, Prof. Ghosh examines agreement, argument-marking and encoding of goal from a Munda perspective. The languages do not always show agreement in the verb. In Santali and Mundari, S, DO, IO consistently trigger agreement in the verb; the remaining languages trigger agreement in some argument like S and with lexical marking in the other. S agreement is a common phenomenon except Korku. It was found that recipient and directional-locational goals receive the same encoding in all the Munda languages.

The next programme was the keynote address of the International Symposium on *Linguistic Ecology and Language Technology*. It was delivered in the same session by Prof. George van Driem, University of Bern. Prof. G.K. Panikkar, Chairman of the session, introduced him to the delegates. Prof. George van Driem delivered his address titled *The Dravidian Language Family: A Reconstruction based on Language and Genes*.

From his speech: "With over three hundred million speakers, the nineteen languages of the Dravidian language family make up one of the largest and most important language families on our planet. The Dravidian linguistic area extends from the eastern foothills of the Himalayas (Kurukh, Malto) up to Baluchistan in the west (Brahui) and down to Cape Comorin and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the South (Tamil). The four major Dravidian languages each have their own script and ancient epigraphic and literary traditions i.e., Tamil since the 3rd Century B.C., Kannada since the 5th Century A.D, Telugu since the 11th Century and Malayalam since the 12th Century. The geographical distinction and the relative chronology of branching of the family permit interferences about the dispersal and likely geographic origin of this language family.

Twenty years ago, it was observed that the global geography of language families often corresponds neatly with the distribution of the Y chromosomal

markers. The ubiquitous albeit not universal correlation of paternal lineages with the geographical distributions of language families suggested that a subset of the paternal ancestors of many language communities also happened to represent the linguistic ancestors of these populations. Population genetic studies of Eurasia and the Indian subcontinent have enabled us to identify a particular *y* chromosomal haplo group that may function as the tracer for linguistic dispersal of ancient Dravidian populations. Data from both historical linguistics and population genetics enable us to present one possible reconstruction of the founding dispersal of the Dravidian language family.” This session was concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Atanu Saha, School of Languages and Linguistics, Jadavpur University.

[To be continued]

R.R. Thampuran

SOME REMARKS ON THE TAMIL TRILL

Abstract

The trill [r] is part of the consonant inventory of Tamil and this paper shows that it is phonologically interesting in three ways. Firstly, the trill is a long segment. This claim is supported by the fact that [r] does not occur in word-initial onsets, where only one (short) segment is allowed in Tamil. It is also evident from the fact that no consonant ever precedes the trill, while voiceless stops are allowed before other rhotic segments, in the coda of a Tamil syllable.

Secondly, the trill is non-moraic despite being long. Evidence in support of this claim is supplied by the fact that a long vowel may be followed by the trill in Tamil. If the trill were moraic, it would not be allowed to follow long vowels, because a long vowel plus the trill would

would make for a trimoraic syllable. Trimoraic syllables are banned in Tamil (like in many other languages), however, as underscored by the absence of sonorant geminates, which are moraic in the language, after long vowels.

Thirdly, an underlying sequence of two trills comes out as [r̥r̥] rather than [rr̥], a fact endorsed by the Tamil orthography. The explanation for the emergence of underlying /rr̥/ as [r̥r̥] may be found in independently validated maximality restrictions on the onset and coda in Tamil.

Keywords: Tamil phonology, trill, length, moras, syllables, quantitative constraints.

Introduction

Tamil has three rhotic segments, all of which are produced in the coronal region.¹ These are the approximant [ɹ], the tap [ɾ] and the trill [r̥].² Of the three, the trill is an interesting object for phonological study because of three factors.

The first factor, discussed in section 1, is that [r̥] is a long segment even though it is generally not perceived as a *geminate*. The length of [r̥] is supported both by the non-occurrence of [r̥] in word-initial onsets, which have space only for one segment, and the ban on any segment after [r̥] in the coda, which accommodates two segments.

The second, deliberated in section 2, is that [r̥] though long is non-moraic, unlike the sonorant geminates in Tamil. That the trill is non-moraic is evidenced by the fact that it is allowed after long vowels, while sonorant geminates, which are moraic, are not.

The third factor is that an input sequence of two trills makes it to the surface as [r̥r̥], and section 3 shows that this metamorphosis of the

MAPPILA DIALECT OF MALABAR, G.K. Panikkar, 2017, HB, Demy 1/8, pp. xlii + 534, Rs. 750/- (US\$ 75/-). **THOUGHTS ON DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS**, G.K. Panikkar (Ed.), 2017, PB, Demy 1/8, pp. 312, Rs. 450/- (US\$ 45/-). **EŽUTTACCAN AND HIS AGE**, Chelnat Achyuta Menon, 2017, PB, Demy 1/8, pp. xvi + 198, Rs. 250/- (US\$ 25/-). **INDO-ARYAN LOAN-WORDS IN MALAYĀLAM**, K. Godavarma, 2017, PB, Demy 1/8, pp. xii + 252, Rs. 300/- (US\$ 30/-).

initial part of /rr/ into a voiceless retroflex stop follows from the interaction of independently corroborated maximality constraints that hold sway over the onset and the coda in Tamil.

A short conclusion to the paper follows in section 4.

1. Length of [r] in Tamil

Traditional descriptions of Tamil phonology have it that the segment represented by [r] in this paper is longer than the other rhotic consonants in the inventory. This phonetic property has a phonological manifestation in that [r] is not allowed to begin a word in Tamil.

A feature of Tamil phonology is the absence of word-initial consonant clusters (at least in native Tamil vocabulary), which makes it clear that the word-initial onset in the language allows a maximum of one segment. The one segment of space would be enough for [r] if it were short i.e., monosegmental. The absence of [r] as a word-initial consonant may, therefore, be taken to suggest that it is long i.e. bi-segmental. This suggestion is weak at best, however, because the other two rhotics, [ɹ] and [ɻ], also do not occur word-initially in Tamil. Their non-occurrence in word-initial position cannot be attributed to length because approximants and taps are, by their very nature, short.

Fortunately, a second piece of evidence settles the issue and shows that [r] has to be considered long, following the traditional descriptions mentioned earlier. It concerns the coda of Tamil syllables, where segmental sequences involving a rhotic approximant or tap and a (tautosyllabic) voiceless stop are common, as seen from (1):

(1) Bi-segmental coda in Tamil

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. r-plus-stop | b. ɹ-plus-stop |
| i. <i>ti: rɸ .pɸ</i> 'judgment' | i. <i>ta:ɹ p.p a: </i> 'latch' |
| ii. <i>se:r k.k ai</i> 'admissions' | ii. <i>ʊa: ɻk .kaj</i> 'life' |

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| iii. <i>sar c.c aj</i> 'controversy' | iii. <i>vi: ɹc .ci</i> 'fall' |
| iv. <i>a ɹt .tam</i> 'meaning' | iv. <i>ʊa: ɹt .tɨ</i> 'wish' |

When [r] occupies the coda, however, it is never followed by a (tautosyllabic) consonant. This should be clear from (2) where the post-trill stops are single and belong to the syllable following the trill, as opposed to those in (1) which are geminated and are, therefore, split between the syllable containing the rhotic segment and the following one.

(2) Coda with trill in Tamil

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. <i>me: r.k ɸ</i> 'west' | c. <i>te r.k ɸ</i> 'east' |
| b. <i>so r.p am</i> 'meagre' | d. <i>ka r.p a.naj</i> 'imagination' |

The fact that [r] and [ɹ] may be followed by a tautosyllabic stop indicates that the Tamil coda can accommodate at least two segments. In fact, it allows no more than two segments, as indicated by the absence of tri-consonantal coda clusters in the language. In this milieu, [r] would take up only one segment's worth of space if it were short like the other two rhotic sounds, allowing another consonant to follow it. The absence of tautosyllabic consonants after coda [r] must therefore be taken to indicate that the trill itself is long and occupies the coda-space meant for two segments, leaving no room for another consonant.

If the Tamil [r] is long, as argued above, one would expect it to be moraic, like the sonorant geminates, which are also long. Section 2, however, shows that it is non-moraic, which means that phonological length does not automatically translate into moras, even within the same language.

2. Non-moraic [r]

The Tamil trill is interesting when it is viewed with respect to two well-known positions on the assignment of moras to consonants. The first, an early claim, is that

geminate are universally moraic, while short (coda) consonants are parameterised to receive moras in some languages (Hayes 1989). The second is that sonorants (sonorant consonants and vowels) may be moraic in languages where obstruents are not (Zec 1995). Both these positions are endorsed in Tamil, where sonorant geminates are moraic, along with vowels, but other consonants are non-moraic.

One would expect [r] to be moraic as well in the aforementioned setting because it is long like the sonorant geminates. It is non-moraic, however, and serves to show that consonant length does not automatically translate into moras (Tranel 1991), even within the same language and among the same type of consonants i.e., sonorants. Moreover, a single type of evidence helps to establish both the moraic status of sonorant geminates and the non-moraic status of [r].

The evidence concerns the distribution of sonorant consonants after long vowels in Tamil, where a singleton sonorant may follow a long vowel, as seen in (3a), but a geminated sonorant may not (3b). It is worth pointing out here that the rhotic consonants [r, ɽ, r̥] and the nasals [ŋ, ɲ] never appear as geminates in Tamil, and not just after long vowels.

(3) Sonorant codas in Tamil

a. V:son	b. *V:son _i son _i
i. s/a:m .bal 'ashes'	C* V:m.m ...
ii. g/a:n .dam 'magnet'	C* V:n.n ...
iii. m u:ŋ .gil 'bamboo'	C* V:ŋ.ŋ ...
iv. k/a:ŋ .ʃi 'Kanchipuram'	C* V:ŋ.ŋ ...
v. a:ŋ .maj 'masculinity'	C* V:ŋ.ŋ ...
vi. s/a:l .ʊaj 'shawl'	C* V:l.l ...
vii. k/e:l .ʊi 'question'	C* V:l.l ...
viii. p/o:r .ʊaj 'blanket'	C* V:r.r ...

TO THE ATTENTION OF ALL DLA MEMBERS

The *DLA News* may have to be sent only through email to the members. Hence, please be kind enough to inform your email address if not already sent to us.

Editor

viii. p/o:r .ʊaj 'blanket'	C* V:r.r ...
ix. s u:ɽ .ci 'intrigue, conspiracy'	C* V:ɽ.ɽ ...
x. e:r .pa:ɽi 'arrangement'	C* V:r.r ...
xi. t u:j .maj 'cleanliness, purity'	C* V:j.j ...

(Legend: C – consonant, V – long vowel, son – sonorant, * – not attested)

While geminated sonorants are not allowed after long vowels, they occur, without restriction, after short vowels, as shown in (4).

(4) Geminated sonorants after short vowels

a. bom.maj 'doll'	b. kam.mal 'earring'
c. kan.ni 'maiden'	d. man.ni 'sister-in-law'
e. ʊaŋ.ŋam 'colour'	f. kiŋ.ŋam 'small cup'
g. pal.li 'lizard'	h. tol.laj 'worry'
i. ʊe.l.laj 'white'	i. pi.l.laj 'child'
k. taj.jal 'tailoring'	l. goj.ja: 'guava'

¹ The distinction between the trill and the tap having all but disappeared in spoken varieties of Tamil, the discussion in this paper centres around the [r] in the diglossic high variety of Tamil used only in formal contexts.

² The exact place of articulation of these segments within the coronal region is not critical to the concerns of the paper. Hence the use of the 'default' symbols for the tap and the trill, which represent alveolar rhotics in the IPA.

[To be continued]

Srinivas S. & Ramesh Krishnamoorthy

PROJECT FELLOW IN DRAVIDIAN UNIVERSITY

The Dravidian University, Kuppam (Andhra Pradesh) has invited applications from eligible candidates for one Project Fellow under the UGC Special Assistance Programme (SAP) to carry out a project on *Language Documentation* involving extensive fieldwork. Eligible candidates may apply with detailed resume so as to reach Prof. Ganesan Ambedkar, Coordinator, UGC SAP-DRS-1, Head, Department of Dravidian & Computational Linguistics, Dravidian University, Kuppam – 517 426 by email (ganesanambedkar@gmail.com) or by post on or before **23rd August 2018**. For further details, please contact Prof. Ambedkar at 919490736166.

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HEARTFELT CONDOLENCE ON THE DEMISE OF M. KARUNANIDHI



Apart from being a giant in Indian politics opening a new path to the Dravidian dominance in Tamil Nadu and emerging as an indomitable force in the making and unmaking of Ministries at the Centre, M. Karunanidhi stands supreme as a man of letters and patron of arts and literature. The title given to him as *Kalaignar* signifies his role in the realms of arts, culture and literature. He patronized Tamil language giving it his mother's status. Being a patron of his mother tongue, he encouraged all the linguistic and cultural enquiries related to it. The International School of Dravidian Linguistics has been always blessed with his love and patronage. In his demise, the Institute has lost a great man who was deeply associated with it. The Director, staff and research fellows express their deep condolences in his demise and share the sorrows of his family members and well-wishers.

T. Jamal Mohammed

Prof. Joseph Mundassery Award to Dr. Puthussery Ramachandran

Prof. Puthussery Ramachandran, Founding Secretary of the Dravidian Linguistics Association and the International School of Dravidian Linguistics has been selected for this year's *Prof. Joseph Mundassery Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award* for his outstanding contributions in the fields of literature and culture. The Minister for Culture, Government of Kerala, Sri. A.K. Balan presented the award which carries a cash prize of Rs. 50,000/- and a citation, at a function held in Thiruvananthapuram. The DLA and ISDL

congratulate Prof. Puthussery Ramachandran on his achievement.

Bindu R.B.

CIIL DIRECTOR'S VISIT TO ISDL

Prof. Rao, the Director of Central Institute of Indian Languages and Prof. L. Ramamurthy have visited the ISDL campus on 8th August 2018. They had a detailed discussion with Prof. Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan, Director, International School of Dravidian Linguistics and the research fellows and staff of ISDL. They also visited the library, publications wing and computer unit of the ISDL.

ISDL RESEARCH FORUM

LIST OF PAPERS PRESENTED IN JULY 2018

- 4.7.2018: *Use of Pregnant Cow Urine for Androgenic Atropecia in Medieval India* Dr. V.N. Bhattathiri
11.7.2018: *Thekkan Pāṭṭiḷe Oravalōkanam* Mr. Arun Sundar
25.7.2018: *The Reconstruction of Malayalam Phonemes based on the Data available from the Early Foreign Notes on Kerala (Part I)* Prof. Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan

NEW LIFE-MEMBERS OF DLA

(July 2018)

1. **Dr. Nanthiyath Gopalakrishnan** (*Membership No. 1336/2018*)
IRA 72A, "Nanthiyath Bhavanam", Inchippulluvila, Pappanamcode, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
2. **Mr. K. Denish Raja Durai** (*Membership No. 1337/2018*)
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3. **Dr. S. Balasundari** (*Membership No. 1338/2018*)
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