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THE STRUCTURE OF POSTPOSITIONS IN MODERN TAMIL

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Abstract

The use of postpositions as an extension or alternative mode of case marking is prevalent since early times. Some of the traditional grammarians of Tamil have noticed this fact. However, the recognition of postposition as a distinct grammatical category started only with the European missionary grammarians who worked on Tamil grammar and the study gained momentum during the latter part of the twentieth century when a few linguists attempted for a detailed analysis of postpositions. In the above light, an attempt is made in this article to examine the post positions of Modern Tamil.

(**Keywords**: argument, case system, adposition, postposition, Grammaticalization, inflectional markers).

Introduction

In Tamil the case system is found to be rich with both the inflectional marking and use of postpositions. There are two layers of case marking elements in Tamil namely, inflectional case and postpositions. In modern written Tamil, *-ai*, *-āl*, *-ōṭu*, *-ku*, *-atu* and *-il* constitute the inflectional case system and they respectively denote accusative, instrumental, associative, dative, genitive and locative functions. Nominative does not involve inflection and the noun or pronoun is used as such in its original