A linguistic study of Vīracōḻiyam

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Abstract

Vīracōḻiyam is a grammatical treatise which was written in the 11ᵗʰ century A.D. This is the sole text that helps us to understand about the usage of Tamil, poetic language and the vernacular since after *Tolkāppiyam* and many linguistic features that are presented in *Tolkāppiyam* is not to be found in *Vīracōḻiyam*. *Tolkāppiyam* is rather extensive, where as, *Vīracōḻiyam* explains the five aspects of Tamil grammar in a compressed form. Since the formulas have composed very consisely, it's rather not easy to understand them. The author of this grammar, imported a number of Sanskrit grammatical structures and lexical items in order to explain Tamil grammar. Thus most of the Tamil grammarians ignore this grammar, considering it as a text which has given black mark to the Tamil grammatical tradition , as it stands out demonstrating the old Tamil grammatical tradition, i.e., Tolkāppiyam tradition. However as *Vīracōḻiyam* appears to be a grammar which yields linguistic mine and helps scholars to approach the social, historical and linguistic views of the medieval period. This dissertation presents the results of research seeking to establish the language contact between Tamil and Sanskrit and to determine which features of *Vīracōḻiyam* that have arisen as it is leaning on Sanskrit grammatical tradition in a great extant. The research dealt so far have been made a thorough study on the linguistics study of *Vīracōḻiyam*. Introduction to *Vīracōḻiyam*, socio political, cultural and linguistic environment of the medieval period Phonology and Morphology as presented in *Vīracōḻiyam* are examined in some detail Moreover, meta language of *Vīracōḻiyam* unfolds interesting observations on language change which would be relevance to understand the Maṇippiravāla style. This study is more biased to descriptive method. According to the method of textual criticism, there are different editions of *Vīracōḻiyam* have employed in this research.

Keywords: Medieval Tamil grammatical tradition, Meta language, Manippiravāḷa style, textual criticism, Mutual linguistic environment.

1. Introduction

Vīracōḻiyam is one of the major treatises on Tamil Grammar, prosody and poetics. Chronologically *Vīracōḻiyam* is the second grammar belonging to the classical Tamil Grammatical tradition, with *Tolkāppiyam* as its sole extant antecedent. *Akattiyam* is supposed to be the earliest Tamil grammar. However it is not available as a unified text, only some of its *sūtras* being retrieved from later commentaries.

The period to which the *Vīracōḻiyam* belongs witnessed a very heavy incidence of Sanskrit loan words into Tamil. This heavy influx of Sanskrit loan words has given rise to the development of a new literary style called *maṇippiravāḷam.*

Vīracōḻiyam is the earliest text to provide a Tamil definition of this new style with reference to poetry. It runs as follows:

"*Vaṭamoḻiyum teṉmoḻiyum pōṉra iru moḻiccorkaḷ viravi varum naṭay"* (V.C.180)

'A kind of style in which words of two languages like Sanskrit and a vernacular are mixed.'

This style is distinct from what is called *viraviyal* mixture which contains words where letters peculiar to Sanskrit are interspersed with Tamil. *Vīraviyal* or the mixture style is defined in the *Vīracōḻiyam* as follws:
"iṭaiyē vaṭaveḻuttu eytil viraviyal" (v.c.180)

"When Sanskrit letters are interspersed, it is known as viraviyal (mixture)."
The author of the *Vīracōḻiyam* takes serious note of the composite nature of the Tamil Language as prevalent during his time. He also makes some random observations on certain dialectal variations which he ascribes to the usage of uneducated people living on the borders of the *Kāveri* river and instructs the reader to recognize them and to be careful not to use such aberrations in their literary compositions. As an instance he refers to the confusion between <ḻ>/<ḷ> and < l > which leads to semantic misinterpretation and specifies the correct orthographical distribution of the said alphabetic symbols.[69]

The author also points out certain colloquialisms which need to be ascertained from worldly usage and must be avoided in literary composition. This would also point to a kind of diglossia situation that would have been prevalent at the time.

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[69] Vīracōḻiyam. verse no - 82 (p.86)

Referring back to the *maṇippiravāḷa* style, it has to be mentioned that this style became a standard style for Tamil vaiṣṇava and Jain prose commentaries in the twelfth through fifteenth centuries. However, it is noteworthy that the Vīracōḻiyam seems to assume both viraviyal naṭai 'mixture style' and maṇippiravāḷa naṭai 'rubies and coral style' to be poetic forms alone; thus overlooking its occurrence also in prose.

The author has also made some comments on the inscriptional Tamil of the period. When we consider cases, for instance, A. Vēluppillai observes as follows:

" In the author's study of the language of inscriptional Tamil before Vīracoozhiyam, there were two examples with -aan while there were twelve examples with -aaḷ. The language of the Tamil inscriptions after Vīracoozhiyam, was more positive in that there were twelve examples with -aaḷ while there was no example with -aan. While Tholkāppiyam mentions -in as the fifth case suffix, Vīracoozhiyam mentions -il as the suffix for that case. In the inscriptions before Vīracoozhiyam, there were six examples with -in and seven examples with -il. In the inscriptions after Viiracoozhiyam, there were Five examples with -in and eleven examples with -il. Thus the case signs mentioned by vīracoozhiyam, are the ones frequently met with in the inscriptions."70

A close study of the whole text reveals a unique feature of this grammar as compared with its predecessor Tolkāppiyam. The whole text runs in the form of a discourse in verse form which is seemingly addressed to a lady as evinced from some of the following terminal expressions for instance,

vāṇutalē	- oh lady of bright forehead
tāḻkuḻalē	- oh lady of flowing hair
āyiḻaiyē	- oh lady of choice ornaments
paṇimoḻiyē	- oh lady speaking sweet word
paintoṭiyē	- oh lady weaving golden bangles
viḷankiḷaiyē	- oh lady wearing bright jewels
tē moḻiyē	- oh divine language/ oh sweet speeches one
tūmoḻiyē	- oh pure language/ oh lady of pure speech
vāimoḻiyē	- oh true language/ oh lady of true speech

The entire text is thus invested with a poetic garb which seems to be due to the influence of *Kaṇṇaṭa* grammar called '*chhandōmbudhi′* written by Nāgavarman in 990 A.D. in which we can find the same style, i.e, address to a lady. (makaṭū muṉṉilai)71

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70 "Vīracōḻiyam as a grammar of inscriptional Tamil" (P.343)
71 Cōḻa Pērarasum Camaya Peru Neṟikaḷum (P.287)

The commentary points out that all these references are to a lady who was possibly the author's immediate addressee. This could also be interpreted as an anthropomorphic representation of Tamil language which is so often referred to several ways in the Tamil literary tradition.[72]

Considered as a whole it can be stated that the author has attempted to cover all the major varieties of the Tamil language, although his main focus was on the standard variety of literary Tamil, which he has sanctioned for use in literary composition.

Thus *Vīracōḻiyam* came thousand years after *Tolkāppiyam,* when the whole language situation and the approach to Tamil grammatical description had changed. The *Vīracōḻiyam* marks the beginning of a distinct trend in Tamil grammatical thought. Certainly in its treatment of poetic ornamentation, the *Vīracōḻiyam* is the first Tamil grammatical text to cite directly from sanskrit sources, in particular those of Daṇdin, an effort that anticipates the full Tamil rendition of the *Kāvyādarśa* a century or so later in the *Taṇtialaṅkāram*. As mentioned previously, the *Vīracōḻiyam* is the first Tamil text to expand the treatment of poetic content into three discrete topics of theme, metrics and ornamentation[73] However the Vīracōḻiyam is not without its critics. For example Nāchimuttu states:

"He (Puttamittiranār) was taken over by the Saskrit models and failed to discriminate the basic taxonomic difference between the two languages. He is under the notion that Sanskrit is the mother of Tamil. Perhaps under the influence of active bilingualism and the lot of convergence that have taken place between Tamil and Sanskrit and the power Sanskrit had achieved over the years would have misled him. Even though he has approached the Tamil grammar with a completely Sanskrit model explicitly, *(cf. Vaṭanuul marapum pukanrukontee-Kariakai 2)* he could only synthesize it with the Tamil approach of Five-fold grammar retaining the feature of literary critical theories like the poruḷ, aṇi and yāppu. This work according to Tamil traditional grammatical view point is a perversion or a blemished one *(citaivu)* and according to the view of Pērāciriyar, it is a spoilt work which is mixing up the description of Sanskrit and Tamil (Tol. Porul, marapiyal III. Pērāciriyar commentary: Mayankak KuuRal ennum citaivu)[74].

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[72] tēṉ tamiḻ - Sweet Tamil (Tamil which is sweet like honey)
    kaṉṉittamiḻ - virgin Tamil
    taṇ tamiḻ - cool or graceful Tamil
    oṇ tamiḻ - beautiful/ glorious/ excellent Tamil
    vaṇ tamiḻ - prosperous Tamil
    naṟṟamiḻ - good Tamil

[73] "Imagining a place for Buddhism'. Literary culture and Religious community in Tamil speaking South India. (P.119)

[74] Negotiating Tamil-Sanskrit Contacts: Engagements by Tamil Grammarians (P.4)

The authorship, date and the structure of *Vīracōḻiyam* are worth mentioning here.

The authorship of *Vīracōḻiyam* is attributed to Puttamittira(nār)n who is supposed to have been a Buddhist scholar[75] belonging to the *Mahāyāna* school of thought.[76]

The following reference in the text attests this fact
"āyuŋ kuṇatava lōkitan pakka lakattiyan
kēṭṭēyum puvaṉik kiyampiya taṇṭamiḻiṅk uraikka"

(Vīracōḻiyam - 2)

(I will explain here the beautiful Tamil that was uttered for the sake of the world (i.e, Pepole) and heard by Akattiyan).

Puttamittiranār states in the above verse, that Akattiyan, considered as the founder of the Tamil grammatical tradition, learnt Tamil from Avalōkitan[77] and then later constructed a Tamil grammar.

This grammar generally referred to in classical Tamil literature as *Akattiyam* is however not available now. Nevertheless it must be noted that there is an alternate tradition which mentions that Akattiyan learnt Tamil from lord Śiva and then later formulated his grammar.[78]

Akattiyan thus affirms its Hindu origin, as against the Buddhist origin attributed to the Tamil grammatical tradition in *Vīracōḻiyam*. The inference that a Tamil grammar called *Akattiyam* pre-existed is based on some *sūtras* (grammatical rules) that occur in later works which are ascribed to *Akattiyam* by the commentators. Some of these *sūtras* have been retrieved but no systematic codification of them has been done.

Puttamittiran (lit. friend of the Buddha) who was a Buddhist scholar has strongly upheld the view that Tamil grammar owes its origin to the Buddhist tradition. This is revealed by the following statement made in *Vīracōḻiyam*.

"I Puttamittiran from Ponpaṟṟi having kept the foot of the pure one (Buddha) who sits under the Bō tree on my head and I am going to sing it in Tamil language." *(Vīracōḻiyam-1)*

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[75] Vīracōḻiyam verse 2 (p.1)

[76] Vīracōḻiyam verse 2 (p.1)

[77] Avalōkitan is one of the Bōdhisatvas, i.e. aspirant to Buddhahood, according to the Mahāyana tradition. Bhōtalaka (In Tamil: *Potikay*) mountain is the place of residence of Avalōkitiśwar who was endowed with all the supreme qualities.

[78] Lexicon of Tamil literature (P.14)

Peruntēvanār (1120-1133), himself a Buddhist scholar who is considered as a disciple or close friend of Puttamittiranār, has written a commentary on the *Vīracōḻiyam.*

The date of the *Vīracōḻiyam* hinges to some extent on the identification of the author and king Vīrarājēntira Cōḻan who was his patron. It has been widely accepted that this treatise is assignable to the 11th century A.D. (1063-1069/70)[79] This text is named after king Vīrarājēntira Cōḻan in admiration of him as mentioned in the following lines.

> "tē mēviya tonkal tēr Vīracōḻan tiruppeyarāl
> Pūmēl uraippan
> > (Vīracōḻiyam-3)

(On the auspicious name of *Vīracōḻian* (whose chariot is decorated by tassel); I will explain this treatise for the sake of the world)

It becomes clear from these that Puttamittiranār, The author of *Vīracōḻiyam* was a contemporary of king Vīrarājēntira Cōḻan. The title of the text *Vīracōḻiyam* is an abbreviation of *Vīrarājēntiran* and *Cōḻiyan* giving *Vīracōḻiyan.* When the word *Vīracōḻiyan* is turned into an inanimate noun form it yields the form *Vīracōḻiyam* which the author has used for naming his grammar.

Vīracōḻiyam consists of a total number of 184 verses including the three - verse preamble *(pāyiram).* All these verses are composed in *kaṭṭaḷaik kalittuṟay* (a metrical form with sixteen or seventeen syllables).[80] This verse form has been favoured by Tamil devotional poets from the sixth century *Śaiva* poetess Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār to the celebrated fifteenth century devotee of Murukan, Aruṇakirinātar.[81]

Although it is a grammatical treatise, the author would have selected this metre to enhance its poetic form. The whole text is divided into five chapters called *atikāram* (Sanskrit *adhikāra*). Each chapter is further divided into subsections *paṭalam* (Sanskrit *paṭala*) as follows.

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[79] Lexicon of Tamil Literature (P.772)

[80] WWW. Tamilvu.org > diploma > html

    கட்டளைக்கலித்துறையின் இலக்கணமாவது,
1. நெடிலடி நான்காய் வரும்.
2. முதல் நான்கு சீர்களிடையில் வெண்டளை அமையும்.
3. ஐந்தாம் சீர் விளாங்காய்ச் சீராகவே முடியும்.
4. அடியின் முதல் சீர் நேரசையில் தொடங்கினால் ஒற்று நீங்க 16 எழுத்தும் நிரையசையில் தொடங்கினால் ஒற்று நீங்க 17 எழுத்தும் வரும்.
5. ஈற்றடியின் இறுதிச்சீர் ஏகாரத்தில் முடியும்.

[81] Imagining a Place of Buddhism. Literary culture and Religious community in Tamil speaking South India. (P.117)

i. *Eḻuttatikāram*   - Chapter on orthography and phonology
a) *canti paṭalam (Sanskrit Sandhi)* - Sub-section on euphonic combination

ii. *Collatikāram* - Chapter on Morphology.
a) *vēṟṟumay paṭalam* : Sub-section on cases.
b) *upakāraka paṭalam(Sanskrit-upakāraka or kāraka)*:Sub section on

the types of relationship between the noun and the action established by the verb.

       c) *tokay paṭalam* : Sub - section on compounds.
       d) *tattita (Sanskrit-taddhita) paṭalam* : Sub -section on nouns
          derived from other nouns, i.e, secondary nominal derivation.
       e) *tātu (Sanskrit-dhātu) paṭalam* : Sub - section on verbal roots.
       f) *Kiriyāpata (Sanskrit Kriyāpada) paṭalam* : Sub-section on finite
          verbs.
       iii. *Poruḻatikāram* : Chapter on meaning or poetic content.
       iv. *Yāppatikāram* : Chapter on metrics.
       V. *Alankāram* : Chapter on poetic embellishments[82]

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

Vīracōḻiyam combines the framework and vocabulary of the predecessor Tamil grammar *Tolkāppiyam*. However *Vīracōḻiyam* departs from *Tolkāppiyam* in many respects and draws heavily on Sanskrit grammatical terminology and concepts. Therefore, an analysis of the adequacy of these two different grammatical methods (i.e. Sanskrit grammatical method and the Tamil grammatical method) in handling by the author of *Vīracōḻiyam* is the purpose of this study.

The objectives of the study are to:

i. Analyze the linguistic method of *Vīracōḻiyam*.
ii. Investigate the influence of two different linguistic traditions, i.e, Tamil and Sanskrit on *Vīracōḻiyam*.
iii. Examine the reasons for a heavy usage of Sanskrit rules to explain the Tamil linguistic method in *Vīracōḻiyam*.
iv. Get a complete overview of the meta-language employed by the *Vīracōḻiyam's* author.
v. Identify similarities and differences between the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Vīracōḻiyam*.

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[82] The sub sections given above are as stated and provided by the editor of *Vīracōḻiyam* S. Kovintarāsamutaliyār. (p.xviii)

1.2 Research questions :

The following are the major research questions.

i) What kind of linguistic method existed in the Tamil linguistic tradition up to the *Vīracōḻiyam*?

ii) Why was it that Sanskrit had such a tremendous impact on the *Vīracōḻiyam*?

iii) How does the *Vīracōḻiyam* depart from the *Tolkāppiyam?*

1.3 Research problem

Is there any unique features in the linguistic method of the *Vīracōḻiyam*?

2.   Methodology

The methodology of this study consists of both qualitative and quantitative methods. However it is more biased to the qualitative method. The method of structural linguistics especially that of the American tradition as represented by Leonard Bloomfield, C.F. Hockett, Pike and Gleason has been used here in order to analyze several aspects of the language including phonology, morphology and syntactic relations of inflected nouns and verbs.

The edition of *Vīracōḻiyam* edited by K.R. Kovintarāsa Mutaliyār is mainly selected, which is generally considered as the standard edition of *Vīracōḻiyam* (1970). It also contains the standard commentary by Peruntēvanar. The researcher has also selected different editions of *Vīracōḻiyam* and follows the method of textual criticism as represented by S.M. Katre. Furthermore, the transliteration scheme followed here is that of the Tamil Lexicon.

3. Literature review

Published materials on the *Vīracōḻiyam* are sparse. Scholars from abroad and from the Indian mainland have worked on the *Vīracōḻiyam,* the results of whose research are mostly in English and some in Tamil.

The following are some research papers that concentrate on the *Vīracōḻiyam*.

A. Velupillai's paper on '*Vīracōḻiyam* as a grammar of inscriptional Tamil' (1968) reveals that *Vīracōḻiyam* employed literary Tamil and the spoken dialect for its subject matter. K. Meenakshi carried out a research on the 'Sanskrit grammars as model for writing Tamil grammars' in 1984. The aim of this paper is to study *Vīracōḻiyam* in order to evaluate the merits and disadvantages of adapting foreign models.

Krishnasamy Nachimuthu has presented a research paper in 2009 on the topic, 'Negotiating Tamil-Sanskrit contacts: Engagements by Tamil Grammarians'. This research paper deals not only with *Vīracōḻiyam* but also with the other Tamil grammatical treatises. The above mentioned research articles were written in English. In Tamil the following research articles on *Vīracōḻiyam* are noteworthy. S.V. Shanmugam has presented the following papers. 'Vīracōḻiyam - oru moḻiyiyal āyvu' (1980) in which the author deals with Vīracōḻiyam from a linguistic point of view. In the same year he completed a work on the phonology of the *Vīracōḻiyam* i.e; *eḻuttilakkaṇ kōṭpāṭu.* This paper greatly facilitated the analysis in the phonology portion of this research. N. kumaraswami Raja has written on the Sanskrit influence on *Vīracōḻiyam*; published in 1984. T.P. Meenakshisundaram presented a paper in 1974, on "Foreign model in Tamil grammar". This remains one of the most significant contributions on the *Vīracōḻiyam* to date.

As for research publications in this field, the following need to be mentioned. A.E. Monious "Imagining a place for Buddhism: Literary, Culture and Religious Community in Tamil speaking South India". published in 2001, which mainly deals with the significance of *Vīracōḻiyam* for understanding the Buddhist culture that prevailed in Tamil Nadu during the *Cōḻa* period. This work discusses few existing Tamil Buddhist works. i.e, *Maṇimēkalay* and *Vīracōḻiyam.*

S.V. Subramaniyam, *"Vīracōḻiyam oru tiṟanāyvu mūlamum karuttum"*

published in 1977, includes additional critical edition and gives commentatry in a concise form.

Finally, S. Rajaram's *Vīracōḻiya Ilakkaṇa koṭpāṭu* published in 1992 is worth mentioning. This book is a critical evaluation of the *Vīracōḻiyam* that covers several aspects of this treatise.This work was especially helpful for understanding the linguistic background of the Vīracōḻiyam*.

4.   Data anlysis and Discussion

Vīracōḻiyam points out many phonological changes that took place in the internal structure of the Tami language, which are not available in *Tolkāppiyam*. Firstly, it is the time when the world believes that it is not proper to mention the spoken usage, the author of *Vīracōḻiyam*, points out the correct orthography regarding ḷ, ḻ and l and he gives examples from common people usages and states one should use the correct usage and should omit the incorrect synthetic usage that violate the noble Tamil language. Here, author's some observations on the dialectal variation in Tamil language and Diaglossia and is elevated in Tamil as norm. Probably at that time there was a trend among the authors who were not well step in classical Tamil grammar to be rather free in their writing, ignoring some of the norms of the classical literary style which are accepted as authentic.

Another particular feature that can be found in the section on Phonology is that the author numbers the letter of the alphabet such as ḻ is known as sixteenth letter. Further, *Vīracōḻiyam* introduces *drutta* system (three morae) which is not available in *Tolkāppiyam*. When consonant clusters are considered ,*Vīracōḻiyam* newly explains the tri-consonant cluster. Where as T*olkāppiyam* states only about bi - consonantal cluster.

Vīracōḻiyam introduces several new rules regarding euphonic combinations which are not available in *Tolkāppiyam*. For instance,

If a standing word ends in i, ī or ai and the following word commences with n, the n becomes ñ

tī + naṉṟu - tīñaṉṟu

when the author points out the articulation forms regarding vocative case, he states that it has to be articulated under the accute accent (udāta) .This idea is direct Sanskrit impact and is not found in *Tolkāppiyam.*

However, sometimes the examples that are given by the author are incomplete. In some cases the author classes the examples together and sometimes the examples do not exactly confirm to the rule that has given by him. For instance,

vādyam - vāttiyam / vācciyam

when Tamilizes the above mentioned Sanskrit word, two changes occurred. one is 'd' becomes voiceless and i is inserted. Rule ends with this change. However, it goes further and states that palatalization took place. i.e., tt - cc which will be taken as substitution (ādēśa). However, according to those given rule, we cannot generate palatalization. such a case, should come under the loop hole. This drawback does not mean that this eminent scholar is unaware of it. He expects the students or readers to derive the formation of such forms by comparing them by the words that in the usage. one could carefully infer that here the author uses only the hint for a correct identification.

Finally, it can be drawn up a final statement of the Phonology in *Vīracōḻiyam* is that it deviates from *Tolkāppiyam* in several aspects and established new ideas.

Morphology was analysed under six sub titles, in *Vīracōḻiyam* i.e., *vēṟṟumai paṭalam, upakāraka paṭalam, tokai paṭalam, tattita paṭalam, tātu paṭalam and kriyapata paṭalam.*

Under *vēṟṟumai paṭalam* case terminations and inflections of noun, eight cases and sixty four kārakas were disussed.

Under *upakāraka paṭalam* how case suffixes are substituted in twenty three syntactic linkages were explained. *Tokai paṭalam* ela borately explored Tamil compounds as well as Sanskrit compounds. Under *tattita paṭalam*, the secondary nominal derivation and the suffixes that occur in the feminine noun were discussed.

Sub chapter on 'tātu' posed, how Tamil roots were formed and how Sanskrit roots are terminated with suffixes, Further, causative roots, infinitive forms, suffixes that indicating tenses, absolutists, negative and prohibited suffixes were discussed.

Under the sub chapter on 'verbs', verbal suffixes in three tenses and of the first, second and third person, Imperative suffixes, The manner in which a verb form ends with conjugated appellative participle, indefinite or finite and passivization were analysed.

Vīracōḻiyam reveals several morphological rules which are not available in *Tolkāppiyam*. The following rules are signficant that are explained by Puttamittirar. Firstly,

- Vīracōḻiyam sets up 'cu' as a *pratyaya* for the imperative singular. However, the imperative singular is simply unmarked in Tamil.

Secondly, the author introduces double causative markers and triple causative markers which are not available in *Tolkāppiyam*.

- Further, there is no mention on past tense markers in *Tolkāppiyam*. where as *Vīracōḻiyam* newly introduces past tense markers.

- Some feminine suffixes such as -atti and āṭṭi are not available in *Tolkāppiyam*. but are available in *Vīracōḻiyam*.
-Puttamittirar creates suffixes (such as cu, ar, ārkaḷ etc) for nominative case. According to the Tamil language nominative is the noun base itself and does not agree any suffixes.

-Finally, As in Sanskrit grammar, the author presents the verbal suffixes, such as tān, tāḷ, kiṟaṉ etc, which are rather difficult to separate the tense from the gender person and number. When we consider Tamil, it is agglutinative in nature where the tense can easily be separated from gender, person and number. The formation of these *pratyayas* is absent in Dravidian languages. This idea is totally new to the Tamil linguistic tradition.

Therefore, it is safe to state that the above mentioned peculiar facts give new aspects on the Morphology section of *Vīracōḻiyam*.

Moreover, it is noteworthy to discuss the Meta language of *Vīracōḻiyam*. Though after *Tolkāppiyam*, *Vīracōḻiyam* which preceded all the later grammars, it didn't occupy a prominent place in the Tamil grammatical tradition. When *Naṉṉūl* is considered it was written later than *Vīracōḻiyam*, and was given the priority to literary usage with the consideration of retention of so called correct usage in Tamil language. Because, during 13th - 14th century when this treatise was written *maṇippiravāḷa* style has reached its climax. During this time, it was felt that it was extremely necessary to write a grammar which is most prescriptive and delimit the mixture of the Sanskrit language. *Naṉṉūl* concerned on linguistic purism in order to protect the traditional grammatical tradition of Tamil language. Though in *Pataviyal* (The section on Morphology) he states about Tamilization of Sanskrit, the section on Morphology of *Naṉṉūl* did not stand as a barrier to the linguistic theory of *Tolkāppiyam* and did not take Sanskrit grammar as the model. whereas ,*Vīracōḻiyam* gave much importance to *maṇippiravāḷa* style. Thus, Tamil grammarians have not consider favorable this grammar in the manner that they have given higher regard to *Tolkāppiyam* or *Naṉṉūl* and there is an opinion among them that *Vīracōḻiyam* has given a black mark to Tamil grammar by super imposing the Sanskrit grammatical tradition as against the Tamil grammatical tradition.

In the *medieval* period , there were some facts that can be noticed. The great influence of Sanskrit on the literary Tamil which influenced a lot on the structure of Tamil literature, and there were many Sanskrit stories that were in usage became plot of the stories of most of the kāvyas (epics). Thus Puttamittirar points out in his grammar the change that took place in the internal structure of the Tamil language during the impact of Sanskrit. Any grammar that was written in a time period, must explain the language situation of that time. In that case, *Vīracōḻiyam* must be highly valued as a significant grammar which has explained the nature of the language at that time. Below given terms could give some ideas on the meta language of *Vīracōḻiyam.*

Word	Verse or Commentary No	Meaning
1. Akarumam (akramán)	64	intransitive
2. Acalam (acala)	40,41	immovable
3. Antam (ánta)	51	The dropping of the final of a word/end
4. Aṉurākam (anu - raga)	63	attachment, affection
5.atikāram (adhikāra)	1	Chapter, section of a book
6. alaṅkāram (alam-kāra)	63	the act of decorating, (in rhetoric) an
7.Avati (avadhi)	29	ablative case
8.Avati kārakam (avadhi karaka)	29	ablative case relations
9.Avviya pāva camācam(aviyayī bhāva samāsa)	45	compounds with indeclinables
10.Ākamam (āgama)	10	epenthesis (letter inserted in any part)
11.Ātecam (ādesa)	10	substitution
12.Ātāram (ādhāra)	29	locative case
13.Itarētaram (itaretara)		occurring chiefly in oblique cases of singular and in compound; perhaps for itaras –itara ex: noyo'onya, paraspara – one another one with another
14.Upakāram (upa -kāra)	63	help, assistance, benefit, favour
15.Upakārakam (upakāraka)	38	case relations
16.Ulōpam (lōpa)	10	elition (The dropping out of pratyays or affixes
17.Upasarkkam (upasarga)	63	*nipāta* or particle joined to a verb or noun denoting action, a preposition
18.utāttam(ud-dhata)	36	raised, turned up, lifted up
19.Ēka vacanam (ēka vacana)	32	singular
20.Ōṅkāram (óm-kāra)	63	The sacred and mystical syllable om
21.Kaṇṭam (gaṇṭa)	6	neck

22.Kaṉmatārayam (karmadhāraya)	45	class of *Tatpuruśa* compound (in which the members would stand in thesame case (samānâdhikaraṇa) if the compound were dissolved
23.Karumakkārakam (karmakāraka)	40,41	One who does any action/work (actor)
24.Karumam (karman	40,41	The object - it stands either in the accusative (in active construction) or in the nominative (in passive construction) or in the genitive (in connection with a noun of action
Karaṇam (karana)	29	Instrument

5. Conclusions

Vīracōḻiyam is unique for several reasons. Firstly, the *Vīracōḻiyam* itself occupies a unique position as the first ancient Tamil grammar written on the five traditional branches of Tamil language (i.e; *ayntu ilakkaṇam*). Unlike other treatises, *Vīracōḻiyam* takes into account the language changes of the specific period by explaining the differences between the literary Tamil and the spoken Tamil.

Secondly, when this valuable work existed only as an old manuscript, almost on the verge of disintegration, it was a scholar from Jaffna Rao. Bahadur C.W. Thāmōtharampillay; who published it in 1881. After that as far as researcher's knowledge no detailed study has been attempted on *Vīracōḻiyam* by any Sri Lankan Tamil scholars.

Thirdly, it is the only Tamil grammatical text written by a Buddhist scholar and it contains references to a number of now lost Tamil Buddhist works. Some scholars believe that this grammar was used in Sri Lanka during the medieval period and may have influenced the *Sidat Saŋgarā* a classical Sinhala grammar of the 13th/14th century. *Sidat Saŋgarā* departs from the expected model of sanskrit and Pāli grammars in that it contains a chapter on prosody and poetics.

Finally, it can be safely conclude that in the medieval period, because of the new cultural waves, many changes took place in Tamil language and there were trends that developed to change the Tamil grammar in accordance with the Sanskrit grammar.

Thus, *Vīracōḻiyam* and it's commentary are envisioning the influence of Sanskrit on Tamil, which proves that this treatise recorded linguistically diverse milieu in the Cōḷa period. Therefore, it can be stated that although *Vīracōḻiyam* traced on Sanskrit grammatical notion as well as technical terms, it seems to stand apart from the principles of Sanskrit theory. In this sense *Vīracōḻiyam* seems to be a unique treatise and also drawing ideas both from Sanskrit and previous Tamil grammars. Therefore, in its linguistic codification and philosophical outlook *Vīracōḻiyam* seems to stand in its own way.

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