

A Study of Derivational Morphological Features of Tamil Language

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There are five major word classes or lexical categories in Tamil. They are noun, verb, adjective, adverb and conjunction. In Tamil language nouns are classified into two. They are rational and irrational. Humans are classified as rational and all other nouns which are animals and objects are classified as irrational. There are three types of nouns in Tamil. They are single nouns, compound nouns and derived nouns.

‘Creation of new lexemes is the province of derivational morphology or derivation.’ In Tamil language, morphemes attach with nouns, verbs, adjectives and word doublers. As a result of that, it creates a large number of new words. It is called nominal derivation. Nominal derivation is formed by suffixation or prefixation.

Nominal derivation is formed in three ways. First, morphemes are attached to verbs, second, morphemes are attached to nouns, and third, morphemes are attached to adjectives. Here, the morphemes can be suffixes or prefixes.

Verb + suffixation Noun

Nuhman (1999) has mentioned fourteen bound morphemes which are attached to verbs and they create new lexemes. They are ச்சி /ci/, சி /si/, ப்பு /ppu/ ஓ /ai/ அம் /am/ வு /vu/ க்கை /kkai/ கை /kai/ மை /mai/, மதி /mati/, வை /vai/, வி /vi/, ச்சல் /ccal/ யனெ அல் /al/.

In my research I have found out eleven bound morphemes than those of Nuhman. They are அகன் /akan/, ஞர் /ñar/, இயல்/iyal/, ப்பி/ppi/, மானம்/maanam/, வை/vai/, ப்பம்/ppam/, மார்/maar/, ப்பான்/ppaan/, பாடு/paatu/ and க்கம்/kkam/. For example,

Verb	+ akan	Noun
1. i. පාට /pāṭu/ Sing	+ අකන + /akan/ + DS	- පාටකන් - /pāṭakan/ - Singer
ii. නැඩ /naṭi/ Act	+ අකන + /akan/ + DS	- නැඩකන් - /naṭikan/ - Actor
Verb	+ n~ar	Noun
2. i. අඟි /aṛi/ Know	+ ගුරා + /ñar/ + DS	- - අඟිගුරා - /aṛiñar/ - Man of erudition
ii. සාව /suvai/ Taste	+ ගුර් + /ñar/ + DS	- සාවගුර් - /suvaiñar/ - Connoisseur
Verb	+ ppi	Noun
3. i. සාර /sura/ Secret	+ ප්පි + /ppi/ + DS	- සාරප්පි - /surappi/ - Gland
Verb	+ māṇam	Noun
4. i. තේය /tēy/ Rub	+ මාණම් + /māṇam/ + DS	- තේයමාණම් - /tēymāṇam/ - Depreciation

	Verb	+ mānam	Noun
ii.	கட்டு /kaṭṭu/ Build	+ /mānam/ + DS	- கட்டுமானம் - /kaṭṭumānam/ - Construction
iii.	வா /vā/ Come	+ /mānam/ + DS	- வருமானம் - /varumānam/ - Income
iv.	பெறு /peru/ Receive	+ /mānam/ + DS	- பெறுமானம் - /perumānam/ - Value /Worth
	Verb	+ vai	Noun
5. i.	கற /kara/ Draw (Milk)	+ /vai/ + DS	- கறவை - /karavai/ - Milch cow
ii.	பற /para/ Fly	+ /vai/ + DS	- பறவை - /paravai/ - Bird
	Verb	+ mār	Noun
6. i.	கூட்டு /kūṭṭu/ Gather up	+ /mār/ + DS	- கூட்டுமார் - /kūṭṭumār/ - Sweeper
ii.	விலக்கு /vilakku/ Put aside	+ /mār/ + DS	- விலக்குமார் - /vilakkumār/ - Broom

In the following example, i – iii, two types derived suffixes are attached to root verb to create new lexeme.

	Verb	+ ppu + ān		Noun
7. i.	கணி /kaṇi/ Calculate	+ ப்பு /ppu/ + DS	+ ஆன் /ān/	- கணிப்பான் /kaṇippān/ - Calculator

ii.	வடி /vatī/ Strain	+ ப்பு /ppu/ + DS	+ ஆன் /ān/	- வடிப்பான் /vatippān/ - Strainer
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iii.	திற /tirā/ Open	+ ப்பு /ppu/ + DS	+ ஆன் /ān/	- திறப்பான் /tirappān/ - Opener
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	Verb	pāṭu		Noun
8. i.	கட்டு /kaṭṭu/ Bind	+ பாடு /pāṭu/ + DS		- கட்டுப்பாடு /kaṭṭuppāṭu/ - Restriction

ii.	தட்டு /taṭṭu/ Knock	+ பாடு /pāṭu/ + DS		- தட்டுப்பாடு /taṭṭuppāṭu/ - Shortage
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	Verb	+ nar		Noun
9. i.	நடத்து /naṭattu/ Conduct	+ நர் /nar/ + DS		- நடத்துநர் /naṭattunar/ - Conductor

ii.	எழுது /eḻutu/ Write	+ நர் /nar/ + DS		- எழுதுநர் /eḻutunar/ - Clerk
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1. Noun + suffixation Noun

Nuhman (1999) has mentioned there are nine bound morphemes which attached to nouns and they create new lexemes. They are ‘ஆளி’/āli/, ‘இயல்’/iyal/, ‘சாலி’/sāli/, ‘காரன்’/kāran/, ‘காரி’/kāri/, ‘தணம்’/taṇam/, ‘துவம்’/tuvam/, ‘இயம்’/iyam/ and ‘ஆளன்’/ālan/.

In my research, I found out eight bound morphemes than those of Nuhman. They are ‘மை’/mai/, ‘இடல்’/iṭal/, ‘இனர்’/inar/, ‘மான்’/mān/, ‘ஆன்’/ān/, ‘ஆடி’/āṭi/, ‘ஆனி’/āṇi/ and ‘ஞர்’/ñar/. The examples for each bound morpheme are given below.

Noun	+ mai	Noun
10. i. நிலை /nilai/	+ மை /mai/	- நிலைமை /nilaimai/
Condition	+ DS	- Situation /
ii. தலை /talai/	+ மை /mai/	- தலைமை /talaimai/
Head	+ DS	- Leadership
iii. பெண் /pen/	+ மை /mai/	- பெண்மை /penmai/
Female	+ DS	- Femininity
iv. ஆண் /ān/	+ மை /mai/	- ஆண்மை /āṇmai/
Male	+ DS	- Manliness
v. வலி /vali/	+ மை /mai/	- வலிமை /valimai/
Pain	+ DS	- Strength

vi. කුණිර /kuḷir/ Cold	+ ගෙම + /mai/ + DS	- කුණිර්ගෙම - /kuḷirmai/ - Coldness
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	Noun	+ iṭal	Noun
11.	i. පලි /pali/ Sacrifice (lives)	+ තිළ + /iṭal/ + DS	- පලියිත්ල - /paliyiṭal/ - Sacrificing
	ii. පාර්වය /pārvai/ Sight	+ තිළ + /iṭal/ + DS	- පාර්වයිත්ල - /pārvayiṭal/ - Supervision
	iii. මාලය /mālai/ Garland	+ තිළ + /iṭal/ + DS	- මාලයිත්ල - /mālaiyiṭal/ - xchanging
			Garlands (marriage)
	iv. ගෝර /pōr/ War	+ තිළ + /iṭal/ + DS	- ගෝරිත්ල - /pōriṭal/ - Fighting
	Noun	+ iñar	Noun
12.	i. බිරුන්තු /viruntu/ Hospitality	+ තින්ත + /iñar/ + DS	- බිරුන්තින්ත - /viruntiar/ - Guests
	ii. පිරිව /pirivu/ Division	+ තින්ත + /iñar/ + DS	- පිරිවින්ත - /piriviñar/ - Section of people

- iii. உறவு + இனர் - உறவினர்
 /uravu/ + /inar/ - /uravinar/
 Relationship + DS - Relations
- iv. தொகை + இனர் - தொகையினர்
 /tokai/ + /inar/ - /tokaiyinar/
 Amount + DS - Amount of people
- v. வகை + இனர் - வகையினர்
 /vakai/ + /inar/ - /vakaiyinar/
 Kind + DS - Kind of people

	Noun	+	māṇ	Noun
13. i	கல்வி	+	மாண்	- கல்விமாண்
	/kalvi/	+	/māṇ/	- /kalvimāṇ/
	Education	+	DS	- Scholar
ii.	பக்தி	+	மாண்	- பக்திமாண்
	/pakti/	+	/māṇ/	- /paktimāṇ/
	Divotion	+	DS	- Divottee
iii.	சக்தி	+	மாண்	- சக்திமாண்
	/sakti/	+	/māṇ/	- /saktimāṇ/
	Strength	+	DS	- Superman
iv.	புத்தி	+	மாண்	- புத்திமாண்
	/putti/	+	/maan/	- /puttimāṇ/
	Knowledge	+	DS	- Clever person

	Noun	+	āṇ	Noun
14. i.	பலம்	+	ஆண்	- பலவான்
	/palam/	+	/āṇ/	- /palavāṇ/
	Strength	+	DS	- strength person

ii.	කණම්	+	අුන්	- කණවාන්
	/kaṇam/	+	/ān/	- /kaṇavān/
	Respectable	+	DS	- RespectablePerson

iii.	ගුණම්	+	අුන්	- ගුණවාන්
	/kuṇam/	+	/ān/	- /kuṇavān/
	Character	+	DS	- Kind heated Person

Noun + āṭi Noun

15. i.	කුත්තු	+	අුඩි	- කුත්තාඩි
	/kūttu/	+	/āṭi/	- /kūttāṭi/
	Dance	+	DS	- Dancer

ii.	වාය්	+	අුඩි	- වායාඩි
	/vāy/	+	/āṭi/	- /vāyāṭi/
	Mouth	+	DS	-Talkative person

Noun + āṇi Noun

16. i.	බාකවු	+	අුණී	- ක්ලාවාණී
	/kaḷavu/	+	/āṇi/	- kaḷavāṇi
	Theft	+	DS	- Thief

ii.	විශ්වාසම්	+	අුණී	- විශ්වාසී
	/viññāṇam/	+	/āṇi/	- /viññāṇi/
	Science	+	DS	- Scientist

iii.	අණ්ඩාණම්	+	අුණී	- අණ්ඩාණී
	/aṇñāṇam/	+	/āṇi/	- /aṇñāṇi/
	Spiritual	+	DS	- A person who is spiritually ignorant

iv.	மெய்ஞ்ஞானம் /meyññāñam/ True knowledge	+	ஆணி - மெய்ஞ்ஞானி /āñi/ - /meyññāñi/ DS - True Knowledgable person
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	Noun	+	ñar	Noun
17. i.	கலை /kalai/ Arts	+	ஞர் /ñar/ DS	- கலைஞர் -/kalaiñar/ - Artist
ii.	கவி /kavi/ Poem	+	ஞர் /ñar/ DS	- கவிஞர் -/kaviñar/ - Poet

2.	Adjective	+	suffixation	Noun
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There are six suffixes which attached to adjectives and they create new lexemes. They are ‘வன்’ /van/, ‘வள்’ /val/, ‘வர்’ /var/, ‘வர்கள்’ /varkal/, ‘து’ /tu/ and ‘வை’ /vai/.

	Adjective	+	van	Noun
18 i.	அழகான /alakāña/ Beautiful	+	வன் /van/ DS	- அழகானவன் -/alakāñavan/ - Handsome man
ii.	உயரமான /uyaramāñā/ Tall	+	வன் /van/ DS	- உயரமானவன் -/uyaramāñavan/ - Tallest man
	Adjective	+	val	Noun
19. i.	அழகான /alakāña/ Beautiful	+	வள் /val/ DS	- அழகானவள் -/alakāñaval/ - Beautiful woman

	ii.	<u>உயர்மான</u>	+	வள்	- <u>உயர்மானவள்</u>
		/uyaramāṇa/	+	/val/	- /uyaramāṇaval/
		Tall	+	DS	- Tallest woman
					Adjective + var Noun
20.	i.	அழகான	+	வர்	- அழகானவர்
		/alakāṇa/	+	/var/	- /alakāṇavar/
		Beautiful	+	DS	- Beautiful person
	ii.	<u>உயர்மான</u>	+	வர்	- <u>உயர்மானவர்</u>
		/uyaramāṇa/	+	/var/	- /uyaramāṇavar/
		Tall	+	DS	- Tallest person
					Adjective + varkaḷ Noun
21.	i.	அழகான	+	வர்கள்	- அழகானவர்கள்
		/alPakaana/	+	/varkal/	- alakāṇavarkal/
		Beautiful	+	DS	- Beautiful persons
	ii.	<u>உயர்மான</u>	+	வர்கள்	- <u>உயர்மானவர்கள்</u>
		/uyaramāṇa/	+	/varkal/	- uyaramāṇavarkal/
		Tall	+	DS	- Tallest persons
					Adjective + vdjkaḷ Noun
22.	i.	அழகான	+	து	- அழகானது
		/alakāṇa/	+	/tu/	- /alakāṇatu/
		Beautiful	+	DS	- Beautiful thing
	ii.	<u>உயர்மான</u>	+	து	- <u>உயர்மானது</u>
		/uyaramāṇa/	+	/tu/	- /yaramāṇatu/
		Tall	+	DS	- Tallest thing

Adjective	+	vai	Noun
23. i. அழகான்	+	வை	- அழகான்வை
/alakāṇa/	+	/vai/	- /alakāṇavai/
Beautiful	+	DS	- Beautiful things
ii. உயரமான்	+	வை	- உயரமான்வை
/uyaramāṇa/+	+	/vai/	- /amāṇavai/
Tall	+	DS	- Tallest things

3. Prefixation + Noun Noun

There are five prefixes in Tamil, which are attached to nouns and they create new lexemes. They are ‘அ’ /a/, ‘து’ /tur/, ‘அப்’ /apa/, ‘நிர்’ /nir/ and ‘அவ்’ /ava/. For example,

	/a/	+	Noun	- Noun
24.	i.	அ	+	நீதி
		/a/	+	/nītī/
		prefix	+	justice
				- injustice
	ii.	அ	+	சுத்தம்
		/a/	+	/suttam/
		Prefix	+	Clean
				- Unclean
	iii.	அ	+	நாகரிகம்
		/a/	+	/nākarikam/
		prefix	+	Culture
				- Uncultured
	iv.	அ	+	காலம்
		/a/	+	/kālam/
		Prefix	+	Period
				- Unearthly time
	v.	அ	+	விவாகம்
		/a/	+	/vivākam/
		Prefix	+	marriage
				- unmarried

	vi.	அ /a/	+	கெளரவம் /kavravam/	-	அகெளரவம் /akavravam/
		Prefix	+	Respectable	-	Irrespectable
		/tur/	+	Noun	-	Noun
25.	i.	தூர் /tur/	+	பாக்கியம் /pākkiyam/	-	தூர்பாக்கியம் /turpākkiyam/
		Prefix	+	Fortune	-	Unfortunate
	ii.	தூர் /tur/	+	நடத்தை /naṭattai/	-	தூர்நடத்தை /turnaṭattai/
		Prefix	+	Behavior	-	Misbehavior
	iii.	தூர் /tur/	+	நாற்றம் /nam/	-	தூர்நாற்றம் /turnāṛram/
		Prefix	+	Smell	-	Bad smell
		/apa/	+	Noun	-	Noun
26.	i.	அப் /apa/	+	கௌர்த்தி /kīrtti/	-	அபகௌர்த்தி /apakīrtti/
		Prefix	+	Fame	-	Infamy
	ii.	அப் /apa/	+	சகுணம் /sakuṇa/	-	அபசகுணம் /apasakuṇam/
		Prefix	+	noun	-	Ill omen
		/nir/	+	Noun	-	Noun
27.	i.	நிர் /nir/	+	கதி /kati/	-	நிரகதி /nirkati/
		Prefix	+	Way	-	Helplessness

	ii.	நிர் /nir/ + Prefix	குணம் /kuṇam/ + quality	- நிர்குணம் /nirkuṇam/ - Without any quality
	iii.	நிர் /nir/ + Prefix	மலம் /malam/ + noun	- நிர்மலம் /nirmalam/ - Spotlessness
28.	i.	/ava/ +	Noun	- Noun
		அவ + /ava/ + Prefix	லட்சணம் /laṭcaṇam/ + Beauty	- அவலட்சணம் /avalalṭcaṇam/ - Ugly
	ii.	அவ /ava/ + Prefix	மரியாதை /mariyātai/ + Respect	- அவமரியாதை /avamariyātai/ - Insult
	iii.	அவ /ava/ + Prefix	மானம் /māṇam/ + honour	- அவமானம் /avamāṇam/ - Dishonour

4. Word doubler + suffixation – Noun

In Tamil language, word doublers are there. It is called ‘*irattai kilavi*’ in Tamil. Word doubler means a meaningless word doubles itself in a sentence and it gives a rhyming word. On the other hand it is said, repetition of similar terminal sounds in two words. For example,

29. i. සලසල
/sala sala/
ii. පාපා
/pala pala/
iii. විරුවිරු
/viru viru/

New lexemes are created by attaching suffixes to word doublers. In my research, I found out two suffixes which are attached to word doublers and they create other new lexeme. They are ‘පු’ /ppu/ and ‘ත්තල්’ /ttal/.

WD	+	ppu	-	Noun
30. i. සුරුසුරු /surusuru/	+ + +	පු /ppu/ /ppu/	- - -	සුරුසුරුපු /surusuruppu/ Activeness
ii. විරුවිරු /viruviru/	+ +	පු /ppu/ /ppu/	- - -	විරුවිරුපු /viruviruppu/ Excite / thrill
iii. සලසල /salasala/	+ +	පු /ppu/ /ppu/	- - -	සලසලපු /salasalappu/ Soundof flowing water

WD	+	ttal	-	Noun
31. i. සලසල /salasala/	+ +	ත්තල් /ttal/ /ttal/	- - -	සලසලත්තල් /salasalattal/ Sound of flowing water
ii. කුසුකුසු /kusukusu/	+ +	ත්තල් /ttal/ /ttal/	- - -	කුසුකුසුත්තල් /kusukusuttal/ Whispering

Conclusion

So far we discussed the derivational morphological features of Tamil language. ‘Creation of new lexemes is the province of derivational morphology or derivation. In Tamil language, morphemes attach with nouns, verbs, adjectives and word doublers. As a result of that we could see a large number of new lexemes are created in Tamil.

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