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“உரப்பியும் எடுத்தும் கனைத்தும்”: Contrastive Phonetics or how to Describe one Language with the Help of Another One”¹

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1 Introduction

The நன்னூல் contains at the end of its பதவியல் a few rules devoted to the problem of adapting words borrowed from Sanskrit to the phonology of Tamil. The commentators to the நன்னூல், while explaining and illustrating those rules, use a very interesting vocabulary for characterizing the phonetic features which are specific to Sanskrit: the pronunciation of unvoiced aspirated consonants (kh, ch, ṭh, th and ph) is said to have உரப்புதல் as a characteristic feature; the pronunciation of voiced consonants (g, j, ḍ, d, and b) is said to have எடுத்தல் as a feature; the pronunciation of voiced aspirated consonants (gh, jh, ḍh, dh and bh) is said to have கனைத்தல் as a feature. This presentation will explore the roots of that phonetic terminology in the earlier literature, and notably in the வீரசோழியம், from which it seems to be partly adapted.

Although the main target of the texts composed by Tamil grammarians is almost exclusively the Tamil language, we occasionally come across passages containing statements regarding other languages. Some pertain to the vocabulary of those languages;² others

¹ This article is an expanded version of a short presentation I had prepared for the Coimbatore 2010 WCTC, for which the title would have been: “*Urappiyum eṭuttum kaṇaittum*: The Contribution of Ancient Tamil Grammarians to General Articulatory Phonetics”. (I was however not able to attend the conference). For reading a preliminary version of this article and for making important suggestions, I wish to thank V.S. Rajam, Vincenzo Vergiani and Giovanni Ciotti. All errors are of course mine.

² For instance, the commentator Teyvaccilaiyār seems to tell us, under TC396t that the use of the interjection *antō!* (instead of *aiyō!*) is borrowed from the *ciṅka-lavar*, that the use of *karaital* in AN16 [*yān tar karaiya vantū*], for describing the action of calling/inviting some one is representative of the *karunāṭar*; that the people called *vaṭukar* use *ceppu* where the Tamilians would use the verb *collutal*; that the people called *telin̄kar* use *pāṇṇil* for referring to both the animals which the Tamili-

concern their pronunciation and are especially interesting by their use of a special vocabulary. The present paper concentrates on a small set of phonetic terms used by Tamil grammarians in order to characterize Sanskrit consonants. It will also be an occasion for a reflexion on one aspect of the 1st phonetic description of Tamil itself, seen in a contrastive perspective. In both cases, we have the same underlying question: what makes it possible, in practice, to describe one language with the help of another?

2 The general context

The original ambition of this presentation is for us to obtain a clear view of the uses of three technical terms in the realm of articulatory phonetics. Those terms are *urappuṭal*, *eṭuttal* and *kaṇaittal*³ and they appear jointly in a sequence *urappiyum eṭuttum kaṇaittum*, listing three alternative possibilities, at two places inside the commentary composed by Mayilainātar, in the 13th century, on the *Nannūl*, and more precisely under *cūttiram*-s N145m⁴ and N146m.⁵ These two are contained in the section, comprising N145m to N148m, found at the end of the *Pataviyal*, which deals with the problem of adapting words borrowed from Sanskrit to the phonology of Classical Tamil. We should add that the reading of that section has to be complemented by the reading of another section of the *Nannūl*, comprising N269m to N273m (inside the *Peyariyal*), which deals with the 4 types of

ans call *pacu* and *erutu* and that the *tuḷuvar* call the mango (*mā*) *kokku*. Similar remarks are also found in the commentary by Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar (see TC400n), although they are more cryptic.

³ These terms will not be translated. But Chart 1 and Chart 2 provide a short road to a partial answer.

⁴ The “m” in N145m point to a numbering done according to the arrangement of *Nannūl* in Mayilainātar’s commentary, as edited by U.V. Cāminātaiyar. Inside the commentaries by Caṅkaranamacciṇiyar (17th cent.) and Ārumukanāvalar (19th cent.), the same *cūttiram* is numbered 146, and I shall refer to it as N146ca, and N146ā, respectively. Other abbreviations used here are TE, TC and TP, for the *Eḷuttatikāram*, the *Collatikāram* and the *Poruḷatikāram* of the *Tolkāppiyam*, with “i”, “c” or “n” pointing to a numbering of *cūttiram*-s as found in the commentaries by Iḷampūraṇar, Cēṇāvaraiyar or Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar.

⁵ As we shall see, they also appear together in the commentary to *Vīracōḷiyam* 57 (cf. 5, *infra*).

words allowed in poetry, namely *iyarcol*, *tiricol*, *ticaiccol*⁶ and *vaṭacol*, the last category being explained in N273m, in the following way:

1. *potuvelut tāṇuñ cirappelut tāṇum irelut tāṇu miyaivaṇa vaṭacol.*
(N273m)

Sanskrit derivatives are words employed (in the Tamil country), which are formed of Letters common (to Sanskrit and Tamil), or of letters peculiar (to Sanskrit) or of letters of both kinds.⁷

The section N145_m-N148_m is indeed an explicitation of what is expressed by N273_m in general terms, because what it does is:

- giving a catalogue of Sanskrit letters, dividing them into two types (N145_m)
- those, numbering 25, which are common (*potuveluttu*) to Sanskrit and Tamil
- those, numbering 28, which are peculiar (*cirappeluttu*) to Sanskrit, and which have to be “changed (when employed in Tamil)” [wording by Lazarus(1878)]
- explain how to adapt the 28 peculiar letters (N146_m)
- explain what to do with words starting with r, l or y (N147_m)
- explain what to do with consonantal clusters (N148_m)

This sequence of 4 *cūttiram*-s is then followed by the last *cūttiram* (N149_m) in the *Pataviyal* which enumerates the letters which are peculiar to Tamil.

3 Three terms for describing special modes of articulation

Inside that general context, the three technical terms, *urapputal*, *eṭuttal* and *kaṇaittal*, which are the topic of this article are used by

⁶ I have recently dealt with *ticaiccol*. See Jean-Luc Chevillard, “The Concept of *ticaiccol* in Tamil grammatical literature and the Regional Diversity of Tamil Classical Literature”, in: *Streams of Language: Dialects in Tamil*, edited by M. Kannan M. Pondicherry: French Institute of Pondicherry, 2008, pp. 21-50.

⁷ Translation by J. Lazarus, *Nannul* [Orthography & Etymology], Part Two, English Translation, with a foreword by P. Kothandaraman, Madras: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, [1878] 1977. [kashagam reprint, spelling modernized]. - The commentators provide us with *amalam*, *kamalam*, *mēru*, etc. as example of the first type, *cuki* (= *sukhin*), *pōki* (= *bhogin*), *cutti* (*śuddhi*), etc. as examples of the second type, and *aran* (= *hara*), *ari* (= *hari*), *kaṭṭam* (= *kaṭhina*), etc. as examples of the third type, 1878 (1977).

the commentator Mayilai Nātar for the purpose of setting apart, among the Sanskrit consonants contained in the five *varukkam*-s (i.e. *varga*-s) those which the *Nannūl* did not mention as being common. More precisely, the *Nannūl*, in N145_m, in its enumeration of *aiyai-mpotuveluttu*, has the wording:

2. *aivarukka mutalīru* “of the five series of consonants, the first and the last letter in each”.⁸

But Mayilainātar is more precise⁹ and says:

3. *kacaṭatapa venṇum aintaṇ varukkattuḷ iṭaiyil urappiyum eṭuttum kaṇaittum collappaṭṭuniṅkum mūṇṇumolinta kaṇa, caṇa, ṭaṇa, tana, pama eṇṇum pattum* (N145_m)

The ten, *kaṇa, caṇa, ṭaṇa, tana, pama*, which are obtained by leaving aside the three that are in the middle of the *varga*-s named after the five [letters] *ka, ca, ṭa, ta* and *pa*, and which are pronounced with an articulation of *urapputal, eṭuttal* or *kaṇaittal*.

We can conclude from this that, since the five *varukkam*-s (*varga*-s) are “k, kh, g, gh, ṅ” (*ka-varga*), “c, ch, j, jh, ṅ” (*ca-varga*), “ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ” (*ṭa-varga*), “t, th, d, dh, n” (*ta-varga*) and “p, ph, b, bh, m” (*pa-varga*), the Sanskrit letters to which Mayilainātar’s articulatory phonetics characterization is given in this distributive statement can be given explicitly by the following chart.

<i>urapputal</i>	<i>eṭuttal</i>	<i>kaṇaittal</i>
kh	g	gh
ch	j	jh
ṭh	ḍ	ḍh
th	d	dh
ph	b	bh

Chart 1: Tamil terminology for the articulation of Sanskrit *ciṛappeluttu*

⁸ English translation, Lazarus (1878), *Nannul...*

⁹ He even inserts additional Pāṇinian terminology, starting the enumeration with *allenru vaḷaṅku mey muppaṭṭēḷaṇuḷlum* “among the 37 consonants which are currently designated by ‘hal’”. The term *al* is the tamilized form of *hal*, a condensed expression derived from the *Pratyāhārasūtra*-s attached to Pāṇini’s grammar.

4 Examples provided by the commentators of Naṅṅūl

This interpretation is confirmed by the examples provided by Mayilai-nātar when, using for the second time the sequence *urappiyum eṭuttum kaṇaittum*, he provides concrete examples for the *cūttiram* N146m in the following way:

4.nakam, nākam, mēkam e-m; calavāti, vicayam, caruccarai e-m; pīṭam, pīṭai, tiṭam e-m, talam, tinam, tarai e-m; palam, pantam, pāram e-m aintu varukkattilum urappiyum eṭuttuṅ kaṇaittuṅ collu mūṅṅum avvam mutalāyina. (N146m)

My goal in this article not being to give an in depth elucidation of the Sanskrit words intended by Mayilainātar in this passage, I will content myself with reproducing here (in image form) an extract from the *Naṅṅūl Kāṅṅikaiyurai*, composed by Ārumukanāvalar in the 19th century, in which, with two exceptions,¹⁰ the same words are found, but with an explicit elucidation, in Grantha script. It appears thus:

Figure 1 (p. 83 [bottom])

உ-ம், ஈஷம் இடபம், எ-ம், சீமம் யிருகம், எ-ம், எழாமயிர்
இகரமும் இருவுமாயிற்று. நவ்ய நகம், நாழி நாகம்,

Figure 2 (p. 84 [top])

பெய்யி மேகம், எ-ம், உமவாழீ சலவாதி, விஜயி விசயம்,
ஸஸுரா சருச்சரை, எ-ம், வீயி பீடம், ஜய்ய சடம்,
மய்யி கூடம், எ-ம், ஸ்யு தலம், ஜிந்ய தினம், யாரா
தரை, எ-ம், மய்யி பலம், வையி பந்தம், மாரி பாரம்,
எ-ம், ஐந்து வருக்கத்திலும் இடைநின்ற மும்மன்றெழுத்தும்
அவ்வவ்வருக்கத்தின் முதலெழுத்தாயின. வங்கஜி, பங்க

¹⁰ The exceptions are lines 8 and 9, in the chart below, in which the examples given by Mayilainātar and by Ārumuka Nāvalar, are not identical.

The data can be provided in Tabular form, as follows:

	Tamilized example (Mayilainātar)	Tamilized Example (Ārumu- kanāvalar)	Sanskrit original (in Ārumu- kanāvalar)	mode of articulation
1	nakam	nakam	nakha	<i>urapputal</i>
2	nākam	nākam	nāga	<i>eṭuttal</i>
3	mēkam	mēkam	mēghaḥ	<i>kaṇaittal</i>
4	calavāti	calavāti	chalavādī	<i>urapputal</i>
5	vicayam	vicayam	vijayaḥ	<i>eṭuttal</i>
6	caruccarai	caruccarai	jharjharā	<i>kaṇaittal</i>
7	pīṭam	pīṭam	pīṭham	<i>urapputal</i>
8	pīṭai (pīḍā?)	caṭam	jaḍam	<i>eṭuttal</i>
9	tiṭam (dr̥ḍha?)	kūṭam	gūḍham	<i>kaṇaittal</i>
10	talam	talam	sthalam	<i>urapputal</i>
11	tiṇam	tiṇam	dīnam	<i>eṭuttal</i>
12	tarai	tarai	dharā	<i>kaṇaittal</i>
13	palam	palam	phalam	<i>urapputal</i>
14	pantam	pantam	baṃdhaḥ	<i>eṭuttal</i>
15	pāram	pāram	bhāram	<i>kaṇaittal</i>

Chart 2: Occurrences of these terms in earlier grammatical literature

The usage among the commentators of *Naṇṇūl* of the technical triplet under consideration being now relatively well established, we turn to an examination of occurrences of *urapputal*, *eṭuttal* and *kaṇaittal* inside other schools of grammatical literature. As these data often belong to older strata of scientific literature, which have, in some sense, been obliterated (or “superseded”) by more modern usages, our interpretations will be more tentative and we may have to face apparent contradictions inside a heterogeneous corpus of technical texts difficult to reconcile with one another. The first passage examined here

will be extracted from the commentary on the 57th kārikai of the *Vīracōliyam*. It reads:

5. *ka ca ṭa ta pa eṇpavar̥ru ovvon̄raiyē kiṭappiṇum urappiyum eṭuttum kaṇaittum mūkkiṇum aintu vitamākac collappaṭukiṇra aintu varukka-ṇkaḷiṇum*

in the five varga-s, named after *ka*, *ca*, *ṭa*, *ta* and *pa*, in each of which items are pronounced in 5 ways, either in stationary condition (*kiṭappu*), or through [the efforts of] *urapputal*, *eṭuttal* or *kaṇaittal*, or through the nose.

The wording is very similar to the one found in 3 and the purpose is the same: describing Sanskrit consonants from a Tamil point of view. The only difference is that there is also a characterization of the first and last consonant in the varga. It is possible that such a formulation was the inspiration for the one used by Mayilainātar in 3, or that both were drawing from a common source which could be the lost grammar of Avinayaṇār.¹¹

The second passage examined here will be an incidental statement contained, in second position, inside the 4th kārikai of the *Vīracōliyam*. That kārikai reads thus:

6. *ēyā ec coṇmun̄ viṇā; eṭut talpaṭut talnalital ōyā turappal eṇa-nāl vakaiyir̄ piṇakkumeykaḷ cāyā mayakkantam mun̄nar̄p piṇavoṭu tāmumvantu vīyāta iroṇru mūvor̄ ruṭaṇilai vēṇṭuvarē* (*Vīracōliyam* - 4)

If we skip the first statement, which is independent, and if we restrict ourselves to the relative clause attached to the head of the second statement,¹² we obtain the following incidental statement, reproduced here with the head of the noun phrase:

7. *eṭuttal paṭuttal nalital ōyāturappal eṇa nāl vakaiyir̄ piṇakkumeykaḷ*
“the consonants, which are born in the 4 ways called “eṭuttal”, “paṭuttal”, “nalital” and “continuous urappal”.

We are now on more difficult ground for 3 reasons: (a) the terminology differs in great part from the one seen before; (b) no example is provided by the commentator; (c) the target of this rule is the Tamil consonants and the clusters which they can form. Our challenge is to find out whether the information compiled upto this point can help us

¹¹ For the importance of Avinayaṇār, see G. Vijayavenugopal, *A Modern Evaluation of Naṇṇūl*, Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1968.

¹² The primary concern of that statement is to deal with consonantal clusters (of two or three consonants).

in understanding the statements made in 7. An additional difficulty is that some modern interpreters, such as the compilers of the *Madras Tamil Lexicon*, have suggested that this might be a vocabulary related to vowels and to the pitch accent (or tone) attached to them.¹³ However, the four “modes” (*vakai*) mentioned in 7 are explicitly said to be applicable to consonants (*meykaḷ*). It is also to be noted that, in the *kurippurai* section of his 2005 edition of *Vīracōḷiyam*, Ti. Vē. Kōpālaiyar has made the following remark:

8. *meykaḷ, eṭuttal paṭuttal nalital urappal enṇa nālvakaiyāl pi-rakkum enṇa ceyti tolkāppiyattil kāṇappaṭāta tākum. ‘tattam tiripē cīriya enṇa’ enṇatu tolkāppiyam. (eḷut.88) [Ti. Vē. Kōpālaiyar [2005: p.88]*

The piece of information that consonants originate in one of the four modes called *eṭuttal paṭuttal nalital urappal* is not found in the *Tolkāppiyam*. What the *Tolkāppiyam* says is [simply] *‘tattam tiripē cīriya enṇa’* (TE88i)

We find a long analysis of sūtra TE88 and of the literature concerning it inside V.S.Rajam [1981a, 92-95]. She translates it as:

9. *tattam tiripē cīriya enṇa* (TE88) “They say ‘the differences in them are little’” (transl. V.S. Rajam[1981a: 92])

She seems to think that the main purport of TE88 is to be “An additional rule for the production of vowels” but she notes nevertheless that Naccīnārkkīniyar thinks that TE88n applies both to vowels and consonants.¹⁴ Concerning consonants, however, and the possible refinements in their description, she discusses them at length on pp.96-100, under TE92:¹⁵

10. *avvā reḷuttu mūvakaip pirappiṇa* (TE92) “These six *eḷuttu* [sounds] are of three birth-types” (transl. V.S. Rajam[1981a: 96])

¹³ The *Madras Tamil Lexicon*, referring to this same *Vīracōḷiyam* passage explains (p. 2175) *nalital* as “circumflex accent; *cūvaritam*.” (i.e. *svarita*).

¹⁴ He even tells us, before the word-for-word paraphrase, that this is a *cūttiram* making use of *ciṅka nōkku*, i.e. looking both forward and backward. It must be noted that ḷampūraṇar also says that TE88i applies both to *muṅkūriya uyirkkum mērkūrum meykkum* “the vowels which have been discussed and the consonants which shall be discussed”.

¹⁵ She also comes back to the problem in Ramamurti Rajam, Ramamurti, “Is Tolkappiyam 92 an interpolation?”, in: *Indian Linguistics [Journal of the Linguistic Society of India]*, Volume 42, Numbers 1-4 (1981), pp. 10-16.

The several delicate questions which she raises incite me however to make a few tentative suggestions concerning the articulation of consonants in an ulterior section. Before that, however, it is useful to examine some of the uses of our technical terms when they are applied to vowels.

5 Eṭuttal, paṭuttal and nalital when applied to vowels

We start by examining the case of N87m (alias N88ci). It reads:

11. *eṭuttal paṭutta ṅalita luḷappil tiripun tattamiṛ cirituḷa vākum*

(Though general rules have been given for the pronunciation of groups of letters,) the sounds of individual letters may in a few instances be modified by the loud, soft and midling varieties of accent.” [English translation, Lazarus (1878)]

I have provided the English translation by Lazarus in order to mention one of the ways in which this *cūttiram* has been understood. It must be said however that another Tamil grammarian, the author of the 17th century *Pirayōka Vivēkam*, explicitly identifies in his verse 40, the terms *eṭuttal*, *paṭuttal* and *nalital* with *utāttam* (i.e. *udātta*), *anutāttam* (i.e. *anudātta*) and *cucaritam* (i.e. *svarita*). It may appear far-fetched to suppose that a feature such as pitch accent might be relevant for the characterization of Tamil words. However, it seems to be the case, at least in the variety of language described by Classical Tamil grammarians, that there are words which are distinguished solely on the basis of intonation contour differences,¹⁶ and that technical expressions such as *paṭuttal ōcai*, etc. have been used for characterizing those differences.¹⁷ That being said, we now return to Tamil

¹⁶ I am not sure whether the device showing which part of the word is prominent (see the next footnote) should be described as a stress accent, even though it seems clear it was not a pitch accent (tone).

¹⁷ See for instance the entries *paṭuttal ōcai*, *paṭuttuc collutal*, on page 183 inside Jean-Luc Chevillard, *Companion Volume to the Cēṅāvaraiyam on Tamil Morphology and Syntax (Le commentaire de Cēṅāvaraiyar sur le Collatikāram du Tolkāppiyam: Volume 2)*, Collection Indologie 84.2, Institut Français de Pondichéry/ Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 2008. See also the example ‘*uṅṅāy*’ *eṅṅatarṅku maraiyākiya ‘uṅṅāy’ eṅṅum col, paṭuttal ōcaiyan ‘uṅṅalaiccey’ eṅṅum poruḷ tantu niṅṅalīn* [...], inside the commentary by Naccīṅārkkīṅiyar on TC451n. If this is a difference in the stress contour, it means apparently that *uṅṅāy* is a negative verbal form when stressed on the initial and an imperative when stressed on the final.

consonants and to the delicate task of elucidating statement 7, which deals with them.

6 How to do mappings between phonetic and phonological scripts?

It is often said that the Tamil script is phonemic while the Sanskrit script is phonetic. Therefore, the mappings between the two scripts are complicated. We have seen at the beginning of this article that in the case of a mapping from Sanskrit to Tamil, if one is supposed to represent a Sanskrit word in Tamil letters (taking it for instance from the 4th column of Chart 2), the solution is to declare that the 1st and the 5th elements in a varga are *potuveluttu*, letters common to Sanskrit and to Tamil, and that the three middle letters in the varga are *cirappeluttu* and have to be changed into the first letter. For instance “gūḍham” will become “kūṭam” (as in line 9 of chart 2).

However, what would happen if one tried to do a reverse mapping, i.e. transliterating a Tamil word by making use of Sanskrit letters, asking the Sanskrit alphabet to play the role of the alphabet devised by the IPA? The problem is well known to all those who have tried to transcribe the name of many Tamil towns in the latin alphabet. Should one write “Madurai” or “Maturai” (not to talk about /maḍure/)? How can we imagine the line of thought of someone wondering how to transcribe a Tamil word making use of *vaṭaveluttu*. If he uses the so-called *potu-v-eluttu*, the pronunciation of the transliterated sequence [i.e. a Tamil word written in Sanskrit letters] will possibly be strange. And therefore, after making the thought experiment, the author of *tattam tiripē ciriya enpa* (TE88, see 9) contents himself with making a minimal statement. He recognizes that pronouncing Tamil is easy for one who knows the language, but that obtaining the equivalent of a precise “phonetic” transcription would be a task of a bigger magnitude. We can also imagine, nevertheless, that he is tempted to make an attempt at enumerating the pronunciations (as seen through a phonetic script) in the case of few items, and this might be the reason why the *Tolkāppiyam* also contains a *cūttiram* which says *avvā reluttu mūvakaiṭ piṟappiṇa* (TE92, See 10) and which apparently only concerns *k-ñ*, *c-ñ* and *ṭ-ṇ*.¹⁸ The reason might

¹⁸ This is discussed in V. S. Rajam, *A Comparative Study of Two Ancient Indian Grammatical Traditions. The Tamil Tolkāppiyam Compared with the Sanskrit Ṛk-Prātiśākhya, Taittirīya-Prātiśākhya, Āpiśali Śikṣā, and the Aṣṭādhyāyī*. A disserta-

be that three distinct pronunciations (unvoiced plosive in initial position, voiced plosive after a nasal, and spirantized consonant in intervocalic position) are perceived for *k*, *c* and *ṭ*, and that the nasals (*ṅ*, *ṅ̃* and *ṇ*) cannot be left out because the voiced plosive is possible only after a nasal. However, this is very speculative and I have no explanation for the fact that *t-n* and *p-m* were not included in the statement, not to speak of *r-ṇ*. But the question seems worth raising.

A related question which one must also try to answer is the one connected with the incidental statement found inside the *Vīracōḷiyam* and reproduced in 7. The open question which has to be asked is: why do we have a partial overlap between the triplet {*urappuṭal*, *eṭuṭṭal*, *kaṇaitṭal*} used by Mayilainātar for describing Sanskrit consonants and the quadruplet {*eṭuṭṭal paṭuṭṭal nalital oṃyāturappal*} used by the *Vīracōḷiyam* for describing Tamil consonants.

- The only real intersection between the two sets is {*eṭuṭṭal*}, and since this corresponds in Chart 1 to “voiced plosives” and since it might be admissible to consider that from the point of view of someone who contrasts Sanskrit and Tamil (as is the case of the *Vīracōḷiyam* author), Tamil does possess “voiced plosive”, in post-nasal position, this intersection seems understandable.
- The absence of {*kaṇaitṭal*} for the description of Tamil consonants cannot be said to be surprising, because Tamil does not possess voiced aspirates, and originally used *kaṇaitṭal* rather for referring to a “bellowing buffalo” (*kaṇaitṭa mēti*) or to a “roaring elephant” (*kaṇaikkum āṇai*), as seen in the *Tēvāram*, than for referring to human speech.
- The presence of {*nalital*} is intriguing, because it might be intended to refer to cases where some consonants are combined with an āyṭam.¹⁹ Another possibility is that it describes the weakened/spirantized articulation of plosives in intervocalic position.

tion in Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. [unpublished Ph.D. thesis], 1981. See also Rajam, *A Comparative Study...*, as already hinted.

¹⁹ I am making this suggestion, thinking of the *Tolkāppiyam* verse TP524i that says: *nalipu vaṇṇam āyṭam payilum*. The link between *nalipu* “softening” and “the fricative corresponding to the plosive” is also noted by S.V. Shanmugam Shanmugam, *Nacciṇārkkiniyar’s Conception of Phonology*, Annamalai University, Department of linguistics: Publication No. 10, Annamalai Nagar, 1967, p. 58.

- As for {paṭuttal}, it is a term with many meaning and it is not easy to make a suggestion. I make the hypothesis that it might be used for referring to the “normal” pronunciation of occlusives, because it may be seen as a sort of equivalent to the term kiṭappu seen in 5.
- A quasi-intersection is {ōyāturappal}, which certainly resembles {urappal}, but since Tamil does not possess surd aspirates, what does the specification ōyātu “continuously” add, which could make it applicable to some of the phonetic realizations of some of the Tamil phonemes? It might in fact concern the groupe often called iṭaiyiṇam (i.e. y, r, l, v, land !).

My suggestions may well have missed the point (and I am not sure where to fit the nasals), but these questions seemed worth asking. I shall be glad if the scholar who is honoured in the volume for which this article is intended as a contribution, namely Professor Āḷvāpīḷai Vēluppīḷai, clears the doubts which remain in my mind.

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²⁰ The Tamil date given is *pirajōrpatti va. tai mā*. It is not clear when exactly this “14-m patippu” was printed.

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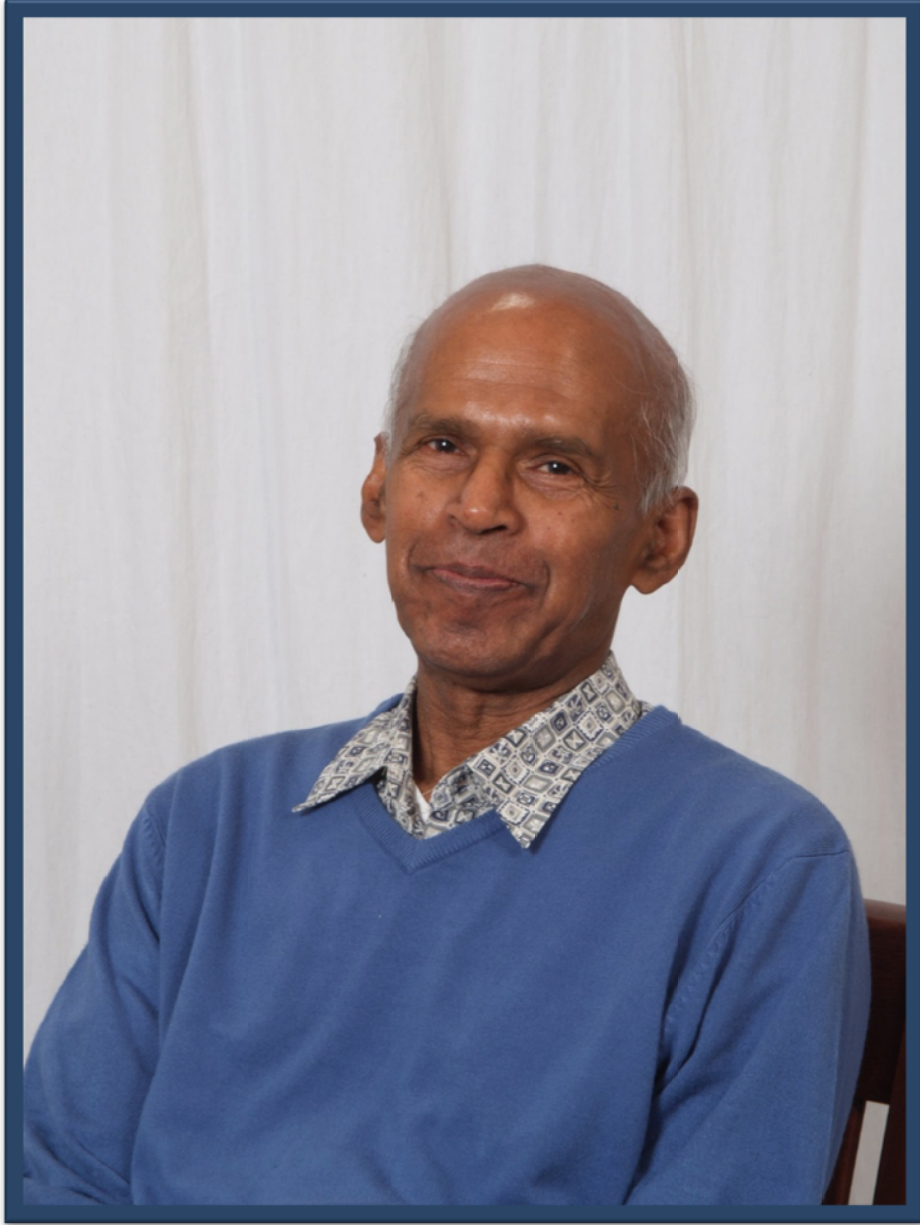
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