CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE STUDY
CHAPTER - VII

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7.1 Summary of Findings

As the aim of this study is to present a linguistic and sociolinguistic description of Tamil inscriptions in Karnataka, various linguistic and sociolinguistic characteristics of the inscriptions have been analysed and conclusions drawn. The linguistic study attempted in this work includes the description of the phrase structure, syntactic structure, cohesive pattern and coherence. The sociolinguistic study attempted in this work includes the identification of the deviations from the norm in various levels of the language, and their correlations with some of the social and other parameters that are considered as significant. The conclusions drawn out of this study are presented below.

7.2 Phrase Structure

The phrases used in inscriptions could be mainly classified into two types namely,

1. noun phrases

and 2. verb phrases.

The phrases are constituted by a head and modifier or qualifier. Thus a noun phrase consists of a head noun and a set of elements
qualifying the head noun. The head noun may be a proper noun, a common noun, a pronoun or a derived noun. The modifier elements that occur before the head noun may be an adjective, a genitive phrase or a participial phrase. Similarly a verb phrase is constituted of a head verb and a set of qualifiers attached to it. The head verb will always be in finite form carrying tense markers and pronominal terminations. The qualifiers attached to the head verb may be non-finite verbal constructions like verbal participle, infinitive, quotative and so on. The description of the noun phrase and the verb phrase has helped in the formulation of rules using which a noun phrase or verb phrase could be derived. The noun phrases attested in the inscriptions have been described with the help of twenty one (21) rules while the verb phrases have been described with the help of seventeen (17) rules.

7.3 Sentence Patterns

The sentences used in the inscriptions taken up for the study have been divided into different categories based upon the presence and absence of copula verb, type of the subjects present in the sentences, type of predicates present in the sentences and type of adjuncts used in the sentences.

The criterion of the presence and absence of the copula verb in sentences has led to the classification of sentences into two
major types viz., (1) explicit copula sentences and (2) implicit copula sentences. The affirmative sentences (non-copula) have been classified into different types on the basis of the tense suffixes which occur (in the predicate). The sentences have also been classified on the basis of the position of the subject in the sentence which has led to a three-way classification of sentences namely (1) sentences with subject in the initial position (2) subject in the medial position and (3) subject in the final position. Further classification of sentences has been made on the basis of the verb. An attempt has been made to classify the sentences on the basis of adjuncts present in the inscriptions. A model analysis of a sentence has been presented at the end of the Chapter - III. This type of analysis helps us to have an idea about the types of sentences that are used in the inscriptions, and from this it can be deducted that these types of sentences were in vogue in those days of the inscriptions also. This chapter concludes with seven rules which explain exhaustively the formulation of sentences in the inscriptions.

7.4 Features of Inscriptional Tamil

The typical features of the inscriptions of Tamil have been identified and listed in Chapter - IV. Presence of multiple adjectival and adverbial attributes characterise the inscriptional materials. Not less than nine attributes have been added to a head
noun and four attributes \textasciitilde{} to a head verb. This peculiar situation is rarely found in any other type of texts except probably in the land registration documents.

Apart from the qualitative differences identified in the components of the noun phrase, certain quantitative differences in the components of the noun phrases also characterise the Inscriptional Tamil. There can be place attributes, person attributes, time attributes, attributes with recursivity, etc. A similar situation is found in the case of verb phrases also. These quantitative and qualitative differences in the phrases are highly typical of the Inscriptional Tamil.

In the sentence level also several characteristic features have been observed. Occurrence of copula sentences, presence of multiple attributes to subject, predicate and object, presence of multiple conjunctions in a sentence and presence of multiple embedded sentences are the characteristic syntactic features of the Inscriptional Tamil. Presence of an elliptical sentence at the end of an inscription is yet another characteristic feature of the Tamil inscriptions found in Karnataka.

7.5 Discourse Analysis

A brief discourse analysis of the texts in inscriptions brings out the coherence pattern and the cohesion structure followed in them.
Discourse analysis has been made on three levels namely (1) grammatical structure (2) thematic structure and (3) speech act structure. The structural analysis of the inscriptions has revealed the general structure of the inscriptions namely (1) the benedictory phrase (2) body of the text and (3) hortative phrase. The thematic analysis of inscriptions has shown that they mostly describe the donations made to temples and other institutions by the kings as well as other persons. Speech Act analysis of the texts brings to light that most of the sentences are in the statement form except the concluding part which is in the hortative form.

7.6 Sociolinguistic Analysis

The deviations attested in the different levels of the language used in the inscriptions have been explained by resorting to the principles of sociolinguistics. The presence of grantha scripts, anuswara, non-linear order, mis spellings, etc. have been explained in this section. The influence of the majority language namely Kannada and the religious language Sanskrit has contributed to the deviations attested.

A statistical analysis of the inscriptions throws more light on the nature of the topics revealed through the inscriptions. 38% of inscriptions describe the donations made, 4.5% of inscriptions describe the valour and 7.5% of inscriptions contain miscellaneous
topics. This type of distribution of the inscriptions highlight the importance given to charity by our ancestors.

7.7 Suggestions for future research in this area of study

Inscriptions are highly valuable materials handed over to us by our ancestors. It is with the help of inscriptions and literary texts that our historians have constructed and reconstructed our past. They offer valuable information not only from the point of view of linguistics but also from the point of view of culture, society, religion, morality and so on. Inscriptions, therefore, deserve an exhaustive and indepth analysis. Some of the directions in which research in future can be undertaken are presented below:

7.7.1 Comparative Study

Studies on Tamil inscriptions carried out so far have restricted themselves to case studies alone, say, as inscriptions of a particular period or a particular region or a particular dynasty/king, etc. But Tamil inscriptions are available not only in Tamilnadu but also in the adjoining and nearby regions like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Orissa, Sri Lanka and so on. So far, no attempt has been made to compare the linguistic styles adopted in the inscriptions of Tamilnadu and other places. Such a study could reveal the peculiar features of Tamil of the concerned regions and also the influence of other languages over Tamil. The phonological structure, phrase structure and syntactic structure of these inscriptions could be
compared and useful conclusions could be drawn. This will help us to present a more adequate history of the Tamil language.

7.7.2 Syntactic Study

In the present study a description of the various sentences used in the inscriptions alone has been attempted. No attempt, however, has been made to undertake a statistical analysis of the syntactic patterns. Such a study when completed could reveal the type of sentence that is most preferred in the inscriptions. Thus multiple embedded sentences enjoy predominance over other types of sentences is a question to be probed.

7.7.3 Historical Study

A cursive look on the script system of inscriptions reveals that grantha scripts have been frequently used in them. The use of grantha scripts starts roughly from the 6th century (with the commencement of the Pallava regime) and continues till the 18th century A.D., with varying degrees. The actual period in which the grantha scripts got entry into the Tamil script system, and their prevalence in inscriptions down to the eighteenth century has to be studied historically from the political point of view. This could help us to understand the exact period from which the Sanskrit language started influencing Tamil as well as the extent of its influence.