5. The relation between Formal and Informal Tamil

In the preceding two chapters an attempt was made to analyse the phonological structures of Formal Tamil and Informal Tamil independently of each other. The arguments for any underlying representation or redundancy and phonological rule were based purely on internal evidence in each variety. Specifically, no evidence from Formal Tamil was used to justify any analysis of Informal Tamil. This was done to find the relation between the two varieties in terms of their own structures and not to prejudice the analysis of Informal Tamil from the point of view of Formal Tamil. The differences between the two in their phonological component are discussed below in terms of underlying representation, redundancy rules and phonological rules. The differences in the surface representation are results of differences in the above these and lists of surface forms are given for comparison.

It is possible to assume that the phonology of Formal Tamil underlies the phonology of Informal Tamil and derive the latter from the former. This has been done by previous scholars. This possibility is discussed briefly in the last section of this chapter.
The differences between the two varieties of Tamil are not restricted to phonology alone. They are manifested in the grammar, i.e., morphology and syntax and in the lexicon as well. They are discussed in the two subsequent chapters.

A. Underlying Representations

The underlying representations are largely common for both Formal Tamil and Informal Tamil. The differences are given below:

The mono syllabic case suffixes which end in a consonant in the underlying representation of Formal Tamil have added the vowel /e/ in Informal Tamil as in the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Tamil</th>
<th>Informal Tamil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talai-y+a:1</td>
<td>talai-y+a:le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kay-y+a:1</td>
<td>kay-y+a:le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pu-w+o:t</td>
<td>pu-w+o:te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amma-w+o:t</td>
<td>amma-w+o:te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kan-n+il</td>
<td>kan-n+ile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kal-l+il</td>
<td>kal-l+ile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mul-l+il</td>
<td>mul-l+ile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'with head'  
'with hand'  
'with flower'  
'with mother'  
'in the eye'  
'in the stone'  
'in the thorn'  

The past tense suffix /t/ with certain words in Formal Tamil is found as /nt/ in Informal Tamil in those words. However /nt/ is a past tense suffix in Formal Tamil also, but with certain other words. So it is not a new underlying form in Informal Tamil, but it occurs with more number of words. It is not inserted by a phonological rule in this study but listed in the lexicon as one of the alternants of the past tense suffix, because there is no phonological environment for its insertion or to derive it from another past tense suffix like /t/. Its occurrence is lexically conditioned.

- cey+t+a:n  
  cey+nt+a:n  'he did'

- koy+t+a:n  
  koy+nt+a:n  'he plucked'

- ney+t+a:n  
  ney+nt+a:n  'he wove'

The words which have /i/ or /u/ in the first syllable in the underlying representation of Formal Tamil have /e/ or /o/ respectively in Informal Tamil as in the following:

- ilai  
  ele  'leaf'

- vilai  
  vele  'price'

- vitai  
  vete  'seed'

- nilai  
  nele  'condition, threshold'
Though the above shown Informal Tamil words have mid vowels in their surface form, they are claimed to have high vowels in their underlying representation. The justification for this is that in derivationally related forms there is high vowel and the mid vowels are environmentally conditioned, i.e., by the low vowel in the following syllable. The derivationally related sets of words are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kilai</td>
<td>'branch of a tree'</td>
<td>kilai</td>
<td>'branch of a tree'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cilai</td>
<td>'branch of a tree'</td>
<td>cilai</td>
<td>'branch of a tree'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kirakku</td>
<td>'east'</td>
<td>kirakku</td>
<td>'east'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uravu</td>
<td>'ploughing'</td>
<td>uravu</td>
<td>'ploughing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uyaram</td>
<td>'height'</td>
<td>uyaram</td>
<td>'height'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kunam</td>
<td>'quality'</td>
<td>kunam</td>
<td>'quality'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kutai</td>
<td>'reduce'</td>
<td>kutai</td>
<td>'reduce'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vowel /u/ after initial /v/ is treated to be /i/ underlyingly for similar derivational
relationship. The examples are below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vutu</td>
<td>'to leave'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vuru</td>
<td>'to fall'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitutalai</td>
<td>'freedom'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>virutu</td>
<td>'falling roots of banyan tree'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that all historically related words in Formal and Informal Tamil cannot be said to have the same underlying form. For example, Formal Tamil words such as piti 'to catch', piri 'to squeeze', pillai 'child' etc. and Informal Tamil words puti, puri and pulle may be historically related respectively and the Formal Tamil words pen 'girl' and petti 'box' and Informal Tamil words ponnu and potti may be historically related respectively and the Informal Tamil words are derivable from the corresponding Formal Tamil words. But there is no internal evidence, i.e., derivationally related words with unrounded high vowel and unrounded mid vowel between labial and retroflex consonants in the above examples. Therefore the underlying forms in Informal Tamil cannot be piti, piri, pillai, pen, petti etc.

b. Redundancy Rules.

In the word initial position of Formal Tamil, there can be only one non-syllabic segment but there
can be two non-syllabic segments in Informal Tamil

kra:mam 'village'
kle:sam 'sorrow'
kla:rkru 'clerk'
klacu 'class'
kro:tam 'anger'
cla:ki 'to praise'
vla:kam 'name of a place'
vratam 'fasting'
bramma 'Lord Brahma'

The stops in consonant clusters must be homorganic (with some lexical exceptions) in Informal Tamil but they may be non-homorganic also in Formal Tamil.

vetkam vekkam 'shy'
katkam kakkam 'armpit'
kacı kacci 'party'

C. Phonological Rules.

The following phonological rules are common between Formal and Informal Tamil. The details of the rule may be seen in chapter 4.A.e.
1. Ca:riyai insertion rule (cf. Rule-2)
2. Glide insertion rule (cf. Rule-3)
3. Tensing of sonorants rule (cf. Rule-4)
4. Voicing rule (cf. Rule-5)
5. Fricativization rules (cf. Rules 6, 7 and 8).
6. Becoming continuant rule (cf. Rule-9)
7. Retraction rule (cf. Rule-10)
8. Retroflexion rule (cf. Rule-11)
9. Develarization rule (cf. Rule-12)
10. Dedentalization rule (cf. Rule-13)
11. Sonorant deletion rule (cf. Rule-16)
12. Deletion of /u/ rule (cf. Rule-17)
15. Fronting of /u/ rule (cf. Rule-20)

The following rules are exclusive to Formal Tamil:

1. Insertion of Ca:riyai /in/
2. Delateralization rule (cf. Rule-15)
3. Tensing of obstruents rule (cf. Rule-14)
4. Affrication rule. (cf. Rule-21)
The following rules are exclusive to Informal Tamil:

1. Palatalization rule (cf. Rules 13, 14 and 15)
2. Nasal assimilation rule (cf. Rule-17)
3. Nasalization rule (cf. Rules 18 and 19)
4. Lateral deletion rule (cf. Rule 21)
5. Glide deletion rule (cf. Rule-22)

The exclusive rules of Informal Tamil apply after the application of the common rules of both Formal and Informal Tamil. For example, Palatalization Rule (Rule-15) which is exclusive to Informal Tamil applies after the application of Develarization Rule (Rule-12) which is common to Formal and Informal Tamil.

Nasal assimilation Rule (Rule-17) which is exclusive to Informal Tamil applies after the application of Retraction Rule which is common to both Formal and Informal Tamil.

The Deretraction rule (Rule-26) which is exclusive to Informal Tamil applies after the application of the Retraction Rule (Rule-4), which is common to both Formal and Informal Tamil.
D. Surface Representation.

The surface representations of Formal and Informal Tamil are more different than underlying representations.

The words with the instrumental case suffix -a:1 and the locative case suffix -il in Formal Tamil take /e/ after the suffix in Informal Tamil.

kayya:l  kayya:le  'with hand'
kanna:l  kanna:le  'with eye'
colla:l   colla:le  'with word'
kayyil   kayyile  'in the hand'
kannil   kannile  'in the eye'

The final /u/ in the associative case suffix in Formal Tamil is /e/ in Informal Tamil.

avanо:du  avano:de  'with him'
enno:du   enno:de  'with me'
kallo:du  kallo:de  'with stone'

/ai/ in Formal Tamil is /e/ in Informal Tamil.

avanai  avane  'him'
marattai maratte  'tree (acc.)'
talaivar  talevaru  'leader'
The words in Formal Tamil which end in a lateral or the glide /y/ do not have them in Informal Tamil in certain environments and with certain exceptions. (cf. Rule-21).

- aval: vanda: 'she'
- vanda:l: vanda: 'she came'
- conna:l: conna: 'if someone says'
- vanda:l: vanda: 'if someone comes'
- maːŋgaːy: maːŋga: 'mango'
- teːŋgaːy: teːŋga: 'coconut'

The words which end in nasal in Formal Tamil end in nasalized vowel in Informal Tamil in certain environments:

- avan: avē: 'he'
- vandaːn: vandaː: 'he came'
- manam: manoː: 'fragrance'
- vandoːm: vandoː: 'we came'

The mono syllabic words with short vowel of Formal Tamil which end in nasal or lateral end in nasal or lateral gemination with /u/ in Informal Tamil.

- kanː: kannu: 'eye'
The words which end in sonorants in Formal Tamil are followed by /u/ in Informal Tamil. This is true also of words which end in a lateral or /y/ which is not deleted. The /u/ after /y/ however appears as /i/

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{mañ} & \text{mannu} & \text{'soil'} \\
\text{kal} & \text{kallu} & \text {'toddy'} \\
\text{kal} & \text{kallu} & \text {'stone'} \\
\text{pal} & \text{pallu} & \text {'tooth'} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
a:n & a:nu & \text{'male'} \\
\text{ma:ñ} & \text{ma:nu} & \text{'deer'} \\
\text{te:n} & \text{te:nu} & \text{'honey'} \\
\text{a:ḷ} & \text{a:lu} & \text{'man'} \\
\text{va:ḷ} & \text{va:lu} & \text{'sword'} \\
\text{te:ḷ} & \text{te:lu} & \text{'scorpion'} \\
\text{ka:ḷ} & \text{ka:lu} & \text{'leg'} \\
\text{pa:ḷ} & \text{pa:lu} & \text{'milk'} \\
\text{va:ḷ} & \text{va:lu} & \text{'tail'} \\
\text{va:r} & \text{va:ru} & \text{'to live'} \\
\text{ku:r} & \text{ku:ru} & \text{'paste, gruel'} \\
\text{ce:r} & \text{ce:ru} & \text{'to reach'} \\
\text{ko:r} & \text{ko:ru} & \text{'join, compile'}
\end{array}
\]
The words which have /tt/ in Formal Tamil have /tt/ in Informal Tamil.

- u:ttçu  
- ka:ttçu  
- a:ttçu kuku  
- co:ttçu kuku

The words which have /tt/ in Formal Tamil have /cc/ in Informal Tamil.

- adittçu:n  
- kudittçu:n  
- padittçu:n

The following processes viz. the deletion of word final laterals and glides, deletion of word final nasal causing word final nasalized vowel, insertion of /u/ after sonorants at the word final position result in the elimination of the word final consonants. Thus no word in Informal Tamil ends in a consonant in the surface representation.

6. Derivation of Informal Tamil from Formal Tamil

The following studies assume the Formal Tamil to be basic and derive the Informal Tamil from it.


Ranganayaki for example states explicitly that "the written language is taken as basic". Shanmugam Pillai (1972) states that "the relationship between Formal Tamil and Informal Tamil can be shown in a series of morphophonemic rules." There are, however different opinions also. Shanmugam Pillai (1960) for example claims that both are two distinct systems. According to him (1965b) the differences between the two are such that an extensive knowledge of literary Tamil does not automatically guarantee an easy understanding of colloquial Tamil. He goes even further and states (1965) if Malayalam has a claim to be different language, colloquial Tamil has an equally good claim to be a language different from literary language.
The differences between Formal and Informal Tamil were shown earlier in this chapter. However, Informal Tamil can be derived from Formal Tamil but not vice versa. It means that the underlying representations can be common for the two and the surface representations of the Formal Tamil will be an intermediate stage from which additional rules derive the surface representation of Informal Tamil. See for example, underlying representation \( \text{patik}+t+a:n \rightarrow \) Formal Tamil surface representation \( \text{paditta}:n \rightarrow \) Informal Tamil surface representation \( \text{padicca}: \)
underlying representation \( \text{co}:t+kk \rightarrow \) Formal Tamil surface representation \( \text{co:t}r\text{u}kk \rightarrow \) Informal Tamil surface representation \( \text{so:ttukki} \) underlying representation \( \text{nil}+nt+a:l \) Formal Tamil surface representation is \( \text{nind}r\text{a}:l \), Informal Tamil surface representation is \( \text{ninna} \).

Underlying representation \( \text{aval} \). Formal Tamil surface representation is \( \text{aval} \rightarrow \) Informal Tamil surface representation is \( \text{ava} \). To put it differently, the Formal Tamil can be the input to the rules of the Informal Tamil.

Even in cases where the underlying forms are different as Formal Tamil \( \text{pen} \), Informal Tamil \( \text{ponnu} \),
the Informal Tamil forms may be derived from the Formal Tamil by simple rules.

But there are some problems also. The problems of differences in morphemes and sentence constructions will be discussed in the following chapters. Even at the phonological level Informal Tamil words like naːlu 'four' cannot be derived from Formal Tamil words like naːnku by regular rules. The Informal Tamil forms like perusu 'be big' can be derived from Old Tamil form like peritu (which is less frequent in Modern Tamil) more easily than from the modern Formal Tamil forms like periyatu.