Chapter 6

Adjectives

6.1 Adjectives As A Category

Inflectionally, adjectives do have specific affixal patternings peculiar to them to mark them off as a category on their own. Therefore, one may consider adjectives as an inflecting class due to reasons explicated below. As to whether adjectives do constitute a separate morphological class, the perspectives follow thus.

Consider the following arguments for the given derivatory processes.

Argument 1:
The adverbial marker *Aka* can be attached only to a nominal base but not to an adjectival base.

Case 1:

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] + \text{Aka} & \rightarrow [X][\text{Aka}] \\
\text{Ex. } \text{maram} + \text{Aka} & \rightarrow \text{maramAka} \\
& \text{'As a tree'}
\end{align*}
\]

Case 2:

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] + \text{Aka} & \rightarrow [X][\text{PE}][\text{PP}] \\
\text{Ad. } *\text{nalla} + \text{Aka} & \rightarrow *\text{nallaAka} \\
& \text{'As a good one'}
\end{align*}
\]

Argument 2:
The following operation dearly demarcates adjectives from nouns when a 3rd. person ending is added to the nominal and adjectival bases. So then, they result in two pronominalized word-forms however, having different senses as shown below.

Case 1:

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] + \text{PE} & \rightarrow \text{ofN} \\
\text{Ex. } \text{maram} + \text{awu} & \rightarrow \text{maramawu} \\
& \text{'Of a tree'}
\end{align*}
\]

Case 2:

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] + \text{PE} & \rightarrow \text{the Adj.-one} \\
\text{Ad. } \text{nalla} + \text{awu} & \rightarrow \text{nallawu} \\
& \text{The one that is good/the good one'}
\end{align*}
\]

\[1\] For more details similar to this analysis see Ramesh (1998)
Argument 3:
The particle \( m\text{Awiri} \) when follows an adjective needs necessarily to be followed by \( \text{Aka} \), an adverbial particle, after it. This obligatory following of an adverbial particle is not so, when the particle follows a noun.

**Casel:**

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] & \quad + \text{mAWin} \rightarrow [X\ m\text{Awiri}] \\
\text{N_Nom.}
\end{align*}
\]

Ex. \( \text{mar am} + \text{mA win} \rightarrow \text{maram m\text{Awiri}} \)

\( \text{like a tree’} \)

**Casc2:**

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] & \quad + \text{mAWin} \rightarrow \ast [X\ m\text{Awiri}] \\
\text{Adj.}
\end{align*}
\]

but,

\[
\begin{align*}
[X] & \quad + \text{mAWin} + \text{Aka} \rightarrow [X\ m\text{Awiri}\text{Aka}] \\
\text{Adj.}
\end{align*}
\]

Ex. \( \text{nalla} + \text{mA win} + \text{Aka} \rightarrow \text{nallam \text{Awiri}\text{Aka}} \)

\( \text{‘is good’} \)

Adjectives in Tamil are of **two** kinds: Basic, and Derived. Two basic adjectives are \textit{nalla} and \textit{punm}. Derived adjectives can be distinguished as belonging to two types: (1) Denominal adjectives: those adjectives that are derived from nouns; (2) Deverbal adjectives: those that are derived from verbs. Denominal adjectives are derived by adding the suffix /+iya/, to the base form of nouns. This can be shown as:

\[
\begin{align*}
[X]\text{N} & \leftrightarrow [X\text{iya}]_{\text{Adj}} \\
\text{Ex.} \quad \text{aY\text{Yak}} & \leftrightarrow \text{aY\text{Yak}ya} \\
\text{‘beauty’} & \leftrightarrow \text{‘beautiful’}
\end{align*}
\]

Verbal adjectives are derived through the addition of the suffix /+a/, following the tense base of the verb. This can be seen as:

\[
\begin{align*}
[X]\text{N} & \leftrightarrow (\text{tense})\ d_{\text{Adj}} \\
\text{Ex.} \quad \text{eV\text{Y}a} & \leftrightarrow \text{eV\text{Y}a} \\
\text{‘do’} & \leftrightarrow \text{‘that which has been done’}
\end{align*}
\]

Adjectives in Tamil do not morphologically mark comparative and superlative degrees of relation. To syntactically express these, either of the two nominal postpositions, \textit{polo}, and \textit{tita} is used after the oblique form of a noun, which performs the predicative adjectival function. Although adjectives can be derived from both nouns, and verbs, taking on their suffixes, what really brings in morphological distinction, is the phenomenon of Affixal Homonymy.
6.1.1 Levels Of Adjectival Extensions

Inflectional patterning in the case of adjectives is largely unilayered. Particles are the chief morphological items that adjectives take on as inflectional suffixes, apart from certain postpositions and GNP inflections.

1: Particles (obligatory)
2: Postpositions (optional)

It can be shown that adjectives either take Particles straight after themselves or after GNP suffixes.

\[
\text{Adj}_\text{base} + (\text{GNP}) + \text{Particle} + (\text{Postposition})
\]

6.1.2 Adjectival Classes

Only two classes of adjectives can be morphologically established. Most of the adjectives that are not basic are derived from either nouns or verbs and hence classified as derived. The two following classes of adjectives could be considered distinct due to allomorphy of the base.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Base ending</th>
<th>Bound Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>nalla</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>puwu</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>+iya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Adjectival Classes

While nalla does not exhibit any morphophonemic variation for the bound base, the stem puwu changes to the bound form puwya. In the case of GNP inflection, nalla loses its final vowel, prior to suffixation, while in the case of puwu, it is the augment rya, that serves as base for GNP suffixation.

6.1.3 Analyzing Adjectives

An analysis of adjectives in Tamil would begin by stripping off at the morpho-syntactic level, Clitics, and at the purely morphological level, semi-bound and bound Particles, down to primary inflectional markers that inflect for the 3rd person GNP suffixes. After segmenting items of each level based on their order of occurrence, the stem may be obtained.

6.1.3.1 Particles and GNP Suffixes

Particles are of two kinds: Non-adverbial, and Adverbial. Those that follow adjectives at the primary level are three:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particle</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>itvam</td>
<td>Comparative1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mAwin</td>
<td>Comparative2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>padi</td>
<td>Comparative3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Adjectival Particles

Two adverbial postpositions Anya and Aka necessarily follow any of the three preceding particles.
The addition of the 3rd. person pronominal endings renders adjectives as nouns, as shown below:

| Adj _ + awu | 3rd, Singular Neuter |
| Adj _ + awanY | 3rd, Singular Feminine |
| Adj _ + aver | 3rd, Singular Masculine |
| Adj _ + aver | 3rd, Sing.Hon. /Plural |

Table 6.3: Adjectival GNP suffixes

It is only the 3rd. person GNP suffixes that can attach to the adjectival base.

6.1.4 Adjectives: Morphophonemics & Allomorphy

The process of suffixation effects certain phonological and morphophonemic changes on stems and suffixes. The following describes and accounts for such changes at each level of adjectival inflection.

In Tamil adjectives may be divided into two classes based on their morphophonemic behaviour.

The stem for Class 1 remains unmarked, i.e., has a null suffix, whereas Class 2 involves an additive augment \( \text{fya} \), which forms the base for the addition of GNP suffixes.

The class of stems that undergoes a change for the combining form is as follows:

Class 2 — puwu — puwu + \( \text{fya} \) → puwtya
Rule: \( u \rightarrow 0 / _{-} \text{fya} \)

There are 4 GNP suffixes that can attach on to the combining base of adjectives, all of which are the 3rd. person suffixes. Before the addition of the GNP suffixes, it is the augment in the bound form that undergoes the final vowel deletion.

Class 2 - puwu - puwtya+ avarY \( \rightarrow \) puwtyavarY
Rule: \( a \rightarrow 0 / _{-} \text{avarY} \)

The number of resulting allomorphs therefore, would include 2 stems each with 1 variant, and 5 suffixes. The total would then mean a sum of: 2 basic stems + 1 stem variant + 1 GNP base + 4 GNP suffixes = 8 allomorphs for adjectives.
6.1.5 The Analyzer Chart for Adjectives

The input to the Hybrid Tamil Morph would be an adjective form that undergoes a series of morphemic stripplings at each level of inflection as illustrated in the chart that follows.

The string is first scanned for a possible clitic at level 1. If found, it is stripped off by the 'Clitic Stripper' and stored in a temporary array with its relevant tag. The rest of the string is reconstructed and passed on to the next level of inflectional scan. Level 2 is that of GNP stripping. A similar processing takes place here, with the GNP suffix being stripped off, tagged, and stored in a temporary array, while the remaining string is reconstructed and passed on to the level 3 of Postpositions. These stripped off, the analysis moves on to level 4 of the Particles. Thereafter, the parse proceeds to level 5 of the Direct or Indirect (bound) forms, which detects the combining marker to be stripped off by the 'Augment Stripper'. This reconstructs the adjectival base after the augment has been determined. The resulting string is declared as the adjectival stem, with the rest of the remaining inflections and suffixes declared with their tags, as encountered at each level of the parse.

A comprehensive list of all adjectival affixes is also provided alongside.
Figure 6.1(a): Morphological Analyzer Chart: Adjective
## Adjectival Inflections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clitics</strong></td>
<td>Avawu, A, o, e, um, kUta, matrum, wAnY, Am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Particles after the Free form</strong></td>
<td>mAwin, pati, viwarn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Particles after the Bound form</strong></td>
<td>evnYa, eVnYappatu, eVnYrYAL, eVnYrYu, eVnYpawu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postpositions after the Oblique</strong></td>
<td>AnYa, Aka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GNP Inflections</strong></td>
<td>aYa, aYa, avar, awu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Augment Inflections</strong></td>
<td>Ø, iya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1(b): List of Adjectival Inflections/Suffixes