CHAPTER 1

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1.1 Postpositions: an overview

Case system links a noun phrase with other parts of a sentence through inflectional markers, or a word, which may be called as adposition including preposition and postposition. In languages like English, case is marked by inflectional marker, prepositions and word order. In Indian languages, especially Indo-Aryan and Dravidian families of languages, there are two layers of case marking elements namely, inflectional case and postpositions. Commenting on the inadequacy of the treatment of case formation by the traditional grammarians in Dravidian, Caldwell (1856) observes as follows:

The imitation of Sanskrit in this particular was certainly an error; for whilst in Sanskrit there are eight cases only, the number of cases in Tamil, Telugu & c., is almost indefinite. Every postposition annexed to a noun constitutes, properly speaking, a new case; and therefore the number of such cases depends upon the requirements of the speaker and the different shades of meaning he wishes to express' (pp.254-255).
In Tamil, one of the earliest of the Dravidian family of languages, the case system is found to be rich with both the inflectional marking and use of postpositions. There are two layers of case marking elements in Tamil namely, inflectional case and postpositions. In modern written Tamil, -āi, -āl, -ōtu, -ku, -atu and -il constitute the inflectional case system and they respectively denote accusative, instrumental, associative, dative, genitive and locative functions. Nominative does not involve inflection and the noun or pronoun is used as such in its original shape. There are a number of postpositions which resemble a word and are used as substitutes for the above case markers other than the accusative case marker and for denoting several extended functions.

1.2 The previous study

The use of postpositions as an extension or alternative mode of case marking is prevalent since early times. Some of the traditional grammarians of Tamil have noticed this fact. However, the recognition of postposition as a distinct grammatical category started with certain missionaries who worked on Tamil grammar and the study gained momentum during the later part of the twentieth century when a few linguists attempted for a detailed analysis of postpositions in Tamil.
1.2.1 Traditional Grammarians

Tolkappiyar (circa 300 BC) categorizes Tamil words into two major classes peyar ‘noun’, viṇai ‘verb’ (S.643) and identifies two more dependant classes of words itai ‘particle’ and uri ‘modifier’ (S.644). The words belonging to itai and uri do not have independent existence and they occur always in association with noun or verb. In Sutra 735, where different kinds of itai 'particle' are listed, forms related to casal and comparative senses have been mentioned besides others. In Sutra 565, the word kaṇ is given as the representative form of locative, the seventh case. Subsequently, in Sutra 566, nineteen words have been enumerated as representing the locative case. They are: kaṇ, kāl, puṟam, akam, ul, uḷai, kīl, mēl, piṇ, cār, ayal, puṭai, tēvakai, mūn, iḷai, kaṭai, talai, valam and iṭam. Similarly, in Sutra 1232, thirty six words denoting comparative sense (related to one of the functions of fifth case) have been enumerated. They are: aṇṇa, ṭyppa, urāḷa, oppa, enṇa, māṇa, onṇa, oṭuṇka, oṭṭa, ārika, enṇa, viyappa, ellir, viḷaiya, irappam, nikappam, kāḷa, kaṭuppa, kēppa, matippam, takaiya, marula, māra, maruppa, pulla, poruva, porpa, pōla, vella, viḷa, nāṭa, naliya, natuniṅka, nanta, ēṭa and puraiya. These two instances reveal the fact that postpositions were prevalent in early Tamil and they were grouped under the dependant word class of itai 'particle'.

Puttamittiranar (circa 1100 AD), in his grammatical work Vīracalīyam, brings to light the possibility of alternant word forms being used for fourth (poruṭtu ‘for’), fifth (niṟṟu ‘from’) and sixth (uḷai/uḷaiya ‘of’) cases in addition to the seventh case thus
indicating the extension of case marking through postpositions (S. 34 and 35). Gunaveera Panditar (circa 1200 AD), the author of *Nēminātam* and Pavananti (circa 1300 AD), the author of *Nāṭṉūl*, closely follow Tolkappiyar in the classification of words, in the treatment of *itaiccol* ‘particle’ and the analysis of case system. Pavananti, however, keeping pace with his period, omits obsolete forms and adds new forms. He has enumerated twenty eight words under seventh case (S. 302). They are: *kaṇ, kāl, kaṭṭai, itai, talai, vāy, ticai, vayīṇ, muṇ, cār, valam, itam, mēḷ, kōḷ, puṭai, mutal, piṇ, pāṭu, alai, tēm, ulai, val, uḷi, ul, akam, puṟam* and *il*. With regard to the words denoting comparative sense, he adds two new forms (*nēra* and *inṇa*), repeats ten forms *pōla, puraiya, oppa, urāla, māṇa, kaṭuppā, iyaiya, ēppa, nēra, nikara, aṇṇa* and *inṇa* (S. 367) from Tolkappiyar’s list and hints at the possibility of more forms. Cenavaraiyar (circa 1300 AD), one of the commentators of *Tolkāppiyam*, refers to the possibility of *māṛu* and *uḷi* being used as alternant forms for the third case in the instrumental sense (S. 735). In a different context, under Sutra 781 of the chapter *itaiccol*, he has mentioned about the use of the form *tōrum* in the sense of plural location. Though Tolkappiyar has not mentioned anything about this form, he has made use of it in Sutra 1349 (for a detailed argument about the treatment of *tōrum* by other commentators of *Tolkāppiyam* and later traditional grammarians see Nadarajan 1974). Teyvaccilaiyar (circa 1400 AD), another commentator of *Tolkāppiyam*, adds to the list of third case markers forms such as *kāraṇam, nimittam* and *ṭunai* in causal meaning and repeats *māṛu*, which has already been mentioned by Cenavaraiyar (Ibid).
Subramanya Dikshitar (circa 1700 AD), the author of *Pirayōkaviyēkam*, refers to the form *mēlninṟu* as an alternant for fifth case (S.6) in addition to those mentioned by Puttamittiranar (Ibid). It is for the first time in the history of Tamil grammar that Swaminatha Desigar (circa 1700 AD), in his grammatical treatise *ilakkanakkottu*, initiates a threefold classification of the different forms denoting case as *urupu*, *vēṟu urupu* and *collurupu* (S.16). *Urupu* refers to the representative case form, as for instance, the instrumental case marker -āḷ in the sentence vāḷ -āḷ vēṭṭināṉ 'he cut with the sword'. When the fifth case marker *in* is used in the instrumental sense as in the sentence vāḷ-in vēṭṭināṉ 'he cut with the sword', it is an instance of *vēṟu urupu*. *Collurupu* refers to a lexical alternant for the same casal sense as in the sentence vāḷ kontu vēṭṭināṉ where the word *kontu* replaces the instrumental case marker -āḷ. The term *collurupu* refers to the postpositions carrying the casal meaning.

In addition to the classification of the case marking forms, Swaminatha Desigar (Ibid) has identified forms such as *utan* in the associative sense and *kontu* in the instrumental sense under third case, *āka* in purposive sense under fourth case and *iruntu* and *vittu* in ablative sense under fifth case (S. 22).

The traditional grammarians have in general identified the occurrence of postpositions as a formal extension of the case system, which is basically inflectional in Tamil. Certain traditional grammarians such as Vaithiyanatha Desigar (circa 1700 AD), the author of *Ilakkaṇa vilakkam* and Muthuvira Upatyayar (circa 1900 AD), the author of *Muttuvīṇiyam* have followed the *Tolkāppiyam* tradition as such with reference to
analysis of case system. Certain others like Swami Kavirayar (circa 1900 AD), the author of Cuvâminâtam and Arumuga Navalar (1823-1879 AD), the author of Ilakkânanac curukkam have closely followed Ilakkanakkottu tradition (Swaminatha Desigar, circa 1700 AD) and adopted the threefold classification of case markers urupu, vēru urupu and collurupu (S. 39). Arumuga Navalar (Ibid) has added two forms pârkkilum and kâlûrum ‘than’ to the list of collurupu (S. 211).

1.2.2 Missionary Grammarians

Beschi, in his works Tōnūl vilakkam (1730) and A Grammar of the High dialect of the Tamil language - Centamil (1730) exactly follows Tolkâppiyam while dealing with the case system of High Tamil language. But in his grammatical work A Grammar of the Common dialect of the Tamil language - Kotuntamil (1728), he has made an attempt to analyze the Tamil words which are equivalent to English prepositions. In this respect, he has identified a number of postpositions with their meanings, traced their origin from noun or verb and mentioned about the governing case marker for each postposition. They are as follows:

a. After nominative

Noun origin

mutal, mutarkontu  ‘from’
varai, varaikkum  ‘as far as’, ‘until’, ‘upto’
Verb origin

\textit{ara} \hspace{1cm} 'without'
\textit{oliya} \hspace{1cm} 'unless'

b. After accusative

Verb origin

\textit{kon}tu \hspace{1cm} 'instrument or medium'
\textit{ku}rítu \hspace{1cm} 'about'
\textit{pó}l, \textit{pól}é, \textit{pó}l, \textit{pól}um \hspace{1cm} 'like', 'as'
\textit{párk}ka, \textit{párkk}il \hspace{1cm} 'than'
\textit{ká}tšilum \hspace{1cm} 'than'
\textit{cú}la \hspace{1cm} 'around'
\textit{tav}ira \hspace{1cm} 'besides'

c. After dative

Noun origin

\textit{app}ál, \textit{appur}am \hspace{1cm} 'beyond'
\textit{ipp}ál, \textit{ippur}am \hspace{1cm} 'on this side'

Verb origin

\textit{äka} \hspace{1cm} 'on account of', 'as'

d. After genitive

Noun origin

\textit{u}lán, \textit{u}láné \hspace{1cm} 'with'
e. **After locative**  
   Verb origin  
   - *iruntu*  
     ‘from’  
   - *niofu*  
     ‘from’

f. **After nominative or accusative**  
   Verb origin  
   - *anjri, allatu, allata, allamal, allate*  
     ‘without’, ‘besides’  
   - *inri, illatu, illata, illamal*  
     ‘without’, ‘besides’

g. **After nominative or dative**  
   Noun origin  
   - *mattem*  
     ‘until’, ‘upto’

h. **After nominative, dative, or genitive**  
   Noun origin  
   - *mel, melle*  
     ‘above’, ‘upon’

i. **After accusative, dative, or genitive**  
   Verb origin  
   - *kitta*  
     ‘near’, ‘near to’

j. **After dative, or genitive**  
   Noun origin  
   - *kili, kile*  
     ‘below’  
   - *pin, pinnu, pinparr, pinniyum, pinnal, pinpu, pinpat, piratu, piraku*  
     ‘after’
According to Beschi (ibid), *itattil* (locative) and *utaiya* (genitive) are case markers and the latter belongs to the common ordinary dialect and is not used in high dialect.

A similar attempt to identify Tamil words equivalent to prepositions and particles has been made by the missionary grammarians such as Graul (1855) and Pope (1855). Graul (1855) in his *An Outline of Tamil Grammar* under section 49 on Prepositions and Conjunctions has identified a few postpositions which are broadly classified into nominal and verbal forms on the basis of their grammatical shapes. The forms listed under nominal category are as follows:

a) Nominative form

- *pariyantam*  ‘until’
- *alavu, alavum*  ‘until’
- *maṭṭu, maṭṭum*  ‘until’
- *māttiram*  ‘as soon as’
- *marunku*  ‘near’
- *poruṭṭu*  ‘for the purpose of’
- *paṭi*  ‘according to’
- *nimittam*  ‘for the sake of’
b) Dative form

\[ \text{varaikkum} \quad \text{‘until’} \]
\[ \text{matükkum} \quad \text{‘as far as’} \]

c) Ablative locative form

\[ \text{varaiyil} \quad \text{‘until’} \]
\[ \text{jąttil} \quad \text{‘near’, ‘at’} \]

d) Oblique form

\[ \text{jątattu} \quad \text{‘near’, ‘at’} \]

The following have been listed under verbal category:

a) Infinitive form

\[ \text{kitta} \quad \text{‘near’} \]
\[ \text{pōla} \quad \text{‘like’} \]
\[ \text{nikara} \quad \text{‘like’} \]
\[ \text{oppa} \quad \text{‘like’} \]
\[ \text{tavira} \quad \text{‘except’} \]
\[ \text{oliya} \quad \text{‘except’} \]
\[ \text{cūla} \quad \text{‘round about’} \]
\[ \text{ara} \quad \text{‘without’} \]

b) Participle form

\[ \text{kuṛittu} \quad \text{‘concerning’} \]
\[ \text{cūlntu} \quad \text{‘round about’} \]
\[ \text{cuṛi} \quad \text{‘round about’} \]
\[ \text{vittu} \quad \text{‘from’} \]
\[ \text{iḷamal} \quad \text{‘without’} \]
\[ \text{allamal} \quad \text{‘besides’} \]
In addition to the above, kil 'under', mel 'over', utan 'with', mun (munpu, munnar) 'before', pin (pinpu, pinnar) 'after' have been considered as nouns by origin.

Pope (1855) has identified postpositions in two ways: (i) as forms equivalent to English prepositions and (ii) as particles connected with different cases.

(i) Forms equivalent to English prepositions
   a. 'before' (place or time)
      mun, munne, munpu -ay, -aka) munnam, munnamē, munna, munnaka, munnālē, munti
   b. 'after' (place or time)
      pin, pinne, pinpu, pinnar, pinpātu, pinnaie, pinnuru, pinti
   c. 'as', 'like'
      pōl, pōla, pōnra, pōlē, pōlavē, pōlumē, oppa
   d. 'concerning', 'about', 'upon'
      kurittu, parri
   e. 'towards'
      nōkki, parttu
   f. 'for'
      ōcaram
g. ‘as far as’, ‘until’, ‘till’, ‘upto’,
   varai
   pariyantam
   maṭṭum

h. ‘as long as’
   ajavu

i. ‘besides’, ‘but’
   oliya

j. ‘with, ‘together’
   kūta

k. ‘round about’
   cūla

l. ‘except’
   tavira

m. ‘besides’, ‘except’, ‘but’
   aprī, allāmal

(ii) As particles connected with different cases
   a. connected with third case
   utan, utanē ‘together with’
   kontu ‘by means of’, ‘through’
   mūlamāy ‘by means of’
b. connected with fourth case
   āka 'for'
enju 'for'
nimittamāka 'for the sake of'
poruṭṭu 'for'

c. connected with fifth case
   iruntu 'from'

d. connected with sixth case
   utaiya 'of'
uriya 'belonging to'

e. connected with seventh case
   akam 'inside'
anṭai 'near'
aruku, arukē, arukil 'near'
iṭam, iṭattil 'with'
ul 'within'
kittē 'near'
kīl 'under'
pāl 'with'
puruṭṭam 'outside'
pērīl, peyarīl 'upon'
mun 'before'
mēl 'above'
It is to be noted here that it is Caldwell (1856), who has for the first time coined the term postposition. According to him, postpositions represent an extension of case system and they are normally appended to the ‘inflected form of the base or oblique case, which has sometimes a possessive, sometimes a locative, and sometimes an adjectival signification’ (p.255).

Arden (1891), in his work A Progressive Grammar of the Tamil Language, considers postpositions as particles serving the purpose of the English prepositions. According to him, the postpositions are nouns or verbs by origin. He has attempted a fourfold classification of Tamil postpositions on the basis of the governing case. The four classes of postpositions with examples are given below:

1. Postpositions added to a nominative case

   - *mattum* or *mattukkum* ‘until’, ‘as far as’
   - *varaiyil, varaiyilum,*
   - *varaikkum* ‘until’, ‘as long as’, ‘as far as’
   - *pariyantam* ‘until’
   - *mutal, mutalaka, mutarkoṇṭu* ‘from’

2. Postpositions added to an accusative case

   - *kurittu* ‘about’
   - *pöl, pōla, pōlé* ‘like’
   - *tavira* ‘except’
   - *oliya* ‘except’
3. Postpositions added to a dative case

cka  
'for'

ul, ullē  
'in', 'among', 'into', 'within'

appuram, appāl  
'on the farther side'

ippuram, ippāl  
'on this side'

muṇ (muṇē, muṇnālē, muṇpu, muṇram, muṇnāmē)  
'before'

pīn (pinnē, pinnālē, pīrpu, pīraku, pīrpāṭu)  
'after'

kī, kīlē  
'under', 'beneath'

mēl, mēlē  
'upon', 'above'

4. Postpositions added to the inflectional base

utan, utanē  
'with', 'together with'

kitā, aruku, arukē, arukil, aṇṭai  
'near'

poruṭtu  
'for', 'for the purpose of'

nimittam, nimittamāka  
'for the sake of'

pēril, peyaril  
'upon', 'concerning'

mēl, mēlē  
'upon', 'concerning'

valī, valiyāka  
'by way of'

paṭi, paṭikkā  
'as', 'according as'

mūlamāy  
'by means of'
1.2.3 Modern Grammarians

The use of the term *collurupu* to denote postposition is found to be maintained by certain modern grammarians of Tamil (Suthananda Bharathiayar, 1964; Devaneyan, 1967; Saravanattamizhan, 1970; and Murugaiyan, 1982). Suthananda Bharathiayar (1964) adds under seventh case forms such as *pakkam, öram, māṭu, pāṅkar, kiṭṭa, mukam, pāl* and *aṇṭai*. Devaneyan (1967) distinguishes *collurupu* ‘postposition’ from *acaiurupu* ‘case suffixes’ and suggests that the number of cases in Tamil are nine with the extension of associative case as distinct from the third case. He adds *ittu* as a postposition under third case. Shanmugam Pillai (1967) interprets *collurupu* as secondary case marker differentiating it from *urupu* which he calls as primary case. Saravanatthamizhan (1970) argues that the reason for the development of *utaiya* under the sixth case is the restricted use of *atu* with the following non-human noun. *utaiya* can be accompanied by both human and non human nouns.

Several arguments in favour of treating postposition as a distinctive grammatical category have been put forth by several modern linguists. The occurrence of postpositions in early Tamil texts and their uses have been traced in the works of Shanmugam (1971) and Athithan (1989). Shanmugam (1971) with illustrations from old Tamil texts has added to the list of locative postposition the forms such as *etir, utaṇ, tiṟam, micaï, mīmicaï, varai, umpar* and *pakkal*. According to him, overlapping of postpositions was quite common in old Tamil. For instance, the locative postpositions *vayin*, *māṭu*, *akam* and *etir* could be used in
accusative sense. The occurrence of postpositions such as *utan* and *kontu* in Tolkappiyam and Sangam texts has been pointed out by Athithan (1989). A detailed analysis of a number of postpositions used in classical Tamil poetry (150 B.C. to 600 A.D.) has been attempted by Rajam (1992).

Formally, postpositions reflect either nouns or verbs (for the argument related to defective nominal base see Balasubramanian, 1973 and for that of defective verbals see Lehmann, 1989). Since these forms cease to display syntactic properties of nouns and verbs, they have to be descriptively treated as a separate category viz., postpositions (see Lehmann, 1989 and Kothandaraman, 1997). Lehmann (1989) has identified different kinds of inflected forms of nouns and verbs used as postpositions. (i) Nouns forms (a) Bare form (*mūlam*), (b) noun + euphonic clitic *ē* (*etērē*), (c) noun + locative case suffix -*il*, (*natuvil*), (d) noun + adverbial suffix -*āka* (*patilāka*) (ii) verb forms (a) verbal participle (*kurittu*), (b) negative verbal participle (*illāmal*), (c) infinitive (*tavira*) and (d) conditional form + *pōla* (*atuttātpōla*).

Postpositions are found to be used in two ways, (i) as a substitute for a particular case marker and (ii) as additional form denoting different relationships between noun and verb. *kontu*, *utan*, *iruntu* and *utaiya* are respectively substitutes for -*āl*, -*ōtu*, -*īp* and -*atu*. The forms such as *parri*, *tavira*, *mēl*, *kī*, *ul*, etc., belong to the second category. Agesthialingom (1979) refers to the former as *māṟṟu urupu* and the latter as *piṇṇurupu*. The term
postpositions has been later adopted by Kothandaraman (1997) and Murugesan (2006) to denote postpositions.

On the basis of the noun form (inflected or non-inflected) that precedes the postposition, a syntactic classification of postpositions has been attempted by missionary grammarians and modern linguists. From what Beschi has said about governing case (1728), one can infer a fivefold classification of postpositions: postpositions occurring after (i) nominative, (ii) accusative, (iii) dative, (iv) genitive and (v) locative. Arden (1891) has dropped the fifth class locative, replaced the fourth class genitive with oblique and advocated a fourfold classification. Schiffman (1979) and Lehmann (1989) have followed Arden (ibid). Kothandaraman (1981 and 1997) has followed Beschi (ibid) with a modification in the first class. The postpositions occurring after nominative and oblique nouns which will not take any case marker are considered by him as plain postpositions. Murugesan (2006) follows Kothandaraman (1981 and 1997).

There is an overlapping between genitive and oblique classes. It is possible that the genitive class may be merged with the oblique class. That is why genitive class has not been considered as a separate class by Arden (1891), Schiffman (1979) and Lehmann (1989). In accusative and dative classes, the occurrence of the respective markers is obligatory with certain postpositions and optional with certain others. When the occurrence of accusative or dative case marker is optional, there
is a possibility of the remnant form overlapping with the oblique class.

A particular postposition distributed among different classes may result in change of meaning. For instance, *mēl* after oblique noun yields the meaning ‘on’ and after dative the meaning ‘over’ or ‘above’ (see Arden, 1891, Karunakaran & Pushapavalli 1981, and Kothandaraman, 1981 & 1997).

Certain postpositions having formal variations without change of meaning has been pointed out by Kothandaraman (1997). They are as follows:

1. *mūn, mūppē, mūnpu, mūnāl, mūnālē*
2. *piṅ, piṅpu, piṅāl, piṅālē*
3. *ul, ullē*
4. *ītaiyē, ītaiyil*
5. *nātvē, nātvil*
6. *etirīl, etirē*
7. *arukē, arukē*
8. *enta, ena*
9. *patīl, patīlāka*
10. *mēl, mēlē*

The fact that the postpositions and the preceding noun form a single unit has been discussed in the works of Kothandarman (1997) and Murugesan (2006). Kothandaraman (1997) has pointed out that the particles such as *-um, -ō and -āvatu* should always follow the postpositions indicating that it is
not possible to insert them in between noun and postposition. This is further confirmed by Murugesan (2006).

Arangarasan (2000) has attempted a semantic classification of postpositions on the basis of the semantic relationship that the postpositional phrase has with the predicate. A list of semantic classes of postpositions suggested by him is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postposition</th>
<th>Semantic Class</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>itam</em></td>
<td>'location'</td>
<td><em>itam</em>, <em>piraku</em> (spatial, temporal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nīṇkal</em></td>
<td>'source'</td>
<td><em>iruntu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ellai</em></td>
<td>'destination'</td>
<td><em>varai</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>vāyil</em></td>
<td>'path'</td>
<td><em>valiyāka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>niraval</em></td>
<td>'distribution'</td>
<td><em>tōrum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nilai</em></td>
<td>'status'</td>
<td><em>āka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>karuvi</em></td>
<td>'instrument'</td>
<td><em>konțu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kāraṇam</em></td>
<td>'cause'</td>
<td><em>muṇṇīṭṭu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>utanikālcci</em></td>
<td>'associative'</td>
<td><em>utan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nōkkam</em></td>
<td>'purpose'</td>
<td><em>poruțtu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>utanmai</em></td>
<td>'possessor'</td>
<td><em>utanaiya</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>uvamam</em></td>
<td>'comparison'</td>
<td><em>pōla</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>urālVu</em></td>
<td>'contrast'</td>
<td><em>vīta</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There are still a number of postpositions which have not been considered in the studies discussed above. Besides the syntactic classification of postpositions on the basis of the governing case, there are several other syntactic issues linking the form and meaning of postpositions, which need to be looked into in depth. A semantic analysis of postpositions in terms of multiple meaning (homonymy and polysemy) and synonymy (total, near and partial) has to be undertaken along with a fresh classification. In the light of above facts, it is felt that there is a strong need to undertake a detailed study of the postpositions in modern Tamil and hence the present study.
1.3 The present study

The purpose of the present study is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the postpositions in modern written Tamil from morphological, syntactic and semantic perspectives.

The data for the study were collected extensively from newspapers, magazines, novels and other modern literary works. The corpus for modern Tamil developed by the Central Institute of Indian Languages and Cre-A for its Dictionary of Contemporary Tamil (Tamil-Tamil-English) were also made use of. 100 postpositions, which are prevalent in modern written Tamil, were selected for the study. The occurrence of each postposition in different sentential contexts was recorded on cards. The syntactic contexts and meanings in which a particular postposition occurs were noted on each card. Grouping and subgrouping of cards were done separately for morphological, syntactic and semantic analysis of postpositions.

Postpositions of nominal and verbal origin were separated and classified into different categories and subcategories. The different possible phonological and morphological variants of the above postpositions were identified and classified in order to understand how different grammatical forms have fossilized and resulted in a category called 'postposition'.

The postpositions were syntactically classified as primary and secondary postpositions as suggested by Blake (2001:10). Primary postpositions are those which are attached to the
nominative or oblique form of a noun or pronoun. The postpositions which follow a noun or pronoun appended with a case marker are secondary postpositions. The primary postpositions were subclassified into two groups namely, those occurring after nominative form and (ii) those occurring after oblique form. The secondary postpositions were subclassified into two groups namely, (i) those occurring after accusative case marker and (ii) those occurring after dative case marker. Certain postpositions which overlap with the above classes or subclasses with no change in meaning were grouped separately. Syntactic tests such as coordination and relativization were applied in order to understand whether the postposition and the preceding noun are separable or not.

A semantic classification of postpositions proposed by Arangarasan (2000: 232-233) was revised with inputs from Lindstromberg (1998) and Vasu (1988), who have attempted a semantic study of English prepositions and Tamil postpositions respectively. A few more classes and subclasses have been included accommodating many postpositions not considered in earlier studies. A detailed semantic analysis was undertaken to identify multiple meaning synonymy among postpositions.

The main study that follows this introduction is organized in four chapters. The morphological study is reported in chapter 2, syntactic study in chapter 3 and semantic study in chapter 4. The findings of the study are interpreted and discussed in chapter 5.