Enunciative Vowel in Dravidian

It seems to be two groups of words in the Dravidian languages in which the vowel endings \( u \) and \( a \) occur. In one group these vowels behave in the same way as the rest of the vowel sounds of the language when they are combined with other sounds. But, in the other group they behave differently. An attempt is made here to prove that these vowel sounds occurring in the second group are later additions.

Tolkāppiyam, the earliest extant grammar of the Tamil language, states that the sound \( u \), joined to a plosive, coming at the end of words is pronounced with less quantity of sound than the normal \( u \), if the plosive is preceded by a long syllable or polysyllable.¹ In classifying the words which have this \( u \) sound it says that they are those words in which the plosive, to which the \( u \) is added, is immediately preceded by (1) a long syllable, (2) polysyllable, (3) a semi-vowel, (4) the aspirate \( h \) (āyīam), (5) a plosive, or (6) a nasal.² The following examples may be given for these six different classes of words:—

\[
\begin{align*}
nāku & \text{ "a cow,"} & \text{varaku "a kind of grain,"} & \text{telku "a flea,"} & \text{ehku "steel,"} \\
hočku & \text{ "a crane"} & \text{and kurāuku "a monkey."} \\
\end{align*}
\]

It also states in another sūtra that in the noun denoting relationship, which begins with the syllable \( nu \), the quantity of the \( u \) sound is less than normal.³ The commentator Naccinārkkīniyār gives the word \( nuntai \) meaning "your father" as the example.

¹ Tol. El. Sūt. 36.
³ Tol. El. Sūt. 67. The expression muraippeyar used in the sūtra may also be taken as plural; in which case it should be translated as "nouns denoting relationship." If the expression is taken as plural, it would mean that there existed in the time of Tolkāppiyam several words denoting relationship beginning with the syllable \( nu \). But the commentator takes the expression as singular. Is it to be inferred from this that such words except \( nuntai \), mentioned by him, were lost in his time?
The old grammarians held the view that the full quantity of the sound of the vowel *u* was one *māṭrā*, whereas the quantity of the *u*, thus shortened, was half. Evidently the difference of the quantity of the sound between the two was determined by the ear. Naccinārkkiṇiyar thinks that the difference between the *u* sounded fully, and the *u* sounded less than the quantity appropriated, is due to the fact that the former is pronounced with the lips rounded, whereas when they are pronounced properly rounding the lips, the words are nouns; whereas the latter is not. He gives the following words as examples:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduced Sound</th>
<th>Full Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>kāṭu</em></td>
<td>&quot;a ear&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kattu</em></td>
<td>&quot;a knot&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kattu</em></td>
<td>&quot;a cry&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>murukku</em></td>
<td>&quot;a kind of tree&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tēruttu</em></td>
<td>&quot;informing&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tolkiippiyam says that words of this kind vary in meaning in accordance with the way in which the final *u* is pronounced. But in the noun of relationship shown before, where the *u* occurs in the initial syllable with the dental *n*, there will be no difference in meaning due to the way in which the *u* is pronounced. Tolkiippiyam gives only this word with the reduced sound of *u* as first syllable. From this it may be conjectured that many more words with the short *u* in the initial syllable existed before the time of Tolkiippiyam. But all of them except the word *nunai* are lost.

It is clear from this that there existed two groups of words in the language wherein the reduced sound of *u* occurred. One group had the reduced *u* in the initial syllable, and the other had it at the end of the word. In the first group of words the reduced quantity of the *u* sound might have resulted through laziness of pronunciation.

Let us now analyse the reduced *u* sound which occurs at the end of words. This *u* disappears as soon as a word beginning with a vowel immediately follows it. Examples:

- *nāku* + *ariu* > *nāk-ariitu* "the cow is precious."
- *pattu* + *ətai* > *patt-ətai* "the silk-cloth."
- *tekku* + *ətai* > *tek-ətai* "this is flea."

When a word beginning with a vowel follows them, these words behave as if they ended in consonants. In fact it is possible that words of this kind might have originally ended in consonants, and the *u* may be a later addition. This is owing to this fact that, when a word with initial vowel comes after it, the

4. See comm. of Nac. under Sūt. 68 of Tol. El.
UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW

But, in other cases, when a consonant follows it, there is no reduction of its half mātra. Examples:

- nāku haritu
- nāku ciritu
- nāku tilu
- nāku peritu
- nāku nautu
- nāku mātigi
- nāku wālitu

"the cow is black."
"the cow is small."
"the cow is bad."
"the cow is large."
"the cow is good."
"the greatness of the cow."
"the cow is strong."

As regards this vowel, Caldwell thinks that it is a very weak vowel, which is largely used at the end of words, for euphonic purposes or as a help to enunciation. If it is an enunciative vowel it has to be analysed as to when it could have been added to these words. Perhaps the Dravidian language, the ancestor of the present Dravidian group of languages, might have had words ending in plosives—a phenomenon which is against the rules of all the present cultivated Dravidian languages. But, this fact is still to be found in some of the ruder dialects of the Dravidian group.

Kōta: tinalik, the infinitive of the root tin—"to eat."
Gond: ork—"they."
ândurk—"they are." or "they were."
nâourk, tamurk—"my brothers."
selâr—"my sisters."
amâlt—"we."
îmâlt—"ye."

Rājmahāl: art, ort—"one."
Orāon: nâch—"four."
Brahui: hulîk—"horses."
urâl—"two."
asit—"one."
musît—"three."
tâhîl—"milk."
tell—"scorpion."

The ending of the words in plosives when the plosives are preceded by a long syllable or polysyllable might have synchronised with the period of the Aryan language when it was possible for words to end in plosives. But when the Aryan language moved on to its Prakrit stage, it was not possible for it to have the plosive ending any more. All the plosive endings were changed to vowel-endings. Since the two languages Aryan and Dravidian were in the same linguistic field this change might have affected the Dravidian language also. Therefore, when the Dravidian language split up into various dialects such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tulu and others, similar changes might have taken place. But Tamil seems to have preserved the final plosive without any change by suffixing this vowel.

The suffixing of this enunciative vowel though it at first originated in Tamil to preserve the final plosives, was later on extended to all consonants:

This \( u \) is elided when it is followed by another vowel. Examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{m\=atu} + \text{a\=du} & > \text{m\=at\=a\=du} \\
\text{avanu} + \text{illa} & > \text{avan-illa}.
\end{align*}
\]

Originally, Malayalam seems to have had the enunciative \( u \) attached to the plosives. Examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{n\=eppu} & \quad \text{"fineness."} \\
\text{noccu} & \quad \text{"minute."} \\
\text{paka\=tu} & \quad \text{"a small bit."} \\
\text{pa\=nu} & \quad \text{"a share."}
\end{align*}
\]

This seems to have been extended later on to other consonants. Examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nonnu} & \quad \text{"gums."} \\
\text{n\=ovu} & \quad \text{"pain."}
\end{align*}
\]

This \( u \) is elided when a vowel follows it. Examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{veytu} + \text{illa} & > \text{veyt-illa}. \\
\text{avanu} + \text{alla} & > \text{avan-alla}.
\end{align*}
\]

So far we have discussed the \( u \) used as the enunciative vowel. From the earliest times the vowel \( e \) also seems to have been used as the enunciative vowel.

In the sutra No. 389 in El\=uttatik\=aram in Tolk\=appiyam the last line ends with the word \( \text{\=aci\=riyarka} \). The term \( \text{\=aci\=riyarka} \) means "to the author." Also in another s\=utra in Collatik\=aram Tolk\=appiyam says that the post-position \( ku \) denoting the dative may also have the form \( ka \) in poetry.\(^\text{12}\) When this post-position \( ku \) is added to a word, the expression naturally becomes one with the short \( u \) ending. In the same way, if \( ka \) is permissible as a dative post-position, then the expression will also become one with a short \( a \) ending. Tolk\=appiyam says that it is a poetic form; hence it must be older than \( ku \).

This kind of vowel \( a \) used for enunciative purposes in place of the vowel \( u \) is very often met with in Tamil literature. There are examples in the Sa\=ng\=am as well as in the Medieval texts. In the following examples the final \( a \) is elided when a vowel follows it:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tu\=wa\=tta} + \text{am\=pir} & > \text{tu\=wai\=t-ampir}. \quad (\text{Pur\=am 4}). \\
\text{tar\=ukka} + \text{ena} & > \text{tar\=uk-ena}. \quad (\text{Patir\=rup\=pat\=u 38}). \\
\text{ti\=tar\=uka} + \text{ena} & > \text{ti\=tar\=uka-ena}. \quad (\text{Cil\=ap 1, line 62}). \\
\text{un\=ta} + \text{i\=tam} & > \text{un\=t-i\=tam}. \quad (\text{Tiruk\=ko\=vai 233}). \\
\text{in\=ta} + \text{i\=tam} & > \text{int-i\=tam}. \quad (\text{Tiruk\=ko\=vai 223}).
\end{align*}
\]

Along with these examples the following colloquial forms are worthy of consideration:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{cit\=ar\=a} + \text{a\=t\=ta} & > \text{cit\=ar-a\=t\=ta}. \\
\text{an\=ta} + \text{an\=ta} & > \text{ant-anta}. \\
\text{en\=ta} + \text{en\=ta} & > \text{ent-enta}.
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{12}\) Tol. Coll. 109.
THE CAUSES OF COMMUNAL CONFLICT IN CEYLON

The enunciative vowel \( a \) exists in Tulu also. It is elided when a vowel follows it. Examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
pritila + ākula & \rightarrow pritit-ākulu. \\
bēleda + ākulu & \rightarrow bēled-ākulu.
\end{align*}
\]

In Malayalam also this reduced sound of \( a \) exists. Caldwell observes that the short \( a \) sometimes replaces the short \( u \) of Tamil. This process is peculiar to the people in South Malabar. In the following examples the short \( a \) is elided when another vowel follows it:

\[
\begin{align*}
ceyka + upakāram & \rightarrow ceyk-upakāram. \\
panna + atu & \rightarrow pann-atu. \\
nalla + antam & \rightarrow nall-antam. \\
amma + accan & \rightarrow amm-accan. \\
ilaya + appar & \rightarrow ilay- appar.
\end{align*}
\]

Though \( u \) was the enunciative vowel used by Tolkāppiyam, we find from these instances that the vowel \( a \) also was used for that purpose. This may be due to the fact that the original vowel that was used for the purpose of enunciation might have been a type of vowel sound which was capable of being confused as \( u \) or \( a \).

K. KANAPATHI PILLAI.