

**Similarities of derived nouns in Tamil and Sinhala languages:****A comparative Study****NARAYANAN MALLIKADEVI**

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**Abstract**

Sinhala is a name of a language belonging to one of the South Asian Languages primarily spoken by the Sinhalese people in Sri Lanka. Some controversies are going on regarding Sinhala language whether it belongs to Dravidian language family or Indo-Aryan language family. Because the Sinhala language seems to contain both Dravidian and Indo-Aryan language features. Most of the discussions, explanations, and illustrations are made regarding Sinhala compared only with Indo-Aryan languages. It is unable to find broad and detailed research activities and linguistic explanations regarding Sinhala compared with the Dravidian languages. Currently only a few numbers of research scholars of the new generation have come forward to do comparative studies between Sinhala and other Dravidian languages to exhibit the Dravidian language features in Sinhala. This research is also one of the attempts to bring out the Dravidian language features in the Sinhala language. According to that, this study talks about the derivational morphology of Tamil and Sinhala and attempts to find the similarities of derived nouns. The goal and objective of this research is to reveal the similar way of generation of derived nouns. Besides, it is going to explore what types of similar nominalizers are used to produce derived nouns in both languages. The suffixes and prefixes are functioned as the nominalizers to form derived nouns in Tamil and Sinhala. Thus, it expects to talk about class-maintaining and class-changing derivational affixes in Tamil and Sinhala. The significance of this study is, most of the Sinhalese scholars say Sinhalese language does not have many Dravidians language features. However, this research is attempting to find the similar derivational morphological features in Tamil and Sinhala and it is going to discuss the way of nominalizing to form derived nouns in both languages.

**Keywords:** Tamil, Sinhala, derivational morphology, derived nouns, suffixes, prefixes, nominalizers

## **1. Introduction**

Although Tamil and Sinhala languages belong into two different language families, several similar linguistic features could be found in both languages. This research is going to discuss the derived nouns in both Tamil and Sinhala under the derivational morphology and it is going to discuss the similar patterns of creation of derived nouns in both languages.

### **1.1. Research problem**

The research problem of this study is how the derived nouns are generated in Tamil and Sinhala in similar ways?

#### **1.1.1. Research questions**

What are the similar suffixes used as the nominalizers in Tamil and Sinhala languages to generate derived nouns?

What are the similar prefixes used as the nominalizers in Tamil and Sinhala languages to generate derived nouns?

## **1.2. Methodology**

Primarily, this research discusses the derived nouns of Tamil and Sinhala using descriptive methods. Hence, accepted and standard written documents have been used as the secondary source to collect and identify the data. The data of both languages have been analysed under qualitative data analysis.

## **1.3. Hypothesis**

Generally, both languages produce derived nouns using the prefixes and suffixes. Several derived nouns are generated in both Tamil and Sinhala by using similar types of nominalizers with the same nouns. On the other hand, phonologically different types of nominalizers are also used in both languages to form other types of derived nouns. However, those nominalizers are also used in a similar way to produce a large number of derived nouns in Tamil and Sinhala.

## 2. Discussion

Generally, in both Tamil and Sinhala languages, a large number of derived nouns are generated in similar ways. The special feature of derived nouns in both Tamil and Sinhala is, almost similar types of prefixes and suffixes are added as the nominalizers to the roots of nouns or verbs to generate new lexemes. On the other hand, some of the derived nouns are formed by using phonologically different prefixes and suffixes in the both languages but in the same manner. These prefixes and suffixes function as the derivational affixes in the both languages.

### 2.1. Derivational affixes

Generally, the derivational affixes are divided into two. They are,

1. Class-maintaining derivational affixes
2. Class-changing derivational affixes

Class-maintaining derivational affixes mean, the affixes do not change the word class of the word when they are affixed with the particular morpheme. Class-changing derivational affixes mean, the affixes change the word class of the word when they are affixed with the particular morpheme. It could be noticed, the class-maintaining and class-changing derivational affixes are affixed with the words in the same manner to generate new lexemes in both Tamil and Sinhala.

The following suffixes shown in the table 1, are functioned as the class-maintaining derivational suffixes in both Tamil and Sinhala. They do not change the word class when they associate to generate derived nouns.

### ABBREVIATIONS

TSMDS	- Third person singular masculine derivational suffix
TSFDS	- Third person singular feminine derivational suffix
TSGNDS	- Third person singular gender-neutral derivational suffix
UNDS	- Uncountable neuter derivational suffix
VNDS	- Verbal noun derivational suffix
TPDS	- Third person plural derivational suffix
NDS	- Neuter derivational suffix

**Table:1**

<b>Derivational Suffixes-Tamil</b>	<b>Derivational suffixes-Sinhala</b>
(paṇam)-ka:raṇ (money)-TSMDS	(salli)-ka:raya: / karu (money)-TSMDS
(paṇam)-ka:ri (money)-TSFDS	(salli)-ka:ri (money)-TSFDS
(kuṇam)-vati (noble quality)-TSFDS	(guṇaya)-vati (noble quality)-TSFDS
(iṇam)-va:ti race-TSGNDS	(ja:tiya)-va:ti race-TSGNDS
(saho:tarāṇ)-tuvam (brother)-UNDS	(saho:ḍaraya:)-tvaya (brother)-UNDS
(iṇam)-va:tam (race)-UNDS	(ja:tiya)-va:ḍaya (race)-UNDS

Moreover, the suffixes given in the above table in both Tamil and Sinhala, it could be noticed the similarity between each pair of suffixes. The illustrations have been given below how derived nouns are created in Tamil and Sinhala using the above suffixes.

When generating derived nouns in the Sinhala language, the final suffix -ya: of the word denotes the singular masculine meaning and the suffix -ya of the word denotes the meaning of both singular feminine and uncountable singular neuter.

## 2.2. Generating masculine denominal nouns

In both Tamil and Sinhala languages, several singular masculine denominal nouns are created by adding the suffix **-ka:raṇ** in Tamil **-ka:raya:** or **-karu** in Sinhala. For example,

**Table:2**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Sinhala</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>
ve:laikka:raṇ ve:lai-ka:raṇ work-TSMDS	vəḍaka:raya: vəḍa-ka:raya: work- TSMDS	Servant (Male)
ko:pakka:raṇ ko:pam-ka:raṇ Anger- TSMDS	tarahaka:raya: taraha-ka:raya: anger- TSMDS	Angry man

paṅakka:raṅ paṅam-ka:raṅ money- TSMDS	sallika:raya: salli-ka:raya: money- TSMDS	Rich man
ku:likka:raṅ kuuli-ka:raṅ wage- TSMDS	kuli:ka:raya: kuliya-ka:raya: wage- TSMDS	Mercenary (Male)

The derivational suffix **-karu** in Sinhala language, does not affix with all the words. It only affix with certain words. For example,

**Table :3**

Sinhala	English equivalent
kul:karu kuli-karu wage- TSMDS	Mercenary
taraṅgaku taraṅga-karu contest- TSMDS	Competitor
lipikaru lipi-karu crime- TSMDS	Clerk
aragalaku aragala-karu protest- TSMDS	protester

### 2.3. Generating Feminine denominal nouns

Some singular feminine denominal nouns are created by adding the suffix **-ka:ri** or **ka:riya** in both Tamil and Sinhala languages. For example,

**Table:4**

Tamil	Sinhala	English equivalent
ve:laikka:ri ve:lai-ka:ri work- TSFDS	væḍaka:ri/væḍaka:riya væḍa-ka:ri/ka:riya work- TSFDS	Servant
ko:pakka:ri ko:pam-ka:ri anger- TSFDS	tarahaka:ri/tarahaka:riya taraha-ka:ri/ka:riya anger- TSFDS	Angry woman
paṅakka:ri paṅam-ka:ri money- TSFDS	sallika:ri/sallika:riya salli-ka:ri/ka:riya money- TSFDS	Rich woman
ku:likka:ri ku:li-ka:ri wage- TSFDS	kuli:ka:ri/kuli:ka:riya kuliya-ka:ri/ka:riya wage- TSFDS	Mercenary

The illustrations shown in the tables 2-4, it could be noticed some phonological similarities between the suffixes **-ka:raya** , **-karu**, **-ka:ri**, **-ka:riya** in Sinhala and **-ka:raṅ** and **-ka:ri** in Tamil.

Further, in both Tamil and Sinhala language, some female proper nouns are created by adding the suffix **-vati** in both Tamil and Sinhala. For example,

**Table:5**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Sinhala</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>
kuṇavati kuṇam-vati noble quality-TSFDS	guṇavati guṇa+vati noble quality-TSFDS	Name of a woman
patma:vati patmam-vati lotus- TSFDS	patma:vati patma+vati lotus- TSFDS	Name of a woman
le:la:vati leelai-vati sport- TSFDS	le:la:vati le:la:+vati sport- TSFDS	Name of a woman

#### 2.4. Generation of denominal common nouns

Some denominal common nouns for both genders are created by adding the suffix **-va:ti** in both Tamil and Sinhala. For example,

**Table:6**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Sinhala</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>
santarppava:ti santarppam-va:ti opportunity- TSGNDS	avasta:va:ti avasta:-va:ti opportunity- TSGNDS	opportunist
iṇava:ti iṇam-va:ti race- TSGNDS	ja:tiva:ti ja:ti-va:ti race- TSGNDS	Racist
samayava:ti samayam-va:ti religion- TSGNDS	a:gamva:ti a:gama-va:ti religion- TSGNDS	Religious

#### 2.5. Generation of denominal abstract nouns

In both Tamil and Sinhala languages, some abstract nouns are generated by adding the suffix **-tuvam** in Tamil and **-tvaya** in Sinhala. For example,

**Table:7**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Sinhala</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>
kavittuvam kavi-tuvam poem- UNDS	kavitvaya kavi-tvaya poem- UNDS	Poetry
talaimaittuvam talaimai-tuvam chief- UNDS	na:yakatvaya na:yaka-tvaya chief- UNDS	Leadership
saho:tarattuvam sah:tarān-tuvam brother- UNDS	saho:ḍaratvaya saho:ḍara-tvaya brother- UNDS	Brotherhood

On the other hand, in both Tamil and Sinhala languages, some abstract nouns are generated by adding the suffix **-va:tam** in Tamil and **-va:ḍaya** in Sinhala language. For example,

**Table:8**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Sinhala</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>
iṇava:tam iṇam-va:tam race- UNDS	ja:tiva:ḍaya ja:ti-va:ḍaya race- UNDS	Racism
ti:virava:tam ti:vira-va:tam extreme- UNDS	-	Extremism
matava:tam matam-va:tam religion- UNDS	a:gamva:ḍaya a:gam-va:ḍaya religion- UNDS	Religiosity
-	nu:tanava:ḍaya nu:tana-va:ḍaya modern- UNDS	Modernism
-	stri:va:ḍaya stri:-va:ḍaya woman- UNDS	Feminism

The generation of denominal nouns by adding similar types of suffixes to the noun roots in Tamil and Sinhala has been discussed so far. Moreover, these suffixes function as the class-maintaining suffixes in both languages.

## 2.6. Generation of denominal nouns adding by prefixes

In both Tamil and Sinhala languages, some denominal nouns are generated by prefixation. The prefixes shown below in the table 9, function as the class-maintaining derivational prefixes in both Tamil and Sinhala to generate new lexemes.

**Table:9**

Derivational prefixes -Tamil)	Derivational prefixes - Sinhala
a-(suttam) NP-(cleanliness)	a-(pirisiḍu) NP-(cleanliness)
ava-(laṭcaṇam) NP-(beauty)	ava-(lassana) NP-(beauty)
apa-(ki:rti) NP-fame	apa-(ki:rtiya) NP-fame
tur-(naṭattai) NP-(Behaviour)	dur-(janaya:) NP-(people)
nir-kati NP-way	nir-(a:varaṇaya) NP-cover

Many singular denominal abstract nouns are created by adding the prefix **-a** in both Tamil and Sinhala. Generally, in both Tamil and Sinhala, the above prefixes are associated to generate derived nouns in negative meaning.

**Table:10**

Tamil	NOM. -NR	English equivalent
ani:ti a-ni:ti NP-justice	ani:tiya a-ni:tiya NP-justice	Injustice
asuttam a-suttam NP-clean	apirisiḍu a-pirisiḍu NP-clean	Unclean
apa:kkiyam a-pa:kkiyam NP-blessing	aba:gyaya a-ba:gyaya NP-blessing	Unfortunate

Besides, in both Sinhala and Tamil, some denominal abstract nouns are generated by adding the prefix **-ava** in both Tamil and Sinhala languages. These types of derived nouns also denote the negative meaning in both languages. For example,

**Table:11**

Tamil	NOM. -NR	English equivalent
avalatcaṇam ava-laṭcaṇam NP-beautiful	avalassaṇa ava-lassana NP-beautiful	Ugly
avamariya:tai ava-mariya:tai NP-respect	avani:thiya ava-niitiya NP-justice	Disrespect
avanampikkai ava-nampikkai NP-hope	avatakse:ru ava-takseeru NP-value	Distrust

Further, in both languages, some denominal abstract nouns are generated by adding the prefix -**apa** to denote other types of negative derived nouns. For example,

**Table:12**

Tamil	Sinhala	English equivalent
apaki:r <i>t</i> i apa-ki:r <i>t</i> i NP-fame	apaki:r <i>t</i> iya apa-ki:r <i>t</i> iya NP-fame	Infamy
Apasakunam apa-sakuṇam NP-omen	-	Bad omen
	apagamana apa-gamana NP-journey	Came back

Besides, some denominal quality nouns are generated by adding the prefix -**tur** in Tamil -**dur** in Sinhala. Here, the spoken form of Tamil [d] functions as the allophone of the phoneme /t/. Hence, in Tamil the prefix could be pronounced as [t] or [d]. For example,

**Table:13**

Tamil	Sinhala	English equivalent
turnaṭattai tur-nadattai NP-behaviour		Bad behaviour
turna:r <i>r</i> am tur-na:r <i>r</i> am NP-smell		Bad smell

turpa:kkiyam tur-pa:kkiyam NP-fortune		Misfortune
	ḍurgunaya ḍur-guṇaya NP-nature	Ignoble quality
	ḍurvarna ḍur-varṇa NP-colour	Faded colour
	ḍurjanaya ḍur-jaṇaya NP-people	Ignoble people

Some denominal abstract nouns are generated by adding the prefix **-nir** in both Tamil and Sinhala to denote in the sense ‘no’ or ‘without’. For example,

**Table:14**

Tamil	NOM. -NR	English equivalent
nira:taravu nir-a:taravu NP-support		helplessness
nirkati nir-kati NP-plight		helplessness
nira:sai nir-a:sai NP-desire		Unfulfilled desire
	nir-a:varanaya NP-cover	Exposure
	nir-ahamka:raya NP-arrogant	humbleness
	nir-a:ya:saya NP-effort	effortless

The generation of negative denominal nouns by adding the same type of prefixes to the noun roots in Tamil and Sinhala has been discussed so far. Further, it could be noticed, the prefixes are functioned as class-maintaining derivational suffixes in both languages.

## 2.7. Adding similar suffixes to adjective forms to generate denominal nouns

In both Tamil and Sinhala languages, some singular masculine denominal quality nouns are generated by adding the suffix **-an** in Tamil **-a:ṇuva:** in Sinhala to the adjective forms. For example,

**Table:15**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Sinhala</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>
intiyan intiya-aṅ ADJ- TSMDS	inḍiya:ḍṇuva: inḍiya:nu-va ADJ- TSMDS	Indian
amerikkan amerikka-aṅ ADJ- TSMDS	æmerika:ṇuva: æmerika:ṇu-va: ADJ- TSMDS	American
kæṇe:ṭiyan kæṇe:ṭiya-aṅ ADJ- TSMDS	kæne:ḍiya:ṇuva: kæne:ḍiya:ṇu-va: ADJ- TSMDS	Canadian
avustire:liyan avustire:liya- ADJ- TSMDS	ostre:liya:ṇuva: ostre:liya:ṇu-va: ADJ- TSMDS	Australian

In the above examples in the table 15, to express the inhabitant noun to relate a country of a person, the name of the country changes as an adjective form and after the suffix **-aṅ** adds to it to denote a denominal noun in Tamil. In Sinhala language, the suffix **-a:ṇu** is attached to the country name to form and adjective form. Finally, the masculine singular suffix **-va:** attached to the adjective form to generate a derived noun. Here it can be noticed some similar phonological feature between the suffixes **-aṅ** and **-a:ṇu** in Tamil and Sinhala.

## 2.8. Creation of deverbal nouns by adding different suffixes in the same manner in Tamil and Sinhala

To form action nouns in both Tamil and Sinhala, the suffix **-tal** in Tamil and the suffix **-i:ma** is attached to the verb root. Especially, the couple of suffixes belong to class-changing derivational affixes in the both languages. Because, when adding the suffix to the root form of the verb, the verb turns into a noun in both languages after the suffixation. For example,

**Table:16**

<b>Action noun (Tamil)</b>	<b>Action noun (Sinhala)</b>	<b>English Equivalent</b>
seital sei-tal do-VNDS	kiri:ma kara-i:ma do- VNDS.	Doing
pa:ital pa:i-tal jump- VNDS	pæni:ma pæna-i:ma jump- VNDS	Jumping
pa:rttal pa:r-t-tal	bæli:ma bala-i:ma	looking

look- VNDS	look- VNDS	
a:ṭatal a:ṭu-tal dance- VNDS	næti:ma nata-i:ma dance- VNDS	Dancing

**NOTE:** Not like Tamil language, generally in Sinhala language the form of verb roots is changed into another phonological structure when they are attached with suffixes.

Besides, several singular deverbal agent nouns are formed in both languages adding the suffixes **-pavar/pavan/o:n** in Tamil and **-ṇṇa:** in Sinhala to the root forms of the verbs. These suffixes also belong to class-changing derivational affixes in the both languages because they change the word class when they are attached to the particular morpheme. For example,

**Table:17**

Agent noun	Agent noun	English equivalent
eḷutupavar/ eḷutupavan/ eḷutupavo:n eḷuthu-pavar/eḷutu-pavan/ eḷutu-o:n write-TSMDS	liyanna: liya-ṇṇa: write- TSMDS	Writer
seipavar/ seipavan/ seivo:n sei-pavar/ sei-pavan/ sei-o:n do- TSMDS	karanna: kara-ṇṇa: write- TSMDS	doer
va:sippavar/ va:sippavan/ va:sippo:n va:si-p-pavar/va:si-p-pavan/va:si-p-o:n read- TSMDS	kiya:vanna: kiyava-ṇṇa: write- TSMDS	reader
anuppupavar/anuppupavan/ anuppuvo:n anuppu-pavar/anuppu-pavan/ anuppu-o:n send- TSMDS	yavanna: yava-ṇṇa: write- TSMDS	sender

Further, to form plural forms of agent nouns in both languages, the suffix **-o:r** in Tamil and **-o:** in Sinhala are used. These suffixes also belong to class-changing derivational affixes in the both languages because they change the word class when they are attached to the particular morpheme. Here also the verb changes into a noun form. For example,

**Table:18**

Agent noun	Sinhala	English equivalent
eḷutuvo:r eḷuthu-v-o:r write-TPDS	liyanno: liya-ṇṇo: write-TPDS	Writers
seivo:r sei-v-o:r	karanno: kara-ṇṇo:	doers

do-TPDS	write-TPDS	
va:sippo:r va:si-p-o:r read-TPDS	kiyavanno: kiyava-nno: write-TPDS	readers
anuppuvo:r anuppu-v-o:r send-TPDS	yavanno: yava-nno: write-TPDS	senders

The illustrations given in table 18, it could be noticed similar phonological feature functions between the suffixes in Tamil and Sinhala. In Tamil it is used **-o:r** and in Sinhala it is used **-nno:**

## 2.9. Suffixation of word doublers in Tamil and Sinhala to generate derived nouns

Generally, in Tamil and Sinhala languages word doublers are used to enhance the creativeness in writing. Word doubler means a meaningless word doubles itself in a sentence and it gives a rhyming word. On the other hand, it is said, repetition of similar terminal sounds in two words.

In both Tamil and Sinhala languages, some denominal nouns are generated by adding the suffix **-ppu** in Tamil **-va** in Sinhala to the root of the word doubler. These suffixes belong to the class-maintaining derivational affixes in both languages. Because, the word class does not change when they are attached the particular morpheme. For example,

**Table:19**

Tamill	Sinhala	English equivalent
Munumunuppu munumunu-ppu WD-NDS	Munumunuva munumunu-va WD-NDS	Chatter
salasalappu salasala-ppu WD-NDS	-	murmur
viruviruppu viruviru-ppu WD-NDS	-	briskness
-	sarasaraya sarasara-ya WD-NDS	A kind of noise
-	barabaraya barabara-ya WD-NDS	Torture

## Conclusion

In the linguistics field, there are not enough comparative research activities conducted by the research scholars between Dravidian and Sinhala languages. When we study Sinhala language, many Dravidians language features are identified in it. Most of the language scholars try to describe the Indo-Aryan language features in Sinhala. The discussions of Dravidian language features in Sinhala do not reveal in detail. Most of the native speakers of Sinhala say only a few lexical relationships could be seen in Tamil and Sinhala. They do not try to explore the other Dravidian linguistic features in both languages. Currently, a few numbers of young scholars have come forward to do comparative research between Sinhala and Dravidian languages. According to that, this is one of the attempts exploring the similar derivational morphological features and derivational processing in Tamil and Sinhala. It has brought out the similarities of production of derived nouns in Tamil and Sinhala. Besides, this research has found out that several derived nouns in both Tamil and Sinhala are generated by adding the same types of nominalizers in the same manner. Hence, it could be noticed that this is one of the linguistic features, morphologically that there is a relationship between Tamil and Sinhala languages.

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