

Afterthoughts, Antitopics, and Emphasis: The Syntacticization of Postverbal Position in Tamil

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1 Introduction

1.1 Postposing in Verb-Final Languages

It is a well-known fact that even in the strictest of verb-final languages, elements occasionally appear to the right of the finite verb, as in 'A book (she-)wrote, Sita'. Functional treatments of this phenomenon tend to adopt one of two approaches. The first of these — what we might call the "unifunctional" approach — subsumes all rightward dislocation in a given language under a single functional label, with the meaning of the label so defined as to cover a broad assortment of phenomena. Examples of this approach include Kuno's (1978) use of the term "afterthoughts" to characterize right-dislocation in Japanese, and Erguvanli's (1984) analysis of all types of postverbal elements as "backgrounding" in Turkish. Alternatively, the "taxonomic" approach identifies a set of seemingly disparate functions associated with postverbal position, without however proposing a unifying relationship among them. Thus Kim and Shin (1992) state that the functions of postposing in Korean include "corrections", "forced displacement", and "emphasis/confirmation", and Junghare's (1985) list of functions for Indo-Aryan includes "de-emphasis" and "emphasis", both distinct from "afterthoughts", which add on something that the speaker originally neglected to say. According to this latter analysis, a syntactic distinction comes into play as well: true afterthoughts are outside the clause, while pragmatically-motivated postposings (emphasis, de-

emphasis, etc.) are crucial components of the clause itself (Junghare 1985:250).

In this paper, I analyze the functions associated with the postverbal position in Tamil, an otherwise strict verb-final language. My analysis shows that postverbal position is *multifunctional* in ways that cannot be captured adequately by a global functional account. Rather, I identify three distinct functional types, each associated with a characteristic intonation pattern and characteristic syntactic behaviors. I further propose that each postverbal type occupies a different underlying postverbal position, depending on whether the relevant unit of analysis is taken to be the sentence, the utterance, or the "extended utterance" in natural speech production. Ultimately, despite the differences among them, the three postverbal types can be seen to be synchronically related along a continuum of syntacticization (Givón 1979) reflecting differing degrees of unity between the main proposition and the right-dislocated element. These claims, along with their implications for diachronic change, are developed with evidence from spoken and written narrative texts.

1.2 The Tamil Situation

As indicated above, Tamil (a Dravidian language with basic SOV word order) is, for all intents and purposes, strictly verb-final. Herring and Paolillo (in press) found that 94% of finite clauses in spoken Tamil, and 100% of finite clauses in normative, pedagogically-oriented written Tamil narrative texts, have the finite verb in absolute sentence-final position.¹ Main clauses follow dependent clauses, and verb-finality is observed in dependent clauses as well, as illustrated in example (1). (See appendix for a list of abbreviations in glosses.)

- (1) ammā nāykutṭiy-ai viṭṭu-kk-uḷḷē ko-ṇṭu
 mother puppy-ACC house-DAT-inside take-CP
 va-nta uṭanē, kumār at-aik koṇcam pāl
 come-P:AjP as.soon.as Kumar it-ACC little milk
 koṭu-tt-ān.
 give-P-3SG:MASC
 'As soon as mother brought the puppy into the house,
 Kumar gave it a little milk'.

¹The oral narratives analyzed by Herring and Paolillo include personal narration, folk tales, and performed epics. The written narrative sample includes first and second-grade level children's stories, and classical narratives rewritten in simplified modern Tamil for adult non-native learners.

When and why is strict verb-finality in Tamil violated? In this paper, I suggest that postposings in Tamil are essentially of three functional types: afterthought, backgrounding, and emphatic. *Afterthoughts* are elements that end up in postverbal position not as the result of deliberate planning, but rather by default, as a consequence of the speaker having decided after uttering the main proposition that something more needs to be added. Postverbal elements of this type may be of any category or phrase type, and fulfill a variety of after-the-fact modification functions. *Backgrounding* postposings, in contrast, are conventionalized, and vary systematically in function according to the grammatical category of what is postposed. Thus *antitopics* signal the secondary or transitional discourse-pragmatic status of (typically) nominal referents, while the conventionalized postposing of *adverbials* and *dependent clauses* functions to signal their lesser importance relative to constituents in preverbal positions. Finally, *emphatic* postposings involve the rightward movement of nominal referents for increased emphasis or saliency.

These three postposing types not only have different pragmatic functions, but they differ intonationally and syntactically as well. As a consequence, any attempt to subsume them under a unifunctional characterization seems destined to overlook the essential multifunctionality of postverbal position in Tamil, and would thus fail to provide an adequate description. The question then arises as to what relationship, if any, obtains among the various postposing types. Are they unrelated strategies which happen to have in common the same marked result, *viz.* that something construable (loosely or otherwise) as part of the same sentence appears to the right of the finite verb? Or are they related functionally or (more likely) structurally, by virtue of the fact that all employ a common structural device?

In what follows, I adduce evidence for a logical continuum of relatedness among the three postposing types with respect to degree of syntacticization, or bondedness of postposing to main clause. Afterthoughts are characterized by a loose, communicatively-based association between original utterances and after-the-fact modification. For antitopics, the association is conventionalized via the pragmatic bond between the two components of the utterance. Emphatic postposing represents the most bonded or "syntacticized" postposing type, in that the postposed nominal is an argument of the main clause itself. In support of the continuum-like nature of this relationship, I present evidence that native speakers blur the boundaries between the individual types by mixing functional and intonational features to represent intermediate degrees of bondedness.

2 The Investigation

2.1 The Tamil Corpus

Postverbal constituents were analyzed in 3,773 finite clauses of spoken and written Tamil narrative text. The spoken corpus, made up of 19 oral narratives representing both traditional and contemporary storytelling genres, contains postposings in 144 out of 1787 finite clauses (8.1%). The written corpus, consisting of seven published short stories by well-known 20th century Tamil authors and one fifth-grade level children's story,² has postverbal elements in 141 out of 1986 (7.1%) of its finite clauses.³ Each finite clause containing one or more postposed elements was identified, and postposings classified by grammatical category. The following information about each postposing in the context of the overall utterance was also noted:

Intonation, i.e., 1) whether the postposed element is part of the intonation contour of the main clause, or separate; 2) whether the postposed element is preceded by a pause (or in written texts, by a comma or ellipses); and 3) the degree of stress, if any, accorded the postposed element.

Discourse-pragmatic status, i.e., 1) importance (could the postposed element have been omitted without sacrificing comprehensibility?); and, for nominal referents, 2) information status, i.e., whether the information expressed by the referent is given, accessible, or new;⁴ 3)

²The short stories analyzed are "Kaṭavuḷum Kantasāmi Piḷḷaiyūm" and "Poṅṅakaram", by Pudumai Pittan; "Guru Piṭam" and "Enkō, Yārō, Yārūkkāvō", by Jeyakandan; "Marumakaḷ Vāḱku", by Krisnan Nambi; "Ammā Mandapam", by Sujata; and "Kaliforniyā Kaṇṇa Kuttuvilakku", by Indira Partasarathi. The children's story, by V. Govindan, is entitled Piḷḷaiyār Kōvilil Piccaikkāraṅ.

³The greater frequency of postposing here than that reported in Herring and Paolillo is due to two factors. First, with the exception of the children's story, the written texts analyzed in the present study are literary, rather than pedagogical. Erguvanli's (1984: 67) observation that sentences with post-predicate elements in Turkish are "extremely rare ... in the more traditional or formal styles of writing", but "far more frequent" in the language of written literature is true for Tamil as well. Second, finite clauses in quoted dialogue were included in the present study, but not in that of Herring and Paolillo. Quoted dialogue often attempts to represent colloquial speech, and thus contains a higher concentration of postposings.

⁴The terms "given", "accessible", and "new" refer to the speaker's assessment of what is in the hearer's consciousness at a particular point in the discourse (Chafe 1976; 1987; ms.). "Given" information is that which has been recently mentioned, or which is "externally evoked" (Prince 1981) by some feature of the physical or psychological context, and is thus actively present in the hearer's consciousness. "Accessible" information is that which the speaker assumes the hearer is able to access (from a previous mention, experience, context, or shared knowledge), even if it is not currently uppermost in the hearer's thoughts. Finally, "new" information

subject/topic continuation, i.e., whether the referent is continued over from the immediate previous discourse context; and 4) persistence, i.e., whether the referent persists as subject/topic in the immediate following discourse context (cf. Givón, 1983).

The results of this analysis are discussed and illustrated below.

2.2 Grammatical Postposing Types

The overwhelming majority of all postposed constituents in Tamil are NPs in the role of grammatical subject (63%). These include NPs marked for dative (i.e., in dative experiencer constructions; 9%) as well as nominative case (54%). Other phrasal types that appear in postverbal position include NPs in other case roles (15%),⁵ adverbs (9%), conjunctive participals (including direct quotes embedded by the quotative particle *enru*; 9%), and dependent (e.g., nominalized and infinitival) clauses (4%). Postverbal elements in Tamil invariably stand in the same case-marked relationship with respect to the verb as if they had appeared in their unmarked, preverbal position.⁶ Further, the main clause may, but need not, contain an element that is coreferential with the postverbal constituent, such as a pronoun or agreement marking on the verb. However, since Tamil is a zero anaphora language, it is not always apparent on the basis of sentences in isolation whether a postposed element is coreferential with a preverbal zero, or whether the postposed element is the argument itself, displaced over the finite verb (but cf. Section 2.3.3).

An example of a postverbal subject (nominative) NP, a postverbal object (accusative) NP, a postverbal NP (locative) functioning as an adverbial, and a complex postverbal adverbial expression made up of a conjunctive participal and an adverb are given in (2)–(5) below.

is that which is introduced for the first time, and thus not accessible from any previous source.

⁵Tamil distinguishes eight morphological cases: nominative (zero), accusative, dative, genitive, sociative, instrumental, locative, and ablative.

⁶Lambrecht (1981:79), noting a similar tendency with respect to antitopics in Spoken French, proposes an explanation grounded in linear processing:

At the time the verb is uttered, the case roles of all following NPs are already determined by the preverbal agreement markers, so that not marking the antitopic for its case would amount to ignoring syntactic information encoded more or less immediately before.

That is, since case information is derived from the verb, it is easily accessed after the main proposition has been uttered. In this respect, right-dislocations differ from left-dislocations or "fronting" operations, which do not preserve case distinctions in a number of languages.

- (2) "uṇkaḷ kamiṣaṇ..." eṇ-r-āṇ nārmaṇ.
your commission say-P-3SG:MASC Norman
'Your commission,' said Norman.'
- (3) avaṇ "nāṇ ce-ṇc-ēṇ-ē kaṇṇ-ai torantu-kittu
he I do-P-1SG-REL eye-ACC open-hold:CP
ceyyi" appaṭi ṇṇu coll-iṭ-t-āṇ
do-IMP thus QUOT say-PFV-P-3SG:MASC
mantirivittaikkāraṇ-ai.
magician-ACC
'Keep your eyes open and do what I did', he told the magician.'
- (4) laṇcam perukiy-irunt-iru-kk-u anta
bribes be.great-PERF-PERF-PR-3SG:NEUT that
kāḷatt-iley-oē.
time-LOC-EMPH
'It seems that (taking) bribes was prevalent at that time.'
- (5) "vara-ṭṭum-ē..." eṇ-r-ēṇ avaḷ-aip pār-ttuc
come-PERF-EMPH say-P-1SG she-ACC look-CP
ciritta-vār-ē.
laugh-ADV-EMPH
'Let him come,' I said looking at her and laughing.'

In Tamil, these sentences are pragmatically marked. However, since English does not have a strict verb-final constraint, the literal translations do not convey a marked pragmatic value (except in (2), where what is postposed is the grammatical subject).⁷ What leads Tamil narrators to situate normally preverbal elements after the finite verb?

2.3 Functional Postposing Types

2.3.1 Afterthoughts

The first and most basic motivation for placing an element after the finite verb in Tamil is as an *afterthought* in unplanned speech. True afterthoughts function as modifications, i.e., to clarify or add to information that the speaker assesses to be insufficient as uttered. Hyman (1975), who claims that afterthoughts play an important role in word

⁷For the purposes of this paper, I have elected to translate Tamil postposed utterances into English rather literally, without attempting to capture the pragmatic effect of the original by more marked English constructions (such as clefting, alternative word orders, idioms, etc.). A disadvantage of this method of translation is that the meaning of the Tamil sentences can only be fully appreciated through the accompanying discussion; the advantage, however, is that no additional complexities of interpretation inhering in the English structures are introduced.

order change in Niger-Congo languages, describes the motivation for afterthought "postposing" as follows:

Once the speaker has put the verb down (in a strict SOV language), it is no longer possible to add anything. However the speaker may forget to say something in the course of an utterance; or he may find that it is necessary to add something, because his interlocutor has not understood; or he may realize that the sentence he just uttered is unclear or ambiguous. In all of these cases (and doubtless others), he may wish to add something after the verb-final utterance. (Hyman 1975:119-120).

The Tamil postverbal "afterthought" type fits this characterization well. Afterthoughts in the Tamil corpus function as additions, corrections, reformulations, and explanations, as illustrated in (6)–(8) below.

- (6) tūṇ oṇru iru-kk-utu, alakāṇa tūṇ.
pillar one be-PR-3SG:NEUT beautiful pillar
'There's a pillar (there), a beautiful pillar'.
- (7) enka father... av- avar at-ile member, theosophical
our father h- he that-LOC member theosophical
society-le.
society-LOC
'My father, h- he was a member of that, of the theosophical society.'
- (8) anta vīraṇ .. inta cāṭṭai .. va-ccu, oru iṭatt-ukku
that soldier this whip put-CP one place-DAT
kūṭṭu-ṭṭu va-r-āru, aṭi-kkir-atu-kku .. aṭi
take-CP come-PR-3RESP beat-PR-VN-DAT blow
vāṅk-a aṭi-kkir-atu-kku.
receive-INF beat-PR-VN-DAT
'The soldier takes this whip, and brings [Tenaliraman] to a place, for the beating .. in order [for Tenaliraman] to receive the blows- for the beating.'

In example (6), the speaker adds the supplementary information that the pillar is 'beautiful' after the first part of the utterance is already complete. The speaker in example (7)⁸ — an elderly man — appears momentarily unable to recall the term 'theosophical society'; he marks its position and case role in the clause with the pronoun *at-ile* 'that (thing)-LOC' and later appends the full NP, also marked for locative

⁸Note that this sentence, which is equational, does not contain an overt copular verb. In such constructions, the predicate nominal normally occupies the position of the finite verb, that is, it appears in absolute sentence-final position.

ization of this intermediate status. Pragmatically, such postposings invariably contain given or accessible (i.e., predictable) information, and are prosodically unstressed. Unlike true afterthoughts, however, they are not deletable, for in addition to signalling relative importance, they fulfill more specific discourse-pragmatic functions. I distinguish two broad types of "intermediate ground" postposings for Tamil: *antitopicalization*, which involves argument NPs, and *adverbial* postposing, including subordinate clauses as well as lexical adverbs and NPs in locative case roles.

Antitopicalization

Antitopics (cf. Chafe 1976) are otherwise topical NPs that the speaker elects for discourse-pragmatic reasons to situate postverbally. Like preverbal topics, they tend to encode thematically important referents which are given, or at least potentially accessible, information prior to being antitopicalized, and which stand in a general "aboutness" relationship to the predicate of the main clause. Generally speaking, antitopicalization indicates that a referent has either been promoted or demoted to intermediate ground. According to the promotion strategy, postposing reactivates referents that were previously mentioned but which have since lapsed into accessible (i.e., background) information status. The demotion strategy, in contrast, deactivates referents that are currently given (active, i.e., foreground) information.

The first strategy is found in all of the written narratives, and in many oral narratives as well. Its primary function is to reintroduce thematic referents that were previously active but have since lapsed into semi-active or accessible information status (Chafe 1987, ms.), typically because another referent has taken over as topic in the interim. In the short story from which the following passage was excerpted, Murugesan's wife Ammalu has been introduced and described ten sentences earlier.

- (10) *aṇṇaikkū murukēcaṇ-ukku kuṣi. avaṇ-um, avaṇ*
 that.day Murugesan-DAT joy he-and his
kutiraiy-um 'taṇṇi' pōṭṭu-viṭṭu rēs viṭ-ṭ-ārkaḷ.
 horse-and water drink-PFV:CP race let-P-3PL
vaṇṭi 'tōkkaṇ' aṭi-tt-atu. ērkkaḷ
 cart pothole hit-P-3SG:NEUT shaft
oṭi-nt-atu. kutirai-kku palamāṇa kāyam.
 break-P-3SG:NEUT horse-DAT strong wound
murukēcaṇ-ukku ūmaiyaṭi. viṭṭ-il koṇṭu vantu
 Murugesan-DAT internal.injury house-LOC bring:CP

pōṭ-um poḷutu pēccu mūcc-illai. nalla
 put-F:AjP time speech breath-NEG good
kālam kuṭitt-iru-nt-āṇ, inta māṭiri vali
 time drink-PERF-P-3SG:MASC this manner pain
teriy-āl-āvatu kiṭa-kka. vīkkatt-iṛku
 know-NEG:CP-at.least lie-INF swelling-DAT
eṇṇatt-aiy-ō arai-ttu pūc-iṇ-āl ammāḷu.
 whatever-ACC grind-CP smear-P-3SG:FEM Ammalu
appoḷutu tāṇ carup pēc-iṇ-āṇ.
 then EMPH a.little speak-P-3SG:M

'On that day, Murugesan was in a good mood. He and his horse got drunk and had a race. The cart hit a pothole. The shaft broke. The horse was grievously wounded. Murugesan (suffered) internal injuries. When (they) brought him into the house and set him down, he didn't have the breath to speak. Fortunately he'd been drinking, so he at least remained unaware of the pain. She ground something up and rubbed it on the swelling, Ammalu. Only then did he speak a little.'

In this example, the status of Ammalu as active, "given" information has lapsed in the 18 sentences since she was first mentioned, and hence, she must be reactivated. Her role in this mention is not foregrounded — indeed the sequence as a whole is about Murugesan —; rather, she is represented as an antitopic, on intermediate ground. To borrow a theatrical metaphor, she emerges from the wings for a brief appearance, but not to occupy center stage.

While far from categorical in the corpus overall, the strategy of postposing to reactivate previously-mentioned referents is highly systematic in a number of the written short stories. In the story from which the following excerpt was taken,¹¹ referents tend to appear postverbally whenever the subject has switched from that of the previous sentence. Antitopicalization here functions as a device for referent tracking, akin to retrospective or "backward-looking" switch reference systems in other languages.

- (11) *nārman avar-iṭam aintu pattu rūpāy*
 Norman he-LOC five ten rupee
nōṭṭu-kkaḷ-ai eṇṇ-ik koṭu-tt-ān. "itu
 bill-PL-ACC count-CP give-P-3SG:MASC this

¹¹ "Kaliforniyā Kaṇṭa Kuttuvilakku", by Indira Parttasarati.

etu-kku?" enru ket-t-ār paṭṭu.
 what-DAT QUOT ask-P-3RESP Pattu
 avar-ukku nārman mītu ciṭitu kōpam
 he-DAT Norman on little anger
 ērpāṭ-t-atu. "uṅkaḷ kamiṣaṇ..."
 experience-P-3SG:NEUT your commision
 en-r-āṇ nārman. "nalla kamiṣaṇ..."
 say-P-3SG:MASC Norman good commision
 enru colli-kko-ṇṭ-ē paṇatt-ai vāṅk-i
 QUOT say-hold-CP-EMPH money-ACC receive-CP
 itupp-il ceruki-kko-ṇṭ-ār paṭṭu.
 waist-LOC insert-BEN-P-3SG:RESP Pattu
 "cāppāṭṭ-ukku enṇa ērpāṭu ṇṇu kēḷ-uṅkō..."
 food-DAT what plan QUOT ask-IMP:PL
 en-r-āṇ raṇiku.
 say-P-3SG:MASC Rangu
 'Norman counted out five ten rupee bills and gave (them)
 to him. "What's this for?" asked Pattu.
 He felt a twinge of anger at Norman.
 Your commission, said Norman.
 Saying "Nice commission, took the money and tucked it
 into (the pouch at) his waist Pattu.
 "Ask him what he plans to do for meals," said Rangu.'

In written narrative, "switch reference" postposing is especially common in reported dialogue to signal a change of speaker, as in the example above: fully 81% of postposed NPs follow a quote and a verb of saying, as compared with only 11% which follow a quote in the oral narratives.¹²

Further evidence for the switch-reference function of postposing is found in contexts where the postposed NP is ambiguous (i.e., could

¹²Interesting parallels can be noted in this respect between Tamil and English. In literary English, it is possible to invert subject and verb after a quote and a verb of saying, as in "[quote]," said Mary. Inversion is excluded in other sentence types, however, except when Mary is presentationally-focused; thus: *The book read Mary (meaning 'Mary read the book') and *Sat down Mary are ungrammatical, although the presentational Into the room strode Mary is possible. What is the basis for the correlation between subject postposing and quotes? I suggest that it arises out of a need to track participants during conversational exchanges, while at the same time preventing this necessity from detracting from the impact of the quoted dialogue. Postposing effectively backgrounds the speaker while unambiguously signalling her identity. It is not clear to me, however, why this strategy should be employed more in writing than in speaking, other than that it has become conventional to do so in both English and Tamil.

refer to more than one locally-accessible referent). In such instances, the fact of postposing alone may signal that a switch in topic/subject has taken place. This is illustrated in the oral example in (12).

- (12) avaṇ-uṭaiya māmaṇ cakuni anku varu-kiṇṇ-āṇ.
 he-GEN uncle Cakuni there come-PR-3SG:MASC
 (...) appaṭi kaiy-ai va-cc-āṇ. tirumpi
 thus hand-ACC place-P-3SG:MASC turn-CP
 pār-kkiṇ-āṇ avaṇ.
 look-PR-3SG:MASC he
 'His uncle Cakuni comes there. (...) (He) placed
 his hand (on his shoulder). Turns around and looks he.'

In this passage, both uncle Cakuni and his nephew are third person singular masculine referents, as indicated by the agreement marker -āṇ on the finite verbs. Although the personal subject pronoun *avaṇ* he could refer equally well to either, the fact that it is postposed in the final utterance effectively shifts the reference from the subject of the previous utterance (Cakuni) to the other participant; that is, it is the nephew who turns around and looks.

Antitopics where the subject/topic switches from that of the immediately preceding utterance account for 78% of all antitopics in the written narratives, and 60% of those in the oral narratives. Of these, those in the oral texts continue as topical in the subsequent discourse in a slight majority (59%) of uses, while those in written texts are followed by another shift in topic 79% of the time that is, they typically represent an entity that is only topical for the duration of one sentence.¹³

The second antitopicalization strategy, which is in some respects the mirror image of that described above, is attested exclusively in oral narration. According to this strategy, a topic/subject in active "given" status is demoted or deactivated to intermediate status via postposing (that is, it is moved from center stage to a less prominent position on the stage). No switch from the previous subject/topic is involved; rather the topical status of a continuous referent is modified. Examples of this type are given in (13)–(15) below.

- (13) rājāv-ai pākk-aiy-ile kāvalar-kaḷ varicaiy-ā
 king-ACC see-VN-LOC guard-PL row-ADV
 ni-pp-āṅka. rājā anke iru-nt-ār ṇṇā ..
 stand-F-3PL king there be-P-3RESP COND

¹³These and related correlations are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this section.

mūnu vācal-le kāvalar-kaḷ ni-pp-ānka reṇṇu
 three gate-LOC guard-PL stand-F-3PL two
 reṇṇu pēr-ā reṇṇu reṇṇu pēr-ā.
 two people-ADV two two people-ADV
 appa uḷḷa viṭa-māṭṭ-ēṇ-t-ānka kāvalar-kaḷ
 then inside let-F:NEG-1SG-(say)-PFV:P-3PL guard-PL
 appa tāṇ teṇālirāmaṇ colli-iru-kk-āṇ.
 then EMPH Tenaliraman say-PERF-PR-3SG:MASC

'When (he goes) to see the king, **guards** are standing in rows.
 If the king was there, **guards** would stand at the three gates.
 Two by two. And wouldn't let (him) inside *the guards*
 (i.e., the guards wouldn't let him inside).
 So then Tenaliraman speaks, it seems.'

- (14) Avan kañcā vēra aṇṇaikki
 he ganja moreover that.day
 kuṭicc-iru-kk-āṇ. Kañcā ellām
 smoke-PERF-PR-3SG:MASC ganja all
 pōṭu-v-āṇ avan appuram vantū, anta
 put-F-3SG:MASC he afterwards TOP that
 kutirai mēle ēṭ-i,
 horse top climb-CP
 'He'd smoked ganja too that day. Did ganja and
 everything *he*. Afterwards, (he) climbed on the horse, and ...'

- (15) nāṇ tāṇ, āmā, anta patil-ellām nāṇ tāṇ
 I EMPH yes that answer-all I EMPH
 eḷut-iṇ-ēṇ. oru nāl-aṇcu letter eḷut-iṇ-ēṇ nāṇ.
 write-P-1SG one four-five letter write-P-1SG I
 at-ile mu-kkāl vāci eṇṇa eḷutu-v-ōm?
 that-LOC three-quarter time what write-F-1PL
 'I, yeah, I wrote all the replies. Wrote about four or five
 letters *I*. (You know) what we wrote most of the time? ...'

A question which immediately arises regarding examples of this type is the following: if the function of postposing a same subject/topic referent is to demote it to a lesser status, and if there is no competing intervening subject/topic with which it could be confused, why mention it at all? Why not simply "background" it by encoding it as an anaphoric zero?

The key to understanding the presence of such mentions can be found in the utterances which immediately *follow* antitopics of this type. In each case, there is a shift to a new topic after the clause

containing the postposing: in (13), from the guards to Tenaliraman; in (14), from the ganja-smoking of the protagonist to his accident on horseback (not directly related to smoking ganja, but rather to the wildness of the horse); and in (15), from the speakers agency in letter-writing, to the content of the letters themselves. In the switch-reference examples considered previously, different-subject antitopics *retrospectively* mark a shift from one topical entity to the next. Same-subject antitopics, in contrast, mark a topic shift *prospectively* (i.e., they signal that a shift is about to occur).

Further compelling evidence of the prospective-switching function is found in examples such as the following, where a zeroed topic is re-introduced as an antitopic immediately prior to a switch to a new topic, for no apparent reason other than to highlight the switch. In the text preceding example (16), Kovalan — the errant husband of the faithful Kannaki — has been the topic of four consecutive utterances, in the first of which he is referred to by a full NP, in the second and third by a pronoun *avan* 'he', and in the last utterance, by an anaphoric zero (i.e., only via subject agreement on the finite verb). He is thus a well-established thematic referent at this point in the narration.

- (16) anta vēciy-iṇ-uṭaiya vīṭ-ley-ē
 that prostitute-INC-GEN house-LOC-EMPH
 iru-kk-āṇ. [zero]
 be-PR-3SG:MASC
 māṭavi vīṭ-ley-ē iru-kk-āṇ avan.
 Matavi house-LOC-EMPH be-PR-3SG:MASC he
 [postposed pronoun]
 kaṇṇaki .. avaḷ vīṭ-le iru-kk-ā.
 Kannaki her house-LOC be-PR-3SG:FEM
 [preverbal NP — new topic]

'(He)'s staying only at the prostitute's house.

(He)'s staying only at Madavi's house *he*.

Kannaki .. is at her (own) house.'

The pronoun *avan* is reintroduced in postverbal position in the clause immediately preceding the shift in topic to Kannaki. As such, it both closes off the topic of the husband and signals that a different topic is to follow.

Finally, the prospective-switching function also accounts for some otherwise anomalous instances in colloquial speech where an NP — typically a pronoun — is mentioned both preverbally and postverbally in the same utterance. In such cases, the speaker apparently decides to

change topic in the following utterance after having already encoded an overt subject in clause-initial subject position. He modifies his utterance to signal the upcoming topic shift by (redundantly) postposing a subject pronoun, as in (17).

- (17) *uṭaṇē avan .. caṭṭaiy-ai eṭu-ttu aṭi eṭṭu aṭi*
 then he whip-ACC take-CP blow eight blow
aṭicc-iṭ-ṭ-āṇ avan. tirupp-i aṭutta itu-kku
 hit-PFV-P-3SG:MASC he turn-CP next thing-DAT
vā-ṭ-ār.
 come-PR-3RESP
 'Then he [the soldier] took the whip
 and struck eight blows *he*. He [Tenaliraman] turns and comes
 to the next thing.'

There is a correlation between antitopics that continue the same topic as that of the previous clause, and an immediately following shift in topic: 69% of all instances of the phenomenon are followed by a topic shift. In the spoken language, the two antitopicalization strategies are complementary in distribution and function, with different-subject antitopics typically continuing as topics in what follows, and same-subject antitopics followed by an immediate shift in topic. In the written texts, in contrast, both same-subject and different-subject antitopics are followed by a shift in topic the majority of the time (77%). The correlation between antitopicalization, previous topic, and following topic is summarized in Table 1 (for written Tamil) and Table 2 (for spoken Tamil).

	following topic same	following topic different	Total:
previous topic same	32% N=9	68% N=19	100% N=28 (22%)
previous topic different	21% N=21	79% N=81	100% N=102 (78%)
Total:	23% N=30	77% N=100	100% N=130 (100%)

Table 1: Antitopicalization and topic continuity in Written Tamil

	following topic same	following topic different	Total:
previous topic same	31% N=10	69% N=22	100% N=32 (40%)
previous topic different	59% N=29	41% N=20	100% N=49 (60%)
Total:	48% N=39	52% N=42	100% N=81 (100%)

Table 2: Antitopicalization and topic continuity in Spoken Tamil

In all, 93% (N=121) of antitopics in the written texts and 88% (N=71) of antitopics in the spoken texts correspond to a topic switch in one direction or the other, as compared with only 6% (N=9) of the written texts and 12% (N=10) of the spoken texts where the topic remains the same throughout. Antitopicalization in Tamil thus generally functions to indicate topics that are *transitional* in the discourse.

In addition to their discourse-pragmatic characteristics, antitopic constructions have prosodic characteristics that further distinguish them from true afterthoughts. While true afterthoughts are typically separated from the finite verb by a break in timing, antitopics are incorporated along with the finite verb as part of a unified intonation contour.¹⁴ Moreover, while the postverbal element in an afterthought construction may receive some degree of stress, antitopics are invariably unstressed, that is, uttered with lowered pitch and volume, and often with increased tempo. In both constructions, the main stress in the utterance, if there is one, falls on or before the finite verb.¹⁵ The two resulting prosodic contours are illustrated for the minimal pair in (18), based on the sequence *veḷiyē pōṇāṇ kaṇṇaṇ*, lit. 'outside go-P-3SG:MASC Kannan'.

- (18) a. *veḷiyē pōṇāṇ, kaṇṇaṇ.* Went outside, Kannan. (i.e., He
 went
 [Kannan] is an afterthought)
- b. *veḷiyē pōṇāṇ kaṇṇaṇ.* Went outside Kannan.
 [Kannan] is an antitopic]

¹⁴Correspondingly, in the written examples, no comma appears between an antitopic and its main clause (see examples (10) and (11)).

¹⁵The issue of whether Tamil has predictable stress (or 'accent') has been the subject of some debate (Andronov 1975; Asher 1985; Christdas 1988). In the present corpus, stress appears to be primarily emphatic, and hence variable from utterance to utterance.

The existence of prosodic differences of this sort suggests that there is a closer unity between antitopics and their immediately preceding clauses than between afterthoughts and the clauses they follow.

Adverbial and dependent clause postposing

The second major sub-type of intermediate ground postposing involves adverbials and dependent clause constructions. Such postposings specify additional modification (manner, time, location, purpose, etc.) to the main predicate of the utterance, and as such would appear to be of secondary or intermediate importance by definition, even though the information they contain is often strictly speaking not recoverable from context. In general, postposed adverbials and clauses are best analyzed as conventionalized afterthoughts, without further pragmatic specialization. One possible motive for appending them after the finite verb, especially in unplanned speech, is as a means of stating the important information (i.e., subject and predicate) first, without the clutter of adverbial detail, a strategy which Aske (1991), following Dik (1989), calls "uncluttering the pre-field", and which Kim and Shin (1992) characterize as "forced displacement". A motive of this sort may be discerned in examples such as the following.

- (19) appuram rompa nāl kaḷi-ccu, letter
 then many day pass-CP letter
 vant-iru-cc-u, anta poṇṇu kkiṭṭa iruntu.
 come-PERF-P-3SG:NEUT that girl-ABL
 'Then many days later, the letter arrived, from the girl.'
- (20) vāl-ai eṭu-kkiṭ-āṇ veṭ-r-atu-kkāka vēṇṭi.
 sword-ACC take-PR-3SG:MASC cut-PR-VN-BEN PURP
 'He takes up the sword in order to cut.'

In these examples, the speakers state the information that advances the narrative story line first (the letter arrived; he takes up the sword), followed by adverbial modification (source; purpose) in postverbal position. The principle of reserving preverbal positions for important information could also account for the tendency for subject NPs to be postposed after quotes.¹⁶

Evidence of the status of postposed adverbials relative to other

¹⁶A more marked variant of the "most important information first" strategy allows the finite verb to appear in sentence-initial position, followed by its arguments and modifiers. This is illustrated in the following dialogue, from the short story "Ammā Mandapam".

A: "vint-i vint-i naṭa-nt-āṇ-ā?"
 limp-CP limp-CP walk-P-3SG:MASC-Q

postposing types can be adduced from examples in the corpus where two constituents appear postposed to the right of the finite verb (N=23). In 9 instances (39%) all of them following a quote both an antitopic and a backgrounding adverbial are postposed.¹⁷ In all of the instances, the order is antitopic+adverbial, as in the oral example in (21) and the literary example in (22) below.

- (21) "avaṅ-ai kīle taḷli-tt-āṇ-ē.. en
 he-ACC down push-PFV:P-3SG:MASC-EMPH my
 makaṇ" appaṭi ṇṇu, aḷa-r-āṇ.. anta rājā
 son thus QUOT weep-PR-3SG:MASC that king
 uṭkā-ntu.
 sit-CP
 'Having said "Knocked him down .. my son (did)", wept ..
 the king sitting down.'
- (22) "avaḷ-ā? avaḷ-ai jeyi-kka yār-āl
 she-Q she-ACC win-INF who-INST
 muṭiy-um?" en-p-ārkaḷ ūr pen-kaḷ, oru vita
 be.able-F:3SG:NEUT say-F:3PL town girl-PL one kind
 acūyaṭiy-uṭaṇ.
 envy-with
 "Her? Who can beat her?" say the women of the town,
 with a sort of envy.'

The consistent relative ordering of adverbial after antitopic suggests a looser syntactic bond between postposed adverbials and their preceding clauses than that for antitopics and their preceding clauses.

Intonationally, adverbials tend *not* to be incorporated into the contour of the main clause, except in the case of high-frequency adverbs such as 'here', 'now', 'yet', 'a lot', 'a little', etc.

B:	"ōṭ-iṭ-āṇ	rompa	vēkamā ...	paya-ntu	koṇṭ-ē."
	run-P-3SG:MASC	very	fast	fear-CP	hold:CP-EMPH

A: "Did (he) walk with a limp?"

B: "(He) ran, really fast ... (like he) was scared."

What appears to motivate this example is not so much a need to postpose the adverbials, as it is to prepose the verb, i.e., to emphasize the verbal action and contrast it with the verb of the preceding utterance.

¹⁷The other combinations attested are antitopic + afterthought (26%), afterthought + afterthought (22%), adverbial + adverbial (9%), and antitopic + antitopic (4%). No combinations of three or more postverbal elements were found in the corpus.

- (23) *kār-in mītu veyil vīlu-nt-atu ippōtu.*
 car-GEN top sunlight fall-P-3SG:NEUT now
 'The sun was shining on the car now.'
- (24) *at-ai nī ila-kkav-illai iṇṇum. at-ai vai-ttu*
 that-ACC you lose-NF:NEG yet that-ACC place-CP
ātu.
 play-IMP
 [in a gambling game] 'THAT you haven't lost yet. Bet
 that and play.'

Otherwise, longer and more complex adverbials are typically appended after a pause, as in (19) and (22), a further indication of their more peripheral relationship to the proposition of the main clause. Similarly, postposed subordinate clauses are separated intonationally from the main clause in speaking (example (25) below), and set off by a comma in written texts (example (26) below).

- (25) *rompa vēkam-ā oṭu-r-atu,... pāl-ai*
 very speed-ADV run-PR-3SG:NEUT milk-ACC
pār-tta uṭaṇē.
 see-P:AjP as.soon.as
 'It runs really fast, ... as soon as it sees the milk.'
- (26) *Atu tān āṅku 'meyin' rastā. Kaikōtta nāṅku*
 that EMPH there main street. hand.hold-P:AjP four
pēr varicai tārālamāka pōk-alām, etirē vaṇṭi-kaḷ
 people row freely go-POSS opposite vehicle-PL
var-āviṭṭ-āl.
 come-NEG-COND
 'That is the 'main' street there. Four people holding
 hands in a row can go along freely, if no vehicles
 come from the other direction.'

Given the tendency to pause between main clause and adverbial postposing, and the generally supplementary nature of its content, it is often difficult to determine whether a postverbal adverbial in speech is conventionalized or a true afterthought. The distinction (from the point of view of the linguist) may reside in little more than the slight stress typical of afterthoughts vs. the absence of stress in conventionalized postposing, and even this criterion is not without exception, as noted in Section 3.2.

2.3.3 Emphatic Postposing

We come now to the third function of postposing in Tamil: emphasis. This type is considerably more restricted in occurrence than the

afterthought or backgrounding functions described above,¹⁸ appearing primarily in traditional oral narrative genres such as Villu Pāṭṭu ('Bow Song') or Kathākālakshēpam performances. Postposings of this type involve the presentation of new and/or emphasized nominal referents. Unlike the other postverbal types, emphatic postposed referents are intonationally highly stressed. Moreover, each is the unique focus of assertion of the sentence in which it appears, and thus must be considered to occupy a position within, rather than outside, the clause.

The principal pragmatic function of emphatic postposing is the presentation of new referents into the discourse; the referent is then treated as given information and elaborated upon in the clauses that follow. Examples of new referent presentation are given in (27) and (28).^{19, 20}

- (27) *ēlu pēr-un tāṅ mūṅki mūṅki*
 7 people-and EMPH immerse:CP immerse:CP
nīr-āṭa-r-āl-ē. ... Uṭaṇē pār-tt-āl
 water-play-PR-3SG:FEM-TAG suddenly see-P-3SG:FEM
at-ilē orutti! "aṭiyē! nām vantū
 that-LOC one:female FEM-VOC we TOP
evvaḷavu nēram ā-kiṭ-atu!"
 how.much time become-PR-3SG:NEUT
 'All seven of them are immersing themselves and playing
 in the water, right? Suddenly looked up one of them!
 (i.e., one of them looked up!) "Hey! It's getting late!"
 (she said)'
- (28) *Nappācai uṇṭ-ākki-ṇ-āṇ. It-aik*
 false.desire exist-cause to be-P-3SG:MASC This-ACC
kēṭ-t-āṇ vituran. avaṇ nallavaṇ cittappā.
 hear-P-3SG:MASC Viduran he good-MASC uncle
"eṇṇa, nāṭṭ-ai vaittu āṭu-v-at-ā? vēṇṭ-ām,
 what country-ACC place-CP play-F-VN-Q must-neg

¹⁸Just under 10% of the postposings in the oral corpus are of this type, including hybrid uses such as that illustrated in example (35).

¹⁹Both of these examples are from performances in the Villu Pāṭṭu tradition.

²⁰Note that (28) contains, in addition to the emphatic postposing *vituran*, an antitopic *avaṇ* 'he' (here signaling a prospective topic switch) and an afterthought elaboration, *cittappā* 'uncle'.

vēṇṭ-ām" ṇṇu coṇ-ṇ-āṇ avaṇ.
 must-NEG QUOT say-P-3SG:MASC he
 '[Cakuni] instilled [in Dharman] the desire (to gamble further).
 Heard this *Viduran* (i.e., Vituran heard this). He was a good
 man, (their) uncle. "What, wager the country?
 No, no!" said he.'

In these examples, neither *Vituran* nor the referent of *atilē orutti* 'one of them' has been mentioned before, nor are they otherwise recoverable from context. Indeed, *Vituran* is highly unpredictable information, since without explicit mention of him, the listener would almost certainly interpret the subject of the verb *kēṭṭāṇ* 'heard' to be one of the two other masculine referents, Cakuni or Dharman. These postposings, rather than being semantically "redundant", "supplementary", or "deletable" as has been claimed for afterthoughts and background-type postposings (cf. Kuno 1978), are crucial to the intended interpretation of the sentence.

Other uses of emphatic postposing highlight a referent regardless of whether or not it is a new mention. This is illustrated in (29).

- (29) "kaṭumaiyāṇa cāpatt-aik koṭu-kkiṇ-ēṇ pā!
 cruel curse-ACC give-PR-1SG see-IMP
 piṭi cāpatt-ai! cāk-āta cuṭalaiy-ile
 take-IMP curse-ACC die-NEG:AjP burning.ground-LOC
 nī cāmpal-āka pō!" eṇṇu
 you ash-ADV go-IMP QUOT
 capittu-viṭ-ār.
 curse-PFV-P-3RESP
 "I'm going to give you a cruel curse, see! Receive
 the curse! You will turn to ashes at the
 eternal burning ground!", thus he cursed (him).'

In (29) as well as in the two previous examples, the postposed referent has a cataphoric function: it points ahead in the discourse to where it receives further elaboration.

Corresponding to their emphatic function, postposings of this type have emphatic intonation as well. In (27)–(29), the sentences containing the postposing are pronounced with sharply rising (utterance non-final) intonation on the verb, and heavy falling stress on the postverbal constituent.²¹ This pattern contrasts strikingly with both the "afterthought" and the "antitopic" patterns, in which the intonation on

²¹It was presumably this emphatic intonation that led the native speaker transcriber of examples (27) and (29) (whose transcription I have retained here) to punctuate the sentences with an exclamation point.

the verb falls, rather than rises, and the postposed constituent receives little or no stress. Applying this intonation pattern to the sample sentence in (18a–b) produces the following utterance, in which the postposed NP 'Kaṇṇaṇ' is emphasized, i.e., as a focus of immediate subsequent interest in the discourse.

- (18) c.
 veliyē pōṇāṇ kaṇṇaṇ! Went outside Kannan!
 ['Kannan' is emphasized]

The fact that the heaviest stress falls not on the verb but rather on the postverbal NP provides strong evidence that postverbal position in emphatic constructions of this type is clause-internal.

There is independent syntactic evidence for this view as well. To begin with, an overt subject pronoun cannot be added to the beginning of (18c) above, a fact which suggests that the postposed NP is itself the subject of the clause, rather than a co-referential copy of an anaphoric zero in preverbal position.

- (18) c'.
 *avaṇ veliyē pōṇāṇ kaṇṇaṇ! He went outside Kannan!
 ['Kannan' is emphasized]

In contrast, the same sentence with Kannan as an antitopic is acceptable (although somewhat odd pragmatically; cf. example (17) above), and with Kannan as an afterthought, is both acceptable and perfectly normal.

- (18) b'.
 ?avaṇ veliyē pōṇāṇ kaṇṇaṇ. He went outside Kannan.
 ['Kannan' is an antitopic]
 a'.
 avaṇ veliyē pōṇāṇ, kaṇṇaṇ. He went outside, Kannan
 (that is).
 ['Kannan' is an afterthought]

Second, while it is marginally possible to follow an emphatic postposing with an antitopic,²² the reverse order is not possible (at least, not if emphatic intonation and function is intended).

²²This observation is based on elicited data. The constraint against sequences of emphatic postposing + antitopic appears to be pragmatic, rather than syntactic. It is somehow odd to focus one referent and antitopicalize another (e.g., for purposes of switch reference) in the same utterance; presentational focus, when it occurs, appears to take precedence over all other word-order related pragmatic operations. It follows from this that sequences of emphatic + antitopic + afterthought are also odd, although the combined relative ordering of emphatic + antitopic and antitopic + afterthought leads us to expect that if the three postposing types did co-occur, they would occur in this order.

- (30) Uṭaṇē pār-tt-āl at-ilē orutti!
 suddenly see-P-3SG:FEM that-LOC one:female
 anta paittiyakkāraṇ-ai.
 that crazy-MASC-ACC
 'Suddenly looked up one of them, at the crazy man.'
 (i.e., 'Suddenly one of them looked up at the crazy man.')

- (31) * Uṭaṇē pār-tt-āl anta paittiyakkāraṇ-ai
 suddenly see-P-3SG:FEM that crazy-MASC-ACC
 at-ilē orutti!
 that-LOC one:female
 'Suddenly looked up, at the crazy man. One of them.'

Further, there can be only one emphatic postposing per sentence, although sentences with more than one backgrounding postposing are possible.²³

Finally, emphatic postposing is precluded if another constituent in the sentence is in focus. Unlike antitopics (A-TOP) or afterthoughts, emphatic focus cannot co-occur with questions or negation, as shown by (32)–(34).

- (32) a. *It-aik kēṭ-ṭ-ān-ā vituran?
 this-ACC hear-P-3SG:MASC-Q Vituran
 'Heard this Vituran?!' [Vituran is emphasized]
 b. It-aik kēṭ-ṭ-ān-ā vituran?
 this-ACC hear-P-3SG:MASC-Q Vituran
 'Heard this(,) Vituran?' [V. is A-TOP or afterthought]
- (33) a. *eṇṇa kēṭ-ṭ-āṇ vituran?
 what hear-P-3SG:MASC Vituran
 'What heard Vituran?!' [Vituran is emphasized]
 b. eṇṇa kēṭ-ṭ-āṇ vituran?
 what hear-P-3:SG:MASC Vituran
 'What heard(,) Vituran?' [V. is A-TOP or afterthought]

- (34) a. *It-aik kēṭ-kav-illai vituran!
 this-ACC hear-NF-NEG Vituran
 'Didn't hear it Vituran!' [Vituran is emphasized]
 b. It-aik kēṭ-kav-illai vituran.
 This-ACC hear-NF-NEG Vituran
 'Didn't hear it(,) Vituran.' [V. is A-TOP or afterthought]

These restrictions fall out from the fact that focus in Tamil is syntactically unique—that is, there can be one and only one constituent in focus per clause. The incompatibility of emphatic postposing with focusing operations such as question formation and negation supports the view that emphatic postposing is itself focused.

3 Summary and Discussion

I have presented functional, intonational, and syntactic evidence in support of the view that postverbal elements in Tamil are of three distinct types. To the extent that this view is correct, it should be apparent that the question of how and why strict verb-finality is violated cannot be answered by a single generalization on either formal or functional grounds. Indeed, it may not be going too far to state that the only feature all instances of postverbal word order in Tamil have in common is postverbal word order.

Having said that, I would like to go further and suggest that even such an apparently tautological statement is incorrect, if by "postverbal word order" we mean that all elements that appear to the right of the finite verb occupy the same underlying position and are the result of the same formal process (e.g., "right-dislocation"). Rather, the evidence suggests that there are three underlying postverbal positions, each of which operates according to different principles within a different linguistic domain.

3.1 Postverbal Positions and Linguistic Domains

The most general domain evoked here is that of *speech production*. The production domain includes not only (more or less) complete grammatical utterances, but afterthoughts which repair or modify the communication in a variety of ways. Afterthoughts are in a loose syntactic and pragmatic relationship to the assertion in the main clause, and may be separated from it prosodically by separate intonation contours and pauses, and syntactically by other post-clausal elements such as antitopics. It makes little sense to say that afterthoughts are "right-

²³See Fn. 17.

dislocated" in a transformational sense; rather they end up after the finite verb by default, as a consequence of the linear nature of speech production.

Antitopics, in turn, occupy a position that is closer to and intonationally unified with the main clause. This position is systematically associated with pragmatic functions related to information status, thematicity, topicality, grounding, etc., and thus the domain within which the position operates may be termed the *pragmatic* domain. If both an antitopic and an afterthought appear, the former precedes the latter, and thus can be considered to form a tighter syntactic bond with the main clause, although the unity can be interrupted by an emphatic postverbal element.²⁴ Because of the intentional nature of such postposings, they can be considered to "move" rightward, or rather, a copy of the referent moves, leaving a coreferential pronoun or zero in preverbal position.

Finally, emphatic focus postposings occupy a position inside the clause, immediately after the finite verb. They are syntactically focused, pragmatically salient, and intonationally stressed. The position is further subject to a variety of formal co-occurrence constraints to which the other positions are not, and thus is defined, at least in part, within the *syntactic* or clause-level domain. Postposings of this type represent the clearest cases of movement, since it is the argument itself that appears postverbally (i.e., no copy or trace remains in preverbal position).

Figure 1 schematically represents the relationships among the three postverbal positions and their respective domains. Note that for each post-clausal position, there is an analogous preclausal position and a function associated with it. Afterthoughts mirror false starts, prefatory comments, etc. that may occur in natural speech production before the speaker embarks on the utterance proper. The unit containing these production-based elements constitutes an *extended utterance*. On the *utterance* level, antitopics are paired with presentational topics, i.e., those of the marked or shifted variety, as in the English expression 'as for X, ...' and the Tamil expression 'X vantū, ...' or 'X eṇṇāl ...'. Finally, within the *sentence* itself, initial (subject) position is preferred for non-shifted topics, and this function is mirrored by sentence-final 'focus' position, represented in the diagram as F.²⁵

²⁴Backgrounding adverbials should probably be included in the pragmatic domain as well, although it is difficult to draw a principled distinction between them and true afterthoughts.

²⁵I include F in the diagram as part of a maximally differentiated system, e.g., that

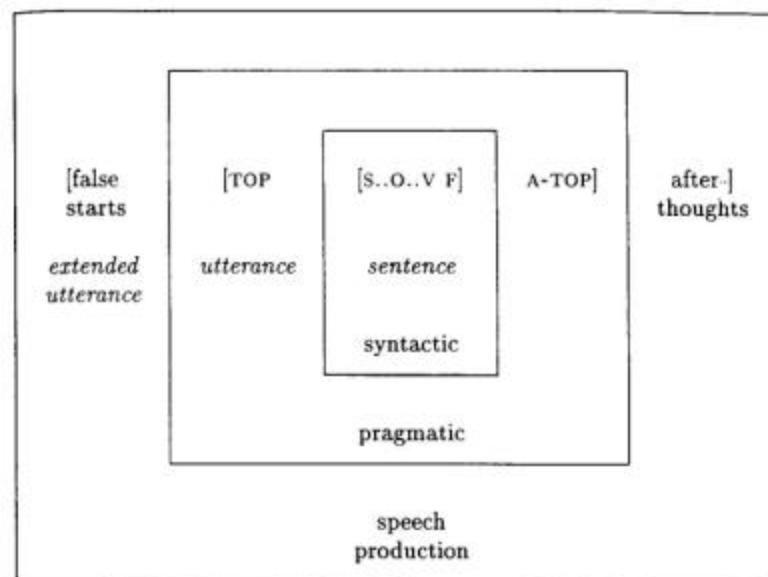


Figure 1: *Functional positions in three domains in Tamil*

As figure 1 suggests, the three postverbal positions are situated along a continuum of increasing closeness of bond between postverbal element and finite clause, proceeding inward from speech production in contexts of use to the pragmatic and ultimately to the syntactic or sentence-level domain. That is, the three types pattern synchronically according to a model that was originally intended by Givón (1979:222) to describe a diachronic process, that of syntacticization, whereby "[tightly bound] constructions arise diachronically ... from looser, conjoined, paratactic constructions."²⁶ The question then arises as to whether the model implies a necessary diachronic relationship among the three postposing types in Tamil.

employed by narrators in traditional oral performance genres. In other discourse genres, the clause-internal position represented by F may not be available.

²⁶Cf. also Lehmann (1985) and Traugott (1993).

3.2 Diachronic Considerations

Unfortunately, few studies to date have addressed the history of word order in Tamil, and none systematically. Lacking diachronic data, I can only speculate as to which of the postposing types came first, and whether or not there is a direct historical relationship among them. For the purposes of this discussion, I will assume (along with Givón) a path of diachronic development that mirrors the syntacticization continuum.²⁷ The problem is then to account for two links: that between afterthoughts and backgrounding, and that between backgrounding and emphasis.

It is implicit in a number of studies (Lambrecht 1981, Erguvanli 1984) that antitopics and other conventionalized backgrounding postposings have their genesis in true afterthoughts. Indeed such a development is consistent with general principles of grammaticalization as articulated by Hopper (1991); specifically, the tendency for an emerging grammatical structure to be more restricted in function and distribution than its source, and the tendency for older and newer functions to coexist in a "layered" synchronic relationship. A diachronic development from afterthoughts to backgrounding postposings, with the latter representing a conventionalization and a specialization of the functions of the former, is highly plausible according to these criteria.

The relationship between backgrounding and emphasis is more controversial. On the one hand, a relatively high frequency of backgrounding postposings could have at some point licensed a weakening of the strict verb-final constraint, thereby opening the door for postposings of other (i.e., non-backgrounding) functional types. Such a view can be reinforced by appealing to the notion of sentence-final focus position as a pragmatic (or language type-relative) universal (cf. Firbas 1964; Halliday 1967; Herring 1990; Herring and Paolillo in press; Hetzron 1975).²⁸ On the other hand, a shift in function from backgrounding (de-emphasis) to emphasis is not widely attested in languages for which diachronic evidence is available, nor is there direct evidence to support such an interpretation for Tamil. On the contrary, the fact that emphatic postposing is limited to traditional oral performance genres suggests that the strategy, rather than being innovating, may be archaic, a relic of a time when word order in Tamil was less strict.²⁹ In

light of these considerations, and until such time as historical research establishes a direct link, we cannot assume any necessary diachronic relationship between backgrounding postposing and emphatic postposing.

Does this then mean that the continuum model is flawed as a description of the facts of postposing in Tamil? Not at all. It is valid in two important respects. First, the properties of each postposing type are amenable to being arranged in a particular linear order, that order being the same regardless of whether the criterion is syntactic bondedness, intonation, or motivatedness of function; this is presumably not a random coincidence, but rather reflects a principled relationship. Second, the actual attested data represent a gradient of uses. Thus in addition to the "core" cases presented as examples of each type above, there are "mixed" or "hybrid" uses, where features of one type are combined with features of another. For example, much of the difficulty in distinguishing afterthought adverbials and conventionalized adverbial postposings in speech is that both sometimes follow an intonational break (normally a feature of afterthoughts alone); cf. the variation in examples (19) and (20) above. This represents an area where the two postposing types are not separated by a very great functional distance. Moreover, antitopics as well are sometimes accompanied by true afterthought intonation, i.e., delivered as if they were afterthoughts when they clearly fulfill a specific pragmatic function, a fact which suggests that the notion of the afterthought is available in some sense even in conventionalized uses.³⁰ The antitopic 'king' in (21) could be considered an example of this type, although antitopics following an even more pronounced intonation break can be identified in the corpus.³¹ More surprising perhaps are uses which blur the distinction between antitopicalization and emphasis, two functions which might at first glance appear to be mutually exclusive. In traditional oral epic narration, referents that otherwise function as antitopics e.g., for purposes of switch reference are sometimes intonationally emphasized, as in the following example.

³⁰A possible link preserved between the two is whatever stylistic connotations speech containing true afterthoughts may possess informality, spontaneity, colloquiality, etc. These observations are not surprising, of course, if true afterthoughts and backgrounding postposings are diachronically related, the latter arising out of the former as "conventionalizations" of the afterthought strategy.

³¹There are also postposings that appear to function as true afterthoughts which do not follow an intonational break, e.g. 'uncle' in example (28).

²⁷A different developmental order is, of course, theoretically possible.

²⁸Independent evidence of a tendency towards final focus position in Tamil can be adduced from the order of elements in cleft constructions (Lehmann 1989:368) and verbless presentational constructions (Herring and Paolillo in press).

²⁹Cf. Andronov (1991). Native speakers of Modern Tamil feel that emphatic postposing sounds "poetic", which further suggests an archaic status.

- (35) [the immediately preceding discourse topic is 'Duryodhana's brothers']

oru nāl ivan̄ anta .. anantappuratt-ilē tann-uṭaiya
one day he that A.-LOC self-GEN

aṟaiy-ilē amar-ntu iru-kkiṇṇ-ān turiyōṭanan!
room-LOC sit-CP be-PR-3SG:MASC Duryodhana

'One day he was sitting in his room in Anandapuram
Duryodhana!

(i.e., Duryodhana was sitting in his room in Anandapuram)

'Duryodhana' in this example is an antitopic in that the referent is thematic, given information and represents a retrospective shift in topic. At the same time it is emphasized intonationally in the manner characteristic of new mention postposings. The functional motivation for mixing the two strategies appears to be to signal simultaneously a shift to a new topic and to underscore the reintroduction of Duryodhana, the protagonist of the narrative. The existence of hybrid uses of this sort suggests that there is an overlap or at least a perceived relationship between the functions of antitopicalization and emphasis in the minds of speakers. A continuum model is thus necessary to characterize postposing as it is manifested in its full range of uses.³²

To sum up, the three postposing types in Tamil, afterthought, backgrounding, and emphatic are related along a continuum of syntacticization, here defined as a type of linear organization in terms of tightness of syntactic bond between component elements. The syntacticization model is not only descriptively adequate, but would appear to have psychological reality for Tamil speakers, who relate the three postposing types in the same linear order, as manifested through hybrid uses. These observations are essentially synchronic; that is, they do not depend on there being an analogous diachronic relationship among the Tamil postposing types, although such a relationship is not of course ruled out. More generally, the evidence that speakers effectively reconstruct a syntacticization continuum independent of historical relatedness provides support for the motivated nature of syntacticization as a diachronic process.

³²The nature of such a continuum is aptly characterized by Traugott (1993:1) as "a [unidirectional] path ... from less to more compressed, ... with 'way-stations' where prototype constructions cluster along the way; in other words, not a slippery slope but a stairway with landings".

3.3 Conclusion

In concluding, I return to the problem of postposing in verb-final languages more generally. Despite differences in terminology and descriptive approach, the studies cited at the outset agree remarkably in terms of what constitutes the overall functional character of postverbal position. Kuno (1978) uses the term "afterthoughts" to characterize what in our terms would be both afterthoughts and backgrounding in Japanese (cf. also Fujii 1991), and Erguvanli (1984) labels as "backgrounding" a similarly diverse set of phenomena in Turkish. The same three functions, more or less, as are found in Tamil are attributed by Kim and Shin (1992) to Korean and by Junghare (1985) to Indo-Aryan: afterthoughts ("corrections"), de-emphasis, and emphasis. All languages, presumably, make use of afterthoughts as a repair mechanism in unplanned speech. Further, it would seem that this strategy regularly becomes conventionalized in a backgrounding or de-emphatic function. Emphatic postposing, in contrast, is considerably more restricted in its occurrence crosslinguistically and within any given language (it is the least frequently attested type in both Korean and Indo-Aryan). Presumably, this is due to the fact that postverbal emphatics, as focusing devices, form a closer syntactic bond with the main clause, and thus constitute a potential threat to basic word order in ways that more loosely conjoined afterthoughts, antitopics, etc. do not. Thus the continuum model, in addition to accounting for the facts of Modern Tamil, has implications for the analysis of postposing more generally.

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APPENDIX: Abbreviations

ABL	ablative	NF	non-future
ACC	accusative	NP	non-past
ADV	adverbializer	P	past
AjP	adjectival participle	PERF	perfect
BEN	benefactive	PERM	permissive
COND	conditional	PFV	perfective
CP	conjunctive participle	PL	plural
DAT	dative	POSS	possibilitative
EMPH	emphatic	PR	present
F	future	PURP	purpose
FEM	feminine	Q	yes-no question
GEN	genitive	QUOT	quotative
IMP	imperative	REL	relativizer
INC	increment	RESP	respective
INF	infinitive	SG	singular
INST	instrumental	TAG	tag question
LOC	locative	TOP	topic
MASC	masculine	VN	verbal noun
NEUT	neuter	VOC	vocative
NEG	negative		

- 1 first person
2 second person
3 third person

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7

Issues in Word Order in South Asian Languages: Enriched Phrase Structure or Multidimensionality?

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There are a number of intriguing word order phenomena in South Asian languages which challenge existing ideas in syntactic theory about the representation of word order, and the formal mechanisms for capturing word order freedom. In this paper, we will examine some of these phenomena and indicate how they impinge upon theoretical assumptions. Our goal is not to defend any particular theory of word order or a framework for analysing word order phenomena. Rather, we will spell out some of the consequences of word order phenomena to theoretical assumptions in current treatments of word order, and outline a conception of linguistic structure that makes possible a particular line of analysis. As the title indicates, the paper is to be taken as a set of issues surrounding multidimensionality in relation to word order, and a statement of some interesting problems for research, rather than as a set of solutions.

The mechanism of co-indexed traces in current syntactic theory allows us to express two different kinds of information within the same level of representation. Thus, in a passive construction, the chain of an NP and its trace is simultaneously a grammatical subject and a "logical object", the logical objecthood being signalled by the trace. In a sentence like *John, Mary said Bill likes*, the chain of a *wh*- and its trace is simultaneously the topic of the sentence and the grammatical object of the embedded verb, the grammatical objecthood being signalled by the trace. Thus, traces allow us to copy information from one level of representation to another. Compared with phrase structure repre-