

The Phonology and Morphology of Tamil



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著者:Christdas, Prathima

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This study provides a detailed description of the Kanniyakumari dialect of Tamil within the theoretical framework of Lexical Phonology. This work, which includes a careful analysis of the segments, syllables, morphemes, and noun and verb morphology, remains one of the very few accounts of a spoken variety of Tamil, a Dravidian language spoken by over 60 million speakers in India alone, with a long cultural tradition. What sets this book apart from much other work in Dravidian languages is not only its theoretical solidity but also its strong emphasis on the accuracy and reliability of the data. All the data are obtained first-hand from speakers and meticulously checked for accuracy and consistency, so that other scholars can confidently use the data in their research. Tamil is a classic example of a diglossic language: speakers control not only the vernacular that is acquired as a first language, but also the standard and literary dialects that they acquire in school. The dialect presented in this book is unique not only as the first thorough account of the phonology and morphology of a dialect that has not been described before, but also includes features that are specific to the dialect described.

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