

Dravidian Grammar

The most characteristic grammatical features of Dravidian languages are:

Dravidian languages are **agglutinative**.

Word order is **subject–object–verb** (SOV).

Dravidian languages have a **clusivity** distinction.

The major word classes are nouns (substantives, numerals, pronouns), adjectives, verbs, and indeclinables (particles, enclitics, adverbs, interjections, onomatopoeic words, echo words).

Proto-Dravidian used only suffixes, never prefixes or infixes, in the construction of inflected forms. Hence, the roots of words always occurred at the beginning. Nouns, verbs, and indeclinable words constituted the original word classes.

There are two numbers and four different gender systems, the ancestral system probably having "male:non-male" in the singular and "person: non-person" in the plural.

In a sentence, however complex, only one finite verb occurs, normally at the end, preceded if necessary by a number of gerunds.

Word order follows certain basic rules but is relatively free.

The main (and probably original) dichotomy in tense is past:non-past. Present tense developed later and independently in each language or subgroup.

Verbs are intransitive, transitive, and causative; there are also active and passive forms.

All of the positive verb forms have their corresponding negative counterparts, **negative verbs**.