



ECHO WORDS



When an onomatopoeic word is duplicated and the duplicated part undergoes a sound change it is called an echo word. The change may be either of vowel or consonant or both either in the first syllable or in the second syllable of the duplicated part. But mostly the change takes place in the first syllable. In one rare case both the syllables have been changed.

e.g. *tiṭinpoṭineṇal* 'An expression of sound'

There are three subdivisions of echo words. In one case the whole expression is purely onomatopoeic. In the other two types a free word occurs as the first or second part of the echo words. So here the motivated forms are based on the phonetic form of the free word.

Like the onomatopoeic single words and reduplicatives, echo words also bring new distribution of phonemes.

For example *ṭ* occurs in the initial position of the word as in

ṭakkuṭikkeṇal 'The tick-tack sound produced by sabots or slippers while walking'

Regular sandhi alternation operates in the echo words also. For example the nasal before a plosive is assimilated to the homorganic nasal.

tāntōmeṇal 'Expr. of being wasteful'

When a consonant or a vowel is replaced in the echoed part, some consonants and vowels occur predominantly in the

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replaced position. The bilabials either the plosive *p* or the nasal *m*, are found frequently in the echoed part. *p* is found in 42 words and *m* in 32 words out of 82 words where the consonant is replaced. Next comes the palatal *c*.

As far as the vowels are concerned long or short *a* alone is changed in the second part. In most of the cases it is changed into the back vowels *u* or *e*.

The echo words also take the verb like *-en*, the suffixes *-ttal*, *-pu* etc. mentioned with single and reduplicated words. They have been given along with the echo words in this chapter. Sometimes they come without taking any suffix.

Echo words are further classified on the basis of the alternation they undergo. They are

(1) Vowel alternation : the alternation is either in the first syllable or in the second syllable of the echoed word

(2) Consonant change

(3) Consonant plus vowel change

(4) Addition/loss of consonants.

There is another type of echo word. The initial syllable of any word i.e. (C) V - is changed into *ki* - and added to it.

e.g. *aṭukīṭu*, *maṭukīṭu* etc.,

This duplication gives the meaning 'thing(s) like that which is denoted by the basic form'. Any word can be duplicated in this way and so a list of this type of echo words is not given here.

i. Complete Onomatopoeia

As mentioned above, the echo words where neither of the two parts is a free word are given under this head. The words that come under this category are 79 out of 121 echo words.

(1) Vowel Change

(a) $\bar{a} > \bar{u}$

Low back short/long vowel is changed into high back short/long vowel in the echoed part in 5 words.

kacukuceṇal	'Whispering in the air'
kaṭukuṭuttal	'To gabble; rattle in speaking'
kapukkupukkeṇal	'Gurgling of water'
kalukuluttal	'Confused noise due to various low sounds'
kākūveṇal	'Expression as in wailing'

(b) $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$

Low back short/long vowel is changed into mid back short/long vowel in the echoed part in 4 words.

naḷunoḷuttal	'To be soft and moisty'
kaḷukoḷeṇal	'Soft and slippery as jelly'
tāmṭomeṇal	'Expr. of being wasteful'
tāntōmeṇal	—do—

(c) $\bar{a} > \bar{i}$

Low back long vowel is changed into high front long vowel in the echoed part in 3 words.

tākkuṁṭikkumāy	'In a neat or well dressed manner'
tākkuṭikkeṇal	'The tick-tack sound produced by sabots or slippers while walking'
tāntīmeṇal	'Expr. of music sound'
	'Expr. of extravagance'

(d) Vowel change in the second syllable of the echoed part. This change takes place only in one word.

kuṭukuṭā	'Hookah as producing a gurgle'
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(e) Vowel lengthening in the echoed word.

In these words there is no change in the quality of the vowels but only the quantity is changed. This takes place in the second syllable in 3 words.

tontōmeṇal	'Expr. of beating time'
kokkōveṇal	'Expr. of cackling; clucking'
palapaḷa	'Word expression 'no'

(2) Consonant Change

The initial consonant is changed when echoed in the words of this category. Out of the five words in this section the bilabial consonantal phonemes p or m occurs in 4 words initially in the echoed part.

kaṭapaṭaveṇal	'Metaphysical Jargon'
kimāccimaveṇal	'Muttering'
cālāmālāvaka	'Confused by'
taṭapaṭeṇal	'Expr. of patting sound; tottering'
tantumantu	'Confusion'

(3) Consonant plus vowel change

The initial consonant along with the following vowel i.e. the initial syllable itself is changed in the words of this category. Most of the words have the bilabial consonantal phonemes initially in the echoed part followed by the back rounded vowels u or o. They are 48 in number out of 51 words where consonant plus vowel change takes place.

kakkapikkaveṇal	'Expr. of blinking in confusion blabbering'
kacumuceṇal	'Whispering into the ear'
kaṭamuṭeṇal	'Rattling: rumbling in the bowels'
kaṭumuṭeṇal	—do—
kaṭumuṭeṇal	—do—
katalametalavotṭutal	'To allow, to move about'
kappuccippenal	'Phrase signifying the keeping of perfect silence'
kalumoleṇal	'Chattering'
kaḷukkumolukkeṇal	'Fatty appearance'
kilumoleṇal	'Signifying buzzing humming sound'
kiccumūcceṇal	'—do—'
	Noisiness as of housefull of children'

kiyomāyoveṇal	'Screaming as children or young people'
kuḷakkumaḷkḷkenal	'Expr. signifying being fleshy and rounded'
kōkkumākku	'Juggling'
	'signifying confusion and disorderliness'
kōṇamāṇaveṇal	—do—
kōlāmālāveṇal	'To make a cracking sound';
caṭapuṭattal	to be in ordinally hasty'
caṭṭuputtēṇal	'signifying haste'
carakkuppurakkeṇal	'Creaking sound as of shoes'
calārpilareṇal	'Signifying clinking as of ornaments'
calukkupyilukkeṇal	—do—
callōpillōvenriruttal	'To move freely and familiarly'
caḷakkuppuḷakkeṇal	'Splashing sound'
caḷakkuppuḷakkeṇal	—do—
caḷḷuppuḷleṇal	'Growling with anger'
cālāmālāvāka	'Confusedly'
ciḷupuleṇal	'To be mashy as over boiled rice'
cillupulleṇal	'Bubbling as boiling water'
cittupputteṇal	'Short, quick breathing'
ṭakkupukku	'Cunning device, trickery'
ṭakkuppukkeṇal	'Expr. of repeated thumping sound'
takkapikkaveṇal	'Expr. of being usually disorderly improper, awkward'
takkapikkaveṇal	'Awkward'
takkaṭāpikkaṭāveṇal	'Ranting; blustering'
	'Expr. of repeated thumping sound'
takkuppokkeṇal	
tacumpucumeṇal	'Expr. signifying loose hanging of garments on a person'

tatapatēṇal	'Expr. of patting sound; tottering'
tatapuṭēṇal	—do—
tatapuṭaveṇal	'Expr. of blustering; scolding'
tatupuṭuttal	'To be hasty'
tattapittaveṇal	'Wobbling as of a child'
tattakkapittakkaveṇal	—do—
tattakkapittakkakuttutal	'A game in which one tries to strike another's hand and the other draws it back evading the blow'
tantumantu	'confusion'
tammākummā	'Expr. signifying delight; enjoyment'
taṭṭupputteṇal	'Expr. of being angry; being pompous'
tāṭṭupputtu	'Confusion; perplexity'
tiṭinpotineṇal	'An expression of being angry'
tiṭutippeṇal	'Expr. of falling etc.'
nacapicattal	'To waver'
narukkupirukkal	'Rice partially cooked'

(4) Addition of consonants.

When the word begins with a vowel a consonant comes in initially in the echoed part. Here also out of 7 occurrences 4 have bilabials added initially.

āṭaikkappuṭaikka	'Hurriedly'
alaṅkamalaṅka	'To be wilder'
allōlakallōlam	'Great noise'
aḷaykujay	'Hasty action'
ātāpātaveṇal	'A form of respectful greeting and salutation gamon muhammedans'
irāṭṭupirāṭṭu	'Quarrel scuffle'
ekkaccakkam	'Confusion; disorder'

ii. The free words of the previous section, viz. the complete onomatopoeic words, neither of the parts occurs in isolation. There is also another type. The first part is a free word which occurs in isolation. Here the second or reduplicated part is motivated by the phonetic form of this free word. It is similar in form to the free word.

(1) Vowel change.

Only one example is found in this section. Mid vowel is changed into a high vowel. The word *keṣu* 'to spoil' is followed by the echoed part *kiṭu* plus the verbal noun suffix *ttal*. The meaning of the whole expression is 'to be utterly ruined.'

It cannot be brought under (C) $\bar{V}-\bar{K}i-$ because in this type a suffix cannot be added commonly at the end but it should be added separately with each part.

ketukituttal 'To be utterly ruined'

(2) Consonant Change.

Here also the predominant consonant that occurs initially in the echoed part is bilabial. They are 7 in number out of 9.

<i>kūttumūttu</i>	'Combination and cooperation of persons for affecting an object'
<i>cantumuntu</i>	'Narrow street, confusion'
<i>cātaimātaiyay</i>	'By hint; slightly'
<i>cāyalmāyalay</i>	—do—
<i>cikkalpikkal</i>	'Complication'
<i>cikkuppikku</i>	—do—
<i>cintipinti</i>	'Shred; shattered bit'
<i>nappu cappu</i>	'Taste; property; possessions'
<i>pakkicakki</i>	'A little extra quality'

(3) Consonant plus vowel change.

The bilabial consonantal phoneme *m* or *p* occupies the initial position of the echoed word and it is followed mostly by back vowels. They are 17 in number.

<i>kāttimutti</i>	'Clots, loose mould in a newly ploughed clayey soil'
<i>kāttumutti</i>	'Quiteness; good behaviour with reference to children'
<i>kittamutta</i>	'Nearly, about'
<i>kittimutti</i>	'Closely'
<i>kuṟukkumaṟukku</i>	'Interrupting a person when he is speaking and contradicting him'
<i>kuṟukkumar-ukkum</i>	'Here and there'
<i>koṇalmāṇal</i>	'Confusion or disorderliness'
<i>caṭalapuṭalam</i>	'That which is big and stout'
<i>cikkaṭimukkati</i>	'Complications'
<i>cīrupāṇēṇal</i>	'Expr. signifying quarrelling'
<i>cīrupūṇēṇal</i>	—do—
<i>cīrumāru</i>	'Confusion; ill-treatment'
<i>cūrrumpiṟṟum</i>	'All around on all sides'
<i>tāttumutti</i>	'Furniture; articles of various kinds'
<i>talluppullu</i>	'Scuffle pulling and pushing'
<i>tallumullu</i>	—do—
<i>tittumutti</i>	'Mutual abuse'

(4) Addition of consonants.

When the word begins with a vowel a consonant comes in initially in the echoed part as in the case of onomatopoeia. Out of the 9 occurrences 3 have bilabials added initially.

<i>acāttupicāṭṭēṇal</i>	'Behaving foolishly'
<i>aṭitaṭi</i>	'Quarrel that ends in blows'
<i>attiracattiram</i>	'Missiles and weapons'
<i>antimanti</i>	'Evening twilight'
<i>amaḷikumali</i>	'Great uproar'
<i>astipāsti</i>	'Property'
<i>ināmcāṇam</i>	'Small gift'
<i>ēnōtānōvēṇal</i>	'State of being indifferent'
<i>ōṭṭacāṭṭam</i>	'Hurry and bustle'

iii. The free word in the second part.

The echoed word in this section belongs to the first part and the free word to the second. Here the echoed part is preposed to the free word.

(1) Consonant + Vowel change.

Kōṇa is the echoed word of the free word *māṇam* and it comes as attribute to *piḷḷai*. This is the only case where one gets consonant plus vowel change.

kōṇamāṇappiḷḷai 'A marriage ceremony in which the bride presents the bridegroom with a doll representing a child which he returns to her.'

(2) Loss of consonants.

Contrary to the echo word with the free word as the first part, in these words the initial consonant of the free word is lost when echoed. There are 8 such words in this section.

<i>akkampakkam</i>	'This way and that way'
<i>aḷḷattittallāṭi</i>	'Unsteady swaying to and fro'
<i>aṛakkapaṇakka</i>	'With flurry'
<i>aṇatimarati</i>	'Forgetfulness'
<i>icakupicaku</i>	'Awkward predicament'
<i>aṭṭikkuppōṭṭi</i>	'Contradiction merely for the sake of contradiction'
<i>aṇaikkukkoṇai</i>	—do—