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Proposal to Encode Two Letters in Telugu

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Introduction

Tamil is one of the liturgical languages of the *Śrīvaiṣṇavism* sect of *Vaiṣṇavism* within the broader Hindu religious tradition. As a liturgical language, Tamil texts are frequently expressed in scripts other than Tamil for reading and recitation by non-Tamil speakers. This served as an impetus to evolve unique orthographies that attempted to preserve the phonological aspects of the Tamil script/language in other scripts.

This document presents a hybrid Telugu orthography that is used for representing Tamil religious texts and proposes the encoding of two additional consonants to the Telugu block of the UCS to represent this niche orthography in Unicode.

Transcribing Tamil in the Telugu Script

Both Tamil and Telugu being Dravidian languages share a core set of phonemes that made it relatively easy to express the Tamil language in the Telugu script. However, two Tamil consonants, namely LLLA $\[mmodel] A \[mmodel] RRA \[mmodel] r$, tended to be problematic. Given that Tamil texts were transcribed into Telugu (by explicitly denoting the voiced plosives. In Tamil, voiced and unvoiced plosives are allophones, and the script depicts both using the same graphemes. The voiced or unvoiced realization of a plosive grapheme must be contextually inferred) rather than transliterated, preserving the phonetic realization of the source text was especially important.

Even though there is an Old Telugu equivalent of \underline{I} (encoded as Telugu Letter LLLA \mathfrak{G} U+0C34), it is virtually unknown to the modern populace outside the epigraphic domain and the associated phoneme / \underline{I} ceased to be part of the modern language a millennium ago. As for \underline{r} / \underline{r} , the Telugu equivalent (\mathfrak{G} U+0C31) when geminated has a different phonetic realization to that of Tamil. In

Telugu, ஐ <u>rr</u>a, as expected, is realized as a geminate trill /rra/ but in Tamil ற்ற <u>rr</u>a is uniquely

realized as /tttra/.

Both these problems were resolved by the wholesale importation of these two Tamil consonants and simply treating them as if they were Telugu consonants. Using this hybrid orthography, the original Tamil phonetic realization of the source text was appropriately preserved in the Telugu script without any loss. It also provided a visual cue to readers that these are Tamil phonemes and care must be taken in pronouncing these characters in accordance to Tamil phonology. Given that these were liturgical texts to be recited, enabling proper pronunciation of the texts was quite crucial.

A sample Tamil verse [5] written using the hybrid Telugu orthography (along with its source Tamil text) is shown below.

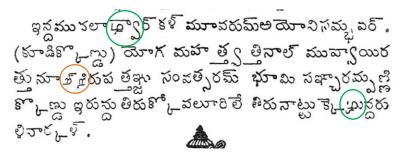
ట్ పుకుకన వమనాయ్ ాదో వాశల్ టీఱివాలార్ **షణ్**రునాళ్ పెరున్నయిల్ తా ౯ తన్దానో వననలు డో యాయగుజిలమే తి జీ లో రెమ్సా వాయ్. ೧೦.

நோற்று ச்சுவர்க்கம் புகுகின்ற அம்மனாய் மாற்றமும்தாராரோ வாசல் திறவாதார் நாற்றத்துழாய்முடி நாராயணன் நம்மால் போற்றப்பறைதரும் புண்ணியனால் பண்டொருநாள் கூற்றத்தின் வாய்வீழ்ந்த கும்பகரணனும் தோற்றுமுனக்கே பெருந்துயில்தான் தந்தானோ ஆற்ற வனந்தலுடையாயருங்கலமே தேற்றமாய்வந்து திறவேலோரெம்பாவாய் 10.

It can be clearly seen how the Tamil consonants LLLA ழ (green) and RRA ற (red) have been completely embraced as Telugu consonants by taking Telugu vowel signs and Virama. Also, note that in a non-geminate context, Telugu RRA (blue) is still retained to transcribe Tamil RRA.

Apart from the regular liturgical Tamil texts, several commentarial *Maņipravāļa* texts, which were written using an admixture of Tamil and Sanskrit, were also published using the Telugu script. They were traditionally meant to be published by mixing Tamil and Grantha scripts. But due to the lack of widespread typesetting in Grantha, it was difficult to publish these in the original scripts as intended. With Telugu being a major language with easier availability of typesetting, and the script containing an 'almost' phonetic superset to express both the languages, many of

these texts came to be printed in the Telugu script. For instance, the below *Manipravāla* snippet [7] in the Telugu script should have been ideally expressed using Tamil and Grantha (as shown in the accompanying reconstructed transcription).



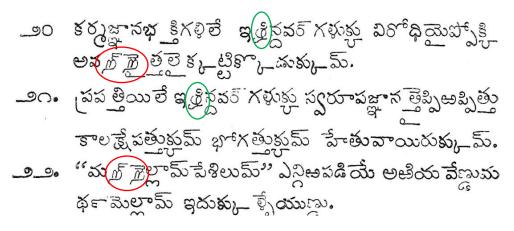
இந்தமுதலாழ்வார்கள் மூவரும்சுயொநிஸ்ஜவர். (கூடிக்கொண்டு) யொற ஜஹதுத்தினால் முவ்வாயிர த்துநூற்றிருபத்தஞ்சு ஸ்லவதாம் ஹூஜி ஸ்் ஹாம்பண்ணி க்கொண்டு இருந்து திருக்கோவலூரிலே திருநாட்டுக்கெழுந்தரு ளினார்கள்.

Telugu was used to represent both the Tamil and Sanskrit parts of the texts. The Tamil part of these texts also use the hybrid orthography by adopting the Tamil consonants LLLA & RRA as Telugu consonants as shown earlier.

Typographic Identity

Typographically speaking, the imported letters seem to have their own identity and are always found to be typeset in a manner congruent to other Telugu letters. In the below examples, you can notice how the characters for Tamil transcription (*henceforth, Tamil-transcriptional*) LLLA and RRA were styled and scaled appropriately to blend in with the other Telugu letters as much as possible.

From [10]:



From [3]:

From [7]

From [1]:

Tamil Transcriptional LLLA can also be seen here producing conjoining (ottu) forms like any other Telugu consonant. And the letter is also appropriately scaled to match the va-ottu.

సన్నైయాయ్, ''ఇవనోడుకలను పరిమాఱ్ప్లే దారు କୁର୍ యో!" ఎన్తు ఆరాయ్నుపార్తు, "తిరువాయ్ ప్పడియిల్ పెణ్ని గోవర్ధనముమ్ కిడన్లతాకిల్ అవ్దూ క్రైక్ర్ణాప్తి రిహ్ఫామ్" ఎన్హుపా అతుక్కు, తైనక్కు హ్పోకబలమిల్లా మైయా లే అవద్ శా అనుసన్నిత్తు

0 ఇవర్ కళ్ నడివుతానే గుచికు,-ఎనిఱపడియే. ங்கைக் **கிறி ஹல்** - మఱప్పనేయాన్ వేణుమ్ మాడ కేళిర్" ఎన్లితార్కళ్. విధిపూ කාs්ව

Possible Unicode Representations

Given the widespread use of this orthography in religious contexts and with a range of publications ranging from the late 19th century to the 21st Century, there is a need to represent this orthography properly in the digital form using Unicode.

The following encoding mechanisms are possible:

(i) ScriptExtensions.txt

Treat the existing Tamil Letters LLLA and RRA as also Telugu characters by making a new entry to *ScriptExtensions.txt*. Curiously, the file as of now does not seem to have any base consonants and the entries are mostly composed of combining signs and other symbols. Also, it is not quite sure how rendering engines might treat the characters during script run and developers/vendors adding these characters to fonts. Another disadvantage is that the letters cannot have their unique typographic forms when a font would want to support both the Telugu and Tamil scripts.

(ii) Encode new characters

Greek and Cyrillic characters used in Latin orthographies are known to be added in the UCS as Latin characters (partly) due to typography and script identity. Encoding new Tamil characters (that are used as native letters) in Telugu would be quite like that. When a font is typeset, the Tamil-transcriptional letters must be made typographically similar to the other Telugu characters in the glyph set. A font would also want to visually differentiate the Tamil-transcriptional LLLA & RRA as Telugu letters from their use as Tamil letters. It would be more sensible to encode them as separate characters and provide them with their own identity, given that they have their own typographic considerations when used within the Telugu script.

The only disadvantage would be that we would possibly performing a duplicate encoding of existing characters. But again, Telugu & Kannada already share several similar-looking characters

so do Tamil/Grantha, Bengali/Tirhuta and so on. It will not be the first time Unicode will be encoding similar-looking characters for different scripts.

Taking all the above into consideration, we take the approach (ii) and proceed with proposing the Tamil-transcriptional consonants as Telugu letters.

Characters to be encoded

We propose that the following characters be encoded in the Telugu block of the UCS with the associated character properties and recommended annotations.

0C5B	TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL LLLA
------	--

• Used in religious texts

0C5C D TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL RRA

• Used in religous texts

OC5B;TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL LLLA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;; OC5C;TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL RRA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;

Indic Syllabic Category

The following changes should be made to the IndicSyllabicCategory.txt

```
# Indic_Syllabic_Category=Consonant
```

0C58..0C5C ; Consonant # Lo [5] TELUGU LETTER TSA..TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL RRA

Conjoining/Subjoining Forms

Both U+0C5B (𝒫) and U+0C5C (𝕮) do not have any attested conjoining or subjoining (*ottu*) forms.

Especially, the geminate cluster of U+0C5C $_$ is always attested with an overt Virama e.g. p p

cf. *Tamil* ற்று <u>rr</u>u, in order to imitate the Tamil orthographic convention.

Collation

They are to be treated as phonetically equivalent to the existing Telugu LLLA and RRA and hence are to be sorted immediately following them.

[...] < TELUGU LETTER RRA < TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL RRA < [...] < TELUGU LETTER LLLA < TELUGU LETTER TAMIL TRANSCRIPTIONAL LLLA < TELUGU LETTER RRRA < [...]

Further Attestations

From [2]:

యలుడేయానో జే శ్రీర్యు స్మోష్లు స్పోర్యం అధన ప్రాత్రికి గ్రామం కుండి పెరుణి నిపెత్తపడికళుక్కు అవన్ ముక జ్రాటా పెయా లే మికి వుమవ సనై ఎాహాయ్, ఆవళ్ నిపెత్తపడికళుక్కు అవన్ ముక జ్రాటా పెయా లే మికి వుమవ సనై ఎాహాయ్, ఆవళ్ నోడుకలను పరిమాఱ పె స్ట్రీ స్టాహ్లో? ఇల్లై రోహా? సిస్టు ఆరాయ్ను పార్తె తివడ నోడుకలను పరిమాఱ పె స్ట్రీ స్టాహ్లో? ఇల్లె రోహా? సిస్టు ఆరాయ్ను పార్తె తివడ అమ్ అఱ వ స్ట్రీస్ స్టాహ్లా స్ట్రీ స్టార్ కిల్లి స్టార్ కిల్లా లో సిజికిగ్రం లో అకాగ్ర్ స్టార్ స్ట్రీస్ స్టార్ కిల్లి స్టార్ కిల్లా లో సిజికిగ్రం కి విషయా లైల్ అకాగ్రంగా స్టార్ స్టాహ్లాడు పేడు స్టార్ సిరు వరజ్లా పెరుమాళ రైయర్ ఎమ్నెరుహా నార్ కేట్ల కోంటు కింటు కింటు కి స్టాట్లిత్ కొల పెల్లామ్? బిల్లా ప్రాత్ పెల్లామ్? ఎస్టు ఇజ్లానే ఒరు నా శెల్లామ్ పాడి ప్పడి కి రాజ్లీనిలో జే విటు స్ఫోమ్.

From [4]:

పుళ్లం శిలమ్బినగాజ్ వుళ్లరైయిన్ కోయిలిల్, వెళ్ళై విశిళజ్లిన్ పేరరవం కేట్టిలైయో, పిళ్లాయ్: ఎళున్దిరాయ్ పేయ్ములై నజ్జుణ్డు, కళ్ళచ్ఛగడం కలక్కట్రియ కార్లాలిచ్చి, వెళ్ల త్రవిల్ తుయిలమర్న వితినై, ఉళ్ళత్తుకొర్తాబు మునివర్గళుం యోగిగళుమ్ మెళ్ల యెళున్ను అరి యన్ట పేరరవమ్ ఉళ్ళం పుగున్న కుళిర్నేలో రెమ్బా వాయ్.

From [6]

ఆడియో మోదుం నిస్టోడుం పిరివిస్టి ఆయిరం పల్లాణ్డు వడివాయ్ నిస్ వలమార్బినిల్ వాఖ్ల్ గిస్టమంగైయుం పల్లాణ్డు! వడివార్ శోదివలత్తుతైయుం శుడరా బ్రీయుం పల్లాణ్డు పడైపోర్ ఫుక్కు ముఖ్రుడ్డుం అప్పాళ్ళాశన్నియముం పల్లాణ్డే॥2

From [8]

ముతలాడ్డ్రార్ట్లు ముగ్గరిలో పేయాడ్డార్ట్లు మూడన వారు. పీరు భాగనన్ని రేశ్రాతుక కటాకులబ్జ దిన్యజ్ఞానముచే చెన్న పట్టణమునకు సమీపాపమున మెలాపురియందు మణికైర నమనెడి భావియందు ఎఱ్జకలువపుచ్చమున ద్వాపరయుగ

Tamil transcriptional LLLA has been used here to spell a Telugu-ized Tamil word in a Telugu language text.

వా భితిరునా మములు తిరుక్క జ్రే సెనునూఱుమ్ శెప్పినాస్ వా కిటన ఐప్పశిచ్చతయమ్ శెనిత్త వళ్ళల్ వ మరుకు-ముబ్బమ్మియలైనకర్ వాట్లవన్నోనార మలర్కం రియాయ్రల్ తనిల్ వనుతితాన్ని తి

From [9]:

ాళాయి 1 పి. పు. 2-6-43. 2-0- -----తిరు వెట్టుకూల్ సిస్మార్ కి కా. 2609. వర్ణా శమాచారవతా పురుషేణ పరుపుమా 1 విష్ణురారాధ్య తే పన్హానాన్య కి 1 వి. పు. 3-8-9 2611. 20002000

From [11]:

Here, the author probably tried to emulate the printed texts in Unicode but the attempt ended up just using proper Tamil syllables among the Telugu text. A text editor would not have allowed the Tamil consonants to take up Telugu Vowels sign. (As a side note, the author is also not very fluent in the Tamil script as evidenced by his spelling mistakes in the Tamilized section: முmu for ழுlu & னழறுd for ழைlai)

ఉందుమడగళిత్తనోడాద తోళ్ వలియన్

నందగోపాలన్ మరుమగళే! నప్పిన్నాయ్!

కందమ్ కమగ్రుమ్ కుగ్రుల్! కడై తిఱవాయ్;

వందెంగుమ్ కోట్రియయె్కుత్తనగాణ్; మాదవి

ప్పందల్ మేల్ పల్ కాల్ కుయిలినంగళ్ కూవినగాణ్;

పన్గార్ విరలి! ఉన్ మైత్తునన్ పేర్ పాడ,

శెందామరైక్రైయాల్ శీరార్ వళ్లెయొలిప్ప

వందు తిఱవాయ్ మగిగ్రీన్దు ఏలోరెంటానాయ్!

References

- 2. මීරාప్పావై వ్యాఖ్యానమ్ ఈరాయరప్పడి திருப்பாவை வராவராநம் ஈராயிரப்படி Tiruppāvai Vyākhyānam Īrāyarappaḍi (1939) <u>https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.372508/page/n1/mode/2up</u>
- 4. මරාప్పావై Tiruppāvai (1992) https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.387432/page/n3/mode/2up

Tiruppāvaiyin Taniyan Vyākhyānam (1936) https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.330341/page/n1/mode/2up

- 6. శ్రీపతి స్తుతిమాలా Śrīpati Stutimālā (2002) <u>https://archive.org/details/sripatisthuthima023932mbp/page/n97/mode/2up</u>
- 7. పేరియతిరుముడియడవు Periyatirumuḍiyaḍavu (1898) https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.384495/page/n3/mode/2up
- 8. ఆళ్వారాచార్య సంగ్రహ చరిత్రము Āļvārācārya Saṃgraha Caritramu (1994) <u>https://archive.org/details/AlwaracharyaSamgrahaCharitralu/mode/2up</u>
- 10. ముముక్షుప్పడియుం, తత్త్వత్రయముం, శ్రీవచనభూషణముం _{లొలొ}ఉ్ఈార్చింద్రింగ్రి -

https://archive.org/details/MumuxuppadiThathvathrayamSrivacanabUshaNamteluguLipi/page/ n1/mode/2up

11. Tiruppavai: English to Telugu (2015) https://chinnajeeyar.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Thiruppavai-English-to-telugu.pdf

ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 2 PROPOSAL SUMMARY FORM TO ACCOMPANY SUBMISSIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO THE REPERTOIRE OF ISO/IEC 10646. ¹ . Please fill all the sections A, B and C below. Please read Principles and Procedures Document (P & P) from <u>http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/principles.html</u> for guidelines and details before filling this form. Please ensure you are using the latest Form from <u>http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/summaryform.html</u> . See also <u>http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/summaryform.html</u> .				
A. Administrative	1110.//Std.ukuug.uk/3101/302/W02/0003/10au	haps.htm. for fatest roadmaps.		
1. Title:	Proposal to Encode T	wo Letters in Telugu		
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3. Requester type (Membe		Individual		
4. Submission date:		14/04/2020		
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2. Number of characters in		2		
3. Proposed category (sele A-Contemporary C-Major extinct F-Archaic Hieroglyphic of	D-Attested extinct	B.2-Specialized (large collection) E-Minor extinct Obscure or questionable usage symbols		
a. If YES, are the nar in Annex L of I b. Are the character s 5. Fonts related:	character names provided? mes in accordance with the "character na P&P document? shapes attached in a legible form suitable he appropriate computerized font to the P	e for review? Yes Yes Yes Yes		
Vinodh Rajan b. Identify the party granting a license for use of the font by the editors (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.):				
	Vinadh Pajan vinadh@virt			
b. Are published examosing of proposed character7. Special encoding issues Does the proposal activity of the proposal activity of	other character sets, dictionaries, descrip mples of use (such as samples from new ers attached?	ptive texts etc.) provided? Yes (spapers, magazines, or other sources) Yes rocessing (if applicable) such as input,		
	, searching, indexing, transliteration etc. (Collation	(if yes please enclose information)? Yes		
that will assist in correct un Examples of such propertie information such as line bro Collation behaviour, releva related information. See th see Unicode Character Da	nderstanding of and correct linguistic proc es are: Casing information, Numeric inforr eaks, widths etc., Combining behaviour, S ance in Mark Up contexts, Compatibility ec ne Unicode standard at <u>http://www.unicode.org/reports/t</u>	roperties of the proposed Character(s) or Script cessing of the proposed character(s) or script. mation, Currency information, Display behaviour Spacing behaviour, Directional behaviour, Default quivalence and other Unicode normalization <u>de.org</u> for such information on other scripts. Also <u>tr44/</u>) and associated Unicode Technical Reports Committee for inclusion in the Unicode Standard.		

^{.&}lt;sup>1</sup>. Form number: N4502-F (Original 1994-10-14; Revised 1995-01, 1995-04, 1996-04, 1996-08, 1999-03, 2001-05, 2001-09, 2003-11, 2005-01, 2005-09, 2005-10, 2007-03, 2008-05, 2009-11, 2011-03, 2012-01)

C. Technical - Justification

. Technical - Justinication		
1. Has this proposal for addition of cha	aracter(s) been submitted before?	No
If YES explain		
2. Has contact been made to members	s of the user community (for example: National Body,	
user groups of the script or chara		Yes
If YES, with whom?	The author himself is part of the user community	
If YES, available relevant	documents:	
3. Information on the user community	for the proposed characters (for example:	
size, demographics, information	technology use, or publishing use) is included?	Yes
Reference:	See Proposal	
4. The context of use for the proposed	characters (type of use; common or rare)	Rare
Reference:	See Proposal	
5. Are the proposed characters in curr	ent use by the user community?	Yes
If YES, where? Reference:	See Proposal	
	e principles in the P&P document must the proposed characters b	e entirelv
in the BMP?		Yes
If YES, is a rationale pr	ovided?	Yes
If YES, reference:	Telugu is in BMP	
	kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?	Yes
	be considered a presentation form of an existing	
character or character sequence		No
If YES, is a rationale for		
If YES, reference:		
	be encoded using a composed character sequence of either	
existing characters or other prop		No
If YES, is a rationale for		
If YES, reference:		
	r(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function)	
		Yes
to, or could be confused with, an existing character? If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?		
If YES, reference:	See Proposal	A.L
	combining characters and/or use of composite sequences?	No
If YES, is a rationale for such us	e proviaea ?	
If YES, reference:		
Is a list of composite sequences If YES, reference:	and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided	?
12. Does the proposal contain charact	ers with any special properties such as	
control function or similar semantics?		No
If YES, describe in deta	il (include attachment if necessary)	
13. Does the proposal contain any Ide	ographic compatibility characters?	No
	ponding unified ideographic characters identified?	