

markers. Each noun belongs to a particular gender. It can be inflected for number and case. The gender classification of the noun is mainly based on its pronominal reference.

4.2.1 Classification of Nouns

All the nouns of Tamil are classified into (1) substantives and (2) pronouns. All substantives are further classified into :

1. simple nouns having only one morpheme and
2. derived nouns where the stem takes a gender - number marker as a derivative suffix.

Simple nouns are classified into human and non-human nouns based on their pronominal reference. The pronominal reference in Tamil is found in the finite verbs.

4.3 Pronouns

Pronoun is a word that is used instead of a noun. Pronouns as a sub-category of nouns distinguish number and gender. There are many types of pronouns, viz.,

1. personal pronouns
2. possessive pronouns
3. demonstrative pronouns