Abstract

This paper discusses the structural and functional significance of participles and verb forms in Modern Tamil. The focus of this paper is on identifying the structural and semantic aspects of participles and finite verb forms to help teach and learn Tamil. Examples from current usage are provided along with an introduction to participles in traditional Tamil grammars. Occurrence of participles and finite verbs in various forms are presented and discussed.

Key words: Participles, finite verb forms, modern Tamil, use of participles and finite verb forms in teaching and modern Tamil

Participles in Tamil – an Introduction

Participles are non-infinite verb forms in Tamil and Tamil grammars refer them as eccaṅkalḷ (Tolkāppiyam, 1994). Participles are in immediate constituent relationship with the following finite verb in a phrase or sentence except the relative / adjective participle form which has IC relationship with the following noun. Participle expects a finite verb or noun to terminate the sentence in which it occurs. However, in languages like English a relative pronoun (forms like which, that, who, where, etc.) connects the noun and the following participle form as in the song that she sang, the student who answered the questions, etc. Participles have both affirmative and negative distinctions in their occurrences. Moreover, Tamil relative participle forms can take gender-number suffixes (Karunakaran, 1971) as well, and all such forms are tested as participial nouns/conjugated nouns – affirmative or negative. It is also possible to add some of the particles denoting place, time, manner, etc. (poḻtu, uṭanē, paṭi, etc.) to the relative

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forms and expand them. All such forms are termed as temporal participle 1, temporal participle 2, place participle, manner participle, etc.

Some of the Tamil participles can occur in reduplicated forms as well. All such forms so formed function as verbal participle only (like collaccolla, naṭantunanṭantu, ṭiṭṭi ....) and thus get syntactico semantic significance in the sentence / discourse structure of the Tamil language. For example,

\[ \text{anta nikaṭccikkāka nam talaivar ṭi ṭi uļaittār} \]

‘our leader really worked very hard for that program/function’

There are particles like –um, -ē, -tāṅ, -varai (yilum), -varai (kkum), etc. which occur with participles forms in sentences and discourses.

i) \[ \text{appā colliyum tampi koṭtuttuk kēṭkavillai.} \]

‘eventhough father advised my little brother, he did not listen/care to his advice’

ii) \[ \text{nīyāvatu viruntukku nērru vantirutāl naṅōka iruntirukkumē} \]

‘it would have been nice at least you have attended the dinner yesterday’

iii) \[ \text{enṇǒṭu vantē tiruvēṇ enru kamala aṭam piṭikkirāį} \]

‘Kamala is very adamant that she would also accompany me’

iv) \[ \text{nāṅ aṛinta varaiyil antak kaṭṭuraiyil viṭakkam cariyāka amaintuṇṭatu.} \]

‘as far as I knew, the description given in that essay was quite alright’

**Objectives of the Study**

Words are organized into phrases and clauses to make sentences by a set of rules and principles in a language. A simple sentence contains only a single clause, while a compound sentence, or a complex sentence contains at least two clauses. The most natural sentence structure is the simple sentence and it is the first type which children learn to speak, and it remains by far the most common sentence in the spoken language of people of all ages. Simple sentences can be very effective for gaining a reader’s or listener’s attention. However, in this
paper the use of participles in complex sentences and some other verbal constructions are also exposed analytically and critically.

As this is a descriptive linguistic study of modern Tamil structure and use, the following are set as the main objectives:

i. To identify and formalize the morphological description of all types of participles found in the modern Tamil.

ii. To explain the syntactic function and the significance of the participle forms in Tamil complex sentence formation

iii. To identify and explain the role of participles in the formation of complex verbal categories like ‘modals’ and ‘aspects’.

iv. To explain the process of expansion of participle forms by the addition of certain particles in Tamil.

v. To explain the syntactic-semantic significance and value of participle constructions in Tamil discourse.

vi. To explain the formation of finite verb forms.

Scope of This Study

i. It is purely a descriptive study with reference to the modern written Tamil as practiced in Malaysia-Singapore.

ii. However, due importance is given to all those distinctive participle constructions found in Malaysia-Singapore spoken Tamil varieties.

iii. The study tries to focus on the use of participles in some of the specific social contexts.

Research Methodology

Research methodology includes three sub-sections, namely:

i. Data collection and data used for this study.

ii. Research Methods applied in the analysis.

iii. The interpretations made and formalization of the descriptive analysis.

Data for This Study

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The relevant and adequate data for this study were collected from newspapers, textbooks, journals etc. representing the print media and also from radio and television programs representing the audio-visual media. Researcher has made use of the observation method also in order to gather information pertaining to language use in specific socio-cultural contexts. All types of collected data were processed and classified in such a way they become fit for the descriptive and structural linguistic analysis aimed at.

Research Methods Used for the Analysis

The following descriptive and structural linguistic methods are chosen for the analysis:

i. Methods of morphological and syntactic descriptions.

ii. Analysis of sentence structure and beyond using the principles of discourse analysis.

iii. Coherence and cohesion of meaning and linguistic forms in discourse and their distribution

The Interpretations Made and Formalization of the Descriptive Analysis

In the process of formalization of analysis due importance has to be given to the presentation of the descriptive study as follows:

i. Presentation of the morphological analysis

ii. The role of the participles and finite verbs in phrases.

iii. Significance of the participles in sentence structure and

iv. Syntactico-semantic correlation found in the discourse structure from the points of view of ‘Coherence’ and ‘Cohesion’.

MWT – Morphological Description

Verb forms: Participles

1. Verbal participle/ Past participle

1.1 Affirmative


\[ \text{paṭi-ṭṭ-u} \rightarrow \text{paṭittu} \quad \text{‘having read / studied’} \]

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1.2 Negative

Structure: VB + (L.M.) + neg. suf. + VP suf.

paṭi-kk-ā-mal > paṭikkāmal ‘without reading/ studying’
ōṭu-ā-mal > ōṭāmal ‘without running’

2. Conditional Participle

2.1 Affirmative


eṭu – tt – āl > eṭuttāl ‘if (one) takes’
āṭu - iṅ - āl > āṭiṅāl ‘if (one) dances’
va-nt-āl > vantāl ‘if (one) comes’

2.2 Negative

Structure: VB + (L.M) + neg. suf. + cond. Suf.

eṭu – kk- ā- viṭṭāl > eṭukkāviṭṭāl ‘if (one) doesn’t take’
āṭu – ā - viṭṭāl > āṭāviṭṭāl ‘if (one) doesn’t dance’
kēṭ - k- ā - viṭṭāl > kēṭkāviṭṭāl ‘if (one) doesn’t ask’

3. Infinitive

Structure: VB + (L.M) + inf. suf.

naṭa – kk- a > naṭakka ‘to walk’
cey – a > ceyya ‘to do’
nil –k – a > nirka ‘to stand’

*L.M. denotes link morpheme and it is obligatory after the strong and middle verbs in Tamil. (Karunakaran, 2000)
4. Relative Participle / Adjective Participle

4.1 Affirmative


- \( \text{eṭu – } \text{tt – a} \) \( \rightarrow \text{eṭṭa} \) ‘took’ (adj.p.)
- \( \text{col - } \text{kiŗ - a} \) \( \rightarrow \text{colkiŗa} \) ‘saying’ (adj. p.)
- \( \text{oṭu – } \text{um – Ø} \) \( \rightarrow \text{oṭum} \) ‘will run’ (adj. p.)

4.2 Negative

Structure: VB + (L.M) + neg. suf. + RP suf.

- \( \text{oṭu – } \text{āt – a} \) \( \rightarrow \text{oṭāta} \) ‘not running’ (adj.)
- \( \text{naṭa – } \text{kk – } \text{āt – a} \) \( \rightarrow \text{naṭakkāta} \) ‘not walking’ (adj.)

5. Temporal Participles

5.1 Temporal Participle 1

5.1.1 Affirmative

Structure: RPF aff. + poḷutu/pōtu

- \( \text{paṭitta - poḷutu/pōtu} \) ‘while/when one read’
- \( \text{colkiŗa-poḷutu/pōtu} \) ‘while/when one saying’
- \( \text{collum- poḷutu/pōtu} \) ‘while/one will tell’

5.1.2 Negative

Structure: RPF neg. + poḷutu/pōtu

- \( \text{paṭikkāta - poḷutu/pōtu} \) ‘while/when one not reading’
- \( \text{cāppiṭa - poḷutu/pōtu} \) ‘while/when one not eating’

5.2 Temporal Participle 2†

†This is only with reference to the affirmative type of constructions. There is no negative counterpart for this.
5.2.1 Affirmative

Structure : RPF aff. + ṭanē / tum

vanta - ṭanē/ tum ‘as soon as one came’

ōṭanē - ṭanē / tum ‘as soon as one ran’

‘ṭanē/ tum’ occur in free variation after thr RP forms.

e.g. appā viṭṭukku vanta ṭanē ēṭāvatu paṭippār ‘as soon as father comes home he used to read something. It freely varies with the following sentence:

appā viṭṭukku vantatum ēṭāvatu paṭippār’.

Formation of Complex Verb Forms and the Role of Particles

Participle forms occur as base forms for the formation of complex verb forms known as ‘modals and aspects’. There are seventeen such form’s, each having a particular meaning and function in modern Tamil.

1. Formation of Modals

Structure: Inf. MV + Aux. Verb +

There are ten (10) types of modal forms as explained below:

i. Obligatory : Inf. MV + vēntum

colla - vēntum ‘one has to tell’

paṭikka - vēntum ‘one has to read’

ii. Need not: Inf. MV + vēntām

ōṭa - vēntām ‘one need not run’

eṭukka - vēntām ‘one need not take’

iii. Can (possibility) : Inf. MV + muṭiyum

colla - muṭiyum ‘one can tell’

kuṭikka - muṭiyum ‘one can drink’

iv. Cannot : Inf. MV + muṭiyātu

cāppita - muṭiyātu ‘one cannot eat’
v. Should not (prohibitive): Inf. MV + kūṭātu
   āṭikka - muṭiyātu ‘one cannot hit’
   etukka - kūṭātu ‘one should not take’
   vara - kūṭātu ‘one should not come’

vi. Probability: Inf. MV + kūṭum
   pāṭa - kūṭum ‘one might sing’
   naṭakka - kūṭum ‘one might walk’

   cāppīṭa - vaitīṭēn ‘I caused someone to eat’
   naṭakka – vai ‘cause someone to walk (imp.)’

viii. Past Negative: Inf. MV + Ilīai
   paṭikka – ilīai ‘(one) did not/does not study’

ix. Future negative: Inf. MV + -māṭṭ + PGN suf.
   koṭukka-māṭṭ-ēn ‘I will not give’

x. Progressive (Action going to take place): Inf. MV + -pō + PGN suf.
   colla - pōkārān ‘he is going to tell something’
   aṭikka-pōkārākāṭu ‘they are going to hit’

2. Formation of Aspectual Verb Forms

Structure: VP aff. MV + aux. verb +

i. Perfective: VP aff. MV + iru+
   vantu - irukkīrēn ‘I have come’
   vantu - iruntēn ‘I had come’
   vantu - iruppēn ‘I would have come’

So, there are forms denoting perfective meaning in all the three tenses.

ii. Definitive: VP Aff. MV + viṭu + (PNG Suf.)

\(^i\) Auxiliary verb forms are added with or without person-number-gender markers.
\(^ii\) Past negative form denotes present negative also.
paṭittu - viṭēn
koṭuttu - viṭuvān

‘I read something (def.)’
‘He will give (def.)’

iii. Completive : VP aff. MV + āiyru

cāppiṭṭu - āiyru
colli - āiyru

‘one has eaten (comp.)’
‘one has said something (comp.)’

iv. Reflexive: VP aff. MV + koṭ + (PNG suf.)

paṭittu - koṭ
ōti-koṭ-v-ān >
ōtikkoṭ vān

‘you read for / by yourself’ (imp.)
‘he will run for/by himself’

v. Continuative/ Durative: VP aff. MV + koṭṭiru +

vantu-koṭṭirukkārikārka
vantu-koṭṭirunṭarkārka
vantu- koṭṭiruppārka

‘They are coming’ (now.)
‘They are coming’
‘They will be coming’

vi. Trial (try to do….): VP aff. MV + pār + (PNG suf.)

cāppiṭṭu - pāṛtēn
kēṭṭu-pārkkirōm

‘I tried to taste something’
‘We will try to ask’

vii. Contemptuous / Derogatory : VP aff. MV + tolai + (PNG suf.)

epatīyō pōytolai
vantu tolai

‘You go and get lost’ (imp.)
‘You (sg.) also come and join us.
(in a derogatory sense)’

Functional Significance and Use of Participles in Tamil

Sometimes Participles occur in reduplicated utterances as given below. Infinitive form and the verbal participle affirmative forms have reduplicated utterances and thereby they acquire contextual meanings such as intensity of an action, in course of time, as time goes on, repeatedly, continuously, frequently, etc.

1. Reduplication of Infinitive Forms

Structure: Inf-1 + Inf. -1 > Reduplicated Inf.

i. pōkap pōka ellām cariyākiviṭṭum enru nampukīrēn

‘I hope that everything will become alright in due course / in course of time’
ii. nān collaccolla tampi kataiyai eḻutu muṭittān
   ‘younger brother completed writing of the story as I went on narrating it (continuously) to him’

2. Reduplication of Verbal Participle (Affirmative) Forms

   Structure: VP Aff. 1 + VP Aff. 1 > Reduplicated VP

   i) ōṭi ōṭi uaitāl vākkaiyil uyarvu pegalām
      ‘if one works really hard one can come up in life’

   ii) ŋṅkaṭ ceyta utaviyaipparri colliccolli makiṅṭārkaṭ
      ‘They are praising you a lot for the help that you have done to them’

   iii) avariṭam kēṭukkēṭṭu maṇam calittuviṭṭatu
       ‘I am really fed up very much because of my repeated request to him’

Functional Significance of Participles Occurring with Particles in Discourse

Particles both free and bound occur with nouns, verbs, adverbs and among themselves (one particle occurring with another or one after another) in Tamil discourse depending upon the contextual/ semantic significance.

   i) pattu maṇi varai    till ten o’clock’

   ii) tampiyum          ‘younger brother also’

   iii) vantālum         ‘even if one comes’

   iv) varuvāṅē          he will come (def.)

   v) nanṟākavē iruntatu ‘yes, it was really good’ etc.

In Tamil, particles occur after the participle forms also and all such forms exhibit their functional importance in grammatical constructions.
### Formation of Complex Verb-Sentences in Tamil - Role of Participles

All those participles formed as explained in the section on morphological description participate in the formation of complex sentences of different types in Tamil. That is, when two or more simple sentences are embedded into one another, those finite verb forms in the embedded sentences get transformed into participle forms. This is because Tamil sentences can have only one finite verb in a sentence and all other actions performed by the subject have to be transformed into participles depending upon the syntactic-semantic agreement / dependence. So, there are a set of T-rules which explain the changes due to addition, deletion, replacement or

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</table>
| Conditional: | pōy  
|            | aṅkē pōyum puṇṇiyam illai  
|            | ‘There is no use even if you visit that place’  |
|            | niṟaivērri  
|            | niṟaivērriyē tiruvōm  
|            | ‘We will definitely complete the project undertaken by us’  |
|            | kēṭṭāl  
|            | nān kēṭṭālum avar taramāṭṭār  
|            | ‘even if request him, he will not give’  |
|            | varāviṭṭāl  
|            | niṅkaḷ vantālum varāviṭṭālum avar nīcchayam varuvār  
|            | ‘whether you come or not he (hon.) will definitely come’  |
| Infinitive: | colla  
|            | tampi antac ceytiyai ippolūtu collavāvatu ceytānē  
|            | ‘younger brother at least informed us the matter now…. oh! That was fine’  |
| RP: conṇa, vantapolūtu |  
|            |  
|            | āciriyār conṇapaṭiyētān nān antak kaṭṭurai el utinēṅ.  
|            | ‘I wrote that essay exactly the same way as the teacher explained’  |
|            | niṅkaḷ vantapolūtūtān nāṅ cāppiṭṭu muṭṭītēṅ  
|            | ‘I just finished eating when you came in’  |
substitution etc. There are five kinds of participles with affirmative and negative distinction participate in the transformational process found in the derivation of complex sentences (as matrix and constituent sentences).

1. **Derivation of Infinitive Constructions (sentences)**
   
   i)  tāmpi maruntu vāṅkināṟ [S S]
   
   ‘younger brother bought medicine’
   
   ii) tāmpi kaṭaikkup pōnāṟ [M S]
   
   ‘younger brother went to the store’

   The syntactic-semantic significance in the derivation of the complex sentence, tāmpi maruntu vāṅka kaṭaikkup pōnāṟ ‘younger brother went to the store to buy medicine’ is the transformation namely vāṅkināṟ > vāṅka. The T-rule is FV becoming infinitive form of the verb and the meaning of infinitive form is purposive. As the two actions were performed by the same subject, the subject of the SS is deleted in order to get the required complex sentence as stated above.

2. **Derivation of Verbal Participle Constructions (Sentences)**
   
   i) nāṉ oru puttakam koṭuppēṅ [M S]
   
   ‘I will give a book’
   
   ii) nāṉ nāṭaikkku uṇ aṟaiṅku varuvēṅ [S S]
   
   ‘I will come to your room tomorrow’

   By applying the T- rules: (1) FV – SS > VP – SS
   
   (2) Subj. – SS>Ø (deleted)

   The complex sentence derived is: nāṉ nāṭaikkku uṇ aṟaiṅku vantu oru puttakam koṭuppēṅ
   
   ‘I will come to your room tomorrow and give you a book’

   This derivation shows the consecutive meaning (action that has taken place)

3. **Derivation of Conditional Participle Construction (Sentences)**
   
   i) tāmpi pāṇam kēḻpēṅ [S S ]
   
   ‘younger brother will ask for money’
ii) \( \text{appā panam koṭuppār} \ [\text{MS}] \\
\text{‘father will him money’} \\

The complex sentence,

\[ 
\text{tampi kēṭṭāl appā panam koṭuppār} \\
\text{‘if younger brother requests father will give money to him’} 
\]

Is derived by applying the following T-rules:

i) \( \text{FV – SS > Cond. Part. – SS (kēṭpān becomes kēṭṭāl)} \)

ii) \( \text{Obj. – SS > Ø (panam is deleted)} \)

iii) \( \text{Subject – MS is shifted} \)

4. \textbf{Derivation of Relative Participle Constructions (Sentences)}

The complex sentence, \( \text{āciriyar coṇṇa viṭṭakam mikavum cariyāṇatu} \)

‘the description the teacher gave was quite correct’ is derived from the following sentences namely,

i) \( \text{āciriyar viṭṭakam coṇṇar} \ [\text{SS}] \\
\text{‘the teacher gave the description’} \\

ii) \( \text{anta viṭṭakam mikavum cariyāṇatu} \ [\text{MS}] \\
\text{‘that description was quite correct’} \\

by applying the following T-rules,

a) \( \text{FV – SS > RP – SS (coṇṇar > coṇṇa)} \)

b) \( \text{Obj. – SS > Ø (viṭṭakam is deleted)} \)

c) \( \text{Dem. Adj. > Ø (anta is deleted)} \)

5. \textbf{Derivation of Temporal Participle Constructions (Sentences)}

The two simple sentences \( \text{rāmaṇ aṅkē pōṇār ‘Raman went there’ [SS]} \) and \( \text{kannan aṅkē iruntār ‘Kannan was there at that time’ [MS]} \) are embedded into one another to derive the complex sentence,

\[ 
\text{rāmaṇ pōṇaṇpoṇāḻu kaṇṇaṇ aṅkē iruntār} \\
\text{‘Kannan was there when Raman went’} 
\]
In the derivation of this sentence the following T- rules are applied:

T – rules:  
1) FV – SS > RP aff. – SS (pōnār > pōna)  
2) RP + appolutu > RP polutu (pōna + appolutu > pōṇapolutu)  
3) ADV place – SS > Ø (ainkē is deleted)

Formation of Participial and Verbal Noun Forms

Both these sub-categories are formed by the addition of PNG suffixes to the relative participle forms – affirmative and negative. Tamil traditional grammars discuss such forms under viṇaiyāḷaṇaiyum peyar (participial noun / conjugated noun) and toḷirpeyer (verbal noun). The first category of noun forms are formed by adding all the PNG markers to the RP forms whereas the second category of noun forms by adding suffixes such as – al, -tal, or PNG suffix -(a)tu.

1. Formation of Participial Noun Forms

Structure: RP form – Aff / Neg. + PNG suff.

naṭantavaṇ ‘he who walked’,
naṭantavaḷ ‘she who walked’,
naṭantavarkaḷ ‘they (human) who walked’,
naṭantavar ‘he/she (hon.) who walked’,
naṭantatu ‘that which walked’,
naṭantavai ‘those which walked’
naṭakkātavaṇ ‘he who did not walk’,
naṭakkātavaḷ ‘she who did not walk’ etc.

2. Formation of Verbal Noun Forms (Refers only to the action performed)

Structure 1: VB + Verbal Noun suf. (-al, -tal, etc.)

Structure 2: RP Form + PNG suf. (-tu)

Structure 1: -al (cey – al > ceyal ‘action’ etc.
-tal (pāṭu – tal > pāṭatal ‘act of singing’ etc.)
Structure 2: Suffix – (a)tu

Affirmative: vanta+tu > vantatu ‘that which came/the act of coming’
po: -came-atu > po: natu ‘the act of going’

Occurrences of Distinctive Use of Particles

There are certain particles like - pōṭu, used in some of the Tamil spoken varieties (dialects) of Tamilnadu (India), Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and they all are considered as distinctive usages. The following are some of the variations attested.

1. -pōṭu occurring as an auxiliary verb after the VP aff. MV to denote the meaning definiteness (definitive type)

2. -kiṭu, -ṇṭu, -kiṭṭu, -ṭṭu, -nu occurring as alternants of the auxiliary form (--koṇṭu) representing the continuative / durative meaning.

3. -kayyōṭa occurring as a particle denoting (as soon as….) after the RPF aff.

4. –acce occurring as a particle after the RP form to denote (when/while an action performed).

5. –iyalum / -iyalāṭu occurring with the Inf. MV. to denote can/cannot. (vara – iyalum in the Jaffna dialect)

6. –kō, -ki-, -ku-, -kiṭ-, -kun- occurring as variants of -koṭ (-kō.) to denote the reflexive meaning.

7. –vāci which occurs after the RP form affirmative to denote the meaning because of one’s …… (coṇṭavāci ‘because of one’s saying’).

Finite Verb Forms in Modern Tamil

Finite verb forms in modern Tamil has the morphological structure, VB + Ten. Suf. + PNG Suffix, except in the formation of Future non-human sg. /pl. finite form (as in ḍtum ‘will run-it/ They (n.hum’)’.

Modern Tamil has at least 5 types of finite verb forms:
i) Imperative Verb form

ii) FV with tense suffixes and PNG suffixes

iii) Permissive Verb Forms

iv) Hortative Verb Forms

v) Optative Verb Forms and

vi) Impersonal Verb Forms.

Of these forms only the second type occurs with tense suffixes. All those FV forms are commonly used in Modern Tamil and their occurrence is frequent also. The FV forms show different kinds of distribution and exhibit distinct syntactico semantic relationship /agreement (with subject).

1. **Imperative Form (FV 1)**

   There are affirmative and negative forms both in singular and plural. In addition, there is a form to denote the Intermediate herorific singular§.

   e.g. nī vā                                          'you (sg.) come'

   nīṅkaṭ vāruṅkaṭ/ va:ṅkaṭ                       'you (pl.) come'

   nīr vārum                                      'you (I. hon. sg.) come'

2. **FV with tense and PGN suffixes**

   VB + Ten. Suf. + PGN Suffix

   e.g. paṭi – ép – e:n > paṭittēn      ‘read-I’

   ōṭu - kīr - a:n > ōṭukīrān           ‘runs-he’

   naṭa – pp - āṭ > naṭappāṭ           ‘will run-she’

   ōṭu – Ø – um > ōṭum                ‘will run-it’

3. **Permissive Verb Forms**

§nī, nīṅkaṭ, nir show agreement, but with different suffixes -uṅkaṭ, -ṅkaṭ and unmarked in singular.

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\[ \text{e.g. } \text{eḻutu} - \text{alām} \rightarrow \text{eḻutalām} \quad \text{‘one may write’} \]
\[ \text{paṭi} - \text{kk} - \text{alām} \rightarrow \text{paṭikkalām} \quad \text{‘one may read’} \]
\[ \text{nil} - \text{k} - \text{alām} \rightarrow \text{nirkalām} \quad \text{‘(one) may stand up’} \]

Permissive FV can have any subject (with all the three persons, and also can denote the meaning ‘(one) can do………’

4. Hortative Verb Forms


\[ \text{e.g. } \text{āṭu} - \text{aṭṭum} \rightarrow \text{āṭṭum} \quad \text{‘let (one) play/dance’} \]
\[ \text{col} - \text{aṭṭum} \rightarrow \text{collaṭṭum} \quad \text{‘let (one) tell’} \]
\[ \text{naṭa} - \text{kk- aṭṭum} \rightarrow \text{naṭakkaṭṭum} \quad \text{‘let (one) walk’} \]

5. Optative Verb Forms


This is a restricted usage in the sense it can go with very few verb bases as in:

\[ \text{avar nācamāka poūka} \quad \text{‘let him perish’} \]
\[ \text{talaivar vāḷka} \quad \text{‘let the leader live long’} \]
\[ \text{nī nallā irukka…..} \quad \text{‘you! live long!’} \]

However, in the context of performing prayer to God a form pōṛri (praise thy lord) is added.

\[ \text{oppilā āṇṭavarē, pōṛri………pōṛri !} \]

‘Thy Lord, we offer our prayers to you’

6. Impersonal Verb Forms
There is a set of forms with affirmative vs. negative difference used as verb forms which occur as finite verbs. These forms show agreement with the dative case subject forms (mostly) and instrumental case subject form in one particular occurrence. It is an interesting feature in the occurrence of subject – predicate agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Affirmative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) vēṇṭum ‘want’</td>
<td><strong>vēṇṭām</strong> ‘don’t want’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) teriyum ‘know’</td>
<td><strong>teriyātu</strong> ‘don’t know’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) piṭikkum ‘like’</td>
<td><strong>piṭikkātu</strong> ‘don’t like’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) pōtum ‘enough’</td>
<td><strong>pōtātu</strong> ‘not enough’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) puriyum ‘understand’</td>
<td><strong>puriyātu</strong> ‘cannot/don’t understand’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) muṭiyum ‘can’</td>
<td><strong>muṭiyātu</strong> ‘cannot’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustrations

1) **enakkut teriyum** ‘I know’ ↔ **enakkut teriyātu** ‘I don’t know’

2) **ennāl muṭiyum** ‘I can’ ↔ **ennāl muṭiyātu** ‘I cannot’

However, permissive form can have only third person subject such as

avar paṭikkaṭṭum ‘let him read’

*but not nī paṭikkaṭṭum or nān paṭikkaṭṭum.*

So, the differences found in the formation, subject predicate agreement and sociocultural contexts do play a significant syntactico semantic role in Tamil sentence structure which need to be explicitly made clear.

Conclusion

The present study has brought out the importance of some of the Tamil verb categories at the morphological and syntactical levels. It has focused on the contextual usages in Tamil
discourse and brought out the use of participles and finite verb forms as well as particles occurring with nouns and verbs. This kind of classification and syntactic-semantic explanation are quite relevant for the language learners and users in order to identify the exact functional importance and values of grammatical structures in the communicative language - both in teaching and learning.

References and Bibliography

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