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Auxiliary Verbs in Modern Tamil

A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.

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Introduction

Auxiliary verbs are the verbs which lose their original syntactic and semantic properties when they collocate with other verbs as auxiliary and signify various grammatical meanings which are the auxiliary meanings of the other verbs in the sentences.

Example

raaman ankee iruntaan	“Rama is there” - Main Verb
raaman ankee vantiruntaan	“Ram has come there” – Auxiliary verb

The verbs which thus become auxiliaries may also function like full verbs elsewhere, resulting in formally being identical but functionally different pairs of verbs. The difference is manifested in their different syntactic distribution and semantic denotation.

The function of an auxiliary in any language is to express the voice, mode, tense or aspect of the action denoted by the main verb of a sentence.

Various Names of Auxiliary

Auxiliary verbs have various names. Walther, 1739, Pope, 1859, Arden 1891, Agesthialingom, 1964, Meenakshisundaram, 1965, Isreal , 1976, Karthikeyani, 1976, Srinivasan, 1976, Joseph, 1981 and Steever, 1983 addressed this auxiliary as auxiliary verbs. Bahl, 1967 termed this as Explicator. Hock, 1974 mentioned this auxiliary as Compound Verbs. Subbarao, 1979 called this as Secondary Verbs. Bhat, 1979 termed this as Vector. Kachru pointed out this as Serial verbs.

Characteristics of Auxiliary Verbs

1. Auxiliary verb always occurs after the main verbs and it is dependent upon the main verbs.

Example:

iRaivan ceyya vaittaan	“God made him to do this”
naan payantu pooneen	“I was afraid of that”

2. Most of the auxiliary verbs have PNG markers and negative markers but the modal auxiliary verbs do not have the PNG markers and the negative markers except the Model auxiliary verb maaTTu.

Example:

murugan ceytu kaaTTinaan “Murugan demonstrated it.”
 inRu mazhai varakkuuDum “Today the rain may come.”
 avan vara maaTTaan “He won’t come definitely.”

3. Auxiliary verbs come after the verb root of the main verb, infinitive form of the main verb, verbal participle form of the main verb, relative participle form of the main verb, finite verb of the main verb, verbal noun form of the main verb and the participial noun of the main verb and the conditional infinitive form.

Example:

puRaa viTu paTTatu	“The pigeon left out” Verb root
iraaman colla vantaan	“Rama has come for telling this” Infinitive
kaNNan vantu irukkiRaan	“Kannan has come here already” Verbal Participle
kaTaikku vantirunta raaman	“Rama who has come to the shop” Relative Participle,
kala vantaal illai	“Kala who had not come” Finite Verb
nii varalaam	“You may come” Verbal Noun
iraamantaan paarttavanaam	“Rama one who saw that” Participial Noun
geetha paaDip paarttaal teriyum	“If Geetha try to sing then it will be clear” Conditional Infinitive Form

4. When Auxiliary verbs occur in compound sentences, then the auxiliary may be deleted from the sentences.

Example:

naan paarttum irukkiReen: naan keeTTum irukkiReen = naan paarttum keeTTum irukkiReen. “I had seen; I had heard = “I both seen and heard”

4. Auxiliary verbs are reduplicated to indicate various grammatical meanings.

Example:

latha varukiRaaL	“Sita comes”	Present Perfect
sita vantu koNTiRukkiRaaL	“Sita is coming”	Present Progressive
cirittuk koNTirukka veeNTaam	“It is not necessary to laugh”	Negative Present Progressive

5. In between the main verb and the auxiliary verb no meaningful units will occur.

Example:

aaciriyar paTittu viTTaar	“Teacher had read”
aaciriyar paTittu ippootu viTTaar	“Now the Teacher read it and left”

But some words which have lexical meanings occur in between the main verb and the auxiliary verb.

Example:

unnaal paTikka muTiyaatu	“You cannot read”
unnaal paTikka ippootu muTiyaati	“You cannot read now”
unnaal ceyya iyalum	“You can do this”
unnaal ceyya inRu iyalum	“You can do this today”

6. Auxiliary doesn't take complements by itself.
7. Auxiliary doesn't give the meaning of its homophonous full verb.
8. Auxiliary loses its meaning if it is permuted.
9. Infinitive that occurs before auxiliary cannot be converted into verbal noun.
10. The verb V1 alone cannot be negated without negating the auxiliary V2.
11. When the auxiliary V2 is negated the preceding verb V1 also comes under the scope of negation.
12. The verb V1 cannot be reduplicated before V2 if the verb V2 is an auxiliary.
13. Auxiliary construction doesn't permit negative simultaneous for both V1 and V2.
14. Auxiliary verb cannot form single word utterance.
15. An Auxiliary can take another auxiliary so that the sequence of V1, V2, and V3 can be seen among which the last two can be auxiliaries.
16. The auxiliary verb V2 can be replaced by another auxiliary where as the second member of the compound verb cannot be replaced by another verbs.
17. Compound verb is semantically one unit but whereas the auxiliary structure is not so, expressing one main notion plus some auxiliary notion.

Modern Tamil Auxiliary Verbs

In Tamil, the following verbs are function as auxiliaries: ‘aTi’ – “To beat”,

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‘aruL’ – “To become grace”, ‘aam’ – “To accept”, ‘aaccu’ – “To finish”, ‘iyalum’ – “Possible”, ‘iru’ – “To be”, ‘il’ – “To be not”, ‘uL’ – “Inside”, ‘eTu’ – “To take”, ‘ozhi’ – “To destroy”, ‘kaaTTu’ – “To show”, ‘kuuTum’ – “To be possible”, ‘koNTiru’ – “To have”, ‘koL’ – “To have”, ‘cey’ – “To do”, ‘takum’ – “to be worth”, ‘taLLu’ – “To push”, ‘teri’ – “To know”, ‘tolai’ – “To go”, ‘neer’ – “To face”, ‘paTu’ – “To suffer”, ‘paNnu’ – “To do”, ‘paar’ – “To see”, ‘peRu’ – “To get”, ‘poo’ – “To go”, ‘pooTu’ – “To put”, ‘maaTTu’ – “To hang”, ‘muTiyum’ – “To be possible”, ‘varu’ – “To come”, ‘viTu’ – “To leave”, ‘veeNTum’ – “To need” and ‘vai’ – “To put”

Kinds of Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are broadly classified in to three types. They are Voice Auxiliary, Aspectual Auxiliary and Modern Auxiliary.

Voice Auxiliary

Voice Auxiliaries are the auxiliaries which come after the infinitive forms of the main verbs. The verbs like ‘paTu’, ‘peRu’, ‘koL’, ‘cey’, ‘vai’, ‘paNnu’, ‘aruL’ are the voice denoting auxiliaries. Among the above paTu and peru are the passive voice denoting auxiliaries. koL is the reflexive voice, benefactive denoting auxiliaries. aruL is the benedictive voice denoting auxiliaries. Cey, vai and paNnu are the causative voice denoting auxiliaries.

Example:

avanaal katai ezhutappaTTatu	“The story was written by him”	(Passive)
baalu kaTitam varappeRRAan	“Balu received letter”	(Passive)
avan tanakkut taanee peecikkoNTaan	“He talked by himself”	(Reflexive)
avanai varapa paNNineen	“I made him to come”	(Causative)
avanai naantaan ceyya vaitteen	“I made him to do”	(Causative)
avanai varac ceYTEen	“I made him to come”	(Causative)
avar vantaruLinaar	“He came gracefully”	(Benedictive)

Aspectual Auxiliary

Aspectual auxiliary are the auxiliaries which come after the verbal participle forms of the main verbs. iru, koNTiru, viTu, ozhi, vaa, vai,

Avan vantiruntaan	“He had come”	Past perfect
Avan vantu koNTiruntaan	“He is coming”	Present Progressive
Avan cirittuk koNTirukka veeNTaam	“It is not necessary for him to laugh”	Negative present progressive
anpuTan pazhaki varum tankai	“Ever lovable sister”	Habitual thing
raaman taan paarttavanaam	“Rama who had seen it”	

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murukan ceytu kaaTTinaan	“Murugan demonstrated it”
nii paatip paarttaal teriyum	“If you try to sing then it will clear”
avan paarttu viTTaan	“He had seen it” (Completion)
unakku collat terital veeNTum	“You must know how to tell it”
naan ezhutikkoNTatu ennavenRaal	“The written thing was ...”
muttu vzhuntaTittu ooTinaan	“Muthu ran like anything”
	Idiomatic meaning” ‘Speediness’
amaiccar vantarulinaar	“The Minister has come” meaning Honorific
naan caappiTTaaccu	“I finished eating” meaning ‘Completeness’
avan cettuppoonaan	“He dead” meaning ‘Completeness’
avan caRRaip pizhinteTuttaan	“He extracted the juice” meaning ‘Excess’
raaman vantullaan	“He came” meaning ‘Complete’
raaman ceytu kaaTTinaan	“Rama demonstrated it”
avan ezhutit taLLiTTaan	“He wrote like anything” meaning ‘Impatience’
avan aTittuttaLLiTTaan	“He beat like anything” meaning ‘Idiomatic Expression’
pooyt tolai	“Get lost” meaning ‘Riddance’
kannanaip paarkka neerntatu	“Accidentally I met kannan”
uma eTuttup paarttaal muTiyavilai	“Uma tried it but it was not possible”
naankaL vazhakkamaaka keTTu varukiRoom	“Habitually we heard”
avan paarttu viTTaan	“He saw definitely”

Modal Auxiliary

Model Auxiliary verbs are the auxiliary verbs which come after the infinitive form or the verbal noun of the main verbs and they don't have the PNG markers and the negative markers except the Modal Auxiliary maaTTu .

Example:

baama varalaam	“Baama may come”	Meanings Permission, possibility,
ennaal cappiTa iyalum	“I can eat”	Meaning ability
ennaal paarkka muTiyum	“I can see”	Meaning possibility
avan paarkkkavillai,	“He did not see”	Meaning Negative
avan paarkka maaTTaan	“He never seen”	Meaning negative conformity
Mazhai varak/varutal kuuTum	“Rain may come”	Meaning Possibility
Itu collat takum	“It is worth to say”	Meaning appropriation
Enakku aaTat teriyum	“I know dance”	Meaning fact
Nii paaTa veeNTum	“You must sing”	Meaning completion, request
ennaal paaTa iyalum	“I can sing”	Meaning ability
avanaal paaTa iyallaatu	“He is not able to sing”	Meaning Inability
peeca veeNTum	“You must talk”	Meaning Condition
nii varalaam	“You may come”	Meaning Permission

Sequence of Auxiliary

Auxiliaries are coming in sequence as two or three or even four in a sentence.

Example:

vantu koNTirukkiRaan	“I am coming” (Two auxiliaries “koNTu” and “iru” are the two auxiliaries combined in one sentence)
pazhattai paRittup paarkka veeNTum	“Pluck the fruit and see” (Two auxiliaries “paar” and “veeNTum” in one sentence)
avan saami vantaruLa vaittaan	“He made the force to come” (Two auxiliaries “aruL” and “vai”)
baala caTTail pooTTuk koLLac ceytaan	“Bala made him to put his shirt” (Two auxiliaries “koL” and “cey”)
miira pooTTuk koLLa neerntatu	“Meera had the occasion to wear” (Two auxiliaries “koL” and “neer”)
kolai ceyyappaTaveeNTum	“He/She/It/They must be killed” (Two auxiliaries “paTu” and “veeNTum”)
avanai caTTai pooTTu koLLac ceyya veeNTum	“Made him to wear the shirt” (Three auxiliaries “koL”, “cey” and “veeNTum” in one sentence)
miira pooTTu kola neeravillai	“Meera did not have the occasion to wear” (Three auxiliaries “kol”, “neer” and “illai” in one sentence)
raja ippoo paarkka neerntirukka veeNTum	“Now the Raja has the occasion to see” (Three auxiliaries “neer”, “iru” and “veeNTum”)
nii ceytu paarkka veeNTiatu illai	“It is not necessary to do this” (Three auxiliaries “paar”, “veeNTum” and “illai” in one sentence.)
nii caTTaiyai pooTTuk koLLac ceyya veeNTiyatu illai	“It is not necessary to take steps to wear the shirt” (There are four auxiliaries “koL”, “cey”, “veeNTum” and “illai” in one sentence)

Conclusion

- 1) From the above datum I conclude that the above mentioned auxiliary verbs are very much useful to the main verbs. So it is opt to address these auxiliary verbs as helping verbs.
- 2) Without the help of the helping verbs it is not possible to get some grammatical meanings like perfect, Aspectual and modal etc.
- 3) The emotional feeling is correctly expressed by using these auxiliaries. Example the irritation meaning is expressed by the helping verb “tolai”.

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