

OPEN ACCESS

Verb Phrase in Tamil

C. Kuppusamy

Assistant Professor, CAS in Linguistics
Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India

Volume: 7

Issue: 4

Month: April

Year: 2020

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 20.01.2020

Accepted: 05.03.2020

Published: 01.04.2020

Citation:

Kuppusamy, C. "Verb Phrase in Tamil." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2020, pp. 76–79.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v7i4.1921>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Abstract

The verb phrase is built up of a verb, which is the head of the construction. Verb occurs as predicate in the rightmost position of a clause. As a predicate it selects arguments (Ex. Subject, Direct object, Indirect object and Locative NPs) and assigns case to its arguments and adverbial adjuncts. Another syntactic property of verbs in Tamil is that they can govern subordinate verb forms. Verb occurring as finite verbs in clause final position can be complemented by non-finite verbs proceeding them. The latter with respect to the interpretation of tense or subject governs these non-finite forms, being subordinate to the finite verb form. If we follow the traditional idea of having a VP node for Tamil, then all the elements, except the subject NP, will have to be grouped under VP.

Keywords: NP, VP, Adverbial, Adjunct, Aspect

Introduction

Verbs in Tamil conjugated for tense, negation, person, number, gender, adjectival form and adverbial form. There are three tenses in Tamil, 1) past tense, 2) present tense and 3) future tense. Tamil has use of tense markers for expressing tense. There are a set of past tense markers, a set of present tense markers and a set of future tense markers. The finite verbs and non-finite verbs in Tamil are inflected forms and the following patterns emerge out.

	Verbal forms	Structure
1.	Finite Verb	a) Verb root + Tense Marker + PNG <i>pa:ʃ-in-a:n</i> 'sing-Past-he'
2.	Infinitive verb	a) Verb + Infinitive Marker <i>pa:ʃ-a ma:ʃʃa.n</i> 'sing-Inf.'
3.	Past participle form	a) Past Participle + finite verb <i>pa:ʃ-i va-nt-a:n</i> 'Sing-Past-Participle'
4.	Negative participle form	a) Verb + Negative + Participle <i>pa:ʃ-a:-mal</i> 'Sing-Neg-Participle'
5.	Relative Participle forms	a) Verb + Past Tense + RP <i>pa:ʃu-in-a</i> 'Sing-pasT-RP' b) Verb + PreT + RP c) <i>pa:ʃ u-kir-a</i> 'Sing-PreT-RP' d) Verb + FuT + RP <i>paʃ-um</i> 'Sing-FuT-RP' e) Verb + Negative + RP <i>pa:ʃa:ta</i> 'sing -Neg. - RP'
6.	Pronomilized forms	a) Verb + PasT+RP+PNG <i>pa:ʃ-in-a</i> b) Verb + PreT + RP + Pronoun <i>pa:ʃu-kir-a</i> c) Verb + FuT + RP + pronoun <i>pa:ʃ-um</i>

Constituents of Verb Phrases

The constituents which comes under VP i.e. that are headed by V can be listed as follows:

1.	Adverbial Phrase	<i>(avaḷ) ve:kama:ka vanta:ḷ</i> 'she came fast'
2.	Case Phrase	<i>(kaṇṇan) ra:tavaippa:rtta:n</i> 'Kannan saw Radha'
3.	Post Positional Phrase	<i>(puli) avaḷ me:l pa:yntatu</i> 'The tiger jumped over her'
4.	Verbal participle Clause	<i>ca:ppiṭṭuvuṭṭu cenra:n</i> 'Having eaten food, he went'
5.	Infinitival Clause	<i>ca:ppiṭac cenra:n</i> 'He went to eat'
6.	Conditional Clause	<i>ve:lai irunta:l varuva:n</i> 'He will come if there is any work'
7.	Concessive Clause	<i>maḷai peytum pu:mi nanaiyavillai</i> 'Even though it rained, the earth has not drenched'

8.	Complement Clause	<i>(avan) ve:lai muṭintu viṭṭatu enru</i> <i>conna:n</i> 'He said that the work has finished'
----	-------------------	---

Compounding of Verbs

Building of verbal forms for denoting tense, mood and aspect is referred here as compound verbs. Compounding leads to tense-aspect-mood (TAM) system, which is crucial to verbs. The auxiliary verbs added to non-finite and gerundial forms of the main verb (MV). The verb flow chart (see next page) depicts the complex processes of verbal compounding.

Building of Aspectual Forms

Aspectual auxiliaries express aspect in Tamil. The aspectual auxiliaries not only express aspectual distinction but also other semantic concepts depending upon the context. Lehman (1989) identifies the following five aspects in Tamil.

1. Inceptive aspect
2. Progressive aspect
3. Iterative aspect
4. Perfective aspect

	Type	Structure
1.	Inceptive aspect The verb 'a:ku' occurs as an auxiliary verb in Tamil finite past tense form after all suffixed adverbial nouns expressing inceptive aspects.	$V+al + a:ku + PNG$ <i>avan ennai kaṇṭatum o:ṭala:na:n</i> 'He started running immediately after seeing me'
2.	Progressive aspect Progressive aspect in Tamil is expressed by auxiliary 'konṭiru'. With stative main verbs <i>iru</i> expresses progressive aspect.	MV in PastP form + <i>konṭiru/iru+PNG</i> <i>kaḷya:ni a:ṭi konṭirukkira:ḷ</i> 'Kalyani is dancing'
3.	Iterative aspect The same compound verb <i>konṭuva:</i> with following main verb in verbal participle form, denotes iterative aspect too. Iterative aspect is the repeated or regular occurrence of an action or event during a period of time In this case, the part of the compound auxiliary verb <i>konṭu</i> can be dropped.	MV in Past Participle form + <i>konṭuva: + PNG</i> <i>centra oru va:rama:ka ka.laiyil maḷai peytu</i> <i>konṭu irukkiratu</i> 'From last one week it rains in the morning',
4.	Perfective aspect The perfective aspect in Tamil is expressed by the auxiliary verbs <i>iru</i> , <i>a:yirru</i> and <i>viṭu</i> which are added to the past participle form of a main verb. The auxiliary <i>viṭu</i> added after past participle form expresses perfect aspect, that is an action or event that has been completed within a point or period of time. Thus <i>viṭu</i> indicate a complete action.	MV in PastP form + <i>a.yirru</i> <i>kumaran vi:ṭṭu pa:ṭam ceṭta:yirru</i> 'Kumaran has finished the home work'. MV in PastP form + <i>viṭu + PNG</i> <i>vacanti aṅṭa ve:laiyai muṭittu viṭṭa:l</i> 'Vasanti has finished that work' <i>ra:jan maturaiyai viṭṭu po:y viṭṭa:n</i> 'Rajan had left Madurai'

Patterns of Verb Phrases

The different types of VP patterns / predicate

patterns (and sentential patterns) based on the characteristic features of verbs are as follows.

Types of pattern	Structural pattern (i.e.) argument structure
Pattern 1	NP + NP <i>atu puttakam</i> ‘That is a book’ <i>avan ma:ṇavan</i> ‘He is a Student’
Pattern 2	NP + BV <i>(iru) kaṭavul irukkīra:r</i> ‘God exists’
Pattern 3	NP + NP + BV <i>(alla) avaḷ nallavaḷ alla</i> ‘She is not good’
Pattern 4	NP-ukku + VI (a set of verbs of feeling) <i>avanukku pacikkīratu</i> ‘He feels hungry’ <i>enakku talai valikkīratu</i> ‘I have headache’
Pattern 5	NP + VI <i>na:m va:ḷkīro:m</i> ‘We live’
Pattern 6	NP + NP-ukku + VI <i>ramu vi:ṭṭukkup po:na:n</i> ‘Ramu went to home’
Pattern 7	NP + NP-il + VI <i>susila viṭṭuyil tankina:!</i> ‘Susila stayed in a hostel’
Pattern 8	NP + PP + VI <i>pa:mpu valaikkuḷ nuḷaintatu</i> ‘The snake entered the hole’
Pattern 9	NP + Adv A + VI <i>avan pattu mayil naṭanta:n</i> ‘He walked ten miles’
Pattern 10	NP + NP-a:ka + VI <i>ilaikal paccāi nīramma:ka ma:rina</i> ‘The leaves turned green’
Pattern 11	NP + enṛu-Clause + <i>teri</i> <i>avaḷ varuva:!</i> <i>enṛu terikīratu</i> ‘It seems that she will come’
Pattern 12: The basic case marking pattern of Tamil transitive clause is the nominative accusative pattern. All transitive verbs show this pattern	NP + NP-ai + VI <i>avarkaḷ puliyaip pa:rta:rka!</i> ‘They saw tiger’
Pattern 13	NP + NP-ai + NP-il + VT <i>kuppu paṇattaip peṭṭiyil vaitta:n</i> ‘Kuppu kept the money in a box’
Pattern 14	NP + NP-ai + NP-po:la + VT <i>avar avanai oru e:laiyaip po:la naṭattina:r</i> ‘He treated him as a poor fellow’
Pattern 15: The first deviation from the basic pattern of transitive verb is ‘Dative accusative’ pattern. The verbs of mental experience (Ex. <i>ieri</i> ‘know’, <i>puri</i> ‘understand, etc.) verbs of emotional experience (Ex. <i>piti</i> ‘like’ etc) and verbs of physical and biological experience show this patterns.	NP-ukku + NP-ai+ <i>teri</i> <i>enakku ava:lai teriyum</i> ‘I know her’
Pattern 16: This is the typical pattern of trivalent verbs receiving three arguments, subject, object and indirect object.	NP + NP-itam + NP (-ai) + VT <i>avaḷ enniṭam paṇam koṭutta:l</i> ‘She gave me money’

Pattern 17	NP+NP Loc <i>iruntu</i> +NP-ai +VT (<i>uriñcu</i> 'suck') <i>avan kuṭuvaiyiliruntu taṇṇi:rai uriñcina:n</i> 'He sucked the water from the flask'
Pattern 18	NP + NP-il + NP-ai + VT (<i>kala</i> 'Mix' Type of Verbs) <i>avan pa:lil taṇṇi:raik kalanta:n</i> 'He mixed water with milk'
Pattern 19	NP + NP-a:l + NP-ai + VT (<i>cey</i> 'make' Type of Verbs) <i>avan kalimaṇṇa:l oru pa:nai ceyta:n</i> 'He made a mud pot using clay'
Pattern 20	NP + NP-a:l + NP-ai + VT <i>avan kattiyail kaliyai veṭṭina:n</i> 'He cut the stick with a knife'
Pattern 21	NP + NP-me:l + VT (Verbs of <i>tuppu</i> 'Spit' Type) <i>avan en-me:l eccil tuppina:n</i> 'He is spit the saliva on me'
Pattern 22	NP + NP-utan + VT (verbs of <i>pe:cu</i> 'Talk to' Type) <i>avan avaluṭan pe:cina:n</i> 'He talked with her'
Pattern 23	NP + NP-itam + NP-ai VT (Verbs of <i>ku:ru</i> 'Tell' Type) <i>avan avalitaṁ poyyaik ku:rina:n</i> 'He told her the lies'

Conclusion

Tense, mood and aspect are conveyed by auxiliary verbs and the inflections are conveyed by verbs. Even though they can be compartmentalized theoretically, they depend on one another, so they need to be dealt in a single package.

References

Agesthalingom, S. "Auxiliaries and Main verbs." *Auxiliaries in Dravidian*, edited by Agesthalingom, S. and Varma. G.S. Annamalai University, 1982.

Andronov, M.S. *A Standard Grammar of Modern and Classical Tamil*, New Century Book House, 1969.

Annamalai, E. "The Participial Noun in Tamil - Some problems." *Third Seminar on Dravidian Linguistics*, edited by Agesthalingom, S. and

S.V. Shanmugam, Annamalai University, 1972.

Arden, A.H. *A progressive Grammar of Common Tamil*, Christian Literature Society, 1954.

Culicover, P.W. *Syntax*, Academic Press INC, 1976.

Geetha, K. *Subsystems of principles: A Study in Universals Based on Tamil Syntax*, I.I.T. Kanpur, 1985.

Karthikeyan, A. *Compound Verbs in Tamil*, Annamalai University, 1984.

Kothandaraman, P. *A Grammar of Contemporary Literary Tamil*, IIT Studies Chennai, 1997.

Kothandaraman, P. "A note on VP in Tamil." *Modern Studies in Tamil*, Tamil Nulagam, 1976.

Author Details

Dr. C. Kuppusamy, Assistant Professor, CAS in Linguistics, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India, Email ID: dr.c.kuppusamy@gmail.com