Verb Phrase in Tamil

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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, Adverbal, 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.

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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
   - (avaļ) ve:kama:ka vanta:ļ
     - ‘she came fast’
2. Case Phrase
   - (kuṇan) ra:tavaippa:rtta:n
     - ‘Kannan saw Radha’
3. Post Positional Phrase
   - (puli) avaļ me:l pa:yntatu
     - ‘The tiger jumped over her’
4. Verbal participle Clause
   - ca:ppițțuvițțuc cenṟa:n
     - ‘Having eaten food, he went’
5. Infinitival Clause
   - ca:ppițac cenṟa:n
     - ‘He went to eat’
6. Conditional Clause
   - ve:lai irunta:l varuva:n
     - ‘He will come if there is any work’
7. Concessive Clause
   - maḻai peytum pu:mi nanaiyavillai
     - ‘Even though it rained, the earth has not drenched’

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

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  
*atu puttakam* ‘That is a book’  
*avan ma:ṇavan* ‘He is a Student’

Pattern 2 | NP + BV  
*(iru)* katavul irukkira:r ‘God exists’

Pattern 3 | NP + NP + BV  
*(alla)* aval nallavaḷ alla ‘She is not good’

Pattern 4 | NP-ukku + VI  
(a set of verbs of feeling)  
*avamukku pacikkira:atu* ‘He feels hungry’  
*enakku talai valikkira:atu* ‘I have headache’

Pattern 5 | NP + VI  
na:m va:ḻkiṟo:m ‘We live’

Pattern 6 | NP + NP-ukku + VI  
*ramu vi:ṭṭukkup po:na:n* ‘Ramu went to home’

Pattern 7 | NP + PP + VI  
*pa:mpu valaikkul nulaintatu* ‘The snake entered the hole’

Pattern 8 | NP + Adv A + VI  
*avan pattu mayil nāṭanta:n* ‘He walked ten miles’

Pattern 9 | NP + enṟu-Clause + teri  
*avaḷ varuva:/ enru teriṅkira:tu* ‘It seems that she will come’

Pattern 10: The basic case marking pattern of Tamil transitive clause is the nominative accusative pattern. All transitive verbs show this pattern | NP + NP-ai + VI  
*avarkaḷ puliyaip pa:rtta:rkaḷ* ‘They saw tiger’

Pattern 11 | NP + NP-ai + NP-ai + NP-ai + VI  
*kuppu panattaip pettiyil vaitta:n* ‘Kuppu kept the money in a box’

Pattern 12: This is the typical pattern of trivalent verbs receiving three arguments, subject, object and indirect object. | NP-ukku + NP-ai+teri  
*enakku ava:ḷai teriyum* ‘I know her’

Pattern 13 | NP + NP-ai + NP-ai + VT  
*a var avanai oru e:ḻaiyaip po:la naṭattina:r* ‘He treated him as a poor fellow’

Pattern 14 | NP + NP-ai + NP-po:la + VT  
*a var avanai oru e:ḷaiyaip po:la naṭattina:r* ‘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. ieri ‘know’, puri ‘understand, etc.) verbs of emotional experience (Ex.piti ‘like’ etc) and verbs of physical and biological experience show this patterns. | NP + NP-itam + NP (-ai) + VT  
*avaḷ enniṭam paṇam koṭutta:l* ‘She gave me money’
Pattern 17
NP+NP Loc iruntu+NP-ai +VT (uriñcu ‘suck’)  
avan kuṭuvaiyiliruntu tanñi:rai uriñcina:n  
‘He sucked the water from the flask’.

Pattern 18
NP + NP-il + NP-ai + VT (kala ‘Mix’ Type of Verbs)  
avan pa:li tanñi:rai kalantra:n  
‘He mixed water with milk’

Pattern 19
NP + NP-a:l + NP-ai + VT (cey ‘make’ Type of Verbs)  
avan kalimaña:l oru pa:nai ceyta:n  
‘He made a mud pot using clay’

Pattern 20
NP + NP-a:l + NP-ai + VT  
avan kattiyail kaiyai veṭṭina:n  
‘He cut the stick with a knife’

Pattern 21
NP + NP-me:l + VT (Verbs of tuppu ‘Spit’ Type)  
avan en-me:l eccil tuppina:n  
‘He is spit the saliva on me’

Pattern 22
NP + NP-utan + VT (verbs of pe:cu ‘Talk to’ Type)  
avan avalutam pe:cinna:n  
‘He talked with her’

Pattern 23
NP + NP-itam + NP-ai VT (Verbs of ku:ru ‘Tell’ Type)  
avan avaliṭam poyyaik ku:ṟina:n  
‘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
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