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**AFFIRMATIVE – NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN MODERN TAMIL WITH
REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE USE**

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Introduction

Language structure displays different types of expressions (structural) in the use of language in various socio cultural contexts and situations. Affirmative - negative, question – answer, imperative, opposite words (antonyms), acceptance – rejection/refusal, liking – disliking, exclamation, emphasis and so on are some of the expressions which are not only basic and common but also frequent and significant in the day – to – day communication. These expressions and constructions are found not only in the lexical level, but also in the morphological and syntactic levels of the language. Also these expressions are used in varying degrees both in the formal and informal contexts of language use.

Objectives of the study

This paper tries to focus on the structure and use of affirmative and negative forms/ expressions found in modern Tamil with suitable illustrations and conditions of occurrences. As affirmative – negative distinction is quite prevalent and explicit in the day- to –day use of language (spoken or written), special emphasis becomes a must in language – learning- teaching process. This becomes quite obligatory also in the teaching – learning of a second language or foreign language.

For example, the following examples bring out the affirmative – negative dichotomy in Tamil and English, at a glance.

Tamil			English
uṇṭu	X	illai	(it) is X (it) is not
a:m/a:ma:m	X	illai	yes X no
periya	X	ciṛiya	big X small
piṭikkum	X	piṭikka:tu	like X don't like
muṭiyum	X	muṭiya:tu	Can X cannot
vaṇtu	X	vara:mal	having come X without coming
paṭitta:l	X	paṭikka:viṭṭa:l	If (one) reads X if (one) doesn't reads
po:ṇkaḷ	X	po:ka:ti:rkaḷ	You go X you don't go
pa:rta	X	pa:rka:ta	(one) who saw X (one) who didn't see.
vaṇtapoḷutu	X	vara:tapoḷutu	When (one) came X when (one) didn't come etc.

The affirmative – negative distinction is found both in the morphological structure as well as in the phrase/syntactic structure of Tamil, in addition to the lexical level.

Lexical level: usages

Negative words: there are two negative words which occur as free forms having all allomorphs.

i) *ot'alla(al-)* 'no/not' and

ii) *illai (il-)* 'no/n

Occurrences

1) <i>alla</i> 'no/not' <i>atueñkalvi:tualla</i> 'that is not our house' <i>avartamiḷ a: ciriyaralla</i> 'he (hon.) is not a Tam il teacher' <i>appaṭialla</i> 'it is not so'	<i>alla:</i> 'no/not' /al – <i>alla:mal</i> (unnaiall:mal) <i>alla:tu</i> (unnaialla:tu) <i>alla:viṭṭa:l</i> (appaṭialla:viṭṭa:l) <i>anri</i> (anriunaiyanri)
2) <i>illai</i> 'no/not' <i>avar u:ril illai</i> 'he (hon.) is not in town' <i>atueñkaḷ vi:ṭuillai</i> 'it is not our home' <i>illaienra:l</i> 'if not....'	<i>Illa:-</i> 'no/not' <i>Illa:-</i> (allomorphs) il <i>illa:mal/illa:tu</i> <i>illa:viṭṭa:l</i> <i>illa:ta, illa:mal</i> illa:n <i>inmai</i> inri <i>illa:tavarkaḷ</i> <i>illa:mal</i>

The negative base forms behave as verbs, in the sense they take verbal suffixes like participles, gender- number suffixes etc., other than the tense suffixes.

eg,

alla:tu /alla:mal 'without'

alla:vitta:l 'if not'

allan 'It is not (he)'

illa:mal 'without'

illa:vitta:l 'if not'

illa:ta a:l 'a person not having.....',

The negative verb bases have allomorphs such as **il-**, **illai**, **illa:t-**, **illa:-**, and **al-**, **alla**, **alla:t-**, **alla:-**, etc., As **al-**, and **il-** are negative bases and so there is no need to make them negatives by adding negative suffixes **a:t-** and **-a:-** as done in the case of regular verb bases.

eg.

o:tu - a: - mal

>*o:ta:mal* 'without running'

o:tu - a:t - e:

>o:ta:te: 'don't run – you' (sg.)

o:pu – a: - vitta:l

>o:ta:vitta:l 'if (one) doesn't run' etc.,

Negative suffixes: There are three suffixes in Modern Tamil:

i) –a:- ,

ii) -a:t- &

iii) - ma:tt-

Conditions of occurrence

i) –a: - occurs before consonants.

cey-a: -mal >ceyya:mal 'without doing'

ii) –a:t- occurs before vowels.

nata -kk -a:t-a>natakka:ta 'that which did not walk'

o:tu - a:t - e: > o:ta:te: 'don't run-you' (sg.)

iii) –ma:tt – occurs before PGN suffixes.

vara-ma:tt - a:n >varama:tta:n 'he will not come'

Use of opposite (antonyms) words

1)Q: ilaṅko: unnutaiyatampiya ? 'Is Elango your little brother?'

A: i) a:ma:m . ilaṅko: ennutaiyatampi 'Yes, Elango is my little brother'

ii) illai ,ilaṅko: ennutaiyatampiella
or

illai ,ilaṅko: ennutaiyatampiillai.

'No, Elango is not my little brother'

2)Q :atumarama:? 'Is it a tree?'

A :i) a:ma:m , atumaram 'Yes, it is a tree'

ii) illai ,atumaramalla / illai 'No, it is not a tree'

Here, **alla**and **illai** occur in free variation.

3) Q: ni:ṅkalaṅke: po:vatuunta: ? 'Do you (hon.sg.). used to go there?'

A: i) a:ma:m , na:naṅke: po:vatuuntu 'Yes, I used to go there'

ii) illai ,na:naṅke: po:vatuillai 'No, I do not used to go there'

In this kind of sentences **alla**and **illai** are not in free variation with one another. That is, after the verbal noun form only **illai** occurs.

4) Q: ennutaiyaputinamuṅkalitamirukkirata: ? 'Do you have my novel book?'

A: i) a:ma:muṅkalutaiyaputinamennitamirukkiratu

'Yes, your novel is with me'

ii) illai ,uṅkalutaiyaputinamennitamillai 'No, your novel is not with me'
(irikukratu + irukkiratu + illai > illai (FV is deleted))

In the above illustration (4) also **illai** doesn't occur in free variation (as it replaces irukkiratu + illai).

Occurrence of negation in noun phrase sentences

S NP1 + NP2 : *avar a:ciriyar* 'he is a teacher'

(Affirmative)

NP1 + NP2 + *alla / illai*

(Negative) : *avar a:ciriyar alla / illai* 'he (hon.) is not a teacher'

Occurrence of negation in verb phrase sentences

S NP + VP

(Aff.) : *na:ntinamumañke: o:tuvatu untu* 'I used to run there every day'

(Neg.) : *na:ntinamumañke: otuvatuillai* 'I do not used to run there every day'

(Aff.) : *uñkalutaiyaputtakamaraiyilirukkiratu* 'your book is in the room'

(Neg.) : *uñkalutaiyaputtakamaraiyilillai* 'Your book is not in the room'

Occurrence in Imperative sentences

Affirmative

ni: o:tu 'You (sg.) run' *ni: o:ta:te:*

ni:ñkal o:tuñkal 'You (pl.) run'

Negative

ni: o:ta:te: 'You (sg.) don't run'

ni:ñkal o:ta:tirkal 'You (pl.) don't run'

Negative Imperative form

= [Verb Base + Neg. Suf. + Imp. Suf.]

NegSuf -a:t- , Imp. Suf. -e & -i:rkal

Affirmative – Negative expressions in impersonal verb Sentences

Affirmative

1. *ve:ntum* 'want'

2. *teriyum* 'know'

3. *po:tum* '(is) enough'

4. *pitikkum* 'like'

5. *mutiyum* 'can'

6. *puriyum* 'understand'

Negative

1. *ve:nta:m* 'don't want'

2. *teriya:tu* 'don't know'

3. *po:ta:tu* '(is) not enough'

4. *pitikka:tu* 'doesn't like'

5. *mutiya:tu* 'cannot'

6. *puriya:tu* 'do not understand'

There are no person – gender – number endings in the above impersonal forms (which are finite). When these forms occur in the verb predicate, they have dative or instrumental subjects as follows:

eg.

ve:ntum / ve:nta:m 'want / don't want'

1. **enakkupputtakamve:ntum** 'I want a book'

2. **enakkupputtakamve:nta:m** 'I don't want a book'

muḇiyum/ muṭṭiya:tu 'can / cannot'

1. **tampiya:lmutiya:m** 'little brother can....'

2. tampiya:lmutiya:tu 'little brother cannot.....'

Affirmative – Negative difference in participle constructions

a) In verbal participle structure

Affirmative	Negative
o:ti 'having run' patittu 'having read'	o:ta:mal 'without running' patikka:mal 'without reading'

In sentences:

i) *tampive:kama:kao:ti ki:le: vilunta:n* 'little brother ran fast and fell down'

ii) *ni: e:n o:ta:mal nirkira:y?* 'Why are you standing without running?'

iii) *avarpaṭittuelutina:r* 'he read (something) and wrote it'

iv) *ira:manpaṭikka:malelutina:n* 'Raman wrote something without studying'

b) In conditional participle structure

Affirmative	Negative
conna:l 'if (one) says' natanta:l 'if (one) walks'	colla:vitta:l 'if (one) doesn't say' naṭakka:vitta:l 'if (one) doesn't walk'

In sentences

i) *tampiconna:lappa: ke:tpa:r* 'if little brother says, father will listen'

ii) *avarpa:ṭa:vitta:Imanipa:tuva:r* 'if he (hon.) doesn't sing Mani will sing'

c) In relative participle structure

Affirmative	Negative
elutina, elutukira 'one who wrote / one who writes' patikkira, patitta 'one who will read'	eluta:ta 'one (who) didn't write' paṭikka:ta 'one who didn't read'

In sentences

i) *appa: connave:laiyattampiceyta:n* 'little brother did the work that father asked him to do'

ii) *a:ciriyar colla:tave:laiyaikkannanceyta:n* 'kannan did the work that the teacher did not tell (him)'

d) In temporal participle structures

Temporal participle -1

Affirmative	Negative
ca:ppiṭukira ca:ppiṭṭa + polutu ca:ppiṭum	ca:ppita:ta + polutu when one didn't eat'

‘when (someone) ate/eating/will eat’

In sentences

i) na:nca:ppittapolutuvilakkuerintatu ‘the light was onwhen I was eating’

ii) na:nca:ppita:tapolutueta:vatukutippe:n ‘I drink (something) when I do not eating (anything)’

Temporal participle -2

There is no negative formation in this structure.

Affirmative ‘as soon as an action takes place’

ca:ppitta + utane:/tum

(only in past tense) >ca:ppittautane: ~ ca:ppittatum ‘as soon as (one) ate’

In sentences

i) tampica:ppittautane: koñcamtu:ramnatappa:n

‘little brother used to walk for sometime as soon as he finished his eating’

ii) avartinamumca:ppittatumtu:tkapo:va:r

‘he (hon.) used to go to bed as soon as he finishes eating’

Affirmative – Negative expressions in complex verb forms

Structure: MV inf + Aux. verb

a) Past Negative

Aux. verb ‘illai

eg.

avalnanra:kappa:tavillai ‘she did not sing well’

antanatikaicirappa:kanatikkavillai ‘that actress did not act well’

b) Future Negative

Aux. verb ‘-ma:tt - + PNG suf.

eg.

i) avarve:kama:kao:tama:tta:r ‘he (hon.) will not run fast’

ii) na:nañke: po:kama:tte:n ‘I will not go there’

iii) avarkalna:laikkuppallikkuvarama:tta:rkal

‘they will not come to the school tomorrow’

c) Prohibitive1

Aux. verb + ku:ta:tu ‘should not’

eg.

i) maniinime:linke: varakku:ta:tu

‘Mani should not come here, hereafter’

ii) avar anta ve:laiyacceyyakku:ta:tu

‘he (hon.) should not do that work’

d) Prohibitive 2

Aux. verb ‘+ve:nta:m ‘need not’

i) tampianke: po:kave:nta:m ‘little brother need not go there’

ii) ni: ataicca:ppitave:nta:m ‘you (sg.) need not eat that (food)’

Affirmative vs. Negative Expressions with participial noun and verbal noun forms

a) Participial noun constructions

Relative participle form + PNG suffixes

eg.

patitta+ PNG suf. (in affirmative)

patikkira

patikka:ta + PNG suf. (in negative)

In sentences

i) *aṇṭaṇṭaiyilpaṭikkiravanennuṭaiyatampita:n*

‘one who is reading in that room is my little brother’

ii) *intaonruta:navarpaṭikka:tatu*

‘this is the only one that he (hon.) did not read’

b) Verbal noun constructions

Ten. Suf.

VB++ atu (non-hum. S.g.suf.)

Neg. suf.

eg.

vara:tatu ‘ the act of not coming’

paṇittatu ‘ the act of reading’

Illustrations (in sentences)

i) *ni: ne:rruinke: vara:tatu enakkutteriyum*

‘I know about your absence yesterday’ (not coming here)

ii) *avalpa:ta:tatunallatu*

‘it was a good thing that she did not sing’

iii) *ni:ṇkalviruntuca:ppittataina:npa:rtte:n*

‘I saw you eating dinner’ (act of eating)

Use of Interrogative word + particle –um constructions Inter. word + um

It gives both affirmative and negative meanings, depending upon the structure.

Structure:

eṇke:

etu

eppolutu

ya:r

.....

Use :*eṇke:yum*

etuvum ‘ Affirmative or Negative Meanings’

eppolutum

ya:rum

Illustrations

i) *intapputtakameṇke:yumkitaikkum*

‘ this book is available (one can get) everywhere’

ii) *intapputtakameṇke:yumkiṭaikka:tu*

‘this book is available nowhere /not available everywhere’

iii) *inraiya:vilavukkuya:rum(ello:rum) varuva:rkal*

‘everyone will come for today’s function’

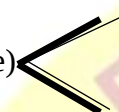
iv) *inṛaiyavila:vukkuya:rumvarama:tta:rkal*

‘no one /none will come for today’s function’
everywhere (in affi.)

enke:yum 

nowhere (in neg.)

everyone (in affi.)

ya:rum(same) 

none (in neg.)

enke:yum Affirmative Aff. meaning

eppoēutum+ Form

etuvum Neg. Form Neg.meaning

ya:rum

So, in modern Tamil negative structures are lexical – morphological and syntactical. The occurrences are conditioned and quite systematic also. There are a few exceptions as well.

Future Finite verb (Aff.) Future Neg.

use of – *ma:tt-* +PNG suf. (in negative)

eg.

o:ṭama:tte:n ‘I will not run’

po:kama:ṭṭa:rkal ‘they (hum.) will not go’

But, when non – human endings follow:

atu o:tum > *atu o:ta:tu* ‘it will not run’

avai o:tum > *avai o:ta:tu* / *o:ta:tavai* ‘they (n.hum.) will not run’

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