

Control in Tamil

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*Tamil (tam), Dravidian
also known as Tamalsan, Tambul, Tamili, Tamal, Damulian
spoken in India (Asia)*

1 Grammar Profile

1.1 Morpho-Syntax

1.1.1 Head position

head-final (postpositions, [AP QP A], ReIN)

1.1.2 Morphological type

absolutely agglutinating or concatenative, concatenative morphology in Tamil always involves suffixation

1.1.3 Case system

nom/acc: case realized on nouns, nominative (unmarked case with no over realization), accusative (-ai), dative (-(u)kku/-ku), instrumental (-aal), sociative (-ootu/-utan), locative (-il/-itam), ablative (-iruntu), benefactive (-aaka), genitive (-atu).

1.1.4 Verbal Agreement

person and number agreement between subject and matrix verb

1.1.5 Null Arguments

null subject (pro and PRO)

1.2 Matrix Clause

1.2.1 Basic word order

SOV/OSV

1.2.2 Alternate word orders

Non-configurational, but verb must always be located in clause final position. An optional stylistic movement may postpose an argument NP over the finite verb.

1.2.3 Ordering of nominal and pronominal arguments

SO, OS, same as nominal arguments

1.3 Embedded Clause

1.3.1 Basic word order

verb-final

1.3.2 Verbal agreement

the embedded predicate does not seem to show subject agreement.

1.3.3 Possible morphological categories of the embedded clause

Tamil uses non-finite and nominalized verb forms, complementizing verbs, complementizing nouns and clitics to mark complementation. Types of non-finite clauses: Infinitival clauses (suffix –a onto embedded verb; complement to desiderative, modal, aspectual, manipulative and perceptual verbs, as well as adverbial clauses and noun phrases. Verbal participle clauses, Conditional clauses, and Adjectival clauses

2 Control Profile

2.1 forward subject control into infinitival complement

2.1.1 Example structure

- (1) kumaar [amerikka-v-ukku-p poo-k-a] virumpu-kir-aan
kumar-nom america-dat go-inf want-pres-3sm
'Kumar wants to go to America.'
- (2) kumaar-ukku-c [caikkil oott-a-t] teri-y-um
kumar-dat cycle ride-inf know-fu+3sn
'Kumar knows how to ride a cycle.'
- (3) raajaa [katav-ai-c caatt-a] mara-ntu vit-t-aan
raja-nom door-acc close-inf forget-vbp leave-past-3sm
'Raja forgot to close the door.'
- (4) raajaa [aankilam pati-kk-a] aarampi-tt-aan
raja-nom english study-inf start-past-3sm
'Raja started to study English.'
- (5) naan [paTikk-a(p)] pooneen
i-nom read-inf go-past-PT
'I went to read.'
- (6) naan inkee [paaT-a] vanteen
i-nom here sing-inf come-past-PT
'I came here to sing.'

2.1.2 Predicates participating in the construction

desiderative verb: virumpu 'want'

modal verb: teru ‘can/know how to’
implicative verb: vitu ‘leave/forget’
aspectual verb: aarampi ‘start’poon ‘go’

2.2 *forward object control into infinitival complement*

Apparently the following are actually monoclausal at surface structure as a result of clause reduction (Lehmann p. 260). Evidence is provided from clefting.

2.2.1 Example structure

- (7) raaja kumaar-ai·k [kuti·kk-a] kattayappat-t-aan
raja-nom kumar-acc drink-inf force-past-3sm
‘Raja forced Kumar to drink.’
- (8) naan kumaar-ai [veelai cey·y-a] uttaravit-t-eeen
I-nom kumar-acc work do-inf order-past-1s
‘I ordered Kumar to work.’
- (9) naan kumaar-ai [var-a-c] con-n-eeen
I-nom kumar-acc come-inf say-pst-1s
‘I told kumar to come.’

2.2.2 Predicates participating in the construction

manipulative verb: kattayappat ‘force’
communication verb: uttaravit ‘order’con ‘say/ask’

2.3 *backward subject control into participial adjunct*

2.3.1 Example structure

- (10) [[Øi niraiya-c caappit-tu] [kumaar-ukkui vayir-r-ai vali-tt-atu]]
a lot eat-vbp kumar-dat stomach-acc pain-pst-3sn
‘Eating a lot, Kumar got a stomach pain.’

References

- Lehmann, Thomas. (1993) A grammar of modern Tamil. Pondicherry, India: Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture.
- Pillai, N. Nadaraja. (1992) A syntactic study of Tamil Verbs. Manasagangontri, Mysore: CIIL.

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