Verb Reduplication in Tamil and Telugu

A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.

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Introduction

Reduplication is one of the important word formation processes noticed in Indian languages. Lawral J. Brinton in his *Structure of English - An Introduction* (1991, p.91) defines, "Reduplication is an initial process similar to derivation in which the initial syllable or the entire word is doubled, exactly or with a slight morphological change. Abbi (1992) talks about two types of reduplication, namely, Morphological and Lexical reduplication. She further divides the lexical reduplication in tothree: Echo-Formation, Compounds and Word Reduplication. The word *reduplication* may be further divided in to three parts: Complete, Partial and Discontinuous Reduplication.

Tamil and Telugu belong to the same language family, which is the Dravidian family. Both languages are treated to be as sister languages.

This Study

This paper highlights the verb reduplication processes in Tamil and Telugu. This study of reduplicated structure in Tamil and Telugu reveals the fact that though reduplication is a general morphological feature of the language, some specific characteristics in individual languages can be drawn from the functional point of view and from the semantic point of view as well.

An attempt is made in this paper to study the reduplicated verb from the point of view of occurrence in individual languages, its function and semantic interpretation. Both the kinds of verbs, finite as well as the non-finite verbs, reduplicate in Tamil and Telugu which are related to tense, aspect and person.

Tamil Verbs

Verbs occur as predicates in the rightmost position of a clause. Thomas Lehman in his *A Grammar of Modern Tamil* divides the verbs in Tamil into finite and non-finite and nominalized verb forms. He further divides the finite verbs in to Imperative, Indicative and Optative, and the non-finite verb forms into Infinitive, Verbal Participle, Conditional and Adjectival Participle.

Singular Imperative Positive Reduplication

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In Tamil and Telugu the positive Imperative form is identical with the verb stem or root and thus devoid of any marker. These verbs are reduplicated and give the meanings Emphatic, Repetition, Entertainment, Irritation, Cordiality etc.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

Tamil   Telugu

cey cey	cey cey	"(You) do"	Emphatic meaning
paaru paaru	cuuDu cuuDu	"(You) see"	Entertainment
poo poo	weLLu weLLu	"(You) go"	Irritation
vaa vaa	raa raa	"(You) come"	Cordiality
kuTi kuTi	taagu taagu	"(You) drink"	repetition

The imperative and the second person morphemes are not overtly marked and are realized as zero morph.

Singular Imperative Negative Reduplication

In Tamil the negative singular Imperative form consists of the verb stem to which the negative allomorph –aat is suffixed followed by the euphonic suffix –ee. These types of verbs are reduplicated and give the meanings Command, Request and Caution. But in Telugu the structure of the negative singular imperative form is verb+the negative form oddu and give the above mentioned meanings.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

 Tamil   Telugu

Pookaatee pookaatee	poo/weLLoddu poo/weLLoddu	"Don't go"
		Command
Ceyyaatee ceyyaatee	ceyoddu ceyoddu "Don't do"	
		Request
Varaatee varaatee	raaoddu raaoddu "Don't come"	
		Caution

Like this, the plural structures of the positive and the negative reduplication occur by adding the plural suffixes –inga and -iirkaL in Tamil. In Telugu, for both positive and negative, the plural suffix –aNDi is added with the above said examples. But the conveying meanings by them are the same.

Indicative Reduplicated Verb Forms

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Both the languages have the positive and the negative Indicative verb forms. Positive Indicative verb forms are marked for the category of tense, person, number and gender+status. Negative Indicative verb forms are, however, not marked in the same way for these categories as the positive Indicative forms are. There is one-to-one correspondence between the positive and the negative Indicative forms. These types of verb forms are reduplicated and give the confirmative meaning.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

	Tamil	Telugu	
1st person Sing.	Vanteen vanteen	occeenu occeenu	"I came"
			Surety or Confirmation
	Vareen vareen	ostunnaanu ostunnaanu	"I am coming"
	Varuveen varuveen	ostaanu ostaanu	"I will come"
2nd person Sing.	Vantee vantee	occeevu occeevu	"You came"
			Surety or Conformation
	Varee varee	ostunnaavu ostunnaavu	"You are coming"
			Commanding
	Varuvee varuvee	ostaav ostaavu	"You'll come"
			Sarcastic meaning
3rd person sing.	avan vantaan vantaan	waaDu occeeDu occeeDu	"He came"
			Confirmation
	varRaan varRaan	ostunnaaDu ostunnaaDu	"He is coming"
			Conformation
	Varuvaan varuvaan	ostaaDu ostaaDu	"He'll come"
			Challenging or Confirmation

Like this the plural forms of the above verbs are reduplicated and give the confirmative meaning. But the future form of the Indicative verbs is reduplicated and gives either the confirmative meaning or the challenging meaning. All the three persons both singular and plural forms are reduplicated.

Negative Indicative Reduplicated Verb Forms

Negative Indicative verb forms are not marked with Person, Number and Gender. (Here after PNG markers). The verb stem combines with the negative marker. In old Tamil the negative morpheme is realized by a zero morph or by the negative allomorph –aa depending upon the PNG morphemes. Only with the third person singular and the plural neuter morpheme, the negative morpheme is overtly marked by the allomorph –aa.

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In the case of occurrence with the all other person, number and gender morphemes, the negative morpheme is not overtly marked.

In Modern Tamil, the form inflected for third person singular number and neuter gender is viTaatu. This form is interpreted as referring to future time or expressing the meaning "Habitual". These types of verbs are reduplicated and give the meaning "Surety".

Example from Tamil

viTaatu viTaatu   "It will not leave (You)"   Surety

Modern Tamil uses two defective auxiliary verbs 'maaTTu' "will not" and 'il' "be not". These two auxiliary verbs come after the infinitive form of the main verb and convey the future negative meaning "Surety'. To express the past and the present negative meaning the auxiliary verb 'il' 'is not' is used. It is unmarked. These types of construction reduplicated and convey the meaning "Surety or Conformation".

Examples from Tamil

viTavillai viTavillai > viTalee viTalee (in spoken) "Not leaving"
ceyyavillai ceyyavillai > ceyyalee ceyyalee   "Not doing"

The infinitive forms of the verbs 'veeNTu' "Need" 'pooTu' "To place" and 'taku' "It is worth" are veeNTa pooTa and taka are in combination with the clitic –ee are reduplicated and give the meaning "Complete Objection".

Example from Tamil

veeNTavee veeNTaam   "I don't need" Complete objection

But in Telugu the above said forms have PNG markers and it will not reduplicate.

Optative Reduplicated Verbs

The optative form is framed by adding the optative marker –ka to the verb stems. These forms are reduplicated and give the meaning of "Appraisal".

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

Tamil   Telugu

Vaazhka vaazhka   zindaabaadh zindaabaadh   "You may live"

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Non-Finite Verb Forms

Tamil and Telugu are distinguished four types of non-finite verb forms i) infinitive ii) verbal participle iii) conditional and iv) adjective participle. All the forms have the negative forms.

    i)   Infinitive

The infinitive verb is formed by affixing the infinitive marker –a to the verb stem. The infinitive form occurs mainly in the compound verb constructions and the complex verb constructions. There also a few cases where the predicate of a simple clause, also occurs as predicate of a simple interrogative clause with a first person subject NP. The infinitives verbs are reduplicated and give the following meanings: i) intensity ii) repetition iii) continuity of action, iv) adjectival meaning, v) resultive, vi) more, vii) negligence meaning, viii) gradually and ix) adverbial meaning.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

    Tamil

tooNDat tooNDa niir varum
 "Continuously digging the water will come out"
                                  Intensity

muyyakka muyyakka roogam
"The disease will increase by continuous strain"
                                  Intensity

The same meaning intensity is expressed by different forms in Tamil and Telugu

    Tamil   Telugu

ceyyac ceyyap pazhakkam varum ceyyagaa ceyyagaa tiruku tundi
"Do it again and again you will get practice"   Repetition

The same types of reduplicated infinitive forms are expressed by different proverbs in Tamil and Telugu.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

    pazhakap pazhakp paalum puLikkum (Tamil)
    tinaga tinaga veeppaakku tiyagaa undu/undundi (Telugu)
    "In due course even the milk become sour"   Gradually

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| Tamil | Telugu |

pazhakap pazhaka varum icai   paadagaa paadagaa raagam ostadi
"By practrising continuouisly the music will come rhythmically"
                                                    Continuity

Examples from Tamil

        ooDa ooDa viTaTTinaan
"He chased him even though the opposite party is running"
                                                    Resultive
        This type is not found in Telugu.

Examples from Tamil

keeTka keeTka avan taravillai
"Even though he is asking again and again he is not giving"   More

        This type of reduplication is not possible in Telugu. This type of expression is
expressed by the ordinary structure as 'enta aDiginaa kuuTa ivva leedu/ivvalee'.

Example from Tamil

peecap peecap peecavee maaTTenkiRaan
"Though we talk again and again he is not answering"
                                                    Negligence meaning
Example from Telugu

ceppinaa ceppinaa kaani vinaleedu ceptu ceptuunnaam vina leedu
 "Though we are telling again and again he is not hearing"
                                                    Negligence meaning

        In the above examples of Tamil and Telugu the Tamil verb 'peecu' "To talk" is
substituted by the verb 'ceppu' "To tell"

        Regarding the infinitive reduplicated verb which is giving the meaning idiomatic
adverbial meaning in Tamil is not appearing as such reduplicated structure in Telugu but
it is in the ordinary adverbial structure.

Example from Tamil

kuniyak kuniyak kuTTinaan
"Though he is bending enough again and again he is beating"
                                                    Adverbial meaning

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Example from Telugu

Vininakoddii ceptaadu   "Even though we are not hearing he'll tell"

<div align="right">Adverbial meaning</div>

Tamil   Telugu

avar peecap peeca alupput taTTiyatu   vinakka vinakka visukku occindi
"His repeated speech makes tiredness"   Adjectival meaning

In the above example, the verb 'peecu' "To tell" in Tamil is substituted by the verb 'vinu' "To hear" in Telugu.

Annamalai (1980:162) and Paramasivam (1983:265) note that an infinitive clause with adverbial function can have various interpretations such as i) purpose ii) cause iii) time and iv) result. Of the four types of infinitive adverbial clauses except purpose infinitive clauses can be reduplicated to express intensity, repetition or continuity of an action. In the case of causal and temporal infinitive clauses there is often ambiguity between a causal and temporal interpretation, for example, kaalam cellac cella adu maaRiviTum "When/became it becomes latter and latter that was changed".

ii) Verbal Participle

The verbal participle is the second tense less non finite verb form. It   has both a positive and a negative from. The positive verbal participle is formed by the affixation of the verbal participle suffix to the verb stem. The verbal participle is homophonous with the various past tense allomorphs. The past tense allomorphs are –t-, -nt-, -in-, -i- and –tt-. This kind of verbal participle are reduplicated and give the following meanings: i) intensity, ii) cause, iii) continuity, iv) result, v) habitual, vi) idiomatic, vii) discontinuous and viii) adverbial meaning.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

Tamil   Telugu

Paarttu paarttuc ceyteen   cuusi cuusi ceesaanu
     "Do the thing very carefully"   Intensity

Tamil   Telugu

peecip peecit toNDai vaRanDatu vaagi vaagi gontu pooyindi
"By repeated talking the throat becomes dry"   Causative

Tamil   Telugu

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azhutu azhutu kaN civantatu   eeDisi eeDisi kaLLu erragaa baTindi
"By the continuous crying the eyes become reddish"   Resultive

      Tamil   Telugu

vizhuntu vizhuntu upacarittaan ongi ongi seevai ceesaaDu
"He invited in a grand manner"   Idiomatic

paaTam naTatti naTatti pazhakkam aanadu   (Tamil)
paaTTam ceppi ceppi alavaadu aayindi (Telugu)
"By talking the classes continuously it became habitual.   Habituality

      Tamil   Telugu

kaaRi kaaRit tuppinaan   kaaRi kaaRi uncinaaDu
"He spits continuously"   Adverb

      Tamil   Telugu

mazhai viTTu viTTup peytatu   vaana aagi aagi kuurcindi/paDinti
"The rain rains discontinuously"   Discontinuous

      Tamil   Telugu

tuRuvut tuRuvi aaraayntaan   tirugi tirugi/malli malli aDigeedu
"He searches it very keenly"   Continuity

koTuttu koTuttuc civanta kaikaL
"He donated a lot because of that his hands become reddish"
                                             Adjectival function

Negative Verbal Participle

The negative structure of the reduplicated verbal participle from conveys the adverbial and the adjectival functional meaning.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

      Tamil   Telugu

collic colli azhuttup pooccu   ceppi ceppi visugu/virakti puTTindi
    "Repeated saying gets boring"   Adverbial function

cenju cenju oru prayojanamumillai   ceesi ceesi ee palitam leedu

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"There is no use of repeatedly doing for him"   Adjectival function

       The following type of negative idiomatic expression is only available in Tamil. The equivalent of this type is in ordinary type not in the reduplicated form. The ordinary structure is 'enta ceppinaak kuuda vinaleedu' .

Example from Tamil

paTiccu paTiccuc colliyum keeTkavillai/keeTkalee
      "I have told repeatedly but you did not listen"   Idiomatic

Miscellaneous Types

       The following first type of idiomatic expression is not possible in Telugu. It is only in Tamil. The other meanings conveyed by the repetition of verbs are possible both in Tamil and Telugu.

     Tamil
uri urinnu uriccaaan
     "He compelled me like anything"   Idiomatic

Tamil	Telugu
collic colvataRkku mun	ceppi ceppakka mundu

      "About to tell"   Idiomatic

Tamil	Telugu
cenjaalum ceyvaan	ceesina ceestaaDu

      "He may do"   Imminence Probability

Tamil	Telugu
avan viTTuviTTaan >viTTiTTaan	waaDu odalina odaluttaaDu

      "He left away"   Auxiliary function

Tamil	Telugu
avan peecuvaan peecuvaan	waaDu maaTlaaDutaaDu maaTlaaDutaaDu

      "He will talk"

       When the reduplicated verb form occurs with the model auxiliary verb form – aam, the modality of probability is likewise expressed. However in comparison with the

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reduplicated verb form inflected for future tense a lesser degree of possibility or probability is implied.

Tamil	Telugu
Kumaar vantaalum varalaam	Kumaar ostee ostaaDu

"Kumar may come or may not come"   Probability

The predicate of a simple clause can consists of the conditional form of the verb + clitic + um and a reduplicated form of the respective verb, which is inflected either for past or future tense or followed by the modal auxiliary form –aam. When the reduplicated verb form is inflected for past tense speaker expresses that the action of the following sentence which is semantically related to the action of the preceding sentence, for example, being a consequence is not approved by him.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

Kumaar oru pudhu cattail vaankinaalum vaankinaan (Tamil)
Kumaar tiisukuneedeedoo tiisukunnaaDu daanee veesukuni raawaalu (Te.)

"Kumar has brought a new shirt but now he is wearing the same shirt daily"

When the reduplicated verb form is inflected for future tense the modality of probability and possibility is expressed.

Examples from Tamil and Telugu

Tamil	Telugu
Kumaar inkee vantaalum varuvaan	kumaar ikkaDa ostee ostaaDu

"Kumar may/may not come here"

Conclusion

The outline picture of verb reduplication in Tamil and Telugu:

i)   Imperative verbs, both positive and negative forms
         are reduplicated, and these give various meanings which do not
         present one-to-one correspondence with each other.

ii)   Positive Indicative verb forms are reduplicated and
         these indicate some meanings. Regarding the negative

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Indicative verb forms, only the Second Person singular and plural neuter forms are reduplicated and indicate some meanings.

 iii) Regarding the optative verb forms, both the positive and negative forms are reduplicated and convey the related meanings.

 iv) Regarding the Infinitive and the verbal participle forms the positive forms give the positive related meanings, and the negative forms give the negative related meanings.

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A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.
Department of Tamil and Translation Studies
Dravidian University
Kuppam – 517 425
Andhra Pradesh, India
arpudharambai@gmail.com

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