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The Auxiliary Verb *Poo* in Tamil and Telugu

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Introduction

There are three types of syntactical categories: Lexical, Grammatical and Phrasal categories. Among these categories, Lexical Category is the one otherwise called parts of speech. Among these Parts of Speech, verbs signify the actions of the subjects. The verb, which shows the main action or meaning, may be labeled as Main Verb. The verb, which is appended with the main verb and denote some shades of meaning, may be labeled as auxiliary verb.

Characteristics of Auxiliary Verb

An Auxiliary modifies the meaning of the main verb. It may precede or follow the main verb. Auxiliary verbs are derived from the main verb historically. Ross (1969) claims that “The auxiliaries behave like a main verb and they belong to the same category.” It is a helping verb. It is sometimes considered as suffixes due to the fusion with main verb. No insertion is allowed in between the main verb and the auxiliary verb. However, some of the particles like emphasis, reflexive marker, etc., can be inserted in between main and auxiliary verbs. The order of the construction should not be changed when the auxiliary verb is involved.

Other Names for Auxiliary Verb

It is otherwise called as Vector, Secondary verb, Helping verb, Associative verb, Additional verb, or Subordinate verb.

Types of Auxiliaries

There are two main types of auxiliaries, namely, Aspectual and Modals. Aspectual are the ones which add aspectual notions like perfective, completive, progressive, etc., to the verb. The constituents, usually called Modal, express semantically the notion of possibility, potentiality, permission, obligation, etc.

Order of the Occurrence of the Auxiliary Verbs

The Auxiliary verb may precede or follow the main verb. Normally auxiliary verbs occur after the verbal participle form of the main verb, Infinitive form of the main verb and the dative form of the verbal noun. The aspectual or Modal or both may follow the main

verb. When both aspectual and modal follow the main verb, the structure is Main verb+Aspect+Modal.

Auxiliaries in Tamil

Two ancient grammarians, in the earlier period Tolkaappiyar, and in the later period Nannulaar, both did not talk about auxiliaries explicitly. But Israel (1976) thinks that the *acainiraikkilavi*, one of the seven kinds of particles or *ITaiccol* in Tolkaappiyam, may be considered as auxiliary verb. Other scholars also have referred to this function and form of auxiliary verbs in Tamil. For example, Agesthalingom (1980) wrote that “Tolkaappiyam speaks of `VeeNTum`, which function as an auxiliary verb (as in *varaveeNTum* `One must come`). He lists 35 auxiliary verbs.

In Tamil, the aspectual auxiliary occurs after verbal participle. For example, *vandu poonaan* `He came and went`. The modal auxiliary occurs after the infinitive of the verb as in: *varacol* `Ask him to come`. The voice auxiliary also occurs after the infinitive form of the main verb. The auxiliary verb functions as a verbalizer when added to the nouns.

Auxiliaries in Telugu

Usha Devi pointed out that the oldest literature of Telugu named *Nannya Bharatam* contains auxiliary verbs. P. S. Subrahmanyam divided the auxiliaries in Telugu into two main classes on the basis of the form of the main verb to which they are attached. The auxiliaries that are attached to the past adverbial participial of a main verb may be called class one, and those that are attached to the infinitive of a main verb may be called class two. He also wrote that the auxiliary verb in Telugu is a syntactically bound form since nothing can be inserted between the auxiliary and the main verb. But Shade showed that in Old Telugu the insertion of a particle of word, phrase or even clause is possible even though in Modern Telugu it is not possible.

With this brief background of the theory about auxiliary verbs in Tamil and Telugu I present below a descriptions of the auxiliary verb *poo* `To go` in Tamil and Telugu.

About Tamil and Telugu Languages

Tamil and Telugu are genetically related languages and they belong to the Dravidian family of languages, one among the four language families in India. These two languages are spoken predominantly in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively. Both the languages are rich in literature as well as population. Both the languages share many structural features. At the same time there is a considerable variation also among these two languages.

The Verbs *poo* and *cel* – Restrictions in Their Occurrences

Poo, the verb, denotes the meaning `To go` in both the languages. Both the languages have alternate forms for `To go`, namely, *cel* and *veLLu*. *Poo* in Tamil occurs both in spoken and literary styles. But *cel* `To go` is reserved only for the written style in Tamil, whereas in Telugu *Poo* and *VeLLu* `To go` are used in spoken and written styles. In both the languages, *Poo* `To go` occurs both as the main verb and as the auxiliary verb. In the same way, *cel* and *veLLu* also act as main verb and auxiliary verb in both the languages.

Examples:

For *Poo* and *Cel* in Tamil, *Poo* and *veLLu* in Telugu as a Main verb.

Tamil: Avan uurukkup pookiraan `He is going to the village`

Telugu: atanu uuriki pootunnaadu `He is going to the village`

Tamil: Avan aNke centraan He went there`

Telugu: atanu akkaka veLLaadu `He went there`

Examples for *Poo* and *Cel* in Tamil, and *Poo* and *VeLLu* in Telugu as an auxiliary verb.

Tamil: Avan varap pookiran Telugu: atanu raa bootunnau `He is going to come`

Tamil: Avan vandu centran Telugu: atanu vacci veLLaadu `He came and went`.

In the above examples, the difference lies in the fact that the verb *cel* `to go` in Tamil occurs as main verb or auxiliary verb only in written language, whereas in Telugu the verb *veLLu* `To go` as well as *poo* occur as main and auxiliary verbs both in the spoken and written styles.

The Verbs *poo* and *cel* in Tamil and *poo* and *veLLu* in Tamil – Their Combinatory Possibilities

In Tamil, *poo* `To go` does not occur as an auxiliary verb to *cel* `To go` nor does *cel* occur as an auxiliary verb to *poo*. But in Telugu though *veLLu* `To go` does not occur as an auxiliary verb to *poo* `To go`, *poo* acts as an auxiliary to *veLLu* `To go`.

Example:

Telugu: atanu veLLi pooyaadu `He went off`

No Insertion in between Main Verb and Auxiliary Verb – Some Exceptions

Both Tamil and Telugu, as a rule, would not allow any insertion in between main and auxiliary verbs except some of the particles like –aa, ve, taan, etc. in modern times. But,

in Tamil, at present I can cite one example for the insertion of pronoun in between main and auxiliary verbs in one song.

Poonavn poonaanDi `The person who has gone is gone`
(Poon+avan)

In Telugu, though not for the auxiliary verb poo, Usha Devi gave some examples of insertion in between the main and auxiliary verb from Old Telugu. Note that, in this example, the insertion is not related to poo auxiliary.

Sabdamu viniyeeneruga

Vine and eruuga are two verbs (main and auxiliary) which are separated by yeen `I seeyaneTlagu-seeya(eTla)agu-eTla is an insertion.

Functioning as Aspectual and Modal in the Same Sentence

In Telugu, the verbs poo and veLLu can act as aspectual and modal auxiliaries together in the same sentence.

atanu vellipooyaadu `He went off.`

But in Tamil this construction is not possible

Functioning as a Main as well as an Auxiliary in the Same Sentence

Both in Tamil and Telugu, poo acts as a main verb as well as auxiliary verb in the same sentence.

Tamil: avan pookap poonaan
Telugu: atanu poobooyaadu `He is about to go`.

In the above example in Telugu, poo can be replaced by veLLu as in atanu veLLapooyaadu `He is about to go`. But in Tamil this exchange offer will not work out and will result in an ungrammatical sentence *avan cellappoonaan.

Some Restrictions on Co-occurrence in Tamil

When talking about the order of occurrences of the auxiliary verb in his article, Pon Kothandaraman mentioned that the auxiliary verb in Telugu occurs as

Mainverb + aspectual + aspectual + auxiliary verb
atanu vacci unDi veLLi pooyaaDu.

He came, stayed and went off.

This construction is not possible in Tamil because *cel* and *poo* do not occur in the same sentence like Telugu *poo* and *veLLu*.

In both the languages, when both aspectual and modal occur in the same sentence, the order is main verb+asp+mod+aux.verb.

Tamil: *avan vantu pookap poonaan*

Telugu: *atanu vacci pooboyyaadu* 'He came and about to go'

In Telugu main verb +asp+asp+mod+aux verb is possible using the verbs *poo*, *veLLu*. This is not possible in Tamil.

Telugu: *atanu vacci undi veLLi poo pooyyaadu.* 'He came and about to go'.

But in Tamil **avan vantu vella poo poonaan* is an ungrammatical sentence.

Auxiliary is Attached Invariably to Main Verb in Telugu

The auxiliary verb in Telugu is invariably attached to one of the two forms of the main verb: the infinitive and the past adverbial participle. An exception to this general rule is the construction in which the auxiliary verb *poo* 'To go' follows the negative adverbial participle *lee-* 'to be not' which itself usually follows the infinitive of a main verb. This construction takes the tense and png markers.

pani ceyyaleeka pootunaanu 'I am not able to do the work'

pani ceyyaleeka pooyaanu 'I was bit able to do the work'.

pani ceyyaleeka pootaanu 'I will not able to do the work'.

This type of construction is not possible in Tamil.

Negation with Auxiliary Verb

When the auxiliary verb *poo* follows the negative adverbial participle of *leeka* 'To be not', *kaa-* 'No' (which is the negative of *avunu*) acts as the main verb (Infinitive form) and precedes the negative adverbial participle *leeka* and the *poo* auxiliary verb. This construction implies the meaning of 'Not able to do'

naa valla kaaleeka pooyindi 'It could not be done by me'.

This construction in Telugu is possible only when the subject is the oblique form of *neenu* 'I' (*naa*) with the instrumental case marker. This type of construction is not also possible in Tamil.

Implied Meanings of Auxiliary Constructions

When *poo* occurs after the infinitive form of the main verb in Tamil implied the meaning `About to`, `Caution`, `Certainty`.

1 malai varap pookutu `The rain is about to come`
rayil varap pookutu `The train is about to come`
bus pookap pookutu `The bus is about to go`.

2 ulle varap poonaan `He is going to come inside`
veliye pookap poonaal `She is going to go out`
rayil eerap poonaar `He is going to get into the train`

The above two sets of examples implied the meaning `about to`, `Going to` only. But there is a difference between the above two sets of examples. In the first set `the about to` meaning will give a positive result, i.e., the bus or train will come within a few seconds certainly. But in the second set of examples he/she is going to enter/come out, it is implied that it did not happen, i.e., he/she did not enter inside/come outside.

The same meaning is possible in Telugu also.

1 varsam raabootundi `The rain is about to come`
rayil raabootundi `The train is about to come`
bus poobootundi `The bus is about to go`

2 loopala raa booyaadu `He is going to enter`.
baiti ki poo booyindi `She is going to go out`
rayil ekka pooyaarru `He (hon.) going to get into the train`.

Caution:

paal koTTap pookutu `The milk is going to pour down`
nii viLap poore `You are going to fall`
cooru cuuDa pookutu `The rice may be hot`

In Telugu also this meaning is expressed similarly.

Telugu: paal olka bootundi `The milk is going to pour`
nuvvu paDa pootavu `You are going to fall`
Certainty (In the future sense)

Tamil: kantippa velai eerappookutu `The price is going to raise certainly`.
kantippa avan unnai atikkappookiraan `Certainly he is going to beat you`

The Infinitive and the Auxiliary

In Telugu, though not in the same situation, the poo auxiliary, which follow the infinitive of the main verb, implies the certainty in the following examples:

nisayaNga mii jitam peruga pootundi `Certainly your salary is going to raise.

In Tamil, when poo auxiliary occurs after the infinitive of the main verb, -aa,-ve, taan, or taane may be inserted in between, and they may show various shades of meaning.

avaL varavaa poora? `Is she going to come?`
avaL vaaravaa poora? `Is she going for the sake of coming?`
avaL avanai paakave pookiraaL `She is going only to see him.
avan collattaaan pookiraan `He is going to tell only.
avan collattaaan pookiraan `He must tell`
naa paakattaane pookireen `I am going to see only`
naa paakattaane pookireen `I will see` (In a challenging way)

But in Telugu this type of insertions after the infinitive of the main verb is not possible.

The Verbal Participle and the Auxiliary

In Tamil, when the auxiliary verb poo occurs after the verbal participle form of main verb, it gives the meaning of contempt, caution, or comforting.

For contempt:

toLaintu poo `Get lost`
oLintu poo `Get lost`
oTi poo `Run away`

For caution:

Paattu poo `Go carefully`
kunintu poo `Go bendingly`
tirintu /keTTup pookum `It may get spoil(Milk etc.)

For comforting:

viTTup pookum `It may be cured`
kuraintu pookum `It may be reduced . (Fever, etc.)

In Telugu, when poo auxiliary occurs after past adverbial participle, it implies the meaning of completeness or swiftness.

taggi poovu `It will reduce.`
yendi poovu `It will dry.`
cedi poovu `It will spoil.`
marci poovu `You will forget.`

Conclusion

In this paper, I discussed the similarities and differences between the uses of the 'poo' auxiliary verb in Tamil and Telugu two genetically related languages. I also pointed out some of the functions performed by poo auxiliary verb when it follows the infinitive form, and verbal participle, and past adverbial participle forms of the main verb in both the languages. We noted that while the form is the same and while several functions and meanings expressed are same in both languages for this auxiliary verb, there are several interesting differences in their use and meanings expressed. Though I mentioned some of the functions and tried to compare them, still the comparison and contrast need further research for accurate results when comparing these two languages.

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