

NEGATIVES

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0 Tamil verbs have a negative voice. It is indicated by two devices: (1) by certain interrogative types and (2) by morphological devices: suffixes and periphrastic formations. The first one is largely psychological. So we are confining our attention to the second.

0.1 There is little accord among our modern grammarians and comparative grammarians about the form and number of the negative suffixes. Their disagreement can be broadly divided into two; (1) on the identification of the suffixes, and (2) their origin. For the present we are limiting ourselves to the former though, we are fully aware of the fact that the latter follows the former to a great extent.

1 In morphemic identification¹ we follow certain elementary procedures one of which is that in the segmentation of a word, no part is left unaccounted. To illustrate this, the word *unṇaatee*: you (sing.) (do) not eat, is segmented as *un(ṇ)*-stem, *-aa*- negative suffix and *-ee* second person singular imperative marker. This segmentation leaves out *-t-*. This is irregular. Second is, one should be consistent in segmentation unless otherwise indicated. Say, for instance, due to certain reasons one may cut *unṇaatee* as *unṇ-aat-ee*. This should be consistently maintained unless it is explained why one has cut differently in a different place. And the third one is a feeling

¹ For clarity I have made use of linguistic terms. For those whose daily task does not warrant their keeping up a running familiarity with the neologism occasioned by the rapidly changing field of linguistics, a popular introduction to linguistics which appeared in *Tamil Culture*, Vol. VII No. 2, April 1958, under the caption 'The need for Linguistics' is referred to for a definition of these technical terms.

that language is a patterned whole and the treatment of any part should be in relation to the whole. Isolated analysis will result in contradiction and confusion.

1.1 To a great extent the obscurity in the analysis of the negatives by Caldwell, Jules Bloch and others can be attributed to the neglect of one or the other of the above stated procedures. It is our desire to identify the negative markers on the basis of forms from *PuRanaanuuRu*,² a representative sample of Old Tamil and a spoken dialect of Tamil, the Nanjilnaad Vellala dialect,³ a representative sample of modern Tamil and compare them with the findings of the above noted pioneers.

2 The following verb classes have negative formation in Tamil. (1) Finite verbs. (2) Verbal participles. (3) Relative participles. (4) Conjugated nouns. (5) Verbal nouns.

2.1 The affirmative and negative finite verb forms are given for each person number or and gender with meaning :

aRinteen - aRiyeen	: I (will) not know (86-3)
varuveem - vaareem	: We (will) not come (145-4)
olvai - ollaay	: You (sing.) (will) not agree (31-6)
tirintiir - tiriyyir	: You (plural) (will) not change (58-21)
unṭanan - unṇaan	: He (will) not eat (184-11)
aṇintanaḷ - aṇiyaal	: She (will) not wear (242-3)
utavum - utavaatu	: It (will) not be useful (18-26)
olluvar - ollaar	: They (genderless) cannot (153-12)
poorppa - pooraa	: They (non-gender) (will) not cover (141-10)

² *PuRanaanuuRu* 4th Edition. Edited by U. V. Saaminaatha Aiyar, 1950. All forms shown in section 2 are taken from the 'Description of the Language of Sangam Classics' now in progress in the Tamil Research Department of the Kerala University.

³ The Naanjilnaad Vellala dialect is my idiolect. All forms in section 3 are taken from my unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Indiana University, U.S.A., 1957.

By now it will be clear that the negative form is different from the affirmative (a) by the absence of tense marker and (b) by the lengthening of the personal marker, consistently in the third person. There are some affirmative third person forms with long vowels as in the negative in PuRanaaanuuRu. Further, in the first and second persons the affirmatives and negatives have long vowel person markers. But it should be remembered here that the person markers, long or short, are not in contrast in the affirmative and negative for, in the affirmative they occur after the tense markers and in the negative after the verb stems.

2.11 Now the negative suffix -a- occurs between verb stem and person marker. It has three allomorphs ~ -e- ~ -a- ~ -i-. Of which ~ -e- occurs between verb stem and first person marker -e-, ~ -a- occurs between verb stem and third person marker -a- and ~ -i- occurs between verb stem and second person marker -i-. In short, the shape of the succeeding personal marker determines the shape of the preceding negative marker.

2.2 The verbal participial negative form is aRintu — aRiyaatu : without knowing (70-8). Here -aat- the negative suffix occurs between verb stem and verbal participle marker -u-.

2.3 The relative participial negative form is ooṭiya — ooṭaa : (he) who will not run (126-4). The later day form ooṭaata is not frequently found in PuRanaaanuuRu. Here also the negative -a- or -aat- occurs between verb stem and relative participial marker -a-.

2.4 In the conjugated nouns aṭankiyoor — aṭankaa-toor : those who (are) not subdued (35-34) -aat- occurs between verb stem and person marking -oo-. Another segmentation adopted at least in Relative participle marker is unṇ + aa + t + a where -aa- is the negative marker and -t- as the past tense marker. In the

clear cases we have seen that negatives of the -aa- type occur only in the place of the tense markers, never before or after them. So if -t- is treated as a past tense marker, it creates a unique situation in which past tense -t- occurs after the negative marker. The absence of present tense negative form like unṇaakiRa confirms that the above analysis is not correct. There is yet another segmentation in which -t- is treated as an eḷuttuppeeRu, i.e. an accretion to the original shape of the morph -aa-. Indeed we are very near to this.

2.41 The negative forms of verbal nouns are as follows :

pooRRiyamai : pooRRaamai = the act of not protecting (28-17).

The negative marker is -a- between verb stem and verbal noun marker -amai.

2.411 In verbal participle veruvaa = without any fear (238-2), paṭaa = without any break (103-9) etc., the negative marker is -aa occurring between verb and verbal participle marker θ which is an alternant of -u- after negative -aa. -aa also occurs between verb stem and word juncture in the third person : koḷḷaa (92-1) = they (will) not emanate.

2.5 Still there is another set of negative markers occurring after verb stem and person marker. They are al and il. Among the two, al is more frequent in occurrence than il. Before all person markers al and a or its allomorphs alternate freely.

keēḷalam or keēḷeem	: we (will) not hear (76-3)
uḷḷalen or uḷḷeen	: I (will) not think (150-3)
kuuRalan or kuuRaam	: He (will) not speak (239-7)
teeRalai or teeRaay	: You (sing.) (will) not get consoled (102-2)
koḷḷalar or koḷḷaar	: they (genderless) (will) not receive (182-6)

But -al- alone occurs before second person plural -min or before the -maar suffix or before word juncture in the first or second person.

kollanmin (216-5) : don't get (plural)

keelanmaar (389-17) : They (genderless) (will) not listen.

peyar-al (3-14) : Let (it) not change.

After verb stem uRu only -aal- occurs before -ka
uR -aal- ka : Let it not pierce (171-13)

Before -iyar and person marker only -il- occurs.
aakiliyar (29-12) : Let you not become

In one instance -il- occurs after tense marker.

poorppittilatu (286-5) : It (non-gender) was not caused to cover

The last one is very frequent in later day literature.

2.6 Yet another way of expressing negation is by the periphrastic formation with alla and illa. Though the stems al and il mean exactly the same as the suffix al and il they are treated separately because of their separate class membership. When stems al or il take another negative suffix they are treated as cases of double negatives meaning a negation; illaa : that which is not having (27-3) for example, is a case of negative stem -il- taking a negative suffix -a- before a Relative participle marker -a.

2.7 Thus in PuRanaanuuRu the negative morpheme -a- has the following allomorphs :

~ -e-, ~ -i-, ~ -a-, ∞ -aat-, ∞ -aa-, ∞ -al-, ∞ -aal-, ∞ -il-.

of these eight allomorphs -il- alone occurs after tense markers. All the other seven occur after verb stems.

2.8 This is the pattern which emerges out of the clear forms.

2.9 We have a set of obsolete verbs in Sangam classics of which only a few of them are available in PuRanaanuuRu.

uṅkum : We will eat (125-4)

keetṭi : You (sing.), will hear (289-8)

Other instances found in other Sangam classics are :

uṅku or uṅtu : I will eat

cenRi : You (sing.) will go

ceerti : You (sing.) will reach

kaṇṭi : You (sing.) will see.

They all signify future tense. But the familiar future tense signs -p- -v- or -m- are missing. On the other hand, the familiar past tense signs are here. There is indeed, a problem of segmentation. Tolkaappiar segments ku ṭu tu Ru and kum ṭum tum Rum as first person marking suffixes.⁴ But in the second person, he counts -i as the second person marker.⁵ What exactly is the position of ṭ, t, R in these second person future forms is not known from his suutras. Of course, the commentators consider them as tense denoting personal markers. Fortunately, these forms have a negative formation which gives a clue to the segmentation.

cenRi - cellaati : You (sing.) (will) not go.

kaaṇṭi - kaaṇaati : You (sing.) (will) not see.

The negative marker -aat- occurs in the place of future tense markers which are ṭ, t, R and k and u and i are first and second person markers respectively followed by a zero singular marker. Note here the condition of occurrence of -aat-. It is also pertinent here to recall Nannuul suutra 145 where its authors say Ru and tu and Rum and tum signify future and past tenses. It is again this pattern of

⁴ *Tolkaappiam*, Collatikaaram, Naccinaarkkiniyar commentary, Ed. by M. V. Venugopala Pillai, 1941, S. 204 and 205.

⁵ *Tolkaappiam* do. S. 225.

occurrence of tense markers in the place of negatives which prevents us from cutting *maar* or *min* as *m + aar* and *m + in* where *m* is assigned to future tense because of the forms like *keelanmaar* : they will not listen (389-17) and *koḷ-ḷanmin* : You (plur.) (do) not have (216-5). Same is the reason for not cutting optative suffix *ka* into *k + a*, *k* denoting future tense because of the availability of forms like *uṇṇaRka* : You (do) n't eat or please (do) not eat.

3 In spoken Tamil periphrastic formation with stem *illai*, *maat-*, *kuud-* and *veenḍ-* are frequent. The first is made use of in expressing negation of past and present indicative verbs.

saappiṭṭaan : *saappiḍavillai* : He (did) not eat
tuungugiRaan : *tuungavillai* : He (has)n't slept.

For negatives of the future indicative verbs *maat-* is used.

tuunguvaan : *tuungamaaṭṭaan* : He (will) not sleep.

But the use of *maat-* is restricted to gender singular or genderless plural only. For non-gender singular or plural the suffix form is made use of.

tuungum : *tuungaadu* : It (will) not sleep.

In *maaṭṭaan* the negative is expressed by the suffix *-a-* before third person *-a*. Note *maaṭṭeen* : I (will) not, where, *~ -e-* occurs before first person marker *-e-* *maaṭṭoom*, where, *~ -o-* occurs before first person marker *-o-*. *maṭṭiir*, where, *~ -i-* occurs before second person marker *-i-* and *maaṭṭaay*, where, *~ -a-* occurs before *-a-*, the second person marker. *∞-aad-* occurs before second person marker *-ee-* in singular imperatives; *ooḍaadee* : (do-)n't run, before Relative participle marker *-a*, *ooḍaada* : that which (does) not run, and before verbal participle marker *-u-* as in *ooḍaadu* : without running *∞ -aadu* occurs after stem *kuuḍ-* : *kuuḍaadu* : not possible and *∞ -aam* occurs after stem *veenḍ-* as in *veenḍaam* : not needed.

4 The negative morpheme -a- has the following allomorphs in the earliest stage of Tamil (PuRanaanuuRu) and the latest stage (Naanjilnaad dialect) :—

{-a-} ~ -e- ~ -i- ~ -a- ∞ -aa- ∞ -aat- ∞ -al- ∞ -aal- ∞ -il-

{-a-} ~ -e- ~ -i- ~ -o- ~ -a- ∞ -aad- ∞ -aadu- ∞ -aam-

With this picture let us look into the analysis of Caldwell, Jules Bloch, Subrahmanja Sastri and Alfred Master.

5.1 In p. 471, Caldwell⁶ says that -a- is the sign of negation which is most systematically used by the Dravidian languages in the formation of the negative voice of the verb. It has, it is true, disappeared from the conjugated forms of Tamil and Canarese. The negative -a- being succeeded in Tamil and Canarese by the initial vowel of the pronominal suffix, appears gradually to have got incorporated with it, and an evidence of this incorporation survives in the euphonic lengthening of the pronominal vowel in Tamil'. In essence we are very near to him though we have stated it differently.

5.11 But there are certain observations of Caldwell which are questionable. (1) in p. 469 he says that 'the Tamil-Telugu-Canarese negative is altogether destitute of signs of tense'. It is not the whole truth. Caldwell himself cites unḍ-il-ei (p. 475) : You (sing.) did not eat, where the -ḍ- denotes past tense. The tenseless negative form will be unṇalai or unṇaay. Among the negative allomorphs it is -il- which occurs after tense markers. vaalntileen, vaalkinRileen, vaalkileen : I live not with past present future tenses. (2) He treats -mai as a verbal participle marker (p. 471). But -mai is capable of taking case signs of which, verbal participle markers are incapa-

⁶ *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* by Caldwell, Third Edition, Reprint, Madras University, 1956. The purpose of this and the continuing series of articles is to review this reprint.

ble of. We cut it as -amai and it is a noun forming suffix for us. (3) In p. 472 he derives the Relative participle ceyyaada from ceyy+aa+du by adding to the verbal participle sign du, the Relative participle marker -a- and the -u- as usual in elision. The du in the negative verbal participle forms, according to him, is the formative of neuter nouns of quality. Therefore one can infer that according to Caldwell, the neuter nouns have given rise to verbal participles which in turn have become Relative participles by the addition of appropriate suffixes at least in their negative voice. This we consider as the result of wrong segmentation. The Relative participle form unṇaakkudirai freely alternates with unṇaada kudirai : the horse which has not eaten. This furnishes proof that -aad and -aa are the same. There are conjugated nouns like unṇaadoon : He who (has) not eaten. If they are segmented as unṇ+aa+d+oo+n i.e. stem+neg.+neuter+third person+sing. number and masculine as Caldwell has done, where ever -aad- occurs, it will rudely change the pattern of verbs and conjugated nouns. The number gender markers always follow the person markers in verbs. Here they precede and follow the person markers. Another question is, has ever a neuter singular suffix been followed by a masculine singular suffix in Tamil ? So, we have segmented -aad- as the negative marker. Again it is the same wrong segmentation which makes Caldwell to say that 'Dravidian imperatives are in general nothing but verbal nouns pronounced emphatically' (p. 473) because of the forms like ceyyaadee : (do)n't do it. This wrong splitting has also misled Caldwell from appreciating one of the most precious of his findings that not only stems, but also, verbal nouns serve as the verbal base and take tense or negative suffixes. Sey(g)al-aadaar : they (will) not do (p. 475) is segmented by him as cey (g)-stem+al (negative)+aadaar (pronominal termination). Instead we treat -al- as the verbal noun suffix followed by -aad-, the negative marker, -a- the third person marker and -ar- as the plural marker.

5.2 Jules Bloch⁷ is brief in his comments on negatives. He says in p. 66 that 'Dravidian has a purely morphological means of expressing the negation; it is the intercalation of a vowel, generally -a- (sometimes reduced to zero) between radical and termination. But in the personal verb, -a- in contact with the terminational vowel has disappeared; the result is that the negative verb is characterised only in relation to the positive by the absence of the temporal suffix'. He also cites *kaṇṭeen - kaaṇeen*. The distribution of personal marker -ee- in affirmative verbs is not the same as in the negative as pointed out earlier. In the former it occurs after tense markers and in the latter after the verb stems. If one posits a zero, as Bloch suggests in all verbs having personal terminations, it will be unnecessary and uneconomical. A zero negative will occur before first, second and third person markers. In effect, this zero will not be a zero of something but something will be of this zero. According to him, Tamil and Kannada express the negative like the affirmative and as a result, it is confusing. He cites 'kaaṇeen': 'I have eyes' and 'I do not see' which is an error. It has two different stem alternants; the first is *kaṇṭeen* and the second is *kaaṇeen*.

5.3 Of the four, Subrahmanya Sastri⁸ has intimate contact with Tamil. He breaks the negative formation into six types and presents them in p. 192.

(1) al between the root and personal termination.

(2) al or il between tense sign and personal termination.

The example cited by him, *kaṇ-t-il-an* : I have not seen (Puram 202-2) is not to be found in PuRam (Ed. third).⁹ Except for the single form *poorppittilatu* already

⁷ *The Grammatical Structure of Dravidian Languages* by Jules Bloch, Deccan College Hand-book series 3. Poona, 1954.

⁸ *Comparative Grammar of the Tamil Language* by P. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, Tiruvadi. 1947.

⁹ Prof. P. S. Subrahmanya Sastri in a private communication says that he made use of the Second Edition of PuRanaanuRu. I could not get this edition.

shown, it does not occur any where in PuRam, though, this form is very common in later day literature. The second example, CiRantanRu (PuRam 75-5) should be interpreted as an affirmative because, al has not occurred after tense markers and all similar forms in PuRanaanuuRu have been interpreted as affirmatives by the commentator.¹⁰

(3) Periphrastic usage of al and il stems.

(4) -a- between the root and the tense -tu-. He cites aakaatu and mutalaatu from Tolkaappiyam Eḷuttatikaram, 71 and 65. The meaning is given by him as 'it will not become' and 'it will not commence' respectively. For us -a- will be the negative marker, -a- third person marker and -tu- neuter singular marker. Note also negative -a- has not taken anywhere in the clear cases, a tense marker after or before it.

(5) By adding personal terminations directly to the root. Here he has not indicated whether the negative function is marked by a zero. In any case, the shortcoming of this has been pointed out in section 5.2.

(6) By lengthening the -a- of roots like var and adding the personal termination. Even affirmative forms have the stem vowel lengthening as in vaariir: You (plural) please come. It is not for expressing negation.

5.4 Alfred Master¹¹ who has examined the negatives afresh in a painstaking article identifies four types of formations in p. 140.

(1) The neutralizer type is by adding stems -al- and -il-.

(2) The -aa- suffix and the -aa- infix found only in Tamil and Malayalam. In this he deals about the ques-

¹⁰ He says that it should be treated as an exception in his private communication. But I see no need for that.

¹¹ *The Zero Negative in Dravidian* by Alfred Master published in the Transactions of the Philological Society 1946. My attention has been drawn to this article by Dr. A. N. Narasimha, the veteran Dravidian Scholar of Mysore.

tions, giving rise to a notional negation. He cites *veenṭum* : *veenṭaam* : (will) not desire and says -aa- is the negative marker. What then is the function of *m* ? a future tense marker ? or a plural marker ? or -aam- as a negative marker freely alternating with -aa- ? We have preferred the last.

(3) The zero suffix as Jules Bloch has posited. But a consistent lengthening of the pronominal suffix has been very effectively brought out in this section by his paradigm. Like Bloch, he points out the confusion between the affirmative and negative verb forms. He cites *viṭaay* : leave thou, which is morphophonemically *viṭ+ θ +aay* and the *θ* is an alternant of the future tense marker -v- or -b- *Viṭaay* can freely alternate with *viṭuvaay* : leave thou (future). Now it is not the same as the negative form which is *viṭ-a-a-y* : leave not thou. In *Puunṇeen* : I (will) not wear and I have the ornaments, the stems belong to two different distributional classes ; one is a verb and another a noun though historically they might be one and the same form. It is convenient to treat them as two different stems ; one taking the tense markers and the other taking the case signs.

(4) The negative particle which is formed in the non-literary languages Kurux, Gondi and Brahui. In the first two, the author says, it arose under the influence of Indo-Aryan languages and in the third it is the borrowed Iranian -na. He leaves out this because it is not Dravidian in origin.

6. To conclude, the negative morpheme in Tamil is -a- and it serves as a morphological means of expressing the negation consistently.