CHAPTER II

BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS IN ENGLISH AND TAMIL

2.1. Sentence Definition and Function:

The sentence is a basic unit of language. Grammarians and linguists have defined the sentence in a great variety of ways, the criterion being that it must express a complete thought. Jespersen (1974:106) has defined the sentence as "a relatively complete and independent unit of communication—the completeness and independence being shown by its standing alone."

Edward Sapir (1949) has said:

The major functional unit of speech, the sentence is the linguistic expression of a proposition. It combines a subject of discourse with a statement in regard to this subject. Subject and predicate may be combined in a single word, as in Latin "dico"; each may be expressed independently, as in the English equivalent "I say", each or either may be so qualified as to lead to complex propositions of many sorts. No matter how many of these qualifying elements are introduced, the sentence does not lose its feeling of unity so long as each and everyone of them falls in place as contributory to the definition of either the subject of discourse or the core of the predicate.
Chomsky (1957:15) claims that "any grammar of a language will project the finite and somewhat accidental corpus of observed utterances to a set of grammatical utterances." It mirrors the behaviour of the speaker who, on the basis of his experience with the language, can produce or understand an infinite number of new sentences.

In the light of the definitions cited above, the following may be given as examples for the sentences:

1. He is a boy.
2. The boys play cricket in the playground.

There are some constructions, where some parts of the sentence may be missing. They are called utterances.

2.2. Kinds of Basic Sentences in English:

Sentences are of three kinds according to form: simple, compound and complex.

Simple sentences have only one finite verb e.g. I know him. Compound sentences have two or more finite verbs, used to link the respective finite verb sentences. e.g. I know him and I am proud of him.

Complex sentences have one finite verb and one or more infinite verbs e.g. I know that he will come.
The simple sentences are otherwise known as minimal sentences. The other two types are called non-minimal sentences because of their complex nature.

Sentences may also be classified according to function:

3. Affirmative or Assertive - He is a boy.
4. Question or Interrogative - Is he a boy?
5. Negative - He is not a boy.
6. Exclamatory - How good he is!
7. Imperative - Be honest.

The present investigation is confined to the sentence patterns according to function.

2.2.1. Assertive Sentence:

Assertives or statements follow the regular order of subject, verb, complement or object. In the modern linguistic sense they have NP + VP structure. As they have only one finite verb, they may be called "minimal" sentences.

In English, minimal sentences may be divided into two types: i. equative type and ii. non-equative type.

In the equative type, a linking verb links the subject and complement. It may be represented as follows:

$$S \rightarrow NP + LV + NP / Adj / Adv.$$
The expansion of the right hand side will give:

\[ \text{NP + Vbe + Adj + Adv} \]

8. She is a doctor

\[ \text{NP + V + NP} \]

9. The song is sweet

\[ \text{NP + V + Adj} \]

10. He is there

\[ \text{NP + V + Adv} \]

ii) \[ \text{NP + V + become + NP + remain + Adj} \]

11. Peter became a teacher.

\[ \text{NP + V + NP} \]

12. Kannan remained poor

\[ \text{NP + V + Adj} \]

Since verbs like "become, remain, taste," etc. behave like "be" verb, they are classified under equative types.

The non-equative type contains only a Noun Phrase and a Verb Phrase——\( S \rightarrow \text{NP + VP} \).
The expansion of the right hand side yields

i) \(NP + \text{Vtransitives}.

\begin{align*}
13. & \quad \text{Birds fly} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Vint}
\end{align*}

Sometimes adverbials as adjuncts can be added to this.

\begin{align*}
14. & \quad \text{The ship arrived late.} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{adv.}
\end{align*}

ii) \(NP + \text{Vtrans} + \text{NP}

\begin{align*}
15. & \quad \text{John loved Mary} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Vtran} \quad \text{NP}
\end{align*}

iii) \(NP + \text{Vtrans} + \text{NP} + \text{NP}

\begin{align*}
16. & \quad \text{I gave him a book} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Vtrans} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{NP}
\end{align*}

iv) \(NP + \text{Vhave} + \text{NP}

\begin{align*}
17. & \quad \text{I have three brothers} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Vhave} \quad \text{NP}
\end{align*}

v) \(NP + \text{Velect} + \text{NP} + \text{NP}

\begin{align*}
18. & \quad \text{We elected John leader.} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Velect} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{NP}
\end{align*}

2.2.2. Interrogative Sentence:

When a question is asked, the tone of the voice or the word order denotes that it is a question in speech. In writing, either the word order plus the question mark at the end or merely the question mark denotes that it is a question.
19. Are you coming? 20. You are coming, eh?

Questions fall into two classes - i. those that may be answered with "yes or "no" and ii. those that introduce Wh-words. The first type can be divided into three kinds:

i) "be-verb" Questions:
21. Is she a doctor?
22. Are the songs sweet?
23. Was he there?

ii) Questions with Modal Auxiliaries:
24. Will they come here?
25. Shall we go out now?
26. Can he do this sum?
27. Must you suffer for her?
28. Dare you question me?
29. May I have the paper?
30. Had they come again?

iii) Questions without be-verb:

Mark Lester (1976:161) defines this type thus:

When no optional element has been picked from the auxiliary and the main verb is not "be" we must use a slightly different version of the "Yes-no" question switch rule. In this version, the only thing that is moved to the first position in the sentence is the tense.

31. John went to cinema.
32. Did John go to cinema?
In order to get questions of this type, two transformations must be applied to the underlying sentence. The first is the Tense + Auxiliary Fronting Transformation and the second "do" Insertion Transformation.

The second class of questions are introduced by interrogative pronouns, adjectives or adverbs with inversion of subject and verb, except when the introducing word is the subject of the sentence. For all such questions, the answer expected is a piece of information. They may be called "Pronominal Questions." These questions usually end with a falling intonation.

33. Who comes here?
34. Whom do you want?
35. Whose pen is it?
36. What is your problem?
37. Which is the correct answer?
38. How much is one and two?
39. Why should they act against me?
40. Where is it raining?

2.2.3. Negative Sentence:

There are many ways of negating a statement. In English, there are two tendencies conflicting with one another. As Jespersen (1933) points out
one is to put the negative word or element as early as possible, so as to leave no doubt in the mind of the hearer as to the purport of what is said; the other is to attract the negative to the verb of the sentence.

The first tendency is seen in the negative prefixes: "never, nowhere, unlawful, insufficient, disorder," etc.

If emphasis is placed on the negative element, it is almost invariably put in the negative adverb or negative word which starts the sentence.

41. No one did ever see him.
42. Never will he accept the proposal.

The present investigation restricts itself to the second tendency which uses "not" or its contracted form "n't" after the first helping verb or the main verb "be." In case tense is followed by a main verb other than "be," "do" insertion rule must be applied as done in the case of Wh-questions. Then "not" will be placed after tense and before the main verb.

43. I do not want it.
44. The car does not run.
45. The boys are not playing.
46. Birds cannot fly.
47. The men did not work.
For negative questions, the negative "not" or its contracted form appears at the beginning of the sentence with the modal or a form of "do," "have" or "be." While in the case of negative "Yes-No Questions," the auxiliary along with the negative element is pushed first by applying the Fronting Transformation, in the case of negative "Wh-questions" the order is the same as for the Wh-questions seen earlier, the only feature being the introduction of the negative element.

48. Didn't Mary go home?
49. Isn't he coming?
50. Haven't they done this work?
51. Who wouldn't approve it?

2.2.4. Exclamatory Sentence:

Exclamatory sentences generally express the emotion of the speaker. They are usually marked either by a special introducing word or by inversion. The pre-order of the predicative or the Verb Phrase is obvious in such constructions.

For pedagogical purposes they may be divided into:

i) Constructions where the interrogative words "what" and "how" are frequently used. The word-order in them generally shows that the sentences are not to be taken as questions.
52. What a wonderful place it is!
53. How beautiful she is!
54. What a cruel blow this is!
55. How polite his behaviour has been!

ii) Constructions which are elliptical in character:

C.T. Onions (1970:50) defines it as

a frequent form consisting of a noun with an adjective qualifying it; in other cases the sentence consists of one word only.

56. What a terrible dream!
57. How curious!
58. O, for a cup of water!

iii) Constructions that consist merely of interjections, i.e. words expressing sudden emotions.

59. Alas! (poor man)

iv) In the fourth type, though a word or words may occur as another part of speech, its use as an interjection is felt to be the primary one. Interjections may also be suffixed as in

60. A sin, indeed!

Finally, the auxiliary "may" is used for expressing a wish. It may be in the form of an address to somebody.

61. May you live long.
2.2.5. Imperative Sentence:

Imperative sentence is one with no overt subject noun phrase. It usually contains the imperative of a verb. As Jespersen (1933:294) observes,

The imperative is used in request, which according to circumstances may range from brusque commands to humble entreaties, the tone generally serving as a key to the exact meaning.

Imperatives are expressed

i) in the 2nd Person by the imperative or by "shall" with the infinitive. Emphasis is conveyed by "do" with the infinitive.
   62. Go away.
   63. Stop that.
   64. Shut the door, please.
   65. Do take some more.

ii) in the 3rd Person with virtually the 2nd Person meaning:
   66. Come here, John!
   67. Please, someone go and tell the news.

iii) in the 1st and 3rd Persons by "let" with the infinitive:
   68. Let us pray.
   69. Let him read.
   70. Let there be light.

iv) with negative adverbs and negative words:
   71. Never you mind.
   72. Don't you do it.
v) in the form of questions and negatives:

73. (Are you) coming or not?

The colloquial phrase "mind you" can be added to the list of imperative types. It functions like a tag to another sentence. In the example cited below, the subject pronoun follows the imperative.

74. I have no time, mind you.

2.3. Kinds of Basic Sentences in Tamil:

As in English, Tamil sentences also can be divided into three types according to the structural formation. They are:
i) Simple sentence which contains a subject and a predicate: The subject is known as eluvay and the predicate payapilai.

75 a.Ta. mo:kan palliku:tam po:kira:n
75 b.Eng. Mohan goes to school.

In this sentence mo:kan "Mohan" is eluvay and palliku:tam po:kira:n "goes to school" is payapilai.

ii) Compound sentence which has one subject and two or more predicates or both subjects and predicates:

76 b. The students should read well and come up in life.
iii) Complex sentence with a finite verb in the main clause and one or more infinite verbs in the subordinate clauses:

77 b. My mother told me that I should speak slowly.

The present thesis restricts its study to the sentences in Tamil formed according to function. They are:

iv) Factual or assertive sentence known as ceṭiva:kkiyam.
78 a. avan oru paiyan.
78 b. He is a boy.

v) Interrogative sentence known as vina: va:kkiyam.
79 a. kanna:n inru varuva:na?:
79 b. Will Kannan come today?

vi) Negative sentence known as etirmarai va:kkiyam.
80 a. avan en makan illai
80 b. He is not my son.

vii) Exclamatory sentence known as unarce:i va:kkiyam.
81 b. May you live long!

viii) Imperative sentence called as e:val va:kkiyam.
82 b. Do the work quickly.
2.3.1. Assertive Sentence:

The five elements of the Tamil assertive sentence are subject, predicate, attribute to subject, extension of predicate and the particles. As pointed out by Lazarus (1985),

The subject and the object are taken care of by the noun "peyar," predicate by the verb "vīnai," attribute to subject by the adjective "ūri" and extension of predicate by the adverb "vīnaiuri." Lastly the particles "iṭaicol" serve to connect these elements as well as sentences.

In Tamil, as in English, minimal sentences can be classified into equative and non-equative types:

i) The equative type has simply two noun phrases placed one after the other without the linking verb. It may be shown as:

\[ S \rightarrow NP + NP/Adj./Adv. \]

83 a. aval oru ṭaṅkṭar.
83 b. She is a doctor.
84 a. paṭṭu inimai.
84 b. The song is sweet.
85 a. avan aṅke: uḷḷaṅ.
85 b. He is there.
86 a. piṭṭar oru a:ciритar a:na:r.
86 b. Peter became a teacher.
87 a. kaḷḷan e:ḷaiya:ka iruntaṅ.
87 b. Kannan remained poor.
ii) The non-equative type contains one or more noun phrases followed by the verb phrase.

\[ S \rightarrow NP + VP \]

88 a. paravaikal parakkinrana.
88 b. Birds fly.
89 a. kappal ta:matama:ka vantatu.
89 b. The ship arrived late.

\[ S \rightarrow NP + NP + VP \]

90 a. ja:n me:riyai ka:talitta:n.
90 b. John loved Mary.

\[ S \rightarrow NP + NP + NP + VP \]

91 a. na:n avanukku oru puttakam koṭutte:n.
91 b. I gave him a book.

\[ S \rightarrow NP + NP + Viru \]

92 a. enakku mu:nru cako:tararka: l irukkira:rkak
92 b. I have three brothers.

\[ S \rightarrow NP + NP + VP \]

93 b. We elected John leader.
2.3.2. Interrogative Sentence:

Like English, the Dravidian languages including Tamil has two kinds of question sentences. Both the tone of the voice and question order of the sentence with the question mark at the end determine the nature of an interrogative sentence. An example for the sentence with the question intonation is:

94 a. kanṇan varukiraṅ?
94 b. Is Kannan coming?

Of the two kinds referred to earlier, the first kind is an "yes/no" type question. Tamil, being the agglutinative language, uses interrogative particles as -a; , o; and -e; in the first type. These particles may be used with any elements of the sentence for questioning. A further division can be made in the "yes/no" type questions. The first is NP+NP+Q type.

95 a. aval oru ṭa:ktaraː?
95 b. Is she a doctor?
96 a. pa:ṭalkal inimaiyaːnavaːiyaiyaː?
96 b. Are the songs sweet?
97 a. avan aṅku iruntaːnaː?
97 b. Was he there?
98 a. avarkal iṅku varuvarkaːḷaː?
98 b. Will they come here?
99 a. na:m ippo:tu ve(liye) poi:ka:la:ma:?
99 b. Shall we go out now?

The second is NP + VP (V + Aux) + Q type.

100 a. avan inta ka:nakkai po:ta mu:tiyuma:?
100 b. Can he do this sum?

101 a. ni: ava(lu)kka:ka avatippa:ta ve:ntuma:?
101 b. Must you suffer for her?

102 a. ni: ennaik ke:li:vi ke:tpatarku ta:tiyam iruk:kiratai?
102 b. Dare you question me?

103 a. na:n pe:pparaipperrukollattuma:?
103 b. May I have the paper?

104 a. avarkal maru:pa:tiyum vantuvi:ta:rkala:?
104 b. Had they come again?

The interrogative suffix -o is added to the verbs to ask a question implying doubt and uncertainty.

105 a. atu unmaiyatka iruk:kumoi?
105 b. Will that be true?

The suffix -e is rare in modern Tamil.

The second kind of question is similar to the "Wh-questions" in English. As in English, they are introduced by interrogative pronouns, adjectives or adverbs. Since the
word order is flexible, the question words can be introduced anywhere in the sentence.

The interrogative pronouns **yaː:r**, **evaŋ**, **evaļ**, and **evar** correspond to the English "who," the Tamil **etu** and **evaŋ** correspond to English "which" and "what"; Tamil **evai**, **ettanai** and **evvalavu** correspond to English "which, how" and "how (many,much)" and lastly **eppati** and **ēhku** are similar to "how" and "where." All the Tamil question words have **yaː** or **e** as the root, just like "Wh-" for English.

106 a. yaː:r iṅku varukiraːr?
106 b. Who comes here?

107 a. yaː:r unakkū veṃtum?
107 b. Whom do you want?

108 a. yaːruṭaiya peṅnaː atu?
108 b. Whose pen is it?

109 a. evaŋ unnottaː tu varuvaːŋ?
109 b. Who will come with you?

110 a. enna unnuṭaiya pracṇai?
110 b. What is your problem?

111 a. etu cariyaːna viṭai?
111 b. Which is the correct answer?

112 a. evai nalla poruṭkal?
112 b. Which are good things?
113 a. onrum iraṇțum ettanai?
113 b. How much is one and two?
114 a. evvaḷavu maṅkaḷ vantaṇar?
114 b. How many people did come?
115 a. avan eppati itai ceytaṅ?
115 b. How did he do this?
116 a. eṅ avarkaḷ enakku etiraṅka ceyalpaṭa veṇṭum?
116 b. Why should they act against me?
117 a. eṅku maḷai peykiṟatu?
117 b. Where is it raining?

2.3.3. Negative sentence:

As in English, negative sense is created in Tamil by means of the addition of prefixes to the nouns. e.g. aniṟi "injustice," aniyaṟam "unfair," acaṟtiyam "impossible," etc. In addition, suffixes also convey negative sense. e.g. niyaṟamra ṣaru "unfair" aṟataṟamra "baseless," etc.

In an emphatic negative statement in Tamil, the stress is laid not on the negative word as in English, but on the question word or the negative word used at the beginning.

118 a. yaṟum avanai paṟtatillai.
118 b. No one did ever see him.
119 a. oruṉoṟuṭum avan anta tiṭṭattai ottukollamaṇṭan
119 b. Never will he accept the proposal.
The present investigation restricts itself to the two kinds of negations, as classified by Dr. Agesthialingom (1982) namely, "morphological negation" and "syntactical negation." In the first kind the morphemes of various kinds are used.

i) by adding -a:, -a:t,-al and an empty morph φ to verb roots:
   120 a. avan ve:layaicceyya: ninra:n
   120 b. He stood without doing the work.
   121 a. rayil cennai cella:tu.
   121 b. The train will not go to Madras.
   122 a. ivai unakkuriyatalla.
   122 b. These do not belong to you.
   123 a. avalai enke:yum ka:no:m (ka:ŋ + Ø + o:m)
   123 b. She is not seen anywhere.

ii) by adding personal termination -ep to the verbal roots:
   124 a. na:ŋ unnai marave:n.
   124 b. I will not forget you.

iii) by adding interrogative pronouns to the verb:
   125 a. na:na: poy pe:cine:n?
   125 b. Did I tell lie?

The interrogative particle a: is used negatively.

In the second kind, "the syntactical negation," the morphemes illai, ma:ttu and kitai serve the purpose.
126 a. avan oru nalla manitan illai.
126 b. He is not a good man.
127 a. avarkal naṭakattil naṭikka maṭṭar kal.
127 b. They will not act in the drama.

Like English negative questions, Tamil negative questions also can be transformed into negation sentences by applying Question-morpheme Introduction Transformation.

128 a. avarkal inta veḷaiyai ceyya muṭiya:ta?:
128 b. Can't they do this work?
129 a. etu jaṇukku piṭikka:tu?
129 b. Which John doesn't like?

2.3.4. Exclamatory Sentence:

In Tamil too, the exclamatory sentences convey the emotion of the speaker. Usually the question words like enpa, evvalavu, ettapai, eppati etc. are used before the qualifying adjectives or adverbs to form exclamation. They are very much like the Wh-words, "what" and "how," doing duty for exclamation in English. In Tamil, the order need not necessarily be the same as in English.

The exclamation in Tamil forms a parallel to the optative.
First, exclamation with question words can be seen. The presence of adjectives or adverbs clearly distinguish it from the interrogative sentence.

130 a. enna aticayama:na itam atu!
130 b. What a wonderful place it is!
131 a. evvalavu alaka:naval aval!
131 b. How beautiful she is!
132 a. ettanai koțu:rama:na ati itu!
132 b. What a cruel blow this is!
133 a. evvalavu mariya:taiya:na națattai avanuțaiyatu!
133 b. How polite his behaviour has been!

Secondly, exclamations are elliptical in nature. They consist of a noun, an adjective or sometimes just one word only.

134 a. enna payankaramarna kanavu!
134 b. What a terrible dream!
135 a. enna a:ccariyam!
135 b. What a wonder!
136 a. (enna tavippu) oru ko:ppai taŋni:rukka:ka!
136 b. O for a cup of water!

Thirdly, exclamations are marked by interjections.

137 a. ayyo:, avan cettupo:na:n!
137 b. Alas, he is dead!
Fourthly, some words may be suffixed to a noun as in:

138 a. pa:vam ta:n!
138 b. A sin, indeed!

Finally, the Tamil optative takes suffixes-ka,-ya, and-r. It expresses a wish commonly formed by these suffixes. The following may be treated as examples for exclamation.

139 a. va:lka aracane:!
139 b. May you prosper, O King!
140 a. ni:tu:liva:liya ni:vir!
140 b. May you live long!
141 a. ni:r va:lyi:r nanku!
141 b. May you live well!

2.3.5. The Imperative Sentence:

In Tamil, the imperatives may have a root of the verb or a complex verb base. va: "come" for example is the root verb signifying the imperative sense. Auxiliary verbs in Tamil as vi:tu, kol, iru, po:tu etc. are used in the complex verbs of imperatives, e.g. vantu vi:tu "come," purintukol "understand," cumma: iru "keep quiet," ottipo:tu "postpone" etc.

The imperative sentences are associated with the second person commands, instructions and requests.
142 a. po:y viṭu.
142 b. Go away.
143 a. atai niṟuttu.
143 b. Stop that.
144 a. tayavu ceytu katavai muṭu.
144 b. Please shut the door.
145 a. innum kofcam eṭuttukkol.
145 b. Do take some more.

According to form, the imperatives may be classified as
i) singular imperative, ii) plural imperative, and iii) honorific imperative.

146 a. paṭam paṭi.
146 b. Read the lesson.
147 a. niṅkal paṭiyuṅkal.
147 b. You (pl.) read.
148 a. ni:r pa:rum.
148 b. You (pl.hon.) see.

According to meaning, the imperatives may be used to
denote i) politeness ii) contempt iii) questions and iv) negative.

The sense of politeness is conveyed by adding the verbal
terminations like -um and -eṇ.
149 a. ni: varave:ntum.
149 b. You must come.
150 b. You (pl.hon.) do.

The sense of contempt is expressed by adding the auxiliaries as po: and tolai.

151 a. olintu po:.
151 b. Get lost.
152 a. po:y tolai.
152 b. Go (contempt).

The question and negative imperatives are formed by adding the respective question morphemes or question words and negative morphemes and negative words.

153 a. (ni:) varukira:ya: illaiya:? 
153 b. (Are you) coming or not?
154 a. ettanai ne:rama: vare:? 
154 b. How long (you take) to come?
155 a. ni: tirumpa:te:.
155 b. Do not turn back.

The colloquial phrase ja:kkiratai functions like a tag to the sentence to which it is added. It gives imperative meaning which can be seen in its extended form— ja:kkirataiya:ka iru.
156 a. aṅke: ore: iruṭṭu, jaṅkkiṟatai.

156 b. Beware, it is utter darkness there.

The basic patterns listed above in five categories i) Declarative ii) Interrogative iii) Negative iv) Exclamatory and v) Imperative from both Tamil and English offer a wide scope for comparison. The analysis of important characteristics and peculiarities in them will give the learners of the second language some ideas regarding the process of sentence making. As the discussion pertains to the basic sentence patterns, the examination of fundamental similarities and differences in the structures of the two languages forms the core of this investigation.