Exploring the Syntax and Semantics of South Asian Languages

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Edited by

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and Usha Udaar

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CHAPTER ONE

EXPLORING THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES OF SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES— AN INTRODUCTION

REENA ASHEM, GURMEET KAUR AND USHA UDAAR[1]

1. Introduction

This volume is a compilation of selected papers presented at the Ninth Students' Conference of Linguistics in India (SCONLI-9), which took place at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi from 14th to 15th March, 2015. The ninth edition of the conference brought together young researchers from various sub-disciplines of linguistics from all parts of the country. The conference was divided into seven sessions over a period of two days, where research scholars from among the students chaired each session. Papers on various topics including case, agreement, adjectives, finiteness, topic modelling and machine translation were presented by the participants. These issues were illustrated via various South Asian languages such as Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Hindi, Magahi, Punjabi, Haryanavi, Braj, Bundeli, Bangla, Assamese, Meiteilon, Sylheti, Badaga, Khoibu and Maring.[2] The present volume contains seven papers selected from those presented at the conference.

[1] The author names' have been listed according to the alphabetical order of the last names.

[2] There is a divide between linguists with regard to the spelling of the Tibeto-Burman language spoken by the Meiteis in Manipur. While some linguists use Meiteilon, others prefer Meeteilon. We adopt the former spelling in this paper, except for where the contributors have used the alternative.

South Asian languages (henceforth SALs) have attracted a lot of attention in the linguistic literature. Some of it derives from the shared similarities between these languages despite them belonging to different language families. To elaborate, languages in South Asia belong to four different language families—Indo Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman—but share several linguistic traits among themselves (Abbi, 2012), thereby constituting a "linguistic area" (in the sense of Emeneau 1956, 1980 and Masica 1976). Some of these shared linguistic traits are retroflex sounds, SOV word order, absence of prepositions, morphological reduplication, and complex predicates among others. For a detailed exposition of these traits across various SALs, see Abbi (1991/1992, 2001, 2012). However, it must be noted that the interest in SALs has not been restricted to their typological (un)relatedness, but has extended well beyond into the generative framework. Noted studies on different SALs by scholars such as K.P. Mohanan (1982), Gurtu (1985), Mahajan (1990), Srivastav (1991), T. Mohanan (1994), Jayaseelan (1999, 2001), Kidwai (2000) among others have had an impact on the development of linguistic theory. With investigation of issues on topics ranging across the board—status of primitive categories (nouns, verbs and adjectives), wh-questions, scrambling, clause structure, case and agreement—these studies have used empirical evidence from SALs to ask crucial questions that have helped shape theory. In this volume we focus on three of these topics: (a) status of primitive categories, (b) clausal and nominal structure and (c) case and agreement. Specifically, this volume presents a compilation of papers each of which attempts to investigate one of these three topics. Each paper puts forth novel data from SALs, and provides descriptive-theoretical analysis of the linguistic phenomenon covered. The current volume thereby paves the way to refining our empirical as well as theoretical understanding of the system of language.

In the next section, we discuss the importance of said topics in the generative literature, followed by demonstrating how studies on SALs have furthered our understanding of these issues. The final section will focus on the contribution of each paper of the present volume to the same linguistic issues.

2. Relevance of the Topics in the Purview of the Theory and Studies on SALs

It is generally assumed that lexical categories like nouns and verbs are universal and found in all languages of the world (see Hale and Keyser,

2003). However, some SALs present a problem for such a claim. Consider the case of Mundari, a Munda language. Peterson (2007) proposes that the language does not have separate noun-verb classes, in that a single word can function as a noun, a verb or an adjective according to the context. A similar proposal has been made for adjectives in Dravidian. Amritavalli (2008) in her study of Kannada, and Jayaseelan (2007) in his work on Malayalam respectively have argued that adjectives are not a primitive lexical category for the two languages under consideration. Specifically, both authors claim that adjectives in these Dravidian languages are derived by incorporation of case markers or postpositions into verbs or nouns. Menon (2014) also argues that there is an absence of the category of adjectives in Malayalam. However, she differs from existing claims by proposing not only that adjectives are not present as a lexical category in the language, but also that they are not derived in the syntax by operations on case markers. The language expresses adjectival meaning via relativization and nominalization.

SALs have also broadened discussions on clausal syntax, especially the issue of tense-aspect-mood (TAM) projections. Since the seminal work of Pollock (1989) and its incorporation into the early minimalist developments (cf. Chomsky 1989), the structure of the clause above the VP has become an important topic in syntactic research. In this respect, SALs have been of key interest due to the presence of tenseless languages like Meiteilon, Malayalam, and Kannada. For example, exploring the clausal syntax of Kannada, Amritavalli (2007) suggests that there is no category of T(ense) in the language, such that a clause in Kannada is not a TP, but a MoodP. On the other hand, Kidwai (2010) in her work on another tenseless language, Meiteilon, argues for the presence of a T-like head in the clause structure insofar that this head inherits uninterpretable features from a higher C-like dominating head. Interest in clausal syntax is furthered by the phenomenon of clausal nominalization in SALs. Nominalization is generally understood as the process of "turning something into a noun" (Comrie and Thompson 1985). It is of two types: derived, where a verb acts like a noun phrase; and clausal, where the full clause acts like a noun phrase. Most of the existing literature on nominalization has focused on derivational nominalization, wherein verbs are nominalized to derive nouns and adjectives. However, SALs like Newar and Mongsen Aao have been shown to have clausal nominalization, structurally represented as $[\text{clause}]_{NP}$ (DeLancey 1999, 2002 and Genneti et al. 2008). This has raised interesting issues pertaining to how we differentiate clausal from nominal units.

On the level of syntactic operations like agreement and case valuation/checking, SALs have been extensively interrogated. In the domain of agreement, two studies that merit our attention are Bhatt (2005) and Chandra (2007). In Chomsky's system of Agree (2000, 2001), case and agreement are understood to go hand in hand, such that case is a side-effect of phi feature agreement. A DP which has been case valued (as a free-rider on phi agreement) is no longer eligible to enter into further agreement relations. Long-distance agreement (LDA) constructions in Hindi-Urdu have provided a fertile ground for understanding Agree. Specifically, employing LDA structures in Hindi-Urdu, Bhatt (2005) argues for dissociation between case and agreement. He proposes AGREE, as per which phi feature agreement is possible with a DP which has already been case valued. Also investigating long-distance agreement cases in Hindi-Urdu along with other languages like Tsez, Chandra (2007) questions the status of Agree as a core grammatical operation and instead proposes that all agreement must always take place between sisters, with no agreement taking place in a c-command configuration.

Given the rich case morphology attested in SALs, the phenomenon of case has also not gone unnoticed. The literature on case in SALs has raises relevant issues pertaining to the PP status of case-markers and structural configurations that license them. Let us illustrate with a couple of examples. The works of Spencer (2005) and Kidwai (2011) on case markers in Hindi-Urdu have shown that the morphological forms *-ne* and *-ko*, understood as ergative and accusative case respectively, are not realizations of case but only postpositions that do not project. Further, the discussion of the Hindi-Urdu ergativity has been of key interest to understand if ergative case is an inherent or a structural case. In this respect, employing perfective constructions with complex predicates in the language, Mahajan (2012) has argued that ergative is an inherent case valued on the subject by the v head which hosts the light verb. Not just ergative, but also dative case has been explored by Davison (2003) and Bhatt (2003) for Hindi-Urdu and by Jayaseelan (2004) for Malayalam. Analyzing the dative case as lexically marked, these works have raised questions pertaining to the status of the dative DP in dative subject constructions (sentences in which the logical subject of a clause takes the dative case, rather than the nominative case).

To recapitulate, these studies indicate how relevant the investigation of South Asian languages has been to shaping our understanding of various linguistic phenomena including clause structure, status of primitive categories and syntactic operations. Not only have these works refined our

conception of the system of language, but they have also made accessible the special empirical properties of SALs to the general linguistic audience. That being said, the current volume is an attempt to further the discussion on SALs in the generative paradigm. Concretely, the papers in the current volume probe into the three domains under consideration—status of primitive categories, clause structure and syntactic operations—in a range of SALs and attempt descriptive-theoretical analyses in light of the existing literature. The first set of papers by Herur, and by Jacob & Mehta probes the nature and status of lexical items and categories in Kannada and Malayalam respectively. Papers by Achom and Bhattacharya deal with issues like nominalization and clause structure in Meiteilon and Bangla. The final set of papers by Gouthaman, Udaar and Kaur focus on the syntactic and morphological underpinnings of case and agreement in their respective works on Malayalam, Haryanavi and Punjabi. We highlight the key claims of each of these papers in the next section.

3. Contribution of the Present Volume

3.1 Status of Lexical Items/Categories

In purview of the current literature on adjectives in Kannada, Sindhu Herur discusses adjectives and comparative constructions in her paper 'Property Concepts and the Degree Expression in Kannada'. Exploring the underlying nature of property concepts in Kannada, Herur shows that they can be expressed either by nouns or by adjectives in the attributive position. In the predicative position, in contrast, property concepts are expressed by adjectives that are syntactically derived from nouns marked with a dative case. The separate existence of nouns and adjectives is further substantiated by the distribution of *heccu*, the Q element in comparative constructions in the language. While the element is optional with adjectival comparatives, it is required obligatorily with nominal comparatives.

Carrying forward the discussion on lexical categories, Jacob and Mehta add upon Heine and Kuteva's (2009) work on grammatical categories and extend their analysis to Malayalam in their paper 'Semantically Elaborate Categories and Grammaticalization in Malayalam'. The paper uses semantic analysis of verbal predicates and demonstrates that similar categories can be drawn in Malayalam through the process of grammaticalization.

3.2 General Aspects of Clausal and Nominal Structure

Focusing on the structure of the clause above the VP in Meiteilon, the paper 'Aspects in Meeteilon' by Padmabati Achom gives an elaborate description of aspectual constructions in the Tibeto-Burman language. Achom argues for the presence of two distinct aspectual heads in Meiteilon- an inner and an outer aspectual head, by providing ample empirical evidence. She claims that the outer aspect head lies above the functional vP and is realised morphologically. On the other hand, the inner aspectual ahead lies inside the lexical VP; it usually remains unrealised. However, certain deictic suffixes in the language help provide the semantics of this aspect head.

In a slightly different vein, Nandini Bhattacharya probes into the nominal domain in Bangla by investigating the semantics of nominal quantification in the language. Specifically, the paper titled 'Semantics of Reduplicative Nominal Quantification in Bangla', addresses the issue of quantification with a focus on the role of nominal reduplication in encoding implicit quantification in Bangla. Reduplication is an important linguistic feature of South Asian languages, and has received attention in the works of Emeneau (1956) and Abbi (1991) among others. Bhattacharya recounts the earlier findings on the phenomenon at the level of phonology and morphology, and takes the discussion a step further to detail the semantics of implicit quantification, especially in Bangla. The paper investigates key linguistic differences between the reduplicated nominals and other NP expressions in the language. Finally, Bhattacharya offers a formal account of the distributive plurality that is expressed implicitly by such reduplicated nominals.

3.3 Case/Agreement

Issues of case and agreement in SALs are investigated in three works in the volume. Genitive and dative case is explored in the paper titled 'The Allomorphs of Genitive and Dative and the Postulation of Grammatical Gender in Malayalam', where Gouthaman KJ explores the motivation behind distinct realizations of the two case markers in Malayalam. He presents the syntactic contexts that determine the choice of distinct forms of the case markers. Employing the case-stacking approach, the author posits that the distinct morphological forms of genitive and dative case in the language follow from different sets of nominal features that the Case head agrees with.

Moving from dative-genitive to ergative case, Usha Udaar elaborates upon the case licensing mechanisms in the paper titled 'Understanding Ergative Case Licensing in Haryanavi'. Focusing on the syntactic nature of ergative case, the paper demonstrates that unlike nominative and accusative cases, the ergative case is neither licensed via phi-feature agreement between a functional head and a nominal nor related to theta assignment by a functional head. Instead, the ergative case in Haryanavi is a dependent case, licensed in the defective perfective aspect domain. The paper, therefore, elaborates upon the debate related to various case modalities existing within the generative literature.

In the last paper titled 'Dative and Ergative Subject Constructions in Punjabi: Understanding Person Agreement', Gurmeet Kaur argues that person agreement is determined by the structural configuration between the agreeing functional head and the agreement triggering nominal (following Baker, 2008). To arrive at this claim, Kaur explores dative and ergative subject constructions in Punjabi. While the theme of the dative structure triggers full phi agreement on the T head in dative subject constructions, the theme of the ergative structure triggers agreement in number and gender alone. Investigating these structures in detail, Kaur claims that in dative constructions, the theme moves beyond the intervening dative subject and agrees with T in sisterhood, while agreement between the theme DP and v-T in the ergative construction takes place long distance for lack of an A-position for the movement of the theme. These varying structural arrangements correlate with +/- person agreement.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the chapters in this volume highlight many interesting and hitherto unnoticed features of SALs. Addressing issues ranging from the status of primitive categories to the working of operations like case valuation and agreement, these papers are a step forward in helping us understand the system of language better.

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CHAPTER TWO

PROPERTY CONCEPTS AND THE DEGREE EXPRESSION IN KANNADA[1,2]

SINDHU HERUR SUBRAMANYA

Abstract

This paper connects two threads of research, namely, *Property Concept (PC)* expressions and the comparative degree construction, both of which are relatively novel for generative work in Kannada, a Dravidian language. I motivate a three-way classification of Property Concept expressions in Kannada based on the facts of attribution and predication. For Kannada, such a classification indicates that Property Concepts are expressed by both adjectives and nouns. The attributive position reveals a broad classification of PCs into two groups: PC adjectives and PC nouns. The PC adjectives form a small, functional class, the rest being PC nouns which form a huge majority. The predicative structures, however, reveal that some of these PC nouns take dative case, and these dative case-marked nouns are syntactically-derived adjectives according to the incorporation account in Amritavalli and Jayaseelan (2003) (henceforth A&J). This phenomenon of PC nouns incorporating into dative case to occur predicatively as adjectives seems unique to Kannada (among her sister Dravidian languages), though a similar construction is noted in Marathi.

[1] ø = null, 1= first person, 2= second person, 3= third person, AGR = Agreement, TOP.=Topic, ACC=Accusative Case, DAT=Dative Case, GEN=Genitive Case, LOC=Locative Case, NOM=Nominative Case, F=feminine, M=masculine, N= neutral, SG=singular, PL=plural, Q=quantifier, PostP.=Postposition

[2] Kannada, in this study, refers to the standard Mysuru-Bengaluru variety of the language.

By analysing the degree expressions in Kannada I motivate a null degree head in comparative constructions. I analyse *heccu* on the lines of the Hindi-Urdu *zyaadaa* (Bhatt 2012) as a Q(uantifier) element and not a degree head. The distribution of *heccu,* which is optional in adjectival and obligatory in nominal comparatives, provides further support to this three way classification of PCs in Kannada. By considering cross-linguistic data, the study hints at a broader claim that the degree head always selects for a gradable predicate, be it an AP or a QP (and not vice-versa).

Keywords: Property Concepts, Kannada, degree expressions, comparatives, Dravidian

1. Introduction

This study explores how adjectival meaning is expressed in Kannada and its implication for the structure of the comparative degree construction. Kannada offers interesting insights into how adjectival meaning is expressed and encoded in Dravidian. In this paper, I refer to all terms expressing adjectival meaning by the semantic notion of Property Concept (PC) as in Dixon (1982). Amritavalli and Jayaseelan (2003) note that Dravidian languages have very few 'true' adjectives, with adjectival meaning being expressed mostly by nouns. A three-way classification of PCs[3] based on predication structures is motivated for Kannada and supports such an observation made in A&J (2003). The first group of PCs consists of a handful of 'true' adjectives and we shall refer to them as PC adjectives. These adjectives are few in number and form a closed-class. Therefore, I analyse them to be functional in nature following Cinque (2010; 35-36) wherein the discussion on Yoruba, a language claimed to have only adnominal (attributive) adjectives forming a closed class, supports such a claim. The second group are 'true-blooded' nouns which occur predicatively in dative subject constructions, and we shall refer to them as PC nouns. The third group consists of a sub-class of these PC nouns which have dual properties of being 'adjective-like' as well as 'noun-like'. They occur predicatively as adjectives in nominative subject constructions by taking dative case and they also occur as nouns in dative subject constructions. These dative case-marked nouns, which I analyse as syntactically-derived adjectives, seem to be unique to Kannada among

[3] I use PCs as a broad term to refer to both nouns and adjectives in Kannada that express a *property* such as *height, anger* etc.

other Dravidian languages. However Marathi, an Indo-Aryan language, has dative case-marked PC nouns in nominative subject constructions.

The three way classification of PCs in Kannada receives further support, with the distributional properties of *heccu,* a Q(uantifier) element (henceforth Q), in comparative constructions. This is the second thread. A brief look at the degree expressions in Kannada, namely, the positive (also referred to as the absolute), the comparative and the superlative degree constructions, leads us to an analysis of the instantiation of the three groups of PCs in comparative constructions in Kannada. I motivate a null degree head for Kannada that always encodes *greater than* semantics.

The novelty of this paper lies in the fact that comparative constructions have not been studied from the perspective of the Property Concept expressions in Kannada. The interesting claims made in this paper are: one, a functional class of adjectives in Kannada; two, a group of syntactically derived adjectives in Kannada; and three, the importance of the degree head selecting only a gradable predicate. The paper, therefore, explores the instantiation of the three groups of PCs in comparative clauses and lays emphasis on the observation that in comparative constructions, the nature of the degree head has universal properties which make it select only a gradable predicate. Hence, the degree head selects for an adjective (which I assume to be inherently gradable) or a quantifier (as quantifiers have gradable properties as well). Hence, the role of *heccu* as a Q element becomes very clear in comparative constructions. When nouns and verbs participate in comparative constructions, the degree head cannot select for an NP or a VP directly as they are not gradable. Hence the degree head first selects a QP which can now select an NP or a VP. Thus, with nominal and verbal comparatives, *heccu* is obligatory. However, in the case of APs, the DegP can directly select for an AP and hence *heccu* is 'not required' or is not obligatory. Such a distribution of *heccu* in comparative constructions re-enforces the three-way classification of PCs motivated for Kannada. *Heccu* is not required in comparatives with the small group of functional PC adjectives and, very interestingly, is also not required with the syntactically derived adjectives (dative-case marked nouns). *Heccu* is obligatory with PC nouns.

Recent work on PCs in Dravidian include Balusu (2015)[4] who argues that adjectival meaning in Telugu is expressed by composing Property Concept (PC) nouns with the entities they modify, using possessive morpho-syntax. Malayalam has been shown to use verbal and nominal roots which combine with functional architecture to express adjectival meaning (Menon 2013 and Menon & Pancheva 2014). Thus, with Telugu expressing PC states with nouns, and Malayalam using PC roots to do the same, Kannada offers a third interesting perspective wherein apart from PCs expressed by nouns, the language has functional adjectives and syntactically-derived adjectives.

2. Property Concept Expressions in Kannada

Let us begin with a discussion of PCs in Kannada and the motivations for a three-way classification. The background data considered for this study is a data set of fifty PCs in Kannada. Initially selected at random, various tests were applied to each PC and three groups emerged. These groups were developed and members were added. Tests of distribution and case marking helped make an initial classification of PCs into two broad groups: PC nouns and PC adjectives.

2.1 Property Concept Expressions in the Attributive Position

There are two tests I have employed to ascertain the adjectival status of PCs in Kannada; one, whether they occur in the attributive position of NPs/DPs (Kennedy 1997) and two, whether they take case-marking. In the first part of this two-fold test, if the PC can occur in the attributive position of NPs in its 'bare' form and does not require genitive case to attributively modify NPs like nouns do in Kannada, then I proceed to classify them as adjectives. In the second part of the test, PCs, to be classified as adjectives, should not take any case-marking. I found a handful of 'true' adjectives which are listed in (1) below. *Oḷḷeya 'good'* being representative of this class of PC adjectives, I refer to this group of PC adjectives as the *oḷḷeya* group.

[4]Balusu (2015) motivates a three-way classification in Telugu PC nouns, and though the three groups are not parallel to the Kannada classification, I owe much of the ideas in this paper to this work.

(1) Members of the ***oḷḷeya* group** of PC adjectives in Kannada: *oḷḷeya* ‘good’, *keṭṭa* ‘bad’, *cikka* ‘small’, *doḍḍa* ‘big’, *hosa* ‘new’, *haḷeya* ‘old’, *yeḷeya* ‘tender’ and *baḍa* ‘poor’.

Below is the data for *oḷḷeya,* being representative of its class, for the two mentioned tests. In (2a) below, *oḷḷeya ‘good’* occurs in the attributive position of NPs. In (2b) we see that *oḷḷeya* resists any form of case marking.

(2) a. oḷḷeya huḍuga / oḷḷeya huḍugi / oḷḷeya huḍug-aru / oḷḷeya huḍugi-yaru

good boy / good girl / good boy-PL / good girl-PL

‘good boy / good girl / good boys / good girls’

b. * oḷḷeya-kke / * oḷḷeya-da / * oḷḷeya-dalli / *oḷḷey-vannu / * oḷḷey-u

good-DAT / good-GEN / good-LOC / good-ACC / good-NOM

Comparing the data in (2) for *oḷḷeya* with a PC noun *koopa* ‘*anger*’, we see that the opposite holds true. *Koopa,* by itself, cannot attributively modify a noun as seen in (3a) and it takes case as illustrated in (3b).

(3) a. *koopa maatu-gaḷ-u

anger word-PL-NOM

‘intended: angry words (lit. *anger words)’

b. koopa-kke / koopa-da / koopa-dalli / koopa-vannu / koopa-vu

anger-DAT / anger-GEN / anger-LOC / anger-ACC / anger-NOM

Koopa however can occur attributively, taking genitive case as in (4) below. The genitive case helps ‘link’ the two nouns *koopa* ‘anger’ and *maatu-gaḷ-u* ‘words’ which otherwise cannot co-occur (as seen above in 3a), as *koopa* is a noun and cannot attributively modify *maatu-gaḷ-u,* another noun.

(4) koopa-da maatu-ga[-u[5]

anger-GEN word-PL-NOM

'words of anger' (lit. anger's words)

A list of PC nouns is given below in (5). This group is similar to the *–am* ending nouns in both Malayalam as in Menon (2013), and in Telugu, discussed in Balusu (2015). PC nouns in Kannada are a mix of Sanskrit-borrowed nouns and native nouns. The phonology of Kannada ensures nouns end in an open syllable, i.e. vowels such as *–a, -u* and *–e.* Kannada does not have the nasal rule for the coda position like the *–am* ending rule for Malayalam and Telugu. To take an example, *koopam* 'anger' in Malayalam and Telugu is *koopa* 'anger' in Kannada.

(5) Some members of the ***koopa* group** representing PC nouns in Kannada- *koopa* 'anger', *santosha* 'happiness', *sukha* 'contentment', *dukha* 'sadness', *bhaara* 'heaviness', *bhaya* 'fear', *hagura* 'lightness', *sulabha* 'ease', *kaʃta* 'difficulty', *teʃuvu* 'thinness', *kobbu* 'arrogance' and *beesara* 'sadness/sulk'.

We have at the end of these tests a clear two-way distinction of PCs in Kannada. One group represented by *oʃʃeya* 'good' shows properties of being 'true' adjectives, and these are few in number. Let us treat them as a closed, functional class and refer to them as the *oʃʃeya* group. The other group is the *koopa* group of nouns.

Of the three groups of PCs proposed in this paper, the *oʃʃeya* group of PC adjectives is the only group to whom it is hard to assign a semantic basis (as can be seen by the list in 1).

[5] '*anger's words'* is not acceptable in English in the intended sense. It maybe paraphrased as *'words of anger'*. Cross-linguistically it is a well-attested fact that possession is expressed with *of.* English employs two strategies to express possession. One is the genitive case marker *'s*and the other is with the genitive PP *of*. In English, '*yesterday's lecture'* expresses a PC. Kannada too has such a construction *'nenne-ya kacheri' (yesterday-GEN concert*) though it does not have the *of*-construction. This is a fertile ground to explore in Kannada but it is beyond the scope of this paper.

2.2 Property Concept Expressions in the Predicative Position

This section explores the predication structures of PC adjectives and PC nouns in Kannada. PC adjectives occur in 'verbless' copular clauses with an NP NP structure, in predication (discussed in sub-section 2.2.1). The PC nouns split into the *koopa* group of 'true-blooded' nouns which occur predicatively only in dative subject constructions in their bare form and the *udda* group of PCs. The *udda* group of PC nouns, exemplified by *udda* 'height', occur as dative-case marked nouns in nominative subject constructions in addition to their ability to occur as bare nouns in dative subject constructions. The former is less marked (unlike general perception about this construction) and can be understood on the lines of *John is tall* while the latter is more marked and would translate into *John has (the) height*. Thus the *udda* group of PCs have properties that make them 'adjective-like' as well as 'noun-like'. The *udda* group of PCs denote tangible, physical properties such as *height, weight, thickness, temperature* etc. The *koopa* group of PC nouns represent psycho-somatic properties. Therefore, there is a very clear semantic basis for this sub-classification of PC nouns in Kannada.

2.2.1 Property Concept Adjectives in the Predicative Position

Kannada has been noted to have, at least superficially, verbless clauses with an NP NP structure (Amritavalli 2000; 11; ex I (i)). They are also referred to as 'nominal clauses'. Hence, a sentence like '*John is a doctor*' in Kannada has only an NP NP structure as illustrated in (6).

(6) John-ø doctor-u.

John-NOM doctor-NOM

'John is a doctor.'

Oḷḷeya 'good' occurs predicatively in such clauses as seen below in (7), followed by a morpheme that encodes number and gender agreement with the subject NP and an invariant 3rd person feature.

(7) avan-u oḷḷeya-avanu. / huḍugi-yar-u oḷḷeya-avaru. / naan-u oḷḷeya-avanu/avaḷu.

he-NOM good-he[6]/ girl-PL-NOM good-they / I-NOM good-he/she

'He is a good person.' /'The girls are good people.' / 'I am a good person.'

It is also important to note that *oḷḷeya* cannot occur predicatively in its 'bare' form. The construction in (8) below crashes without a suffixal morpheme for the PC adjective *oḷḷeya*.

(8) *avan-u oḷḷeya

he-NOM good

'Intended: He is good.'

Keeping the above data in mind, various alternatives are suggested in the following section on the status of these morphemes and the structure of the clause in question.

2.2.1.1 An Analysis of the Predication Structure of Property Concept Adjectives

The facts in (7-8) lead us to two ways of analysing what appears to be 'agreement', in Kannada, for adjectives in the predicative position. The *avanu, avaḷu and avaru* morphemes can be analysed as below, either as adjectival agreement (as in 9) or a (pro)nominal (as in 10). At the phrasal level, the two analyses predict different complements to the 'verbless' copular clause in Kannada.

(9) [[$_{NP}$ avanu] [$_{AP}$ [$_{AgrP}$ avanu] [$_{AP}$ oḷḷeya]]] -- NP AP clause structure

(10) [[$_{NP}$ avanu] [$_{NP}$ [$_{FP}$ oḷḷeya] [$_{NP}$ avanu]]] -- NP NP clause structure

According to (9), these morphemes would then be analysed as some sort of adjectival agreement in the predicative position (though they do not show agreement in the attributive position). The second analysis (10) would predict an NP NP clause structure where *oḷḷeya* would be treated as a 'nominalised adjective'; the *avanu* morpheme above would be some sort

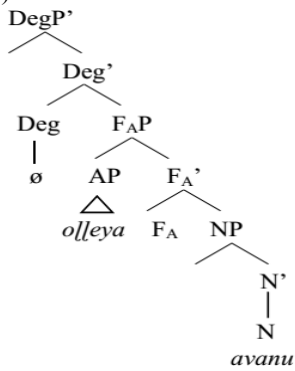
[6] Based on the choice of treatment, the suffixal *avanu, avaḷu* and *avaru* can be glossed in two ways. If we treat them as pronouns, we can gloss them as 'he', 'she' and 'they'. However, if we choose to treat them as AGR morphemes, we have to gloss them as '3MSG / 3FSG / 3PL'. Further along the discussion, I choose to treat them as a dummy pronominal. Hence, the gloss in (7).

of dummy pronominal head in the sense of Cinque's (2010) and Baker's (2008) analyses.

Pursuing the analysis in (9) is problematic on many accounts. Primarily, as described in Baker (2008; 61-62), a general rule regarding adjectives is that if in a given language adjectives do not take agreement in the attributive position they do not take agreement in the predicative position either. The better approach would be to analyse *avanu, avaḷu* and *avaru* as dummy pronominal heads, as PC adjectives in Kannada cannot occur 'bare' in the predicative position. This is the more straight-forward of the two analyses as it is well-known that these morphemes (*avanu, avaḷu* and *avaru*) are subject pronominals across Dravidian. In anticipation of the upcoming discussion on the distribution of *heccu* in comparative constructions, it is interesting to note that the predicative structures of the *oḷḷeya* group of adjectives do not take an obligatory Q. Hence a clause like *avanu oḷḷeya-avanu* 'He good-he' (as in 7) is interpretable as 'He is a good man'.

The analysis I propose is that *oḷḷeya,* a functional adjective, is hosted in specifier position of the functional phrase following Cinque (2010; 25; chapter 3; ex 1). This is illustrated in the representation below in (11). Further, *oḷḷeya* being an adjective, the functional phrase F_AP can be directly selected by a DegP. This explains why the clause type under discussion does not require *heccu* in comparative constructions. When we treat *oḷḷeya* as an adjective that encodes degree semantics, our data gets a ready explanation. The head of the F_AP, the functional phrase hosting the adjective, cannot be empty in Dravidian (for a reason that is unclear at the moment), and hence, we can posit that either the dummy pronominal is inserted here or it moves up from the complement NP.

(11)



In the positive degree constructions of the *oḷḷeya* group of adjectives in (7), the clause *avanu oḷḷeya-avanu* 'He good-he', for example, we said is interpreted as 'He is a good man'. In comparative degree construction of the same sentence (which we shall see further on in (19)), it is 'He (x) is a better man than him (y)'. The degree head being null in Kannada, and *heccu* not being obligatory for comparatives with the *oḷḷeya* group of PC adjectives, the only addition to the clause structure in (7) is the introduction of the standard of comparison. Thus, in Kannada the comparative construction for the *oḷḷeya* group of adjectives is literally 'He is a good man than him.'

2.2.2 Property Concept Nouns in the Predicative Position

PC nouns in Kannada occur predicatively in two kinds of copular constructions; one in which the subject is nominative with the PC noun taking dative case and the other in which the subject is dative case-marked and the PC noun occurs in its 'bare' form. The *udda* group of PCs can occur in both these types of constructions, in the former as *udda-kke* and in the latter as the bare form *udda.* This is illustrated in the data below in (12a-b). Re-iterating the claim made in the beginning, we shall treat *udda-kke* as a syntactically-derived adjective.

(12) a. raama-ø **udda-kke** idd-aane[7] [cf. ex 21 and 22 from A & J (2003)]

Raama(nom.) height-DAT be-3MSG

'Raama is tall.'

b. raaman-ige **udda** id-e

Raama-DAT height be-3N

'Raama has the height.'

[7] This construction is attested in my variety of Kannada and may not be in other varieties of the language. However (as far as my knowledge goes) it is not attested in Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu or Tulu. Also, I would like to thank Ashwini Deo for bringing it to my notice (p.c) that this pair (12a-b) exists in Marathi too.

a. Raam unchi-laa aahe. / b. Raam-laa unchi aahe.
Ram-NOM height-DAT be-3.sg / Raam-DAT height be-3.sg
'Ram is tall.' / 'Ram has the height.'

To distinguish these two types of constructions in (12a-b), we can draw a parallel to their respective counterparts in English: *Raama is tall* and *Raama has the height.* Just as in English, in Kannada too, *Raama has the height* is the more marked of the two constructions. However, with the right context, the construction in (12b) is fully acceptable just as it would be in English; for example, in a context like *Raama has the height (to join the basketball team).*

The *koopa* group of nouns on the other hand occur only in dative subject constructions as in (13b) and cannot occur in constructions such as (13a) with a nominative subject.

(13) a. *raama-ø **koopa-kke** idd-aane

Rama(nom.) anger-DAT be-3MSG

'intended: Rama is angry.'

b. raama-ige **koopa** id-e.

Rama-DAT anger be-3NSG

'Rama has anger.'

Thus, when we compare the predication structures of the *udda* group in (12) with the *koopa* group in (13), the motivation for a sub classification of PC nouns in Kannada becomes clear. They result in two groups, the *koopa* group and the *udda* group. Such an analysis is strengthened by the fact there is a strong semantic basis to this sub-division among PC nouns in Kannada. As the list in (5) suggests, the *koopa* group represent psycho-somaticproperties such as *happiness, sadness, contentment* etc. The members of the *udda* group are listed below in (14) and represent tangible, physical properties such as *height, weight, thickness* etc.

(14) Members of the ***udda(kke)* group** of PCs in Kannada- *udda* 'height', *saŋŋa* 'thinness', *dappa* 'fatness/thickness', *yetra* 'height', *kuḷḷa* 'shortness', *agala* 'width', *nuŋŋa* 'smoothness', *bisi* 'hotness', *taŋŋa* 'coldness', *mett* 'softness', *gaṭṭi* 'hardness' etc.

Thus, we have arrived at a three-way classification of PCs in Kannada: the *oḷḷeya* group of functional adjectives, the *udda-kke* group of syntactically derived adjectives and the *koopa* group of 'true' nouns. Let us now turn

our attention to degree expressions in Kannada and how this three-way classification plays out.

3. The Comparative in Kannada

3.1 An Overview

In this section, I examine the instantiation of the three groups of PCs in the comparative degree construction in Kannada. The section also considers cross-linguistic data in English, Telugu and Hindi comparatives to plot a pattern.

In this paper I shall assume that all adjectives inherently possess the property of gradability[8]. Thus I begin with the assumption that a degree head can select for only a gradable predicate (von Stechow 1984; Abney 1987; Kennedy 1997). By gradable predicate, I mean either an AP or a QP. Kennedy (2007; pg4; ex 9) sums up the idea of a gradable predicate in this definition: 'Gradable predicates map objects onto abstract representations of measurement (SCALES) formalised as a set of values (DEGREES) ordered along some dimension (HEIGHT, WEIGHT, LENGTH etc.).'

For expository purposes, let us consider the three kinds of degree expressions: the positive (also known as absolute) degree construction as in (15a), the comparative degree construction as in (15b), and the superlative degree construction as in (15c) with the intention of ultimately motivating a common structure for the three.

(15) a. John is tall.

b. John is taller than Bill.

c. John is the tallest.

[8] This is the standard view on adjectives in the literature. There are various contesting views, one of which is that adjectives are vague predicates and hence a DegP is not involved. However, I do not follow this view here. In addition, Kennedy (1997) mentions adjectives such as *dead, octagonal* and *former* as non-gradable adjectives. These examples itself are problematic because *dead* and *octagonal* can be attributive or predicative but *former* is purely an attributive adjective. The tests to check for non-gradability include: the adjective cannot take intensifiers or occur in comparative constructions and thus we cannot have **John is very dead* or **John is more dead than Bill*. In this sense, none of the fifty PCs I have worked on are non-gradable. In Kannada phrases like *dead frog* (e.g. *satta kappe*) clearly have relative clause structures.