Research Article

Argument Composition in N+LV Complex Predicates of Kannada

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Abstract
Complex Predicates (CPs hereafter) are abundant in Dravidian Languages spoken in the Southern part of India. A CP is a multi-word expression that acts as one verbal unit where a Light Verb (LV hereafter) plays a vital role (Amberber et al., 2010). LVs, with their syntactic and semantic features and preverbs, determine the argument structure of the whole CP construction. LVs have a distinctive feature of acquiring contextual meanings in combination with the preverbal elements, and this phenomenon is common across language families. (Hook 1991, 1993, Butt 1995). N+LV CPs and Noun Incorporation (NI) structures, which appear to be the same phenomenon, are two different structures altogether, though both have N+V composition. Baker (1988) proposes some defining characteristics for NI structures, which are indeed short for Dravidian languages like Kannada and Telugu, which are highly rich in morpho-syntactic features. According to SK Nadimpalli et al. (2022), additional characteristics exist that can effectively distinguish CPs from NIs. These were demonstrated using Telugu data. The present research concentrates on the difference between NIs and CPs with regard to the argument composition of the whole predicate. The study will also investigate how preverbal nouns in CPs, with specific semantic features, combine with different LVs and how the whole argument structure is composed, with the help of Kannada data as a case in point. The LVs exhibit a wide range of syntactic and semantic properties in consonance with the preverbal noun it combines with to constitute a CP construction. The selection of LVs is inherently language-specific, with LVs in Kannada potentially exhibiting different syntactic and semantic behaviors compared to their counterparts in Telugu. This study, with data from Kannada, would add to the syntactic and semantic repertoire of LVs and N+ LV CPs in Dravidian languages in particular and to the Universal Grammar at large.

Keywords*: Complex Predicate, Noun Incorporation, Light Verbs, Argument Structure, Kannada.

1. **Introduction:**

Complex Predicates (CPs) is one of the defining characteristics of agglutinating languages and it is more so with Dravidian Languages spoken predominantly in the Southern part of India. A CP is a multi-word unit that functions as a single Verb Phrase (VP) with a Light Verb (LV) as integral part in it ((Amberber et al., 2010). In a CP, the preverbal element, which can be a Noun/Lexical Verb/Adjective/Adverb, combines with an LV to constitute one single predicate with its own requirement for arguments. The LVs, depending on the preverbal element and the context, acquire a gamut of nuances of meaning such as benefaction, sudden action, completion and so on (Hook 1991, 1993, Butt 1995). These CP constructions are plenty in Dravidian languages such as Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Tulu and so on.

The CPs are mainly categorized into two types (Nadimpalli, S.K., & Kancherla, S. V. 2023):

A.   Lexical Verb + LV Construction

B.   Non-verb (Noun/adjective/adverb) + LV Construction

Here is a Bengali example for the type-A construction:

1. Ritu-keboi-ta   pathi-e di-echi

   Ritu-obj book-cl send-cp give-1 pres. Perf.

   I have sent the book to Ritu.   (Paul 2004:47)

Here is a Hindi example for the type –B construction:

2. Kamraasaafhuaa (saaf(adjective)+ huaa (LV))

   Room.nom clean became

   The room became clean.   (Mohanan., T, 2006)

In modern South Asian linguistics, the investigations carried out on CPs firstly concentrated on the formal structure and functions of CPs in terms of morpho-syntactic features. In 1980s, the interest was on the semantic properties of CPs (Abbi &Gopalakrishnam, 1991) and cross-linguistic accounts across the South Asian language families (Anderson, 2007; Subbarao, 2012). In 1990s, CPs were well-explored through many theoretical frameworks (Vaidya, 2015). At later stage, computational research concentrated on extracting CPs from electronic corpuses (Bhattacharyya et al., 2006; Soni et al. 2006; Rao et al. 2010).

Kannada, also called Canarese, is the official language in the state of Karnataka, India. It is also one of the classical languages of India with the highest number of Jnanpith Awards for its literature. Being an SOV language with a head-final parameter, it is highly rich in morpho-syntactic features just like Telugu, another major Dravidian language. Kannada allows various types of CPs and even exhibits structures like Noun Incorporation (NI), which are highly similar.

2. **Nominal CPs and Noun Incorporated structures:**

In Baker's (1988) analysis of NI structure, he asserts that only object nominals are incorporated into the lexical verb. However, Jamal Ouhalla (1988, 1989) provides counterexamples, suggesting that the subjects of ergative verbs function as objects in the deep structure. Nadimpalli, S. K., & Lakshmi, B. V. (2022) in their analysis of Telugu data, proved that there is NI structure in Telugu and can be differentiated from CPs. We will now propose the same criteria for Kannada as well which can help us determine whether a given N + LV compound is a CP construction or an NI construction in Kannada. Since Telugu and Kannada are genetically related, the criteria hold equally relevant. The criteria are:

a. The nominal element in an NI structure always counts as an internal argument of the verb it gets incorporated into.

b. Secondly, certain nouns can be incorporated or unincorporated depending on the type of complement which the verb takes.

These Criteria hold relevant to what Tara Mohanan and Fetemeh Nemati (2010) also proposed, sticking to Baker's analysis to differentiate NIs from CPs. Here are Persian Examples analyzed by Fatemeh Nemati (2010).

3. minā be bače Gazā dād (NI)

Mina to child food give.Pst.3.sg

Mina gave the food to the child.   (Fatemeh Nemati, 2010)

4. minā āryā rā šekast dād (CP)

Mina Arya OM defeat give.Pst.3.sg

Mina defeated Arya.   (Fetemeh Nemati, 2010)

Taking Rajyarama's(1998) semantic analysis of nouns in an N + LV compound in Telugu, we treat only those nouns that have +abstract, -stative semantic features or +abstract, +stative, + physiological semantic features as part of CPs in Kannada too and all other nouns as part of NI structures. Consider the following examples.

5. naanu   bhayapaTTe.

I.nom   fear.fall.pst.1s.

I feared.

6. naanu   avanannu   bhayapaDiside

I.nom   he.acc   fear.fall.caus.mar.pst.1s.

I frightened him.

In the sentence (5), the CP is an intransitive one taking only one argument which is *naanu* 'I'. The noun *bhaya* 'fear' is not an argument and therefore is part of the CP. In the sentence (6), the CP is a transitive one taking two arguments which are *naanu* 'I', an external argument, and *avanannu* 'him', an internal argument. In (6), the LV *paDu* 'to suffer or experiencer' takes a causative marker *–isu* in order to become a transitive one but in Telugu it is the transitive LV *peTTu* 'to keep' which makes the CP transitive. *paDu* here means 'to suffer or experience' as we have said earlier *paDu* is ambivalent with two functions and two meanings. When the LV *paDu* is intransitive, it means 'to fall' and when transitive it means 'to experience or suffer'.

We will consider only those nouns which have the following semantic features as part of CP constructions in Kannada. According to Rajyarama (1998), the nouns that have the following semantic features cannot function as internal argument of the following verb. Based on the criteria, we have proposed, we will treat the following nouns in Kannada as part of CPs. The feature that all the preverbal nouns share in both Kannada and Telugu is +abstract. Here are the two types.

Type -1: Nouns which are + abstract and – stative

These semantic features are associated with nouns like *maarpaaTu* 'change', *badilii* 'transfer', *puurṇa/puurtu* 'completion', *moosa* 'to cheat' , *saahasa* 'adventure', *lekka* 'count', *gurtu* 'identification', *jama* 'adding', *sari* 'order', *jote* 'union'.

Some of the LVs that occur with these nouns are *maaDu* 'to do', *hiDi* 'to catch' *haaku* 'to keep' and so on. Here are examples below.

7. avanu   haNana   lekkahaakidanu

he.nom   money.acc   count.keep.pst.3sm

He counted the money.

In the sentence (7), the CP is a transitive one taking two arguments which are *avanu* 'he' and *duDDu* 'money'. *lekka* 'count' is not an argument of the predicate and is just a part of the predicate. Therefore, it is a CP. The noun *lekka* can combine with the LV *haaku* 'to keep' or *maaDu* 'to do' or *iDu* 'to keep' in Kannada while it combines with only *peTTu* 'to keep' in Telugu. The LV *haaku* 'to keep' corresponds to *peTTu* 'to keep' in Telugu expressing a similarity.

Just like in Telugu, in Kannada also, nouns which have +abstract and –stative semantic features cannot satisfy the argument structure of the verb and therefore the verb has to take another argument. Hence, the entire predicate becomes a transitive verb.

puurtimaaDu   'complete do '   'to complete'

moosamaaDu   'cheat do'   'to cheat'

lekkamaaDu   'count do'   'to count'

gurtuhiDi   'identification catch'   'to identify'

sari maaDu   'order do'   'to order'

Here are some more sentence examples.

8. avaru   nannannu   gurtuhiDididaru.

They.nom me.acc   identification.catch.pst.3pl.

They identified me.

The noun *gurtu* 'identity' combines with the LV *hiDi* 'to catch' to form a CP. But, in Telugu, the corresponding LV *piDi* is not an LV. Instead, the LV *paTTu* 'to catch', which is a variant of *piDi* combines with the same noun *gurtu.*

Type- 2: Nouns which are +abstract, +stative and + psychological

These features can be found with the nouns, *cinte* 'being worried', *iirshya* 'envy', *baadhe* 'sadness', *manasu* 'intellect or mind', *bhaya* 'fear' *avamaana* 'insult' *kashTa* 'difficulty'.

Some of the LVs that occur with the nouns are *iDu* 'to keep', *biiLu* 'to fall' *koDu* 'to give', *maaDu* 'to do', *paDu* 'to fall', and so on.

Although these same nouns with the same semantic features form a CP with an LV in both Telugu and Kannada, there is always a collocational restriction on which nouns combine with which LVs in Kannada and Telugu. In other words, the noun *manasu* combines with the LVs *maaDu* 'to do' or *iDu* 'to keep' in Kannada, whereas in Telugu, it does not combine with *ceeyu* 'to do' which corresponds to *maaDu* in Kannada. Rather, *manasu* in Telugu combines with *peTTu* 'to keep' or *paDu* 'to fall' to mean 'to focus' and 'to fall in love' respectively. Here are examples below.

9. atanu   aamepai   manasupaDDaaDu. (Telugu)

He.nom she.on   mind.fall.pst.3sm.

He fell in love with her.

10. avanu   bengalurnalli kelasamaaDokke manasumaaDiddaane. (Kannada)

He.nom Bangalore.in to work   mind.do.be.pst.3sm

He made up his mind to work in Bangalore.

In the sentence (9), the noun with the LV *paDu* expresses a different meaning in Telugu and in (10) the same noun in Kannada expresses a different meaning with a different LV. If the LVs are interchanged in the examples with the same noun both the sentences become ungrammatical. Thus, it is a language specific constraint which decides as to which nouns combine with which LVs. However, sometimes the same noun may combine with the same LV to express the same meaning in different languages.

Nouns that have +abstract, +stative and +psychological semantic features cannot satisfy the internal argument structure of the verb, and so the verb retains its argument requirement, which gets satisfied with an object out of the N+LV compound. Some of the nominal CPs are below.

bhramepaDu/bhrameyaagu	'fall illusion'	'to feel illusioned'
iirshyepaDu	'suffer envy'	'to envy'
kashTakoDu	'give suffering'	'to cause to suffer'
manasiDu	'put mind'	'to focus on sth'
bhayapaDu	'suffer fear'	'to cause to fear'

Here are sentence examples.

11. nanna doDDaNNa   saNNamakkaNNu   bhayapaDisuttane. (Kannada)

    My elder brother.nom   small kids.acc   fear.put.pst.3sm

    My elder brother frightens small kids.

12. nanna maltaayi nanage   kashTakoTTaLu. (Kannada)

     My step mother   me to.dat   difficulty.give.pst.3fm

     My step mother put me to suffering.

In the sentences (11) and (12), the CPs are transitive ones taking two arguments out of the N+LV compound. The noun in the both CPs is part of the predicate and not an argument.

The LV *koDu* 'to give' corresponds to *peTTu* 'to keep' in Telugu with certain nouns. Though the exact equivalent for *koDu* is *ivvu* in Telugu which is also an LV, *ivvu* does not combine with *kashTamu* in Telugu but with *peTTu* 'to keep'. Only *biDu* 'to leave, let...' and *ivvu,* 'to give' function as permissive markers in Kannada and Telugu respectively.

Now, we will analyze N+ LV CPs and NIs diagrammatically with the help of VP Shell Hypothesis proposed by Chomsky (1995) in the Minimalist Framework in order to get a better idea of the status of the noun in an NI structure and in a CP.

Here is a diagrammatic representation of an NI structure.

13.
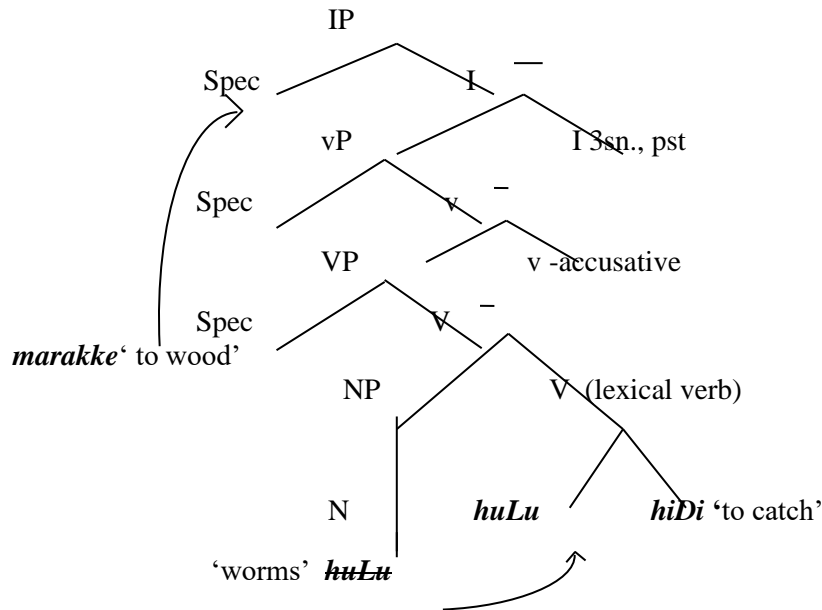
As we have discussed, an NI structure is one in which the internal argument of the predicate gets incorporated into the following lexical verb. As we can see in the above tree diagram, we can find that the internal argument *huLu* moves from the argument position NP to V, which is occupied by the lexical verb *hiDi,* and gets incorporated into the verb. As NI structure is one predicate, both the incorporated noun and the lexical verb occupy the position of V (big V).

Now we will look at the diagrammatic representation of a CP in the following.

13.
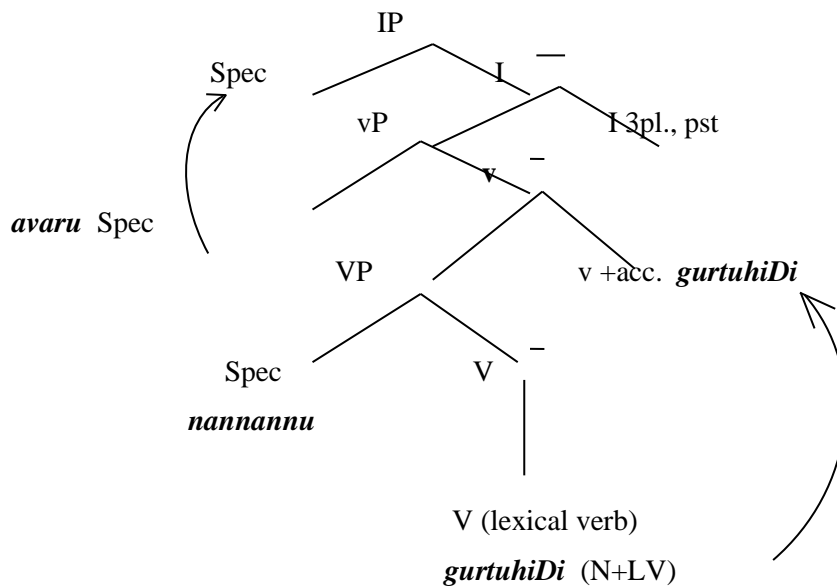
As we can see in the above diagram, the CP *gurtuhiDi,* which is a combination of a noun and an LV, together form a CP and occupy the position of V (big V) just like any other predicate. The LV *hiDi,* which is a verbaliser, and the noun *gurtu*, which is a semantic contributor, together enter as a single predicate occupying the position of V and subsequently move to v (small v), where there is a copy of the LV and finally move to I to become finite. We have taken SOV as the underlying word order for the

following reasons. Firstly, if we assume that the underlying word order is SVO, then there will be too many unmotivated movements in order to arrive at SOV. Secondly, there are more number of SOV languages than SVO languages.

Except the type of V+LV CP, the other types, which are adjective + LV and adverb + LV CPs, also behave the same just like N+ LV CPs with respect to diagrammatic representation. In V+LV CPs, the preverbal element is already an independent verb and therefore can occupy the position of V (big V), while the LV occupies the position of v (small v). The main verb at V moves to v (small v), where there is an LV, combines with it and finally the CP moves to I to take inflections.

So far, we have looked at the difference between an NI structure and a CP with the different criteria proposed. Based on the semantic specifications of nominal elements in N+LV compounds, we have treated only two types of nouns as part of CPs and others as part of NI structures. We have also listed the LVs that combine with the two types of CPs.

3. Morphosyntax of N+LV CPs

The LVs in N+LV CPs can be either transitive or intransitive verbs. The following is a list of some of the widely used verbs with nouns to constitute a CP construction in Kannada.

a. Transitive LVs which go only with nouns:

Some LVs always go with nouns, but they do not attach to verbs. These LVs are: *kaTTu* 'to tie', *maaDu* 'to do', *eeru* 'to climb', *hiDi* 'to hold', *aaDu* 'to play', *uNNu* 'to eat', *suri* 'to pour', *toko* ' take' and so on.

Here are examples from Kannada:

N+LV	Gloss	Actual meaning
tukku-hiDi	rust catch	'to rust'
mosa-maaDU	cheating do	'to cheat'

Here are some sentence examples:

14. avanu   nannalli   yaavaagalu tapphiDitaane. (Kannada)

    He.nom   me.accu   always   fault.catch.pres.3sm

    He always finds faults with me.

15. avanu   nannannu   mosamaaDidanu. (Kannada)

    He.nom me.acc   cheating.do.pst.3sm

    He cheated me.

b. **Transitive LVs which go with both nouns and verbs:**

Some transitive light verbs can combine both nouns and verbs equally. These are some of the examples are: *hoDi* 'to beat' *biDu* 'leave', *iDu* 'to keep', *heeLu* 'to utter' *haaku* 'to keep' and so on.

Here are sentence examples.

16. Amma   nannannu   baidbiTru. (V+LV) (Kannada)

    My mother.nom me.accu   scold.leave.pst.3pl.

    My mother scolded me.

The LV *biDu* 'to leave' in Kannada and the LV *veyyu* 'to throw' in Telugu express the same meaning 'sudden action'. The equivalent of *biDu* is *viDu* in Telugu which is not an LV. Thus, two different LVs in the languages express the same meaning which is called lexicalization.

c. Intransitive LVs which go with both nouns and verbs:

Some light verbs can go with both nouns and verbs equally. LVs like *huTTu* 'to be born', *aagu* 'to become', *baa* 'to come', *hogu* 'to go' are some of them. The following are the examples.

17. avaLige maybandide. (Kannada)

    She.Dat. body.come.pres.perf.3sn

    She has become plump

18. hakki   haarihooyitu. (Kannada)

    bird.nom fly.go.pst.3sn.

    The bird flew away.

So far, we have looked at different LVs and their combinatorial properties.

N+LV CPs, in Kannada, subcategorise for *–endu*, *-emba*, *-embudu* clauses. The argument structure of complex N+LV constructions depends on both elements of the CP in Kannada. Besides clauses, CPs in Kannada subcategorise for non-clausal arguments. Now we will look at some examples to see how argument structure is composed.

19. naanu tumba bhayapaTTe. (Kannada)

    I.nom   very   fear.fall.pst.1s

    I feared very much.

20. naanu avanannu bhayapaDisidenu. (Kannada)

    I.nom   him.acc   fear..fall.caus.mark.pst.1s.

    I frightened him.

In the sentence (20), the noun *bhaya* 'fear' and the LV *paDu* 'to fall' form an intransitive CP taking only one argument, i.e., *naanu* 'I'. In the sentence (21), on the other hand, the same noun *bhaya* combines with the LV *paDu* 'to keep' which has a causative marker attached to it to constitute a transitive CP taking two arguments which are *naanu* 'I', an external argument, and *avanannu* 'him', an internal argument. The LV *paDu* in (21) is a transitive one because of the causative marker *–isu.* But in Telugu, the same noun combines with the transitive LV *peTTu*'to keep' and becomes a transitive CP. Either a causative marker, as in Kannada on the LV, or a transitive LV, as in Telugu, determine the valence value of the whole CP while the meaning of the predicate is contributed by the noun. Thus, the same noun may have different valence value depending on what LV it combines with. We will now look at some more examples in which the same LV has different valence values depending on what it combines with.

21. magu   galaaTemaaDitu. (Kannada)

    Boy.nom   mischief.do.pst.3sn.

    The boy made a lot of noise/ was mischievous.

22. naanu kelasa   puurtimaaDide (Kannada)

    I.nom work all.acc complete.do.pst.1s

I completed the work.

In the sentence (22), the CP consists of the noun *galaaTe* 'mischief' and the LV *maaDu* 'to do' functioning as an intransitive CP. The CP has only one external argument, i.e., *magu* 'the boy'. On the other hand, in (23), the CP consists of the noun *puurna* 'completion' and the same LV *maaDu* 'to do'. The CP, in this sentence is a transitive taking the internal argument *kelasavannu* 'work' one because of the semantic value of the noun.

As in Telugu, in Kannada too, the composition of argument structure in this type is determined by both the noun and the LV. While the noun contributes meaning, the LV determines the transitive value of the whole CP. LVs, in this type, are both verbalisers as well as those that decide transitive value of the predicate.

4. **Conclusion**:

We first explored the differences between an NI structure and a CP. The basic difference between the two structures is that the preverbal noun is an internal argument of the predicate in an NI structure, while it is not an argument in a CP. Baker states that a noun gets incorporated into a lexical verb but not to an LV. Another criterion we proposed to differentiate the two is that certain nouns are incorporated or unincorporated depending on the type of complement the verb takes. Rajyarama (1998), in her analysis of compounds in Telugu, investigated semantic features of nouns to see which type of nouns can satisfy the internal argument requirement of the following verb and which cannot in an N+LV compound and this analysis fairly applies to Kannada CPs as well. However, she does not treat the compounds as CPs or NIs. She treats them all in what she calls the word formation process. The noun can never be detached in a CP. In an NI structure, on the other hand, the same noun occurs unincorporated and it can have case inflection or can have a modifier or determiner etc. But when the noun is incorporated none of these are present. Next, we made a list of the transitive/intransitive LVs that occur in the N + LV CPs in Kannada. The LVs not only determine the argument structure of N + LV CPs but also their thematic structure which in turn determines the case the argument gets. The LVs are mostly verbalisers in N + LV type, the noun needs either an LV or a causative marker to become a verb. However, in the V+LV type, as the preverbal element is already a verb, it does not take another verbalizing affix (LV/causative marker). In Kannada, no LV can render CPs passive and indeed passive form is no longer used in contemporary Kannada. Instead, the intransitive LV aagu 'to become' combines with the noun to make an intransitive CP.

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