

Negation of Copular Sentences in Kannada and Telugu

D Amba¹, Ria Mukherjee²

¹Research Scholar, Sarala Birla University, Ranchi, India

²Assistant Professor/Head of Department of English, Sarala Birla University, Ranchi, India

Abstract

Typology of negation has been much described and discussed over the years. However, focus has mainly been on standard negation. Studies on non-verbal negation in general and comparative studies using the same language family covering the complete domain of non-verbal negation in particular are less common. The strategies to express non-verbal negation vary among languages. In some languages the negation strategy employed in standard negation is also used in non-verbal negation. This study examines and describes negation strategies in Kannada and Telugu languages, both though being the part of the same Dravidian family exhibit differences in the sentence construction. The results suggest that Kannada uses one word to negate the copular sentences whereas Telugu uses two words, one showing an accord and another showing no accord.

Keywords: Dravidian languages, Copula, alla (Kannada), ka:du (Telugu)

1. Introduction:

Dravidian language family constitutes of many languages, four being the mostly used ones – Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. The languages taken up for study are Kannada and Telugu. There are many peculiar features attributed to the Dravidian languages such as honorific pronouns, ultra honorific pronouns, reflexive pronouns, agreement marks with reference to number and gender, compound verbs, reduplication, conjunct verbs, echo words, conjunctive participles, pro-drop, expletive light verbs, etc. Dravidian languages take different negative particles to negate a sentence that has a lexical verb and a sentence that has a non-lexical verb or a copula. This paper studies the negation aspect with reference to copular sentences.

2. Earlier Research:

Negation in different languages have been taken up independently and there are some papers where negation is studied using many Dravidian languages in a brief manner focussing on some aspects. In this study, the focus will be in the detailed study of negation using Kannada and Telugu.

3. Discussion:

Kannada negative morpheme ‘alla’ is used to negate copular sentences which are obligatorily verbless. A copula is a word or a phrase which links the subject of a sentence to a subject complement. In English the verb forms of “to be” are used to frame such sentences, it is often called a linking verb. He is a teacher

In order to negate such sentences in English, we use the negative particle ‘not’

She is not a teacher.

In Kannada, we can frame such sentences without using a verb.

1) avanu adhya:paka

he-informal teacher-masc

he is a teacher

when such sentences are negated, the negative particle ‘alla’ is used.

Now let us look if this word shows an agreement with the subject used in the sentence.

2) na:nu vidhyartha alla

I student not

I am not a student

3) ni:nu vidhyartha alla

you (informal) student not

you are not a student

4) avanu adhya:paka alla

he teacher not

he is not a teacher

5) avaLu nartaki alla

she danser-fem not

she is not a danser

6) adu pustaka alla

that book not

that is not a book

7) na:vu adhya:pakaru alla

we teachers not

we are not teachers

8) ni:vu adhya:pakaru alla

you(formal/plural) teachers not

you are not teachers

9) avaru adhya:pakaru alla

they teacher-pl not

they are not teachers

10) avu pustakagaLu alla

they books not

they are not books

If the sentences are observed without the negative particle ‘alla’ the agreement can be seen with respect to the gender and number. So, in the affirmative sentences, Kannada shows agreement in copular sentences also. But the negative particle ‘alla’ remains invariable all across the subjects. It does not show any agreement for either the gender or the number.

Now, we shall see some similar sentences in Telugu language.

1) ne:nu vidhyartha ka:du

I student not

- I am not a student
- 2) nuvu vidhyarthi ka:du
you (informal) student not
you are not a student
- 3) athanu adhya:pakuDu ka:du
he teacher not
he is not a teacher
- 4) a:me nartaki ka:du
she danser-fem not
she is not a danser
- 5) adi pustakamu ka:du
that book not
that is not a book
- 6) manamu adhya:pakulu ka:du
we (incl. of the listener) teachers not
we are not teachers
- 7) me:mu adhya:pakulu ka:du
we(excl. of the listener) teachers not
we are not teachers
- 8) mi:ru adhya:pakulu ka:du
you(formal/plural) teachers not
you are not teachers
- 9) va:ru adhya:pakulu ka:du
they teacher-pl not
they are not teachers
- 10) avi pustaka:lu ka:du
they books not
they are not books

It can be observed that the negative particle 'ka:du' also is invariable and does not show any agreement with respect to gender or number of the subject.

But Telugu language has one more deviation in negating such sentences wherein we can see agreement.

- 1) ne:nu vidhyarthi ka:nu
I student not
I am not a student
- 2) nuvu vidhyarthi ka:vu
you (informal) student not
you are not a student
- 3) athanu adhya:pakuDu ka:Du
he teacher not
he is not a teacher
- 4) a:me nartaki ka:du
she danser-fem not

she is not a danser

5) adi pustakamu ka:du

that book not

that is not a book

6) manamu adhya:pakulu ka:mu

we (incl. of the listener) teachers not

we are not teachers

7) me:mu adhya:pakulu ka:mu

we(excl. of the listener) teachers not

we are not teachers

8) mi:ru adhya:pakulu ka:ru

you(formal/plural) teachers not

you are not teachers

9) varu adhya:pakulu ka:ru

they teacher-pl not

they are not teachers

10) avi pustaka:lu ka:vu

they books not

they are not books

Here, the agreement in the negative particle can be obviously seen.

ka:nu / ka:vu / ka:Du / ka:du / ka:mu / ka:ru

4. Conclusion:

Both the languages Kannada and Telugu belong to Dravidian Language family, they exhibit some differences and this is one of the aspects. The negative particle 'alla' that negates the copular sentences is invariable in Kannada language whereas the Telugu language has two alternate uses to negate the copular sentences. One aspect does not show any agreement and the other shows a clear agreement with the subject used in the sentence.

5. References:

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