

**Accusative-Nominative Case Conversion and Complex Predicates in Kannada and Japanese/Korean**

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Kannada (a South Asian Dravidian language) shows widespread optional Accusative-to-Nominative case conversion (ANC) with a wider range of predicates than well-known cases found in Japanese, where the phenomenon is restricted mainly to [+stative] complex predicate environments. Optional ANC in Japanese occurs with [+stative] complex predicates (though Nominative objects are (for the most part) obligatory with simplex lexical statives; Kuno 1973). According to Tada (1992) and Koizumi (1995), the Nominative object occupies a higher position than the Accusative object. We follow Koizumi's (1995) analysis for Japanese ANC, whereby potential stative constructions are "bi-clausal", and the Accusative object is licensed in the embedded domain whereas the Nominative object is licensed in the matrix domain.

However, in striking contrast to Japanese, optional ANC in Kannada is quite widespread, occurring with predicates that are seemingly non-complex, consisting of a V+agr complex. We hypothesize that the widespread presence of optional ANC derives from the ability of morphological phi-feature agreement to license Nominative objects in a bi-clausal construction. We claim that the V+agr complex in Kannada constitutes a bi-clausal structure forming a morphologically complex predicate that yields alternative surface positions for the object NP even in [-stative] environments. We further claim that what has been analyzed as morphological verbal agreement in seemingly mono-clausal environments in Kannada actually behaves as the predicate of a higher clausal domain.

## 1. ANC Facts

## 1.1 ANC in Japanese (Kuno 1973)

- Transitive [-stative] predicates do not allow for ANC and require Accusative objects.

(1) John-ga            pizza-**o**            tabe-ru  
John-Nom           pizza-**Acc**           eat-Pres  
'John eats pizza'

(2) \*John-ga           piza-**ga**            tabe-ru  
John-Nom           pizza-**Nom**           eat-Pres

- Simplex lexical [+stative] predicates require Nominative objects.

(3) \*John-ga           huransugo-**o**        deki-ru  
John-Nom           French-**Acc**        capable-Pres  
'John is capable of French'        ('John speaks French')

(4) John-ga           huransugo-**ga**        deki-ru  
John-Nom           French-**Nom**        capable-Pres

- Optional Accusative-Nominative alternation appears with complex (arguably bi-clausal) [+stative] predicates.

(5) John-ga           huransugo-**o**        hana-se-ru  
John-Nom           French-**Acc**        speak-can-Pres  
'John can speak French'

(6) John-ga           huransugo-**ga**        hana-se-ru  
John-Nom           French-**Nom**        speak-can-Pres

## 1.2 ANC in Korean (Chung 1998)

- Transitive [-stative] predicates do not allow ANC

(7) Nay-ka sakwa-lul mekkessta  
 I-Nom apple-Acc ate  
 'I ate an apple'

(8) \*Nay-ka sakwa-ka mekkessta  
 I-Nom apple-Nom ate  
 'I ate an apple'

- Transitive [+stative] complex(bi-clausal) predicates allow ANC

(9) Nay-ka sakwa-lul/ka mekko sephta  
 I-Nom apple-Acc/Nom eat want  
 'I want to eat an apple'

## 1.3 ANC in Kannada

- Transitive [-stative] predicates allow for optional ANC.

(10) jaananu-Ø ondu seeb-**annu** tind-anu  
 John-Nom one apple-**Acc** ate-PNG  
 'John ate an apple' (PNG=person, number, gender  
 marker)

(11) jaananu-Ø ondu seebu-Ø tind-anu  
 John-Nom one apple-**Nom** ate-PNG

- [+stative] complex (bi-clausal) predicates allow for optional ANC.

(12) jaananu-Ø French-**annu** maatada-ball-anu  
 John-Nom French-**Acc** speak-can-PNG  
 'John can speak French'

(13) jaananu-Ø French-Ø maatada-ball-anu  
 John-Nom French-**Nom** speak-can-PNG

Note that cases with –Ø Nominative marker on the object are not cases of Accusative case dropping under adjacency with V (cf. Japanese):

- Quantifier or PP adjunct may intervene between Acc/Nom object and V:

(14) jaananu-Ø seeb-annu/Ø maatra tind-anu  
 John-Nom apple-Acc/Nom only ate-PNG  
 'John ate only apples'

(15) jaananu-Ø seeb-annu/Ø maneya meelee esad-anu  
 John-Nom apple-Acc/Nom house-gen on threw-PNG  
 'John threw the apples on the house'

- Acc/Nom object may be scrambled:

(16) jaanana-Ø      ii    pustakaw-annu/Ø    nana-ge    t      koTT-anu  
 John-Nom      this    book-Acc/Nom      to me      gave-PNG  
 ‘John gave me a book’

(17) ii    baTTey-annu/Ø    [jaanana- Ø    nana-ge    t    koTT-anu]  
 this    cloth-Acc/Nom    John-Nom      to me      gave-PNG  
 ‘John gave me this cloth’

→ Why is the distribution of optional ANC in Kannada more widespread than the distribution of ANC in Japanese?

2. “Bi-Clausal” Account of Japanese ANC

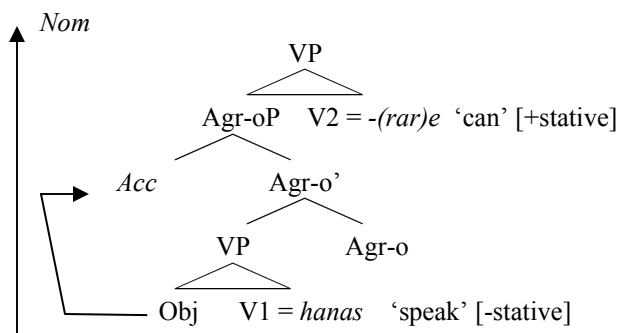
- Tada (1992) argues that the Nominative object takes wider scope than the Accusative object; indicates that the Nominative object is structurally higher than the Accusative object:

(18) John-ga            migime-dake-**o**            tumur-e-ru  
 John-Nom          right.eyeye-only-**Acc**      close-can-Pres  
 ‘John can close only his right eye’  
 i.      can > only      ‘John can wink his right eye’  
 ii.     ?\*only > can    ‘It is only his right eye that he can close’

(19) John-ga            migime-dake-**ga**            tumur-e-ru  
 John-Nom          right.eyeye-only-**Nom**      close-can-Pres  
 ‘John can close only his right eye’  
 i.      \*can > only  
 ii.     only > can

- Bi-level representation of complex potential stives (Koizumi 1995):

(20)



- Japanese complex stative constructions are “bi-clausal” (treating V1 and V2 as separate predicates). The Accusative object is licensed in the embedded domain whereas the Nominative object is licensed in the matrix domain.

3. Widespread ANC in Kannada:

3.1. Proposal

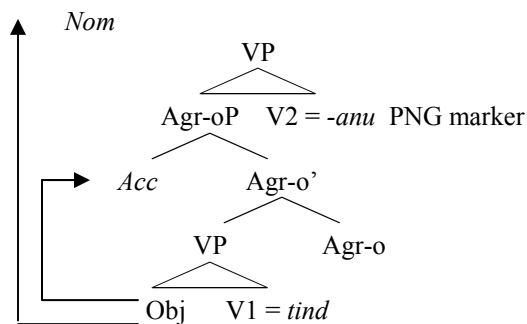
- Like Japanese/Korean, Kannada allows optional ANC in [+stative] complex predicate environments. (ex. 12-13)
- Unlike Japanese/Korean, Kannada allows optional ANC with apparently simplex transitive [-stative] predicates. (ex. 10-11)

→ Proposal: Phi features including Agreement marker (Person-Number-Gender marker) and lexical V form a complex predicate in a VP-shell structure. Lexical V occupies the lower VP-shell; phi features in Kannada serves as the head of the upper VP-shell. The bi-level structure allows an additional case-licensing position for the object NP.

(21) jaanana-Ø      ondu    seeb-**annu**    tind-anu  
 John-Nom        one    apple-**Acc**    ate-PNG  
 ‘John ate an apple’

(22) jaanana-Ø      ondu    seebu-Ø      tind-anu  
 John-Nom        one    apple-**Nom**    ate-PNG

(23)



Note:

- A PF linear account of morphological case marking (e.g., Harada 2002) cannot capture, in a unified way, the data from both Japanese and Kannada. Ex: passive, where V1 arguably has no corresponding Agr-oP, and the object is forced to raise into the domain of the passive morpheme, which we analyze as V2 in the upper shell.

(24) se:bu- Ø/\*annu    tinnal-patt-itu  
 apple-Nom/-Acc    eat-Passive-Past

‘An apple was eaten’

(25) ringo-ga /\*-o    tabe-rare-ta      (Japanese)  
 apple-Nom/-Acc    eat-Passive-Past  
 ‘An apple was eaten’

We therefore appeal to a configurational account.

- “Stativity” alone does not license case conversion; the data suggest that a range of morphological factors involving complex predicate formation are at work.

(26) jaananu- Ø    haNN-annu/ Ø    tin-al-illa  
 John-Nom    fruit-Acc/Nom    eat-infinitive-neg  
 ‘John did not eat the fruit’

(27) jaananu- Ø    kathe-y-annu/ Ø    bare-dan-e?  
 John-Nom    story-Acc/Nom    write-pst-Q  
 ‘Did John write the story?’

- Nominative case licensing may not be mediated via feature checking/agreement; Nominative is possibly assigned as a default in an externally adjoined position (perhaps adjoined to the upper VP or higher) (Fukui and Nishigauchi 1992 for Japanese)

### 3.2. Complex predicates and NP licensing

- Many analyses of complex predicates (cf. Butt, M. (1998)) in different frameworks have argued that complex predicate formation is triggered by Light Verbs and Auxiliaries. These verbs are considered semantically ‘light’ or ‘bleached’ in the sense of Jespersen (1954) and act as ‘receptors’ which need to be bound (“satisfied”) by a head that attaches to them (Koopman (1994)). We argue that ‘light’ verbs/auxiliaries form the head of the upper VP shell and act as receptors for the verb from the lower VP shell creating a complex predicate that triggers ANC in Kannada, Japanese and Korean. We extend this analysis to AGR features, negative morphemes, question particles that act like receptors for the lower V to move into the upper VP shell triggering ANC in Kannada, but not in Japanese/Korean.

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