



Is There Noun Incorporation In Telugu?

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Abstract

The paper concentrates on the phenomenon of Noun Incorporation (NI here after) as treated by Baker (1988) and other researchers. The linguists have a varied opinion on NI. As nominal Complex Predicates (CPs hereafter) and NI constructions seem to have the same grammatical elements and look alike, there arise some basic questions as to whether both nominal CPs and noun incorporated constructions refer to the same structures or they address different structures. Is NI a syntactic movement? How do incorporated nouns behave semantically as well as functionally in general and in Telugu (a Dravidian language) in particular -if at all there are- are some of the questions that will be addressed. Based on the analysis made by many researchers in different languages on NI, the paper tries to finally take up the analyses made by Tara Mohanan (2007) and also Fetemeh Nemati (2010), which stick to Baker's analysis and further try to distinguish NI from CP constructions, and concentrate on the phenomenon of NI in Telugu.

Keywords: Noun incorporation; Complex Predicate; valence value; compound verb ; Telugu

1. Introduction

This paper firstly focuses on the phenomenon of Noun Incorporation and how it differs from Complex Predicate construction reflecting on varied opinions of linguists on NI construction. Secondly, it tries to explore if there is NI construction in Telugu, the most wide-spread Dravidian language spoken in the Southern part of India. Telugu abounds in CPs allowing noun/adjective/adverb/verb to conjoin with a light verb to constitute a CP construction. However, the noun and the light verb constituting a complex predicate is sometimes mistaken to be an NI structure in Telugu though there is not any tangible research carried out on the phenomenon in the language. There requires an elaborate exploration into the behaviour of NI structure across languages taking into account the opinions of various researchers, which, in turn, help find out if there is an NI structure in Telugu. Also, the behaviour of NI structure in Telugu if at all there is.

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1.1. Literature Review

Incorporation is a process by which an independent semantic element combines with another independent element to finally form one new element. As a result, the grammatical function of the incorporated element may change as the element becomes just part of a compound which has its own grammatical function. As the term itself indicates, the incorporated element is a noun combining with a verb to form another verb. Here is an example from Mohawk (Iroquoian, Postal (1962)).

1. ka-rakv ne sawatis hrao-nuhs-a?.

3N-be-white John 3M-house-suf

‘John’s house is white.’

2. hrao-nuhs-rakv ne sawatis.

3M-house-be-white John

‘John’s house is white.’

In (1) the verb root is -rakv ‘be white’, while the noun root is -nuhs ‘house’. In (2) the verb is a combination of both the noun and the verb which are independent elements in (1). This is an instance of NI. Incorporation does not only happen with nouns but prepositions and verbs also in some languages. According to Baker’s analysis, the NI is a consequence of the movement of the head category, the noun or direct object of the verb, to the following governing verb in the syntax and thus it is a syntactic movement. Therefore, the grammatical function of the moved element which is a nominal category roughly changes to verbal category as it will finally form a verb.

Baker’s analysis of NI says that it is a case of move-alpha and hence it has to obey the governing constraints like ECP. In his view, it is only object NPs which can be incorporated but not subjects. But Jamal Ouhalla (1988, 1989) gives counter examples to this saying that the subject of ergative verbs are their objects in the deep structure. Incorporated noun C- commands and also governs its trace and thus satisfies the ECP. But when the subject NP moves to incorporate, it has to lower to the V of VP from the spec of IP. In this movement the incorporated noun cannot C-command its trace and so it violates ECP. Therefore, subject incorporation violates ECP and thus it is ruled out. But subjects of ergative verbs can be incorporated supporting the syntactic movement of move-alpha.

There is also a construction dealt with by Belletti and Rizzi (1981) where a non-maximal nominal clitic moves from the object position and attaches to the verb leaving a trace behind. This clitic heads the NP with a quantifier at D-structure. Belletti and Rizzi came up with this construction found in Italian. The nominal ne clitic in Italian attaches to verb just like a noun incorporated into a verb. The cliticization of the clitic ne was also referred to as noun incorporation. NI and ne-cliticisation share some common properties: the ne-cliticisation occurs naturally from the object position of a transitive verb and it is not possible for it to occur from the subject position of intransitive or ergative verbs. Also, only the subjects in ergative intransitive constructions can undergo this cliticisation. As ne heads NP at D-structure and incorporates into the verb just like an NP, both of them can be treated as the same phenomenon (Jamal Ouhalla). Both the processes operate within the VP which is a head to head movement.

However, Baker tries to expose the distinction between the two processes saying that the ne clitic is a phonologically dependent element on the verb it attaches to while the noun is an independent element and forms a compound with its host verb. Also, ne is not purely a nominal head and thus cannot receive a theta role and cannot be governed lexically.

Prof. B. Rama Krishna Reddy (Personal communication) states that the phenomenon of ne-cliticisation found in Italian is found in Manda also, which is a Dravidian language. But Telugu and Kannada do not have it.

Before we look into whether the phenomenon of NI is present in Telugu, a Dravidian language spoken in Southern India, we need to first answer the question as to whether the N+V CPs can be taken to be noun incorporated constructions. A nominal CP is a composition of a noun and a light verb while a NI construction consists of a noun and a verb. Baker in his analysis did not mention whether the verb in NI construction is a light verb.

Prof. Sudharsan (personal communication) is of the view that by using certain semantic and syntactic criteria, we can determine whether an N+V structure is a CP or an NI structure. If an N_V structure is semantically and syntactically form a single unit, then it is a CP and if it is not a single unit semantically, it then it is an NI structure. In an NI structure N+V do form a single unit only syntactically and the noun retains its original meaning whether it is a part of the the verb or detached from it. Secondly, a noun never gets incorporated to a light verb, it has to be a lexical verb.

Based on the data of Persian, Fatemeh Nemati (2010) tries to draw some differences between CPs and NI structures. In his view, the noun in CPs has no argument relation to the verb and is just part of the predicate. The noun adds to the argument structure of the CP and thus is part of the predication. The most striking difference is that the semantic value of the predicate does not confirm to the original semantic content of the verb, which is a light verb. The noun in NI does not take any external modifiers like adjectives and quantifiers. If modified, the predicate undergoes a semantic change and becomes a non-incorporated counterpart. On the other hand, when the noun in CP is modified, the modification extends to the entire event and the semantics of the noun does not change. Also, according to Fatemeh Nemati, the noun in NI construction can be relativised in its syntactic paraphrase giving the same specific meaning that it has in the incorporated structure. And the noun in CP, when relativised, does not give a specific meaning.

Alana Johns (2007) observes that NI appears to have a noun which is both an argument of the predicate, usually the internal argument, and yet part of the whole predicate. In contrast to Baker's analysis of NI, Rosen (1989), ruling out the interpretation of noun as a syntactic process in NI, states that a lexical analysis can well explain NI in two ways. The first one is that the noun can satisfy the internal argument of the predicate through word-formation process and the second one is that the noun can be treated as a classifier which restricts the interpretation of syntactic process. Thus, it has been an issue of debate trying to arrive at a conclusion about whether it is a lexical or syntactic process. These arguments, to some extent, ended with Distributed Morphology which takes into account both morphology and syntax.

Sapir (1991) and John and Massan (1998) observe that NI is not a uniform construction across languages. What is common for this construction cross-linguistically is that the noun always attaches to the left of the verb which again is a problem for SOV languages like Telugu and Kannada to determine whether a given noun is an incorporated one or an object of the predicate.

Baker, though took some data for NI from Inuktitut language and analyzed them, did not address the language in depth and moreover, the verbs to which nouns attach in this language are all light verbs (Alana Johns, 2007). Alan Johns restricts NI to noun plus light verb constructions saying that the NI in Inuktitut is in fact the result of the nature of the verb involved. In the case of the verb being a lexical element (not light verb), then the requirement of the lexical element at the left most is met by the verb and thus NI becomes impossible. Contrary to this, if the verb is a light verb, the nominal lexical element will incorporate as it goes to lexeme or root position of the predicate. This way, in this language the NI is different from that of Iroquoian language studied by Baker.

Tara Mohanan (2007) states that there are two types of N+V CPs in Hindi where the verb in one type is a lexical one and in another type a light verb. Here are some examples given by Tara Mohanan.

3. Raam-ne apnaa homwark kiyaa

Ram.nom self's homework did

Ram did his homework.

4. Raam-ne kamre-kii safaaii kii

Ram.nom room.Gen cleaning did

'Ram cleaned the room' (Ram did cleaning of the room)

In Mohanan's view, (3) is not a CP while (4) is a CP. The noun as well as the light verb in (4) can change the argument structure in other constructions of CPs. The verb in (3) is a lexical verb and thus the N+V combination is not a CP. The elements of the CP in (4) are phrasally combined forming a single predicate and they do not have a lexical status.

In her view, though the preverbal noun is part of the predicate, it can also be an argument of the light verb in Hindi which is true with Telugu too. Here is an example below.

5. pēdalaku sāyamu cēyabaDindi.

The poor.Dat help do.fall.be.3.sg.n.

The poor were helped.

Mohanan, in an attempt to make a distinction between NI and CP, makes a list of categorial and functional properties of the N+V constructions with the help of which the differences can be characterized. Both the NI and CP are single clause constructions. Here is her analysis below.

		NI	CP
Categorial status	1. Noun	Lexical	Phrasal or lexical
	2. Verb	Lexical	Phrasal or lexical
	3. [Noun, Verb]	Lexical	Phrasal or lexical

		NI	CP
Functional status of Noun	Works as argument	Yes	Can be
	Works as predicate	No	Yes

Tara Mohanan leaves it open at this juncture saying whether these form a set of criteria for CPs and NI constructions have to be researched further.

2. NI Construction in Telugu

As we have seen so far, the linguists have a varied opinion on NI. Based on the analysis made by many researchers in different languages, we will take up the analysis convincingly made by Tara Mohanan and also Fetemeh Nemati (2010) which sticks to Baker's analysis and further tries to distinguish NI from CP constructions with the help of some data from Persian. Here are the examples analyzed in Persian.

6. minā be bače Gazā dād (NI)

Mina to child food give.Pst.3.sg

Mina gave the food to the child.

(Fatemeh Nemati, 2010)

7. minā āryā rā šekast dād (CP)

Mina Arya OM defeat give.Pst.3.sg

Mina defeated Arya.

(Fatemeh Nemati, 2010)

Excluding the nominal element in the verbal complex, the verb is the same in both the sentences which is *dād* ‘to give’. However, the verb in (6) retains its meaning and thus is a lexical verb or main verb to which the noun *Gazā* ‘food’ attaches and finally both of them form one single predicate taking an argument. On the other hand, in (7), the verb does not retain its meaning and just contributes to the meaning of the entire predicate. In this type, the nominal element plays a vital role in terms of argument structure and the meaning of the entire predicate.

While (6) is a NI construction, (7) is a CP construction. Telugu, of course, abound in CPs and we can also list some NI constructions in Telugu following the parameters set by Mohanan and the analysis made by Nemati. Here are examples below.

8. *āviDa vanTa cēsindi*. (NI)
 She.nom cooking.do.pres.perf.3.sg.n.
 She has prepared food.
9. *āviDa bojanamu cēsindi*. (CP)
 She.nom food do.pres.perf.3.sg.n.
 She has had food.

Following the criteria roughly set by Mohanan, we can say that in (8), *vanTa* ‘cooking’, which is lexical, is a noun incorporated into the lexical verb *cēyu* ‘to do’. Functionally speaking, *vanTa* is an argument and also not a predicate. As regards the verb, it is lexical. Coming to (9), the verb *cēyu* ‘to do’ is not lexical and the noun is part of the predicate though it can satisfy the internal argument requirement. Some N+V CPs, of course, can only satisfy the internal argument requirement of the predicate but still they cannot be pure internal arguments. Moreover, in N+V CPs, the verbal element is always a light verb and not a lexical verb.

Sudharsan (1998, 2002) states that certain nouns get incorporated into the verb and the same nouns can also occur independently detached from the verb. She uses the following criteria to determine whether the noun is incorporated or not. If the noun cannot have case inflection or plural inflection or even take an adjective then we can assume that it is incorporated into the verb. Certain nouns which occur in N+V structures can occur detached from the verb. In that case, it can have case inflection, plural marker, etc. We will use the same criteria to show that there is NI structures in Telugu also.

As stated earlier, incorporated nouns do not take accusative or plural marker and external modifiers and thus are different from the regular object nouns. The movement of the incorporated noun is also not possible. Now we will look at one more noun incorporated predicate and see how it resists these morpho-syntactic features mentioned.

10. *peLLicēsukonTānani atanu māTiccāDu*.
 marriage.do.refl.comp he.nom word.give.pst.3.sg.m.
 He has given a word that he will get married.
- 10.a. **peLLicēsukonTānani atanu māTani-iccāDu*. (Addition of accusative case marker)
 marriage.do.refl.comp he.nom word.acc.give.pst.3.sg.m.
 He has given a word that he will get married. (Intended Meaning)
- 10.b. **peLLicēsukonTānani atanu māTalu-iccāDu*. (Addition of plural marker)
 marriage.do.refl.comp he.nom word.pl.give.pst.3.sg.m.
 He has given a word that he will get married. (Intended Meaning)
- 10.c. **peLLicēsukonTānani atanu oka/manci māTiccāDu*. (Addition of external modifiers)

marriage.do.refl.comp he.nom one/good.word.give.pst.3.sg.m.

He has given a word that he will get married. (Intended Meaning)

10.d.*peLLicēsukonTānani māTa atanu iccāDu. (Movement of the noun)

marriage.do.refl.comp word he.nom give.pst.3.sg.m.

He has given a word that he will get married (Intended Meaning)

With the evidence provided by these examples we can state that the structure of NI is found in Telugu.

As discussed, the incorporated nominal element can work as the notional object of the sentence (Kroeber, 1909). But in CPs, the noun can never be a subject or object as the noun is not an argument. Noun incorporation is a composition of a nominal element and a verb (Kroeber 1909, 1911; Sapir 1911; Mithun 1984). According to them, the nouns do not stand free in NI structure, whereas in other structures they do. But in Telugu, the incorporated nouns stand in an NI structure. And in CPs, the preverbal noun may be just a noun stem or a complete noun.

For instance,

11. adupu ceeyu.

Control. do 'to control'

Across languages, it is the inanimate nouns which are more likely to be incorporated than animate nouns and non-human animate nouns are more likely to be incorporated than human nouns (Donna B. Gerdits) which holds true for Telugu too. Also, the NI takes place when the noun expresses a sense of habitual activities or states as we can notice in the following Telugu NI structure.

12. buuju paTTu

Cobwebs.catch 'to catch cobwebs'

Some NI structures may render themselves idiomatic in meaning as in the following Telugu NI sentence.

13. sutti koTTu

hammer. strike 'to speak tediously'

The incorporated noun can work as the notional subject or even object of the sentence (Kroeber, 1909), which is true with Telugu too.

14. inTiki buuju paTTindi

Home.Dat cobwebs catch.Pst.3.sg.n

15. nenu ataniki maaTiccaanu

I.Nom he.Dat word.give.Pst.1.sg.

In (14), buuju 'cobwebs' which is an incorporated noun into the verb paTTu 'to catch' is in fact the notional subject while the noun maaTa 'word' behaves as the notional object in the sentence (15).

In some languages, instruments and passive agents are also incorporated (Sapir, 1911) which is not possible in Telugu. When the object noun is incorporated into the verb, the clause becomes intransitive and therefore the incorporation changes the valency of the clause.

There are two types of NI (Rosen 1989b, Hopkins 1988, H. Woodbury 1975, Mithun 1984,) which are Compounding Incorporation and Classifying Incorporation. While compounding incorporation affects the valency of the whole predicate, the classifying one does not affect the valence value of the clause. Telugu has only compounding incorporation, but not classifying incorporation. Again, in

compounding incorporation, NIs may have a nominative or dative subject. The verb agrees with the nominative subject when it is in nominative case, whereas when there is a dative subject, the verb agrees with the incorporated noun. In both the cases, because of the incorporation, the clauses become intransitive syntactically. Here are the instances below.

16. atanu mancam paTTeeDu. (Compounding Incorporation)

He.nom bed catch.pst.3.sg.m.

He became bedridden.

17. gadiki buujupaTTindi.(Compounding Incorporation) the agr. is with the incorporated noun.

Room.dat. cobweb catch.pst.3.sg.n.

The room is filled with cobwebs.

While (16) has a nominative subject, (17) has a dative subject. The verb agrees with the nominative subject in (16), while the verb agrees with the incorporated object in (17).

In the sentence ‘atanu naaku sutti koTTeeDu’, if the dative one naaku is an argument then we can say that incorporation of the noun sutti does not affect the valence of the clause and so it is an instance of classifying incorporation.

An individual noun phrase can occur in an object position even when there is a noun incorporated into the verb in the same clause in some languages. But, in Telugu, as the valence is affected by the incorporation, it is not possible to have another object along with the incorporated object.

Conclusion

Though nominal CPs and NI constructions seem to have the same grammatical elements and look alike, they are two different structural possibilities. The nominal element is in fact an argument functioning as subject or object in NI while it is just part of the predicate in CP construction. By using certain semantic and syntactic criteria, we can determine whether an N+V structure is a CP or an NI structure. If an N+V structure is semantically and syntactically form a single unit, then it is a CP and if it is not a single unit semantically, then it is an NI structure. In an NI structure, N+V do form a single unit only syntactically and the noun retains its original meaning whether it is a part of the the verb or detached from it. Secondly, a noun never gets incorporated to a light verb, it has to be a lexical verb. The present study, taking up the analyses made by Tara Mohanan (2007) and also Fetemeh Nemati (2010), finds that the NI structure is present in Telugu as evident in the sentence examples. Also, Telugu allows only compounding incorporation, but not classifying incorporation. In Telugu, NIs may have a nominative or dative subject. The verb agrees with the nominative subject when it is in nominative case, whereas when there is a dative subject, the verb agrees with the incorporated noun. In both the cases, because of the incorporation, the clauses become intransitive syntactically.

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Appendix A

List of Abbreviations:

1	First Person
2	Second Person
3	Third Person
ACC	Accusative
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DAT	Dative
LV	Light Verb
M	Masculine
NOM	Nominative
NPST	Non-PastTense
PL	Plural
PROG	Progressive
PRS.PTCP	Present Participle
PST	Past Tense

REL Relativiser
SG Singular

Makalenin Türkçe başlığı buraya yazılır....

Özet

Türkçe özet.

Anahtar sözcükler: anahtar sözcükler1; anahtar sözcükler2; anahtar sözcükler3

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