

The Light Verbs *Go/Come* in Telugu and Kannada

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ABSTRACT: Dravidian languages are very rich in what are called complex predicates in which a light verb plays a vital role. This paper focuses on the light verbs 'go' and 'come' in Telugu and Kannada and their different meanings determined by several factors. Besides the meanings that light verbs can generally express, 'go' and 'come' have negative and positive meanings also. With what preverbal elements 'go' and 'come' give positive meaning and with what negative meaning is discussed with examples with a view to show that these light verbs in Telugu and Kannada share some meanings which in turn lends supporting evidence for the universality of semantics of certain light verbs.

KEY WORDS: Light verb, Complex predicate, Telugu, Kannada.

I. INTRODUCTION

The light verb *vaccu* 'to come' has two variants in Telugu: *vaccu* and *raa*. The verb *raa* 'to come' in Telugu functions as a main verb in imperative, a negative modal verb as in *raadu/kuuDadu* 'shouldn't', a main verb in negative sentences and a main verb in modal verb construction while *vaccu* 'to come' occurs both as a main verb and a light verb giving different meanings. *vaccu* 'to come' when used as a light verb, can acquire the meanings: physical appearance, modality, emphasis, superiority and so on giving positive or negative outcome while *baa* (Kan.) 'to come' can indicate physical appearance, superiority and so on expressing positive or negative sense. *baa* 'to come' in Kannada does not have any variants and it occurs as a main verb and a light verb too but cannot function as modal verb negative or positive. The light verb *povu* (Tel.) 'to go', depending on the context, acquires the meanings: disappearance, loss, process, transformation, dissociation, suggestion and so on leaving positive or negative meaning, but *hogu* 'to go'(Kan.) cannot indicate suggestion.

NEGATIVE MEANINGS OF 'GO'

go gives negative meaning when it refers to something eatable in Telugu but only cooked food in Kannada.

1. a. *kuura pōindi.* (Tel.)
Curry.nom go.pt.3sn
The taste of the curry went bad
- b. *palya keTTuhoogide /haLasihogide.* (Kan.)
Curry.nom bad.go.pt.3sn
The curry went bad.

Interestingly, in English also the verb *go*, when used as a light verb, conveys a negative meaning with an adjective complement.

- c. The curry went bad.

This sense has an extension in Telugu and if any noun concrete or abstract, except those which give unpleasant meanings, is followed by *po* 'to go' it always gives negative meaning.

2. a. *kalamu poyindi* (Tel.)
Pen.nom go.pt.3sn
The pen got lost.
- b. *santoshamu poyindi.* (Tel.)
Happiness.nom go.pt.3sn
Happiness got lost.

povu or *hogu* 'to go' can mean displacement indicating change of the place of an object or subject and thus giving negative evaluation. It, with this meaning, attaches to intransitive verbs in both Telugu and Kannada.

There is no change in the argument structure.

3. a. *piTTa egiripoyindi* - (Tel.)
bird.nom fly go.pt.3sn
The bird flew away.
- b. *hakki haarihoitu* - (Kan.)
bird.nom fly go.pt.3sn
The bird flew away.

povu or *hogu* 'to go' can also mean losing something leaving negative evaluation. This light verb can also go with ergative verbs like *pagulu* (Tel.) 'to break' in both the languages. In fact, it is the light verb which decides the transitivity of the main verb. *povu* or *hogu* 'to go' can make ergative verbs unaccusative or transitive.

4. a. Dabbu **poyindi** (Tel.)
money.nom go.pt.3sn
b. duDDu **hoiyitu** (Kan.)
money.nom go.pt.3sn
The money was lost.
5. a. addamu **pagilipoyindi** - (Tel.)
Mirror.nom break go.pt.3sn
The mirror broke.
b. kannaDi **oDeduhoyitu** (Kan.)
mirror.nom break.go.pt.3sn
The mirror broke.

Povu/hogu 'to go' also acquires the meaning of dissociation leaving negative sense with some ergative main verbs. It gives the meaning that something went wrong. In the example below, it means that even though I tried my best to keep the knot tight, it has got opened up.

6. a. muDi **ooDipoyindi** - (Tel.)
Knot.nom open up.go.pt.3sn
The knot got opened up.
b. ganTu **bicchoitu** - (Kan.)
Knot.nom open up.go.3sn
The knot got opened up.

To say that weather has become worse, be it too cold or too hot, *po* 'to go' combines with the main verb to express intensity and fear leaving negative sense in a Telugu complex predicate construction. In Telugu, all nouns that are used to refer to weather changes take the light verbs that mean 'increase' or 'decrease' to form a complex predicate to which finally another light verb *po* 'to go' attaches to intensify. However, in Kannada, the corresponding light verb in these expressions is *aagu* 'to become' and not *hogu* 'to go'.

7. cali **perigipoyindi** (Tel.)
Cold.nom increase.go.pt.3sn
It became too cold.

POSITIVE MEANINGS OF 'GO'

po/hogu 'to go' conveys positive meaning with the verbs be, become and with some verbs like fulfill indicating process.

8. a. pani **ayyipondi** (Tel.)
Work.nom become.go.pt.3sn
The work got over.
b. kelasa **aagihoyitu**
work.nom become.go.pt.3sn
The work got over.

go gives positive sense in English with the events like meeting, party and so on.

- c. The meeting went off well.

With the nouns of unpleasant meanings also, *go* leaves positive evaluation. This expression can be found in English as well with positive connotation.

9. a. jvaramu **poindi** (Tel.)
Fever.nom go.pt.3sn
Fever has gone.
b. jvara **hoiyitu** (Kan.)
fever.nom go.pt.3sn
Fever has gone.
c. Fever has gone

With some ergative verbs it gives the meaning of transformation of the subject in both Telugu and Kannada leaving positive sense. With this meaning too, *povu/hogu* 'to go' can make ergative verbs unaccusative.

10. a. baTTalu **aaripoyaayi** - (Tel.)
Clothes.nom dry go.3pl.
The clothes got dried up.
b. baTTe(gaLu) **oNagihoyitu** - (Kan.)
clothes.nom dry go.pt.3pl.

The clothes got dried up.

povu 'to go' in Telugu, is also used in metaphorical sense for saying what was the right thing to do when you realize that someone did not do it. This positive meaning surfaces only when *povu* 'to go' is used in a question form. An interesting thing here is, we cannot have a declarative sentence with *povu* 'to go' with this meaning. However, this expression is not present in Kannada. *hogu* 'to go' is not used in the same metaphorical sense used in Telugu. It does not change the argument structure of the main verb.

11. a. atanu ninnu okasaari baDiki pampakapoyeeDa? (Tel.)
 he.nom you.acc. once school.dat send.go.pres.3sm.ques.
 He should have sent you to the school once.

NEGATIVE MEANINGS OF 'COME'

When emphasizing the fact that someone has not done something expected and with the nouns of unpleasant meanings too, it leaves a negative evaluation.

12. a. ataniki rogam vaccindi (Tel.)
 he.dat disease come.pt.3sn
 b. avanige roga bandide (Kan.)
 he.dat disease come.pt.3sn
 He doesn't listen to anyone.

vaccu/baa 'to come' expresses negative outcome when attaches to communicative verbs like ask, tell, advise and so on. This light verb, with this negative evaluation, goes with three place predicates in general. This expression is present in Telugu and Kannada as well.

13. a. atanu elaa naDacukovaalo naaku cheppoccheeDu - (Telugu)
 He.nom how to behave me.dat say come.pt.3sm
 b. hege neDadukoLLabekendu nannage heLakubanda - (Kannada)
 how to behave me.dat say.come.pt.3sm
 He tried to advise me as if I was inferior to him.

Every Telugu or Kannada speaker uses the light verb *vaccu* or *baa* 'to come' when he or she wants to strongly say that the listener or the person he or she is speaking to does not know what had happened. In short, the speaker tries to emphasize that the listener or someone did not know what had happened. This expression, which gives negative sense, is possible in both Telugu and Kannada. Here, the light verb does not change the argument structure of the predicate.

14. a. nuvvu adi chooDoccavaa? (Tel.)
 You.nom that see.come.pres.2sn. Question
 You don't know that at all.
 b. niivu adu noDobandidiya? (Kan.)
 You.nom that see come.pres. 2s. Question
 You don't know that at all.

POSITIVE MEANINGS OF 'COME'

However, it equally conveys positive meaning in Telugu, Kannada and English when to say something recorded, shot, photographed or painted is good.

15. a. bomma бага vaccindi (Tel.)
 picture.nom good.come.pt.3sn
 The painting has come out well
 b. chitra chennagi bandide - (Kan.)
 picture.nom good come.pt.3sn
 The painting has come out well
 c. The painting has come out well

vaccu/baa 'to come' as a light verb, goes with nouns to speak of physical appearance giving positive meaning. Interestingly, Telugu uses a nominative NP as subject with agreement of the subject on the verb, whereas Kannada uses a dative NP as subject with the agreement of the object in these expressions. The whole predicate is an intransitive construction.

16. a. aame chaayoccindi - (Tel.)
 She.nom. colour.come.pt.3sn
 She became fairer.
 b. avaLige baNNA/ rangu bandide - (Kan.)
 her.dat colour come.pt. 3sf
 She became fairer.

With awards, marks and achievements also, *vaccu* or *baa* 'to come' is used to leave a happy note. But when lost or failed an exam, *po* 'to go' is the light verb used to indicate disappointment leaving negative sense.

17. a. maa abbayi padava taragati fastu **vacca**Du (Tel.)
my son.nom 10th class first come.pt.3sm
My son came out first in 10th class.
b. nanna maganu hattane taragatiyalli fastu klasu **bandiddane**. (Kan.)
my son.nom 10th class.loc first class come.pt.3sm
My son came out first in 10th class.

vaccu or *baa* ‘to come’ goes with the names of languages, sports, dance, music etc. when to say that we have some knowledge about them.

18. a. naaku kannadamu **vaccu** (Tel.)
me-Dat. Kannada come.pres.3sn
I know how to speak Kannada.
b. nanage Telugu **barutte**.(Kan.)
me-Dat.Telugu come.pres.3sn.
I know how to speak Telugu.

When someone, who takes the responsibility of doing something voluntarily, performs an action mainly for others, we use the light verb *vaccu* ‘to come’ which gives positive meaning that it is so kind of the person who did it. However, this expression is not found in Kannada.

19. maa tammuDee panulannii cheesuko**ccaa**Du. (Tel.)
my brother.emp.nom all works.acc do.come. pt.3sm
My younger brother did all the works himself.

II. CONCLUSION

go and *come* are the commonest light verbs used cross linguistically. In this paper I tried to list out some of the positive and negative evaluations of *go* and *come* in Telugu and Kannada which is by no means exhaustive. There seems to be some kind of universality as far as the meanings of these light verbs are concerned. An extensive research alone will tell us whether there is anything universal about the context in which the verbs have negative or positive meanings. There needs to be done, in this direction, an extensive research which can contribute a significant amount of the underlying semantic features that these light verbs have to the study of semantics of light verbs.

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