

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 7 : 10 October 2007

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LANGUAGE OF HEADLINES IN KANNADA DAILIES

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Language of Kannada Dailies
Chapter 8

M. N. Leelavathi, Ph.D.

CHAPTER 8

REMARKS ON SOME HEADLINES

Some headlines which require polishing in terms of the use of structure and punctuation mark and choice of vocabulary, are discussed in this chapter. This is in view of improving the headlines towards achieving better comprehensibility, readability and accuracy. The headlines which require improvement have been drawn from the three newspapers KannadaPrabha(KP), Prajavani(PV) and Samyukta Karnataka(SK), and illustrated below along with the alternatives suggestive of the necessary polishing or improvement. Some headlines which involve wrong splitting of words and spelling mistakes that would hinder readability and accuracy have also been illustrated.

8.1 Improvement required in structure

The headlines that require improvement in structure are related to overuse of genitive case marker, avoidance of necessary case marker, ~~inappropriate~~ inappropriate use of case marker, non-standard way of appending case marker to the base noun, unwarranted dropping of relevant function words like quotative particle, or use of word order involving unscrupulous jumbling of words.

8.1.1 Overuse of genitive case marker

It has been already pointed out in phrasal nominal headlines (2.3) that genitivization is a more prevalent process used in making a headline very precise. But it is found in some headlines the genitivization process being overused such that

the comprehensibility is hindered. To illustrate the overuse of genitivization, one example from each of the three dailies is given below.

KP1 : puNe peeTeyalli cinnada paradaaTa (9.7.1991)

Pune market-loc gold-gen running about

KP1a: puNe peeTeyalli cinnakke paradaaTa

Pune market-loc gold-dat running about

'In Pune market,(people) are running about for gold'

PV1 : bhaaratada Ti.vi

India-gen TV

seTgaLige videeshada

sets-dat foreign country-gen

oLLee beeDike (2-7-1991)

good demand

PV1a: bhaaratada Ti.vi

India-gen TV

seTgaLige videeshadalli

oLLee beeDike

good demand

'great demand for Indian TV sets in foreign countries'

SK1 : hitaiSigala sabheya ottaaya

well-wishers-gen meeting-gen pressure

praathamika shikSaNadalli

primary education-loc

kaDDaayada KannaDa (6-7-1991)

compulsory-gen Kannada

SK1a: hitaiSigaLa sabheyali ottaaya

well-wishers-gen meeting-loc pressure

-prathamika ~~hik~~ SaNadalli

primary education-loc

kaDDaaya KannaDa

compulsory Kannada

'pressure in well-wisher's meeting(for) compulsory Kannada
in primary education'

In all the three headlines quoted above from the three dailies, the overuse of genitivation is involved. In KP1, the genitive phrase cinnada paradaaTa 'running about of gold' is difficult to comprehend whereas comprehension is made easy by using the underlying dative case marker -kke with the noun cinna 'gold', as shown in KP1a. This is further substantiated by the following headline from SK, where, in a similar context, the dative case marker has been explicitly used.

gadaga: siimee eNNege tiivra paradaaTa (21-10-1991)

Gadag: Kerosene-dat serious running about

'Gadag:(people are) seriously running about for Kerosene'

In PV1, the genitive phrase videeshada oLLee beeDike 'great demand of foreign country' can be improved and made better comprehensible by using locative case marker -alli with the noun vide^esha 'foreign country' as shown in PV1a. In SK1, the genitive phrase hitaiSigaLa sabheya ottaaya 'pressure of well-wishers meeting' can be improved towards better clarity by using the underlying locative case marker -alli with the noun phrase hitaiSigaLa sabhe 'well-wisher's meeting', as shown in

8.1.2 Avoidance of necessary case marker

In certain instances of phrasal nominal headlines, it is found that the use of necessary case marker has been avoided hindering comprehensibility. The avoidance of dative, genitive or locative case marker leading to lack of comprehensibility is illustrated below:

Avoidance of dative case marker

KP2 : 'king' ricarDs satvaparikSe (6-6-1991)

'King' Rchards test of strength

KP2a 'king' ricarDsge satvapariikSe

'King' Richards-dat test of strength

'test of strength for 'King' Richards'

PV2: soomasheekar^R jaamiinu niraakaraNe (26-7-1991)

Somashekhar bail rejection

PV2a: soomasheekcharge jaamiinu niraakaraNe

Somasheekhar-dat bail rejection

'rejection of bail to Somashekhar'

Avoidance of genitive case marker

PV3 : mallikaarjunayya

Mallikarjunaiah

aaptakaaryadarshi (23-8-1991)

personal secretary

PV3a: mallikaarjunayya avara

Malikarjunaiah -gen

aaptakaaryadarshi

'Mallikarjunaiah's personal secretary'

SK2: navkarara sanghadinda
 employee-gen association-ins
 moore sanmaana (30.7.1991)
 Moore felicitation

SK2a: navkarara sanghadinda
 employee's-gen association-ins
 moorege sanmaana
 Moore-dat felicitation

'felicitation to Moore by the employees' association'

SK3 : varmaa aayooga
 Verma commission
 munde haajaraagalu
 before appear-inf
 nooTiis (7-8-1991)
 notice

SK3a: varmaa aayogada
 Verma commission-gen
 munde haajaraagalu
 before appear-inf
 nooTiis
 notice

'notice issued to appear before Verma commission'

Avoidance of locative case marker

KP3: maDikeeri
 Madikeri
 taalluuku kaceeri
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 taluk office

PV4: benki : haani (25-3-1991)

fire : damage

KP3a: maDikeeri

Madikeri

taalluuku kaceeriyalli

taluk office-loc

with benki : haani

fire : damage

'fire accident in Madikeri taluk office: damage'

With the addition of the dative case marker -ge to the noun 'king ricarDs' 'King Richards' in KP 2 (cf. KP2a),

soomasheekhar 'Somashekhar' in PV2(cf.PV2a), and moore 'Moore' in SK2 (cf.SK2a), the genitive case marker -(avar)a to the noun

mallikaarjunayya 'Mallikarjunaiah' in PV 3 (cf. PV3a) and -(d) a

to the compound noun varmaa aayooga 'Verma commission' in SK3

(cf.SK3a), and the locative case marker -alli to the compound

noun maDikeeri taalluuku kaceeri 'Madikeri taluk office' in KP3

(cf.KP3a), the above headlines get better clarity

and comprehensibility.

8.1.3 Use of inappropriate case marker

In certain rare instances of headlines, the use of inappropriate case marker leading to lack of clarity is observed.

Consider the following example:

PV4: kuuli keeLida dalita

wage ask pst.rp Dalit

baalakanige kennege eeTu (18-11-1991)

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boy -dat cheek-dat slap

PV4a: kuuli keeLida dalita

wage ask-pst.rp Dalit

baalakana kennege eeTu

boy-gen cheek-dat slap

'slap to the Dalit boy who asked for the wage'

In the above instance, the use of dative case marker -ge with the compound noun dalita baalaka 'Dalit boy' is inappropriate and instead the use of genitive case marker is in place (cf. PV4a).

8.1.4 Non-standard way of appending case marker

In certain phrasal nominal headlines while appending case marker to the concerned noun phrase, it is found that the standard convention is not followed, which may result in some sort of confusion to the reader. The discrepancy is found with the use of accusative, dative and locative case markers. Consider the following examples:

Accusative

KP4: mooTaar saikal savaarana

motor cycle rider -acc

taDedu darooDe (31.8.1996)

stop-pp robbery

KP4a: mooTaar saikal savaaranna

motor cycle rider -acc

taDedu darooDe

stop-pp robbery

'robbery, having stopped the motor cycle rider'

PV5: tannaaru makkaLa konda (13.11.1994)

PV5a: tannaaru makkaLna konda
 his six children-acc kill-pst-3sm

'he killed his own six children'

Dative

SK4: bangaarappage shistu samiti nooTiisu, (8-12-1993)

Bangarappa-dat disciplinary committee notice

SK4a: bangaarappange shistu samiti nooTiisu

Bangarappa-dat disciplinary committee notice

'disciplinary committee notice to Bangarappa'

Locative

SK5: cernobildalli

Cherobyl-loc

agni duranta (13.10.1991)

fire tragedy

SK5a: cernobilnalli

Chernobyl-loc

agni duranta

fire tragedy

'fire tragedy in Chernobyl'

The use of the short form -a of the accusative case marker -annu overlaps with the use of the genitive case marker -a. To avoid confusion between the uses of the two, the short form of accusative case marker -a is always preceded by the link morpheme -n-, which has been avoided in the headlines KP4 and PV5. In KP4, the accusative noun phrase mooTaar saikal savaarana needs to

(cf.KP4a). Similarly, in PV5, tannaaru makkaLa needs to be modified as tannaaru makkaLna 'his own six children'(cf.PV5a).

In SK4, the dative case marker -ge added to the noun bangaarappa 'Bangarappa' requires the link morpheme -n- in between (cf.SK4a). In SK5, between the noun cernobil 'Chernobyl' and the locative case marker -alli, the link morpheme -d- is not appropriate and it has to be replaced by -n- (cf. SK5a).

8.1.5 unwarranted dropping of quotative particle endu

The quotative particle endu in its meaning 'that' is usually deleted in clausal nominal headlines involving infinitive (2.2.1) and is replaced by colon in headlines where performative subject or verb is involved. In the headline quoted below from KP, it is found that the quotative particle endu giving the meaning 'as' has been dropped, which is unwarranted and hinders clarity and comprehensibility.

KP5: caamaraajanagara taaluukannu

Chamarajanagar taluk -acc

barapradesha ghooSisali (27-8-94)

drought area declare-opt

KP5a:caamaraajanagara taaluukannu

Chamarajanagar taluk -acc

barapradesha endu ghooSisali

drought area declare-opt

'let Cham^arajanagar taluk be declared as drought area'

8.1.6 Word order-unscrupulous jumbling of words

structure results in lack of clarity in a headline. Observe the following examples:

KP6: aaskar bangaarappa viruddha tiikSNa vaagbaaNa (13.10.1991)

oscar Bangarappa against severe criticism

KP6a:Bangarappa viruddha aaskar.tiikSNa vaagbaaNa

Bangarappa against oscar severe criticism

PV6: innaSTu rupaayi apamavlya (4.7.91)

further rupee devaluation

PV6a:rupaayi innaSTu apamavlya

rupee further devaluation

'further devaluation of rupee'

In KP6, the subject aaskar 'Oscar', if placed after the postpositional phrase bangaarappa viruddha 'against Bangarappa' the headline will get better clarity. Similarly, in PV6, if the adverb innaSTu 'further' is placed after the noun rupaayi 'rupee', the headline will get better clarity.

8.2 Improvement required in the use of punctuation marks

The punctuation marks either overused or avoided where necessary in certain headlines are found to result in lack of clarity and comprehensibility.

8.2.1 Overuse of punctuation marks

The most frequently used punctuation marks such as colon, semicolon and dash are found to be excessively used in certain headlines, as shown in the following examples:

Colon

KP7: paaspoort kaceeri : iiga accukàTTu (11.7.1991)

Passport office : now clean

KP7a:paaspoort kaceeri iiga accukàTTu

Passport office now clean

'passport office is now clean'

PV7: anaitika sambandha :

illicit relationship :

dampatigaLige

couple -dat

graamastharinda neeNu (3-12-1991)

villagers -ins hanging

PV7a:anaitika sambandha

illicit relationship

dampatigaLige

couple -dat

graamastharinda neeNu

villagers -ins hanging

'illicit relationship-

hanging for the couple by the villagers'

SK6:heemaavati naale kaamagaari:

Hemavathi canal construction work

oppige niidaddare caLavaLi (7-3-1996)

acceptance give-neg.cond demonstration

SK6a: heemaavati naale kaamagaari

Hemavathi canal construction work

oppige niidaddare calavali

acceptance give-neg*cond demonstration

'Hemavati canal construction work-demonstration if

acceptance not given'

Semicolon

SK7: enraan: joshi samarthane;

Enron : Joshi justification;

bijepiyalli apasvara (11.1.1996)

BJP -loc dissatisfaction.

SK7a: enraan : joshi samarthane

Enron : Joshi justification

bijepiyalli apasvara

BJP -loc dissatisfaction

'Enron : Joshi's justification, dissatisfaction in BJP'

Dash

PV8. goovaa vidyamaana-

Goa situation-

dehalige niyooga (16.5.1993)

Delhi-dat delegation

PV8a: goovaa vidyamaana

Goa situation

dehalige niyooga

Delhi-dat delegation

KP7 'delegation to Delhi regarding Goa situation'

In KP7, the use of colon is superfluous as it serves no

structure and separating the subject and predicate is not necessary. The use of colon in PV7 and SK6, semicolon in SK7 and dash in PV8 overlap with the use of multideck and hence superfluous.

8.2.2 Avoidance of punctuation mark

In certain headlines, the punctuation marks like comma, colon, dash and hyphen are found missing in places where they are necessary. Consider the following examples:

Comma

KP8: T.V shuuTing empi gaLa sveTTing (1-12-1991)

TV shooting MPs -gen sweating

KP8a:T.V shuuTing, empi gaLa sveTTing

TV shooting, MPs -gen sweating

'TV shooting and MPs sweating'

PV9: turtuparisthiti, seene gastu, pratibhaTane

emergency, army patrol, demonstration,

band, ryaali, niSeedha (20-8-91)

bandh rally ban

PV9a:turtuparisthiti, seene gastu, pratibhaTane,

emergency, army patrol, demonstration,

band, ryaali niSeedha

bandh rally ban

'emergency, army patrol and ban on demonstration, bandh, rally'

Colon

KP9 :maalinya kaTTuniTTina kramakke salahe (1-12-1991)

KP9a:maalinya : kaTTuniTTina kramakke salahe

pollution : strict -gen action -dat suggestion

'suggestion for strict action against pollution'

SK8: pailaT patra pavaarge asamaadhaana (16-5-1996)

Pilot letter pawar-dat displeasure

SK8a:pailaT patra : pavaarge asamaadhana

Pilot letter: Pawar -dat displeasure

Pilot's letter : displeasure to Pawar'

Dash

KP10: kaaangai oDaku khacita aDvaani (6-6-1991)

Cong-I split definite Advani

KP10a:kaaangai oDaku khacita -aDvaani

Cong-I split definite -Advani

'Congress-I split is definite - Advani'

Hyphen

PV10: bhuu kusita kaaraNa mangaLa mahaalakSmi

land slide reason Mangala Mahalakshmi

ekspres railu raddu (27-8-1990)

express train cancellation

PV10a:bhuu kusita kaaraNa mangaLa -mahaalakShmi

land slide reason Mangala -Mahalakshmi

ekspres railu raddu

express train cancellation

'cancellation of Mangala -Mahalakshmi express train due

to land slide'

The avoidance of punctuation mark drastically affects

readability. In the headline of KP8, the compound noun IV
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shuuTing 'TV shooting' and the genitive noun phrase empi-ga|a sveTing 'MP's sweating' needs to be separated by comma. In the headline of PV9, comma is missing in two places after the nouns pratibhaTane 'demonstration' and band 'bandh'. The use of colon ^{has been avoided} after the noun maalinya 'pollution', which is a remanant of the purposive adverbial clause in KP9 and pailaT patra 'Pilot's letter', which is a remanant of adverbial clause of reason in SK8.

Dash is required before the performative subject noun aDvaaNi 'Advani' to separate from the preceding quotative clause in KP10 and hyphen between the hyphenated nouns Mangala and Mahalakshmi in PV10.

8.3 unscrupulous lexical usage

In certain headlines, uncommon and infrequent lexical usages have been chosen inspite of the accessibility to common and frequent usages. Consider the following examples:

KP11: pavrasamsthegaLalli adhikaara grahaNakke daLada siddhate

(16-1-1996)

municipalities -loc power assuming-dat Dal-gen preparation

KP11a: pavrasamsthegaLalli adhikaara sviika^{ra}Na^{ra}kk

municipalities - loc power assuming -dat

daLada siddhate

Dal-gen preparation

'Dal preparing for assuming power in municipalities'

PV11: dinaguuli biidi paalu (24-8-1990)

daily wage on the streets

PV11a: dinaguuligaLu biidipaalu

daily wagers on the streets

'daily wagers will be on the streets'

SK9: daavaNagere peeTe vaarada varadi

Davanagere market week-gen report

sheengaa teeji : hatti mandi (16-5-1993)

groundnut hike : cotton down

SK9a: daavaNagere peeTe vaarada varadi

Davanagere market week-gen report

sheengaa teeji : hatti kusita

groundnut price hike : ~~price~~ cotton down

'Davanagere market's weekly report - groundnut price hike and cotton price down'

In headline KP11, the use of the word grahaNa 'eclipse/catching' in association with the word adhikaara 'power' is slightly deviant in meaning and infrequent in practical use when compared with the word sviikaara 'taking over'. This is further substantiated by the following headline from SK in a similar context.

adhikaara sviikaara

power assuming

'assuming power'

In headline PV11, the word dinaguuli 'daily wage' normally refers to the nature of the job rather than the persons involved in the job. The more appropriate form of the word in this context could be dinaguuligaLu 'daily wagers'. In headline SK9, the word mandi used in the meaning of 'price reduction' is

very infrequent in the common usage and it could be appropriately substituted by the common word kusita with the same meaning.

8.4 Wrong splitting of words

In some of the headlines, it is found that a compound word ^{of} a phrase is indiscriminately split due to space adjustment, which hinders readability and clarity. Observe the following examples.

KP12: prabhaakaran jiivanta

Prabhakaran alive

sere aatmavishaasa (19.8.1991)

arrest confidence

KP12a:prabhaakaran jiivanta sere

Prabhakaran alive arrest

aatmavishvaasa

confidence

'confidence to catch Prabhakaran alive'

SK10: madhumeeha kuritu

diabetes about

nagaradalli vicaara

city -loc thought

gooSTi (3-10-1991)

gathering

SK10a:madhumeeha kuritu

diabetes about

nagaradalli vicaragooSTi

city -loc seminar

The splitting of the word jiiivasere 'catch alive' in KP12, placing jiiivanta 'alive' in the first line and sere 'arrest' in the second line hampers readability and clarity, and therefore, it is better that such splittings are avoided in headlines. Similar is the case with the compound noun vicaaragooSti 'seminar' in headline SK10, where vicaara 'thought' occurs in the second line and gooSTi 'gathering' in the third line.

8.5 Spelling mistakes

The spelling mistakes, which affect accuracy, are rarely found to occur in headlines. Consider the following examples :

KP13. juunnalli 615 kuTumbagala sthaaLaantaraa (29-11-1995)

June-loc 615 families-gen shifting

KP13a: juunⁿalli 615 kuTumbagala sthaLaantara

June-loc 615 families-gen shifting

'shifting of 615 families in 'June'

PV12: mane kusida

house collapse-pst.rp

baalaka saavu (13-11-1994)

boy death

PV12a: mane kusita

house collapse

baalaka saavu

boy death

'a boy died due to collapse of house'

PV12b:mane kusidu

house collapse-pp

baalaka saavu

boy death

'the house having collapsed, a boy died'

The spelling mistake in the word sthaaLaantara 'shifting' is due to lack of attention and it needs to be corrected as sthaLaantara 'shifting' in the headline KP13 (cf.KP13a). In the headline PV12, the mistake is in the word kusida 'which collapsed', has resulted in grammatical mistake. The structure does not warrant the use of the relative participle form of the verb kusi 'collapse' (kusida) as is given in the headline, but instead, the derived noun form kusita 'collapse' or the past participle form kusidu 'having collapsed' will make the structure of the headline grammatical (cf.PV12a and 12b).

The remarks made above on some of the headlines in terms of the use of structure, punctuation mark and choice of vocabulary in them will serve as useful guidelines to the headline writers. Most of the improvements suggested above will not disturb headline space, which is precious for a headline writer. In cases where addition of case marker (8.1.2), link morpheme (8.1.4), or function word (8.1.5) is involved, however, there is a possibility of the problem of space adjustment creeping in. The space problem is also likely to arise while avoiding splitting of compound words or phrases. In such instances, the utmost priority should always be given to the clarity and accuracy of the headline through scrupulous use of structures and punctuation