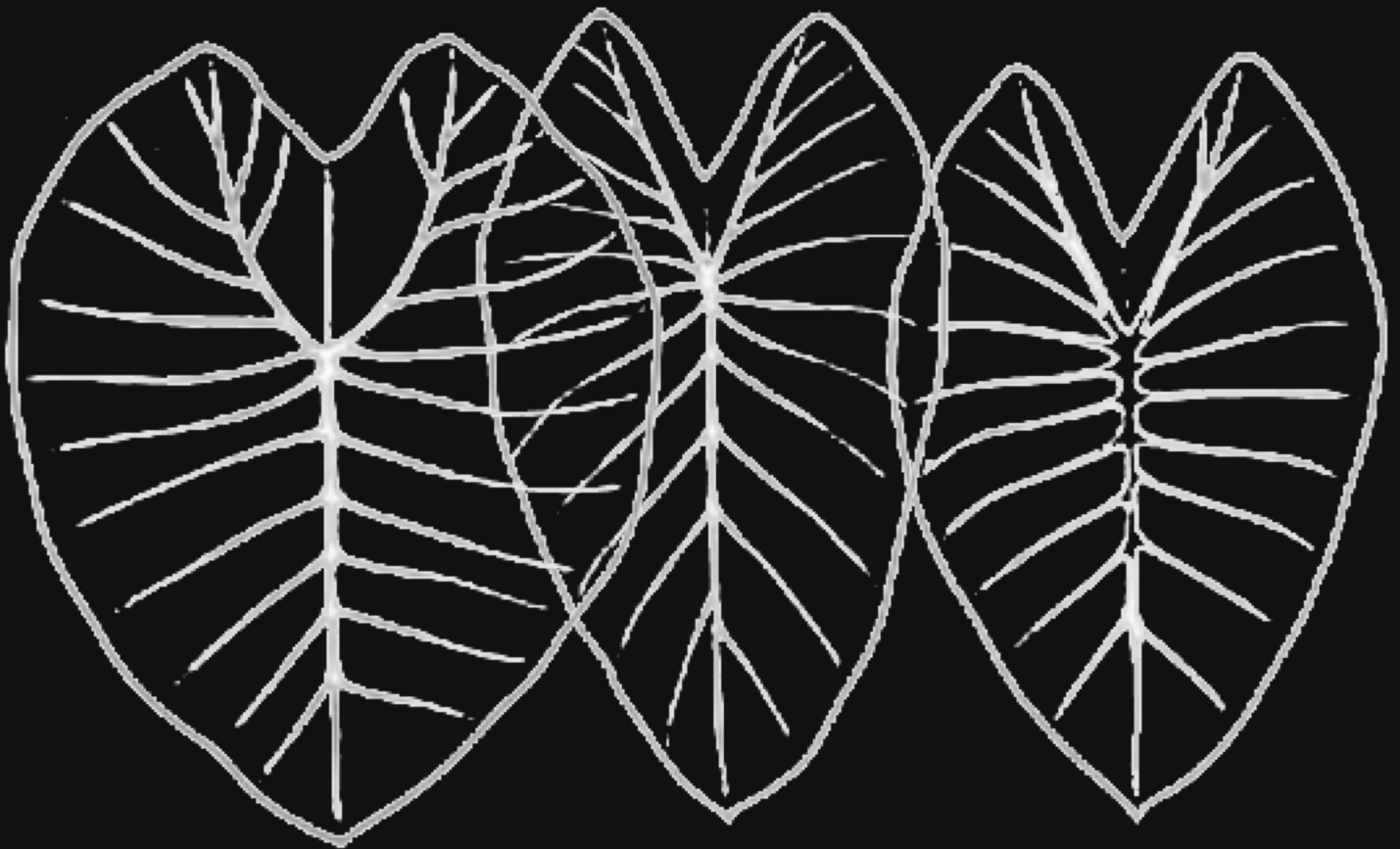


Proceedings of TripleA 3

Fieldwork Perspectives on the
Semantics of African, Asian and Austronesian Languages



Ed. by Vera Hohaus & Wanda Rothe

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The Incompatibility of Malayalam Conjunctive Participle Constructions with Multiple Temporal Adverbs and Individual Level Predicates¹

Amanda Swenson — Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Abstract. This paper builds on the investigation of Malayalam Conjunctive Participle Constructions in Swenson (2016a). The main conclusion in Swenson (2016a) was that Malayalam Conjunctive Participles are semantically underspecified for tense and viewpoint aspect and also structurally small. This paper provides further support for this position. It shows, however, that the Stump (1985) based adjunct account proposed in Swenson (2016a), must be modified to capture certain facts about the compatibility of Conjunctive Participles Constructions with Individual Level Predicates and multiple adverbs in Malayalam.

1 Introduction

This paper focuses on the question of how Malayalam Conjunctive/Adverbial Participle Constructions/Serial Verb Constructions (my ‘multi-verb constructions’) get their temporal semantics. Examples (1)-(3) show why the answer to this question is not obvious. In (1) the *-u/i* morpheme looks like the past tense marker on the main verb (boxed).

- (1)
- a. (innale) njaan pazhum kazhicch-u.
 Yesterday I banana take-PST
 ‘I ate a banana (yesterday).’
- b. (innale) njaan palli-yil pooy-i.
 Yesterday I church-LOC go-PST
 ‘I went to church (yesterday).’

In sentences like (2b-c) the *-u/i* in Conjunctive/Adverbial Participles (what I will call ‘non-main’ verbs and mark with a dotted underline) does not seem to encode past semantics. These sentences, respectively, receive a present and future interpretation, despite the fact that the non-main verb has the *-u/i* marker. This suggests that the *-u/i* marker is, in fact, not a past tense

¹ For their help with Malayalam judgments, I would like to thank Aiswarya G. Shajan, Athulya Aravind, Gokul G., Jasmine Maria G., Meethu Mohan, Minu Sara Paul, Linny Simon, Lekshmi Mohan, Shijith S, Shamna Sulfikar, Susan George, Sreelekshmi N., Sreesha M., and Hema K.S. Special thanks to Yangchen Roy for helping me get the Gopalkrishnan thesis. Thanks to R. Amritavalli, Miriam Butt, Seth Cable, Noam Chomsky, Jessica Coon, Veneeta Dayal, Jasmine Maria G., Keerthana Gopinathan, Sabine Iatridou, K.A. Jayaseelan, P. Madhavan, Pritty Patel-Grosz, Minu Sara Paul, David Pesetsky, Paul Portner, Norvin Richards, Roger Schwarzschild, Shijith S., Peter Svenonius, Kai von Fintel and the participants of the EFLU seminar series, MIT Ling-lunch, FASAL 6 and TripleA3, for relevant discussions of these facts. This work has been supported by a MISTI/MIT-India internship grant. All errors are my own.

marker. At this point, one might think, as Amritavalli & Jayaseelan (2005) have done, that the *-u/i* is a perfective marker, since the non-main event is completed before the main event in the sentences in (2).

(2)

- a. *vasantha peena kada-yil pooy-I vaang-i.*
 Vasantha pen shop-LOC go-U/I buy-PST
 ‘Vasantha went to the shop and bought a pen.’ (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p71: 68a)
- b. *vasantha peena kada-yil pooy-I vaang-unnu-Ø.*
 Vasantha pen shop-LOC go-U/I buy- IMPFV-PRS
 ‘Vasantha goes to the shop and buys (is going to the shop and buying) a pen.’
- c. *vasantha peena kada-yil pooy-I vaang-um.*
 Vasantha pen shop-LOC go-U/I buy- FUT
 ‘Vasantha will go to the shop and buy a pen.’

However, as Hany Babu & Madhavan (2003) have pointed out, when sentences like (3) are added to the data set, a perfective analysis of *-u/i* becomes unlikely. In (3) the main verb is in the present tense and the events denoted by the *-u/i* marked non-main verbs occur simultaneously with the event denoted by the main verb.

(3)

- avan padicch-u padippicch-u jooli cheyth-u jeevikk-unnu-Ø.*
 he study-U/I teach- U/I job do-U/I live-IPFV-PRS
 ‘He lives studying, teaching and working.’

If the non-main verb *-u/i* marker is, in fact, neither a perfective nor a past tense marker, one might consider the option that it is semantically vacuous. This leads to the question, if the *-u/i* on non-main verbs does not have any features associated with it, how are the temporal semantics of multi-verb constructions obtained? This question will guide the rest of the paper. Section 2 provides an overview of the Malayalam multi-verb constructions facts. Section 3 argues against a coordination account. Section 4 highlights the similarities between English absolutes and Malayalam multi-verb constructions and suggests that a modified version of Stump’s (1985) analysis might be a way to account for the Malayalam data. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2 The Properties of Multi-Verb Constructions

2.1 Syntactically Small

Let us begin with a brief overview of the syntactic properties of multi-verb constructions. Previous work has identified non-main verbs as being non-finite (Jayaseelan 1984, 2003; Amritavalli & Jayaseelan 2005; Hany Babu & Madhavan 2003, Gopalkrishnan 1985), IP or

AspP sized adjuncts (Jayaseelan 2003). Evidence that non-main clauses are at least as big as vPs comes from the fact that they can have separate subjects (4). Multi-verb constructions can have different, (1), or same objects, (6b).

(4)

[**paampu** kadicch-u] **goopi** maricch-u
 snake bite-U/I Goopi die-PAST

‘The snake bit (Gopi) and Gopi died.’ (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p55: 41)

The fact that no tense or viewpoint aspect morphemes² can be added to non-main verbs suggests that they are even smaller than (viewpoint) AspP. As Amritavalli & Jayaseelan (2005) point out, the ‘non-finite’ negation, *-aa-*, (5a), but not the *illa*, ‘finite’ negation, (5b) can be used on non-main verbs.³ Mathew (2014) argues based on scope and NPI data that *-aa-* is vP-level negation. If so, this suggests that, indeed, these non-main verbs are syntactically small. When *-aa-* negation is present, it only scopes over the non-main clause, as is expected if Mathew is right.

(5)

a. krishnankutti gauriamma-yude veett-il vaadaka kodukk-aa-de
 Krishnankutti Gauriamma-GEN house-LOC rent give-NEG-PART

thaamassicch-u
 live-PAST

‘Krishnakutty stayed in Gauriamma’s house without paying rent.’

(Gopalkrishana 1985 p76: 76b)

² Examples like (3) argue that *-u/i* is not a perfective marker itself. The forms *-ittu* and *-kondu*, which can be added to non-main verbs, and which Asher & Kumari (1997) have called perfective and progressive markers, respectively seem to more accurately be telicity markers: *-ittu* signals that the telos has been reached while *-kondu* signals that it has not been reached, (i). See Swenson (in prep) for further details.

(i)

a. raadha sinimu-kku pooy-**irikk-uka.yaanu**
 Radha cinema-DAT go.U/I-irikk-PROG.PRS
 ‘Radha has gone for a film.’ (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p237: 19)

[She could be on her way now or sitting in the theater, we don’t know.]

b. raadha sinimu-kku pooy-i-kond-**irikk-uka.yaanu**
 Radha cinema-DAT go-U/I-kond-irikk-PROG.PRS

‘Radha has gone for a film.’ [She is on her way now *but hasn’t reached the theater.*]

³ *illa* negation on the main verb can scope over both clauses, (ia) or just the non-main clause, (ib).

(i)

a. ente aduttu aarum yann-u irunn-illa
 I.GEN near anybody come-U/I sit.PST-NEG

‘Nobody came and sat near me’ [i.e. neither came nor sat]

b. innu soobha skuul-il nadann-u pooy-illa
 today Shobha school-il walk-U/I go.PST-NEG

‘Shobha did not go walking to school’ [i.e. Shobha went to school but she did not walk down to it] (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p86-87: 90, 93)

- b. *krishnankutti gauriamma-yude veett-il vaadaka kodukk-illa
 Krishnankutti Gauriamma-GEN house-LOC rent give-NEG
thaamassicch-u
 live-PAST
 ‘Krishnakutty stayed in Gauriamma’s house without paying rent.’

2.2 Pragmatically Licensed

Malayalam multi-verb constructions require pragmatic licensing conditions. According to Gopalkrishnan (1985), multi-verb constructions presuppose that the non-main verb is linked to the main verbs via one of the relationships demonstrated in (6): manner adverbial, (a), sequential part of a larger action, (b), cause and resulting effect, (c), and means used and ends achieved, (d).

(6)

- a. mani avan-te katha karanj-u paranj-u.
 Mani he-GEN tale cry-U/I tell-PST
 ‘Weeping, Mani told his tale.’
- b. shaantha kanji vecch-u kudicch-u.
 Shantha rice.porridge make-U/I drink-PST
 ‘Shantha made rice porridge and drank it.’
- c. kathaku thurakunna shabdham keett-u annamma unarnn-u.
 door opening noise hear-U/I Annamma wake.up-PST
 ‘Annamma woke up on hearing the sound of the door being opened.’
- d. enikku maranju kudicch-u asukham maar-i.
 I.DAT medicine drink-U/I illness move-PST
 ‘I took the medicine and got well.’
 (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p18: 8, p52: 37a, p17: 3-4)

When such a relationship is lacking, she claims that the sentence becomes bad, (7a). Instead to link these two sentences, *-um* coordination is required, (7b).

(7)

- a. #giita pachakkari arinj-u chaaya und-aakk-i.
 Gita vegetables chop-U/I tea exist-CAUS-PST
 ‘Gita chopped vegetables and made tea.’ [doesn’t meet criteria]
 (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p32: 18)
- b. giita [pachakkari ariy-uka-yum] [chaaya und-aakk-uka-yum] cheyth-u
 Gita vegetables chop-INF-CONJ tea exist-CAUS-INF-CONJ do-PST
 ‘Gita chopped vegetables and made tea.’

However, if (7a) is put into the right context, it becomes fine for at least some speakers.

- (8) Context: A line in a suspense novel. Gita is a family servant. Her job is to chop the vegetables. After finishing her work, she always makes herself a glass of tea before going.

ella divasathe poleyum giita pachakkari arinj-u chaaya
 every day other Gita vegetables chop-U/I tea

und-aakk-i. udane, urakkeyulla shabdham keett-u.
 exist-CAUS-PST suddenly loud noise hear-PST

‘Just like any other day, Gita chopped the vegetables and made tea. Suddenly, she heard a loud noise.’

Another way in which we can see pragmatic licensing is in a constraint on when different subjects are allowed in main and non-main clauses. According to Gopalkrishan (1985), different subjects are generally disallowed, except, as in (4) and (9a), where the subject of the main clause is an argument in the non-main clause.

(9)

a. **shaantha** kanji vecch-u kudicch-u
 Shantha rice.porridge make-U/I drink-PST
 ‘Shantha made rice porridge and drank it.’

b. #[**shaantha** kanji vecch-u] **njaan** kudicch-u
 Shantha rice.porridge make-U/I I drink-PST
 ‘Shantha made rice porridge, and I drank it.’ (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p52: 37)

However, according to my fieldwork, for at least some speakers, (9b) is fine in a context where I am sick and Shantha is taking care of me and thus makes kanji for me. It is also okay if I visit Shantha’s house and I drink kanji because she made it especially for me or if Shantha brought kanji to the office especially for me, so I should eat it. The generalization here seems to be that different subjects are allowed only when some type of a connection can be established between the main and non-main clauses.

So far, this paper has shown that non-main verbs are syntactically small, roughly the size of a vP and that multi-verb constructions require pragmatic licensing via causation, manner or sequence.

2.3 Temporally Underspecified

This section shows that event type and iconicity play key roles in specifying the temporal semantics of multi-verb constructions. Let us first turn to the role of event type. In (10) simultaneous (wake up at the same instant as hearing the noise) and successive interpretations (hear the noise one instant and then wake up the next instant) are possible, if the opening of the

door is viewed as an instantaneous event. If a speaker assumes that the door is slowly creaking open, i.e. that hearing the noise is not an instantaneous event, a proper containment interpretation (wake up while hearing the noise) is also possible. This is strong evidence that non-main verbs in Malayalam are semantically underspecified and do not have their own tense or viewpoint aspect. It also provides an additional argument against an account where *-u/i* is a perfective marker.

(10)

[kathaku thurakunna shabdham keett-u] annamma unarnn-u.
 door opening noise hear-U/I Annamma wake.up-PST
 ‘Annamma woke up on hearing the sound of the door being opened.’
 (Gopalkrishnan 1985 p17: 3)

Iconicity is also important in determining the temporal semantics of multi-verb constructions. Example (11) shows that multi-verb constructions can appear in a variety of places in the sentence.⁴

(11)

- a. njaan school-ilekku nadann-u [apple kazhicch-u].
 I school-to walk-PST apple take-U/I
 ‘I walked to school, eating an apple.’
 [school must be reached; apple does not have to be eaten (though it could be)]
- b. njaan [apple kazhicch-u] school-ilekku nadann-u.
 I apple take-U/I school-to walk-PST
 ‘I walked, eating an apple, to school.’
 [school must be reached; apple does not have to be eaten (though it could be)]
- c. [apple kazhicch-u] njaan school-ilekku nadann-u.
 apple take-U/I school-to walk-PST
 ‘Eating and apple, I walked to school.’
 [school must be reached; apple does not have to be eaten (though it could be)]

The role of iconicity can clearly be seen in cases where a sequential reading is preferred. Here, switching the order of the clauses results in a different temporal interpretation. Gopalkrishnan considers sentences like (12b) to be semantically infelicitous because, according to Hindu etiquette, one should always bathe before going to a temple. If a speaker assumes that not everyone follows temple etiquette, then there is nothing wrong with (12b). This is simply example of the role of world knowledge.

⁴ We can be sure what is the non-main vs. main verb here because in non-main forms ending in *-u*, the *-u* is reduced to a schwa in spoken Malayalam and written with the schwa marker, ̣, while the *-u* in past tense main verbs is pronounced as *-u* and written with the *-u* marker, ു. The *-i*, however, is pronounced as *-i* and written the *i* marker, ീ, in both environments.

(12)

- a. asha raavile kulicch-u ambalat-il pooy-i
 Asha morning bathe-U/I temple-LOC go-PST
 ‘Having bathed in the morning, Asha went to the temple.’
- b. asha raavile ambalat-il pooy-I kulich-u
 Asha morning temple-LOC go-U/I bathe-PST
 ‘Asha went to the temple in the morning and then came home and bathed.’
 [lit. ‘Having gone to the temple in the morning, Asha bathed.’]

In sum, section 2 has shown that non-main verbs are structurally small, roughly vPs and that multi-verb constructions are semantically underspecified for tense and viewpoint aspect and require the clauses involved to be pragmatically linked either via causation, manner or sequence of events.

3 Against a Coordination Account

Based on the traditional name for non-main verbs, the ‘Conjunctive Participle’, one might attempt to argue for a conjunction account for multi-verb constructions. However, this section will argue that such a move faces a number of problems.

The name Conjunctive/Adverbial Participle comes from the two ways these constructions can be translated, either as participle adjuncts serving an adverbial type function, (12a), or as conjoined sentences, (2), (12b). While they are sometimes translated using conjunction, they are different than ‘genuinely’ coordinated sentences in the language. These require the addition of the conjunctive particle, *-um*, (13a), which does not appear in Conjunctive/Adverbial Participle Constructions/multi-verb constructions.

(13)

- a. raaman var-uka-yum Krishnan pook-uka-yum cheyth-u
 Raman come-INF-CONJ Krishnan go-INF-CONJ do-PST
 ‘Raman came and Krishnan went.’ (Asher & Kumari 1997 p135: 647c)
- b. *raaman vann-u-yum krishnan pooy-i-yum
 Raman come-PST-CONJ Krishnan go-PST-CONJ
 ‘Raman came and Krishnan went.’

In order to coordinate two independent sentences, using *-um* coordination, one must attach *-um* to the progressive participle, *-uka*⁵, of the two verbs. The tense and aspect of the sentence are then encoded by the light verb *cheyy-uka* ‘do.’ This structure must be used because finite clauses cannot be coordinated in Malayalam by simply adding *-um* to each verb, (13b). Since non-main

⁵ See Swenson (in prep) for justification for this parsing as a progressive participle.

verbs are identical in form to past tense main verbs, the ungrammaticality of (13b) shows that non-main verbs cannot be conjoined to main verbs with *-um*.

In addition to not allowing coordination via the *-um* particle, there are several other reasons to argue against a syntactic conjunction account for multi-verb constructions. First, as seen above, non-main verbs can appear in many positions in the sentence. If syntactic conjunction were assumed, one would worry about Coordinate Structure Constraint violations. Secondly, a syntactic coordination account might try to say that the different pragmatic relationships felt out of different syntactic configurations. One could try to draw links between a Ramchand (2008) expanded vP since the projections there deal with relationships similar to those involved in Malayalam multi-verb constructions: causation (InitP), manner (ProcP) and sequence (ResultP). However, in addition to it being challenging to work out the details of such an analysis, such an account would transfer a largely pragmatically driven phenomenon to the syntax, which seems undesirable.

Additionally, if a syntactic coordination account were right, then perfects in Malayalam would involve coordination of multiple clauses since the non-main verb is the crucial component in Malayalam perfects. This is not an impossible idea (cf. Coon (2010), who argues that imperfective aspect in Chol, Mayan involves a biclausal structure) but it would add additional complications to any account for the perfect in Malayalam. If a similar, empirically adequate account can be found, this account should then be preferred. With these points in mind, the rest of the paper takes inspiration from the second traditional name for non-main verbs, the ‘Adverbial Participle’ and suggests that they are more like English absolutes than syntactic coordinations.

4 Non-Main Verbs as Modified Stump (1985)-Style Adjuncts

This section argues against a coordination account, highlights the similarities between English absolutes and Malayalam multi-verb constructions and suggests that a modified version of Stump (1985) analysis proposed in Swenson (2016a) is needed to account for the incompatibility of Conjunctive Participles with Individual Level Predicates and multiple temporal adverbs in Malayalam. This section begins with an overview of Stump’s account for English absolutes.

4.1 Overview of Stump’s Analysis

The adjuncts Stump deals with are those that express relations such as causation, (14a), serve as temporal adverbials, (14b), a.o.

- (14) a. The school is determined to avoid a scandal. The father is equally determined to find somebody to blame. The reader, **being more experienced in such things**, knows the truth: it was murder. [causation]

- b. **Grabbing a newspaper from a guard**, Tom went back out, wiped up the dog shit and deposited it and the day's news in a refuse can. [time adverbial] (Stump 1985 p2: 2-4)

Stump's general proposal is that these adjuncts, if not serving as an argument of a modal, frequency adverb or generic operator, belong to the same category as Main Tense Adverbs (MTA). He defines MTAs as "functors, [that] join with tense to characterize the interval at which some sentence is true. In this role, time adverbs are regarded as denoting functions from properties of time intervals to sets of time intervals... MTA join with temporal abstracts to produce temporal abstracts" (Stump 1985 p118).⁶ Some examples of MTAs include *at that time*, *since noon*, *in the morning*, *when Mary sang*, *before Mary sang*, *after Mary sang*, as well as any adjuncts that are not arguments of modals, frequency adverbs or generic operators.

A key tenant of Stumps proposal is *indeterminacy*, which occurs when, in order to assign an interpretation to a sentence, some type of inference is needed because it constitutes part of the truth conditional meaning. Stump uses the sentence in (15) to illustrate this concept. Here 'Picasso' could refer to a number of things: a painting by Picasso, a man named Picasso, a postage stamp with Picasso's picture, etc. However, for (15) to be true, the speaker/hearer must infer that the two Picassos are of the same category, i.e. two paintings by Picasso not a painting by Picasso and a man named Picasso.

- (15) I saw two Picassos today. (Stump 1985 p305: 12)

The claim is that MTA's (i.e. those adjuncts that are not the arguments of a modal, frequency adverb or generalization operator) are semantically indeterminate with respect to the temporal relationship of the two clauses and relevance of the adjunct clause to the main clause. He models this indeterminacy in the semantics using contextual variables. Stump proposes that the temporal and relevancy relations in MTA's can be derived using information such as event type (instantaneous vs. state of affairs/non-instantaneous), word order/iconicity, world knowledge, and predicate type (Individual Level (ILP) vs State Level (SLP)). The middle two pieces of information are relatively self-explanatory. With respect to event type, there are three possibilities, Figure 1.

Event Type Combinations	Possible Readings
#1: both verbs describe instantaneous events	sequential reading simultaneous reading
#2: the adjunct describes instantaneous event & main verb non-instantaneous event (or vice versa)	sequential reading proper containment reading

⁶ MTA are distinct from time adverbs like "yesterday, today, tomorrow, during the past summer" which may function as "the argument of certain expressions...the purpose of such a time adverb is simply to specify a set of time intervals." (Stump 1985 p116)

#3: adjunct & main verb both describe non-instantaneous events/ state of affairs	sequential reading simultaneous reading proper containment reading
--	--

FIGURE 1: POSSIBLE READINGS FOR DIFFERENT EVENT TYPES

The intuition regarding predicate type is that SLPs play an essentially temporal role because they naturally represent short and discrete intervals which pin-pointing a particular time, (16).

- (16) a. When John was drunk, he fell down the stairs. [SLP]
b. Crossing the street, he was almost hit by a car. [SLP]
(Stump 1985 p308: 17a, p309: 19)

ILPs, on the other hand, describe the essential properties of an individual (dispositions, potentials), (17). These are things upon which assumptions about reasons or causes for an action are built.

- (17) a. Having blue eyes, Jane looks a lot like Mary. [ILP]
b. His father having been a sailor, John knows all about boats. [ILP]
(Stump 1985 p308: 18)

4.2 Applying Stump's Analysis to Malayalam Multi-Verb Constructions

Looking back to section 2, there are a number of parallels that can be drawn between English absolute constructions and Malayalam non-main verbs: both have pragmatic requirements, can occur in a number of positions in the sentence and are semantically indeterminate with respect to temporality and gain their temporal interpretations based on the event type, world knowledge, and iconicity. Turning to the puzzle from the introduction about multi-verb constructions with present imperfective, (18a), or future main verbs, (18b), we see that Stump's proposal works with things we already know about Malayalam to straightforwardly provides an explanation. John (1987) and Hany Babu (1997) have argued that the future maker *-um* is a modal, and Hany Babu (2006) has argued that *-unnu* involves a generic operator. As such, in (18), the contextual variables in non-main clauses would be bound, not via pragmatic factors as in MTAs, but by the modal and generic operators taking scope over them, causing the interpretation of the non-main clause to vary with that of the main clause. Jayaseelan (2003) suggests that non-main verb clauses adjoin at a structurally low point in main clauses. This intuition seems to be on the right track, in that for the modal and generic operators to bind the open variable, in their base position, non-main verb clauses would need to be low enough to be in the scope of the modal and generic operators.

- (18) a. njaan oru maanga pootticch-u thinn-unnu-Ø
I one mango pluck- U/I eat-IPFV-PRS
'I pluck and eat (or am plucking and eating) a mango.'
(Amritavalli & Jayaseelan 2005 p199: 38a, my glosses)

- b. njaan oru maanga pootticch-u **thinn-um**.
 I one mango pluck- U/I eat-FUT
 ‘I will pluck and eat a mango.’ (Jayaseelan 2003 p68: 2b, my glosses)

However, there are several important areas where Malayalam non-main verbs and English absolutes differ. The first is with Individual Level Predicates. English absolutes are compatible with Individual Level Predicates as well as Stage Level Predicates, (17). However, multi-verb constructions are not, (19a). Instead, the *-a-thu* nominalization⁷ must be used, (19b).

(19)

- a. *thadi-yan aayi, avan orupaadu **buddhimutt-i**
 fat-MASC be-U/I he much have.trouble-PST
 ‘Being a fat man, he had a lot of trouble.’
- b. thadi-yan **aay-a-thu** *kondu*, avan orupaadu **buddhimutt-i**
 fat-MASC be-REL-NEUT.SG INST he much have.trouble-PST
 ‘Because he is a fat man, he had a lot of trouble.’

Secondly, sentences with multiple temporal adverbs must use *-a-thu* nominalization. They cannot use a multi-verb construction. The examples in (20)-(22) illustrate this with a number of predicates and temporal adverbs. Note that the different temporal adverbs are fine in English absolute constructions, as can be seen in the English glosses for these sentences.

(20)

- a. ***innale** gundakal vinu-vine **thall-I** **inu** avan **maricch-u**.
 Yesterday thugs Vinu-ACC beat-U/I today he die-PST
 ‘The thugs having beaten Vinu yesterday, he died today.’
- b. **innale** gundakal vinu-vine **thall-iy-a-thu** *kondu*
 Yesterday thugs Vinu-ACC beat-PST-REL-NEUT.SG INST

inu avan **maricch-u**.
 today he die-PST
 ‘The thugs having beaten Vinu yesterday, he died today.’

(21)

- a. * **thaamasichu** **pooy-I** avan **samaya-thinu** eth-aan **patti-yilla**
 late go-U/I he time-DAT reach-INF could-NEG
 ‘Having left very late, he didn’t arrive on time.’
- b. **thaamasichu** **poy-a-thu** *kondu* avan **samaya-thinu**
 late go.PAST-REL-NEUT.SG INST he time-DAT

⁷ Swenson (2016) argues that this form consists of the relative marker, *-a*, plus agreement, hence the glossing.

eth-aan patti-yilla
 reach-INF could-NEG
 ‘Having left very late, he didn’t arrive on time.’

(22)

a. *kazhinja kollam avudhi-kku varanasi-yil pooy-i,
 last year holiday-DAT Varanasi-LOC go-U/I

var-unn-Ø-a avudhi-kku unni tirupati-yil
 come-IPFV-PRS-REL holiday-DAT Unni Tirupati-LOC

sandharshikk-aan theerumaanicch-u.
 visit-INF decide-PST

‘Having visited Varanasi on holiday last year, Unni decided to visit Tirupati for the upcoming holiday.’

b. kazhinja kollam avudhi-kku varanasi-yil poy-a-thu
 last year holiday-DAT Varanasi-LOC go.PST-REL-NEUT.SG

kondu, var-unn-Ø-a avudhi-kku unni tirupati-yil
 INST come-IPFV-PRS-REL holiday-DAT Unni Tirupati-LOC

sandharshikk-aan theerumaanicch-u.
 visit-INF decide-PST

‘Having visited Varanasi on holiday last year, Unni decided to visit Tirupati for the upcoming holiday.’

Different manner adverbs are, however, allowed, at least sometimes. Jayaseelan (1984) provides the example in (23), which all speakers I have consulted accept. However, when the adverb modifying the non-main verb is changed from *nallavannam* ‘well’ in (23) to *veegam* ‘quickly’ in (24) speakers report a strange feeling. It is not completely clear to me at this point if the find this sentence ungrammatical or if it is due to a pragmatic constraint in that *veegam* ‘quickly’ often gives a negative connotation, i.e. that it is done hastily and sloppily. This would then contradict with the type of ‘savoring’ reading sometimes induced by *pathukke* ‘slowly.’

(23)

njaan oru maanga nallavannam muricch-u pathukke thinn-u
 I one mango well cut-U/I slowly eat-PST
 ‘I cut the mango nicely and ate it slowly.’ (Jayaseelan 1984 p624: 2a)

(24)

*/#njaan oru maanga veegam muricch-u pathukke thinn-u
 I one mango quickly cut-U/I slowly eat-PST
 ‘I cut the mango quickly and ate it slowly.’

This section has shown that both English absolutes and Malayalam non-main verbs have pragmatic licensing requirements, can occur in a number of positions in the sentence and are semantically indeterminate with respect to temporality and gain their temporal interpretations based on the event type, world knowledge, and iconicity. However, unlike English absolutes, Malayalam non-main verbs cannot occur with Individual Level Predicates or multiple temporal adverbs.⁸

It is interesting that in both of these cases, when provided with the ungrammatical multi-verb construction, speakers correct the sentence by changing the non-main verb into an *-athu* nominalization. Swenson (2016b) argues that this form is nominalized above TP, which would then account for why this structure is compatible with different temporal adverbs while the non-main verb is not: there simply is no space for a unique temporal adverbial in non-main verb clauses because they are syntactically too small, roughly the size of a vP. This analysis fits with the facts presented in section 2, namely that no viewpoint aspect or tense marking can be added to non-main verbs, while the vP-negation *-aa-*, which attaches directly to verbal roots, can be added.

Individual Level Predicates are not compatible with certain types of adverbial adjuncts. One example is depictives, (25).

(25) *Intelligent, John uses the elevator.

Depictives are generally assumed to be syntactically small (Williams 1980, Pytkkanen 2002). Perhaps a further connection between depictives and Malayalam non-main verbs could be made here.

5 Summary

This paper began with a question regarding the temporal semantics of multi-verb constructions. Section 1 showed that the non-main verb *-u/i* marker is, in fact, neither a perfective nor a past tense marker. This opened the option that it is semantically vacuous. The following section explored the plausibility of this option. Section 2 showed that non-main verbs are structurally small, roughly vPs, and that multi-verb constructions are semantically underspecified for tense and viewpoint aspect and require the clauses involved to be pragmatically linked either via causation, manner or sequence of events. Section 3 argued against a coordination analysis for multi-verb constructions. Section 4 argued instead for a modified version of a Stump (1985) style approach. It showed that both English absolutes and Malayalam non-main verbs have

⁸ In addition these differences it is worth noting that, while at least some speakers do accept benefactive totally unrelated subjects in multi-verb constructions, it is harder to force these readings than in English absolutes. The general feeling among speakers seems to be that the pragmatic restrictions on these constructions are stronger than in English absolutes.

pragmatic licensing requirements, can occur in a number of positions in the sentence and are semantically indeterminate with respect to temporality and gain their temporal interpretations based on the event type, world knowledge, and iconicity. However, unlike English absolutes, Malayalam non-main verbs cannot occur with Individual Level Predicates or multiple temporal adverbs. It was then proposed that possibly this is because Malayalam non-main verbs are structurally small.

This paper also has bearing on a larger controversy in Malayalam. The data presented here argue against the tenseless account put forth by Amritavalli & Jayaseelan (2005, et. seq.) where *-u/i* is the perfective marker. Amritavalli & Jayaseelan argue that the *-u/i* in both main and non-main verbs is a perfective marker. Multi-verb constructions with sequential readings with present or future interpretations have been one piece of evidence for their tenseless account. They argue that since the non-main *-u* in these constructions cannot be a past tense marker, given its non-past meaning in these sentences, it is a perfective marker. However, the ability presented above that certain multi-verb constructions allow simultaneous readings, proper containment readings or sequential readings serves as evidence against their account. This suggests, that multi-verb constructions actually aren't evidence for Malayalam being tenseless. See Hany Babu & Madhavan (2003), Menon (2011), and Swenson (in preparation) for further arguments for a tensed account for Malayalam.

While flawed, Amritavalli and Jayaseelan's (2005) account raises many important questions. Central to their proposal is the notion of 'finiteness.' This notion is generally poorly understood, but generally one could say, however 'finiteness' is defined, that languages have a variety of both 'finite' and 'non-finite' forms. The adverb and Individual Level Predicate data provided in this paper highlighted a difference between two 'non-finite' forms in Malayalam: non-main verbs/Conjunctive/Adverbial Participles and *-athu* nominalizations. Work by Abney (1987) and Stump (1985), a.o. has improved our understanding of different 'non-finite' forms in English. To date in the generative literature, no careful comparison of these two 'non-finite' forms in Malayalam has taken place. Better understanding their distribution and the explanations for it is an interesting question in its own right.

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