SOME ASPECTS OF GRAMMAR AND TONICITY: A COMPARISON BETWEEN TELUGU AND ENGLISH

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Abstract

This paper proposes to analyze some points in relation to the connection between grammar and tonicity in Telugu, a Central Dravidian language, spoken in Andhra Pradesh, India. It deals with the new and given aspect of tonicity, and how some grammatical elements are phonologically put into focus through tonic prominence. The paper also deals with the content and grammatical distinction in relation to the choice of marked or unmarked tonicity. As in English, Telugu also shows the similar content and grammatical distinction, but at the level of morphemes. Since the entire verb group in Telugu is realized as a single word, the content and grammatical morphemes are combined together as a single word in a clause. Unlike in English, it seems that almost every grammatically valid element has the potentiality to attract tonic accent in Telugu. Here, this potentiality will be analyzed in accordance with the context. On the whole, this paper will draw a comparison in relation to tonicity in the two languages.

1. Introduction

The framework for the present paper¹ is Systemic Functional Linguistics. According to Halliday (2004), language is a multidimensional phenomenon and so it should not be studied at any isolated level. The strata, phonology, syntax and semantics, are interconnected to each other in a conversational discourse in accordance with certain context of situation. This view is applied to the system of tonicity and its connection with grammar in Telugu. The comparison between Telugu and English is also attempted to give a clear picture of similarities and differences regarding potentiality of tonic accent.

¹ This paper is a part of my ongoing PhD thesis. This work is based on the auditory and acoustic study of speech samples of some Telugu speakers and my knowledge of Telugu as a native speaker.
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