

Lesson 12

The vocative case – gerund – perfect mode – the adverbializing suffix -āgi

The vocative case

Sanskrit has a vocative case (*saṃbōdhanā vibhakti*), therefore many Kannada grammarians wish to see one in Kannada too. The function of this case is generally fulfilled in Kannada by the suffix *ē*, which is added to a noun or pronoun in agreement with the usual rules of sandhi.

The vocative is the case of **addressing** or **calling**. If at all one wishes to explicitly translate this into English, a particle such as *oh!* or less politely *hey!* can be used. In the case of nouns ending in *a* (as a rule referring to male persons), an alternative (and quite common) vocative is made by lengthening the final vowel.

ಸುರೇಶರೇ! ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಹೋಗುತ್ತೀರಿ ?	<i>Surēśarē! Elli hōguttīri?</i>	Surēśa! Where are you going?
ದೇವರೇ ಕಾಪಾಡು!	<i>Dēvarē kāpāḍu!</i> ¹	God, protect (us)!
ಗಣೇಶಾ! ಏನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತೀ ?	<i>Gaṇēśā! Ēnu māḍuttī?</i>	Gaṇēśa! What are you doing?

The gerund

Kannada possesses, like other Dravidian languages, a special nonfinite verb form that in some respects resembles the English gerund and in certain other respects (which will be discussed later) a past participle. This form (which for the sake of convenience we will call ‘gerund’; other modern grammarians call it ‘verbal participle’, ‘past verbal participle’² or ‘absolutive’)³ is used very frequently, and the learner must learn to recognize it and become familiar with its use. Its function is to report **one of several actions or processes in a lengthy sentence that reports a sequence of actions or processes**. The use of the gerund in Kannada, as an indicator of sequentiality, is similar to that of the perfect adverbial participle (совершенное деепричастие) in Russian. Only the final verb is fully inflected; all the preceding are indicated by means of gerunds.⁴

In a modern European language like English, one can construct complex sentences such as “I left the house, walked to the bus, got on the bus, went downtown, got off, and walked to the office”, using a number of fully conjugated, finite verb forms (left, walked, got, went, got, walked) for creating a composite message in one long sentence. In a Dravidian language like Kannada, such a sentence is not possible; instead of linking many messages by means of comma’s and ‘and’, one uses gerunds.

The Kannada gerund does not indicate any particulars about the subject, i.e., it says nothing about the gender, number, or person of the subject. It only indicates that a certain action or process took place and was followed by another.

ನಾನು ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋಗಿ ಮಲಗಿದೆನು	<i>nānu manege hōgi malagidenū</i>	I went home and went to sleep (or: after going home, I went to sleep) (literally: I house-to having-gone lay down)
ಅವರು ಆ ಸಂಗೀತವನ್ನು ಕೇಳಿ ಸಂತೋಷ ಪಟ್ಟರು	<i>avaru ā saṅgītavannu kēḷi saṁtōṣa paṭṭaru</i>	they heard the music and were happy (or: after hearing that music, they were happy) (literally: they that music having-heard joy underwent)

It is important that the learner understands the use of the gerund. Not a single bit of adult conversation is spoken, nor is a single column of newspaper text printed, without the use of gerunds.

The learner may now understand what the ordinary Kannada sentence structure would be if one wishes to translate a complex English sentence like the one given above. “I left the house, walked to the bus, got on the bus, went downtown, got off, and walked to the office” becomes ನಾನು ಮನೆಯನ್ನು ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಬಸ್ಸಿಗೆ ನಡೆದು ಬಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹತ್ತಿ ನಗರಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋಗಿ ಬಸ್ಸಿನಿಂದ ಇಳಿದು ಕಚ್ಚೇರಿಗೆ ನಡೆದೆನು *nānu maneyannu biṭṭu bassige naḍedenu*

bassinalli hattī nagarakke hōgi bassinimda ḷīdu kaccērige naḍedenu. By curious coincidence, English is perhaps the only Western language in which this kind of construction can be imitated rather well without sounding completely idiotic, even if it sounds rather artificial: “I, having left the house, having walked to the bus, having got on the bus, having gone to the city, having got off the bus, walked to the office.” In Kannada, this is the ordinary way of constructing such a message.

Usually, the grammatical subject of the gerunds is the same as the grammatical subject of the finite verb that ends the sentence; in other words, all the actions are performed by the same agent. However, this need not always be the case. In two situations, the subject of the gerund and of the finite verb may be different:

(a) when there is a causal relationship, as in ಹಣ ಹೋಗಿ ಬಡವನಾದನು *haṇa hōgi baḍavanādanu* ‘after his money was gone (lit.: ‘his money having gone’), he became poor’,⁵ or ಮಳೆ ಬಂದು ಹೊಳೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿತು *maḷe baṇḍu hoḷe heccitu* ‘after the rain came (i.e., because of the rain), the (level of the) river rose’.⁶

(b) when a period of time has passed, as in ಅವನು ಹೋಗಿ ಐದು ದಿವಸ ಆಯಿತು *avanu hōgi aīdu divasa āyitu* ‘after he went (lit. ‘he having gone’) five days passed’⁷ (i.e., it has been five days since he went).

Regular formation of the gerund

To form or recognize the gerund correctly, one must know the past stem of the verb.⁸ Verbs of the first class lose the final *d* of the past stem (or, alternatively, one can say that the final *u* of the root is replaced by a short *i*), whereas verbs of the second class add a short *u* (i.e., a *du* is added to the root).

1st verb class

<i>root</i>	<i>past stem</i>	<i>gerund</i>	
<i>māḍu</i>	<i>māḍid-</i>	<i>māḍi</i>	to do, to make
<i>kēlu</i>	<i>kēḷid-</i>	<i>kēḷi</i>	to hear, ask
<i>hāru</i>	<i>hārid-</i>	<i>hāri</i>	to jump, fly
<i>hattu</i>	<i>hattid-</i>	<i>hatti</i>	to ascend, climb

Note that the gerund of the first class looks exactly like the shorter form of the imperative plural. In practice, confusion never arises: an

imperative is the last word of a sentence, whereas a gerund never is (except in rare cases in poetry or highly emotional speech).

2nd verb class

root	past stem	gerund	
<i>kare</i>	<i>kared-</i>	<i>karedu</i>	to call
<i>īli</i>	<i>īlid-</i>	<i>īlidu</i>	to descend
<i>hoḍe</i>	<i>hoḍed-</i>	<i>hoḍedu</i>	to strike, hit
<i>naḍe</i>	<i>naḍed-</i>	<i>naḍedu</i>	to walk

Formation of the gerund of strong verbs

Also in the case of the strong verbs,⁹ the gerund is (almost always, with only two exceptions) based on the past stem of the verb, after which a short *u* is added:

root	past stem	gerund	
<i>koḍu</i>	<i>kott-</i>	<i>kottu</i>	to give
<i>ari</i>	<i>arit-</i>	<i>aritu</i>	to know
<i>koḷḷu</i>	<i>koṃḍ-</i>	<i>koṃḍu</i>	to take, buy
<i>baru</i>	<i>baṃḍ-</i>	<i>baṃḍu</i>	to come
<i>bīlu</i>	<i>bidd-</i>	<i>biddu</i>	to fall
<i>kadi</i>	<i>kadd-</i>	<i>kaddu</i>	to steal
<i>horaḍu</i>	<i>horaṭ-</i>	<i>horaṭu</i>	to set out, start

Two verbs are somewhat irregular in that their gerund is not derived from their strong past stems, but from their roots:

root	past stem	gerund	
<i>hōgu</i>	<i>hōd-</i>	<i>hōgi</i>	to go
<i>āgu</i>	<i>ād-</i>	<i>āgi</i>	to become

The formation of the gerund on the basis of the past stem reveals its basic meaning: an action took place in the past, but the message that is expressed by means of the sentence is not yet completely finished.

The perfect mode

The use of the various grammatical devices for indicating actions and processes in the past is not quite as exactly stipulated as in most of the modern European languages. The simple past tense (also called 'imperfect' or 'preterite' by some grammarians) in Kannada can, according to the context, be translated by an English imperfect, perfect, past perfect, or any of these in the continuous mode. Nowadays the majority of native speakers, esp. the less educated, do not distinguish conceptually between all these forms and treat them simply as different ways to express the past; if at all distinctions are made, a 'perfect' is used to indicate a past that is more remote than an 'imperfect', and a 'past perfect' represents a still more remote past. However, there are situations in which the Kannada speaker / writer wishes to be more precise about the time or mode of a past action or process.¹⁰

One construction is often used with a meaning that approximates that of the English perfect: one takes the gerund of a verb and adds the present tense of *iru*, which here functions as an auxiliary verb. The final vowel of the gerund, whether *u* or *i*, is elided, and the gerund and the form of *iru* are written together. Thus, e.g., *māḍi* (having made / done) and *iddēne* (I am) together become *māḍiddēne* 'I have done', *hōgi* (having gone) and *iddēne* together form *hōgiddēne* 'I have gone', *karedu* 'having called' and *iddēne* together become *karediddēne*. Note that the auxiliary verb for this 'perfect' is always *iru* 'to be', never 'to have'.¹¹

ನಾನು ಅದನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿದೆನು	<i>nānu adannu māḍidenu</i>	I did that
ನಾನು ಅದನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿದ್ದೇನೆ	<i>nānu adannu māḍiddēne</i>	I have done that (lit.: I that having-done am)
ನಾನು ಹೋದೆನು	<i>nānu hōdenu</i>	I went
ನಾನು ಹೋಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ	<i>nānu hōgiddēne</i>	I have gone (lit.: I having-gone am)

Like the English perfect, this construction signifies that an action or process took place in the past and was completed.¹²

It is similarly possible to combine a gerund with a different conjugated form of *iru*: a past or future tense, with corresponding meanings: that at a certain point in the past, the action or process had already

taken place, or that there will be a time in the future when the action or process will have taken place.

ನಾನು ಪುಸ್ತಕವನ್ನು ಓದಿದ್ದೇನೆ	<i>nānu pustakavannu ōdiddēne</i>	I have read the book
ನಾನು ಪುಸ್ತಕವನ್ನು ಓದಿದ್ದೆನು	<i>nānu pustakavannu ōdiddenu</i>	I had read the book
ನಾನು ಪುಸ್ತಕವನ್ನು ಓದಿರುವೆನು	<i>nānu pustakavannu ōdiruvenu</i>	I will have read the book

Note that the audible and visual difference between *ōdidenu* 'I read' (simple past tense) and *ōdiddenu* 'I had read' is merely the doubling of the second *d*, which means that the preceding syllable is prosodically long. The past perfect does not occur often, but it is important to distinguish it from the simple past.

The adverbializing suffix *-āgi*

In earlier lessons we have already noticed the suffix *-āgi*, that can be added quite freely to nouns and pronominalized adjectives and other attributive words to create words that behave functionally as European adverbs, according to the usual rules of sandhi:

ಆ ಮರ ದೊಡ್ಡದಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆದಿದೆ	<i>ā mara doḍḍadāgi beḷedide</i>	that tree has grown tall
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After what has been said about gerunds in this lesson, one can now recognize *-āgi* as the gerund of the verb *āgu* 'to become'. Literally, this sentence means: "that tree, a large thing having become, has grown".

Although *-āgi* actually is a gerund, one peculiar aspect of its use must be noted. Ordinarily, the gerund has the same subject as the sentence as a whole. With *-āgi* in this particular function as adverbializing suffix, this need not be so. For instance:

ಅವನು ಈ	<i>avanu ī kelasavannu</i>	he has done this
ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಕೆಟ್ಟದಾಗಿ	<i>keṭṭadāgi māḍiddāne</i>	work badly
ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾನೆ		

Literally: “he this work, a bad thing having become, has made.” Obviously, the ‘he’ has not become a bad thing; it is the work that he was doing, that has become bad; in other words, he did the work badly.

This use of *-āgi* is **extremely** frequent – so much so that the grammatical origin of *-āgi* as the gerund of *āgu* is consciously hardly realized by Kannada speakers. In practice, there is no single way in which an adverbial construction with *-āgi* can best be translated. Any translator must keep in mind that practically everything in a Kannada sentence that is marked by *-āgi* has an adverbial function.

When *-āgi* is added to any of the many loanwords from Sanskrit which, in the original language, are adjectives, these words become adverbs in Kannada. There is no need for first pronominalizing them:

ಅವನು ತುಂಬ	<i>avanu tuṃba</i>	he spoke very
ಕ್ರೂರವಾಗಿ	<i>krūravāgi</i>	cruelly
ಮಾತನಾಡಿದನು	<i>mātanāḍidanu</i>	
ಅವಳು ಅದನ್ನು	<i>avaḷu adannu tuṃba</i>	she has done that
ತುಂಬ ಸುಂದರವಾಗಿ	<i>suṃdaravāgi</i>	very beautifully
ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾಳೆ	<i>māḍiddāle</i>	

In the above examples, *krūra* ‘cruel’, *suṃdara* ‘beautiful’ are Sanskrit adjectives.

When used with nouns that denote persons, it is often appropriate to translate *-āgi* with ‘as’:

ಅವಳು	<i>avaḷu lēkhakiyāgi ā</i>	she participated in
ಲೇಖಕಿಯಾಗಿ ಆ	<i>sammēlanadalli</i>	that conference as
ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನದಲ್ಲಿ	<i>bhāgavahisidaḷu</i>	a writer
ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿದಳು		

ಅವನು	<i>avanu purōhitanāgi</i>	he worked in a
ಪುರೋಹಿತನಾಗಿ	<i>dēvasthānadalli</i>	temple as a priest
ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ	<i>kelasa māḍidanu</i>	
ಮಾಡಿದನು		

Literally, the two above sentences mean “she, writer having become, in that conference participated” and “he, priest having become, in temple work did”.

When used with nouns that denote conditions, the meaning is that that condition has come about:

ಅವರು ಸುಸ್ತಾಗಿ	<i>avaru sustāgi</i>	they came tired
ಬಂದರು	<i>baṇḍaru</i>	

The word *sustu* means ‘fatigue, tiredness’. Here the ‘they’ (*avaru*) came (*baṇḍaru*) after tiredness (*sustu*) had arisen (*āgi*), in other words: they were tired when they came.

Often *-āgi* is added to a dative with the meaning ‘for [the sake of]’, ‘for the benefit of’. This combination has the same meaning as dative + *ōskara*.



ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸರದಿಗಾಗಿ ಕಾಯಿರಿ – ‘Please wait here for your turn’ (*saradi-ge-āgi*).
On a floor in Bangalore Airport

Exercise

Read and translate the following sentences:

೧. ಗಣೇಶರೇ! ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದೀರಾ?
೨. ಅವರು ಸುಸ್ತಾಗಿ ಮಲಗಿದರು.
೩. ಆ ಹುಡುಗಿ ಸೊಗಸಾಗಿ ಹಾಡಿದಳು.
೪. ಆ ಹುಡುಗ ಒರಟಾಗಿ ಮಾತನಾಡಿದ.
೫. ಅವನು ನನ್ನನ್ನು ಕೆಟ್ಟದಾಗಿ ಬಯ್ಯು ಹೊರಟು ಹೋದ.¹³
೬. ಅದನ್ನು ನೋಡಿ ಖುಶಿಯಾಗಿ ನಕ್ಕಳು.

೭. ಈ ಪಾಠವನ್ನು ಓದಿ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕೇಳಿ.
 ೮. ಪಕ್ಕದ ಮನೆಯವರು¹⁴ ನೆನ್ನೆ ಊರಿಗೆ ಹೋಗಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ತಿಂಗಳು ವಾಪಸು ಬರುವರು.
 ೯. ಅವರು ನಿಜವಾಗಿ ಹಾಗೆ ಹೇಳಿದರಾ?¹⁵
 ೧೦. ತೀವ್ರವಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ ಮಾಡಿ ಈ ವಾಕ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಓದಿ.
 ೧೧. ದಯವಿಟ್ಟು ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಬೇಗ ಹೇಳಿ.
 ೧೨. ಜೋರಾಗಿ ಮಾತನಾಡುತ್ತಾನೆ.
 ೧೩. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲಿ ಇಳಿಯುತ್ತದೆ.

Vocabulary

ಆಫಿಸು	<i>āphisu</i>	office
ಇಳಿ	<i>īli</i>	to descend, go down
ಒರಟು	<i>oraṭu</i>	coarseness
ಕದಿ	<i>kadi</i>	to steal
ಕಾಪಾಡು	<i>kāpāḍu</i>	to protect, guard
ಕೊಳ್ಳು	<i>koḷḷu</i>	to buy
ಕ್ರೂರ	<i>krūra</i>	cruel
ಖುಶಿ	<i>khuśi</i>	joy
ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ	<i>cennāgi</i>	nicely, finely
ಜೋರು	<i>jōru</i>	force, forcefulness
ತಿಂಗಳು	<i>tiṃgaḷu</i>	month
ತೀವ್ರ	<i>tīvra</i>	severe, intense
ದಯವಿಟ್ಟು	<i>dayaviṭṭu</i>	please
ನಕ್ಕು	<i>nakk-</i>	(past stem of <i>nagu</i>)
ನಗು	<i>nagu</i>	to laugh
ನಡೆ	<i>naḍe</i>	to walk; to happen

ಪಟ್ಟ	<i>patt-</i>	(past stem of <i>paḍu</i>)
ಪಡು	<i>paḍu</i>	to suffer, experience, undergo
ಪಾಠ	<i>pāṭha</i>	lesson
ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ	<i>prayatna</i>	attempt
ಬಯ್ಯ	<i>bayd-</i>	(past stem of <i>bayyu</i>)
ಬಯ್ಯು	<i>bayyu</i>	to abuse, scold
ಬೆಳೆ	<i>beḷe</i>	to grow
ಬೇಗ / ಬೇಗನೆ	<i>bēga / bēgane</i>	soon, fast, quickly
ಭಾಗವಹಿಸು	<i>bhāgavahisu</i>	to participate
ಮಲಗು	<i>malagu</i>	to lie down, sleep
ಮಾತನಾಡು	<i>mātanāḍu</i>	to speak
ಮುಂದಿನ	<i>muṁdina</i>	next
ಯೋಚನೆ	<i>yōcane</i>	thought
ಲೇಖಕಿ	<i>lēkhaki</i>	writer (f.)
ವಾಕ್ಯ	<i>vākya</i>	sentence
ವಾಪಸು	<i>vāpasu</i>	back, returned
ಶಬ್ದ	<i>śabda</i>	word
ಸಂತೋಷ	<i>samtōṣa</i>	joy
ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನ	<i>sammēḷana</i>	conference
ಸುಸ್ತು	<i>sustu</i>	tiredness, fatigue
ಸೊಗಸು	<i>sogasu</i>	grace, elegance, beauty
ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟ	<i>spaṣṭa</i>	clear
ಹತ್ತು	<i>hattu</i>	to climb; to begin
ಹಾಡು	<i>hāḍu</i>	to sing
ಹಾರು	<i>hāru</i>	to fly, jump

ಹೊರಟೆ	<i>horat-</i>	(past stem of <i>horaḍu</i>)
ಹೊರಡು	<i>horaḍu</i>	to set out, leave for

Notes

¹ One curious feature of Kannada is that the word for ‘god’, *dēva*, is always used in the plural (*dēvaru*), also when referring to a single god, which is what one would expect out of respect towards the god; but in the case of a single god, although the noun is plural, the verb is in the singular. Hence it is possible, and correct, to say ದೇವರು ಇದ್ದಾನೆ *dēvaru iddāne* ‘God exists’.

² Cf. Kittel 1903: 93 (§154).

³ In Kannada ಭೂತನ್ಯೂನ *bhūtanūna*, ‘past deficient’, Venkatachalastry 2007: 158.

⁴ This type of construction is another example of Dravidian influence on the Indo-European languages of South Asia. It is found already in Sanskrit, and the various modern Indo-European languages of northern India have similar verb forms.

⁵ Cf. Kittel 1903: 419 (§361, 1).

⁶ Cf. Spencer 1950: 112.

⁷ Cf. Kittel 1903: 420 (§361, 2).

⁸ Also other verb forms are derived from the past stem, such as the conditional and the concessive, which will be discussed in a later lesson. Whenever a verb is strong (or what earlier grammarians called ‘irregular’), this means that the **past stem** is formed in a manner that one would not likely suspect, and **therefore also** the gerund, conditional and concessive are formed differently.

⁹ See lesson 5 and the appendix at the end of the book.

¹⁰ It is matter of debate whether this grammatical form, which here has been called ‘perfect’, should be considered a tense or a mode. What follows in the rest of this section is a description of the usage as one commonly finds in coastal Karnataka, where the ‘perfect’ has the modal implication of completion. Further east, the perfect is used less frequently, and where it is used, the completive significance is often missing, and it is simply used as a kind of alternative past tense.

¹¹ Speakers of German, Dutch, French and similar languages must note that there is only **one** auxiliary verb, and not one for transitive and another for intransitive verbs, as in *ich bin gegangen* / *ik ben gegaan* / *je suis allé* versus *ich habe gelesen* / *ik heb gelezen* / *j’ai lu*. **In Kannada, transitivity lies not in the auxiliary, but in the main verb.**

¹² I.e., this is *usually* the case. Although the perfect mode can already be found in Old Kannada texts, many authors and speakers today are not so precise in

distinguishing between the simple past and the perfect as modes, or feel that the perfect signifies a more distant past than what is expressed by the simple past.

¹³ Lit. 'having set out, he went' is the common idiomatic expression for 'he went away'.

¹⁴ *Pakkada maneyavaru* 'the person of the house of the side (*pakka*)' means 'neighbour'.

¹⁵ Idiomatically, ಹಾಗೆ ಹೇಳು *hāge hēḷu* and ಹಾಗೆ ಮಾಡು *hāge māḍu*, besides literally meaning 'to say in that manner' and 'to do in that manner', can also (and usually do) mean 'to say that' and 'to do that'.