Lesson 7

*The Oriental Research Institute (ORI) of the University of Mysore,
home of the second largest collection of Sanskrit manuscripts in India*

Grammatical case: dative

The dative case

Functions of the dative case

The ಚತುರ್ಥೀ ವಿಭಕ್ತಿ *caturthī vibhakti* or 'fourth case' (commonly called
the **dative** in modern grammars) is a case with more than one function.

(1) It is useful to think of the dative, first of all, as the case that indi-
cates the **destination** or the **end of a movement,** in a very broad sense.
The characteristic ending is *-(i)ge* with most nouns and pronouns, with
an alloform (alternative form) *-kke* for neuter nouns ending in *a* as well
as for the neuter pronouns *adu / idu* and *avu / ivu.* (See the table of
pronominal forms on p. 90.)

The dative can often be translated by the English 'to' (unless the
English word order suffices, as in the second example below):

ಅವನು ಹುಡುಗನಿಗೆ	*avanu huḍugani**ge***	he gave a book to
ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಕೊಟ್ಟನು	*pustaka koṭṭanu*	the boy
ಅವನು ಹುಡುಗಿಗೆ	*avanu huḍug**ige***	he gave the girl a
ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಕೊಟ್ಟನು	*pustaka koṭṭanu*	book

In these sentences, the act of giving means that an object (here: a book) moves from the giver to the receiver. The receiver is in the dative.

Similarly, the dative is the case of **destinations:**

ನೆನ್ನೆ ಅವನು	*nenne avanu*	yesterday he went
ಮೈಸೂರಿಗೆ	*Maisūrige hōdanu*	to Mysore
ಹೋದನು		

Here the city Maisūru ('Mysore' in Anglified spelling; nowadays officially spelt 'Mysuru') is the destination of the subject's travel, therefore it is in the dative.[1]

This 'end of a movement' or 'destination' should be taken in a **very** broad sense. When one person speaks to another, the speaker's words are intended to reach the listener, i.e., again there is a movement (of words) that have the listener as their destination:

ಅವನು ಆ	*avanu ā huḍuganige*	he told this matter
ಹುಡುಗನಿಗೆ ಈ	*ī viṣayavannu*	to that boy
ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು	*hēḷidanu*	
ಹೇಳಿದನು		

Usually, the indirect object (in the dative) is placed before the direct object (in the accusative) in the sentence; but because these parts of the sentence are clearly indicated by the case endings, there is some degree of freedom in the order of these parts, if the speaker / writer wishes to emphasize a part of the sentence by a less usual word order. Therefore a Kannada speaker will not say 'he told this matter to that boy' but 'he to that boy this matter told', etc. One could also say 'to that boy he this matter told' to emphasize the receiver of the message; or 'he this matter to that boy told' to emphasize the object, or 'this matter he to that boy told' to emphasize the object still more. But the standard order of the parts of the sentence is **subject – indirect object – direct object – verb.**

(2) Also, the dative may indicate a **purpose** or **reason:**

| ಅವನು ಊಟಕ್ಕೆ | *avanu ūṭakke* | he went home for |
| ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋದನು | *manege hōdanu* | lunch / dinner |

Here we have a sentence with two datives: *manege* 'to [his] house' tells us the destination of his going, and *ūṭakke* tells us for what purpose he went, namely, his *ūṭa* 'meal'.[2]

Formation of the dative

The dative is formed by adding the suffix -*ge* to: (a) masculine and feminine nouns and pronouns, (b) to neuter nouns ending in *i* or *e,* (c) to plurals.

Please note that the dative of masculine nouns in -*a* is always formed on the basis of the historically original 'long' nominative in -*nu,* never the short one.

If the nominative ends in *u* (e.g., at the end of every plural ending), a short *i* is substituted for that *u* (see the last four examples in the following table):

huḍugi	*huḍugige*	(girl)
buṭṭi	*buṭṭige*	(basket)
kere	*kerege*	(tank)
huḍuga(nu)	*huḍuganige*	(boy)
huḍugaru	*huḍugarige*	(boys)
huḍugiyaru	*huḍugiyarige*	(girls)
maragaḷu	*maragaḷige*	(trees)

However, the final *u* is not elided if the word consists of two short syllables (as we have already seen with the genitive, e.g., ಹಸು *hasu* 'cow' or ಕರು *karu* 'calf': here the datives become ಹಸುವಿಗೆ *hasuvige* and ಕರುವಿಗೆ *karuvige*).

With neuter nouns ending in *a* and with the pronouns for the third person neuter (both singular and plural), the suffix is not -*ge,* but -*kke:*

mara	*mara**kke***	(tree)
pustaka	*pustaka**kke***	(book)

This same suffix -*kke* is used with the pronouns for the third person neuter, of the type *adu* and *avu* (note that in these pronouns, the *u* is changed to *a*):

adu	*ad**akke***	it (remote)
avu	*av**akke***	they (remote)

The alternative long form for the plural, *avugaḷu,* of course forms the dative in the regular manner of all plurals in *gaḷu:*

avugaḷu	*avugaḷ**ige***

Datives of pronouns

Please note that in a few forms, the typical doubling of the nasal consonant (as in the genitive and accusative) does **not** take place in the dative:

Person	**Nomina-** **tive**		**Dative**	
1 sg.	ನಾನು	*nānu*	ನನಗೆ	***nanage***
2 sg.	ನೀನು	*nīnu*	ನಿನಗೆ	***ninage***
3 sg. masc.	ಅವನು	*avanu*	ಅವನಿಗೆ	*avanige*
3 sg. fem.	ಅವಳು	*avaḷu*	ಅವಳಿಗೆ	*avaḷige*
3 sg. neu.	ಅದು	*adu*	ಅದಕ್ಕೆ	*adakke*
1 pl.	ನಾವು	*nāvu*	ನಮಗೆ	***namage***
2 pl.	ನೀವು	*nīvu*	ನಿಮಗೆ	***nimage***
3 pl. epic.	ಅವರು	*avaru*	ಅವರಿಗೆ	*avarige*
3 pl. neu.	ಅವುಗಳು	*avu(gaḷu)*	ಅವಕ್ಕೆ	***avakke* /** *avugaḷige*

Following the pattern of ಅವರು *avaru,* the dative of ಯಾರು *yāru* 'who' is ಯಾರಿಗೆ *yārige* '[to] whom'.
    Examples:[3]

ಅವನು ನನಗೆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಕೊಟ್ಟನು	*avanu nanage pustaka koṭṭanu*	he gave me a book
ನಾನು ನಿಮಗೆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಕೊಟ್ಟೆನು	*nānu nimage pustaka koṭṭenu*	I gave you a book
ನಾನು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಕೊಟ್ಟೆನು	*nānu avarige pustaka koṭṭenu*	I gave them a book

Picture of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, in the reading room of the ORI, Mysore

The dative with *bēku, bēḍa, sāku, sāladu*

An extremely frequent use of the dative is found in constructions where something is **required** or **desired.** The desired thing becomes the grammatical subject of the sentence, and the predicate is ಬೇಕು *bēku* 'is required / needed / wished / desired'; the person who requires or desires (sometimes referred to in linguistic literature as the **logical subject**) is put in the dative:

ನನಗೆ ಆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಬೇಕು	*nanage ā pustaka bēku*	I want / need that book

| ನಿಮಗೆ ಆ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳು ಬೇಕು | *nimage ā pustakagaḷu bēku* | you want / need those books |

The above sentences mean, more literally translated: 'to me that book is a desired thing', and 'to you those books are a desired thing'. The grammatical subject can be anything (singular, plural, neuter, feminine, masculine): the predicate is **always** ಬೇಕು *bēku:*

| ನೀವು ನಮಗೆ ಬೇಕು | *nīvu namage bēku* | we want / need you |

The negative form of ಬೇಕು *bēku* is ಬೇಡ *bēḍa:*

| ನನಗೆ ಆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಬೇಡ | *nanage ā pustaka bēḍa* | I do not want / need that book |
| ನಿಮಗೆ ಆ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳು ಬೇಡ | *nimage ā pustakagaḷu bēḍa* | you do not want / need those books |

Bēku can mean 'is wanted', 'is required', 'is needed', 'is desired' (and *bēḍa* can mean all those things negatively). In other words, *bēku* and *bēḍa* do not indicate whether the requirement is prompted by an external necessity or by an inner wish. ನನಗೆ ನೀರು ಬೇಕು *nanage nīru bēku* can have any meaning ranging from 'I need water' (because otherwise my health will fail me due to dehydration) to 'I would like some water' (because my mouth is dry and I will able to speak more easily if I have had a sip of water, or because I wish to wash away a bad taste from my mouth). Usually the context will make it clear to the listener or reader what is meant. Kannada has words that are more precise (such as ಬಯಸು *bayasu* 'to desire', ಇಚ್ಛಿಸು *icchisu* 'to wish', ಅವಶ್ಯ *avaśya* 'necessary', etc.), but usually *bēku / bēḍa* is sufficiently clear.

Two other defective verbs with which sentences of a similar syntactic structure are created are ಸಾಕು *sāku* 'is / are enough / sufficient' and its negative form ಸಾಲದು *sāladu* 'is / are not enough / sufficient':

| ನನಗೆ ಇಷ್ಟು ಅನ್ನ ಸಾಕು | *nanage iṣṭu anna sāku* | this much rice is enough for me |

ಅಷ್ಟು ಹಣ ನಿಮಗೆ ಸಾಲದಾ?	*aṣṭu haṇa nimage sāladā?*	is that much money not enough for you?

Exercise

Read and translate the following sentences:

೧. ಅವರು ನನಗೆ ಹಣ ಕೊಟ್ಟರು.

೨. ಇವರು ನಮಗೆ ಊಟ ಕೊಟ್ಟರು.

೩. ನೀವು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಪತ್ರ ಕೊಟ್ಟಿರಿ.

೪. ನನಗೆ ಹಣ ಕೊಡಿ!

೫. ಅವರು ನಮಗೆ ಕಥೆ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

೬. ನಾವು ನಿಮಗೆ ಕಥೆ ಹೇಳುವೆವು.

೭. ನೀವು ನಮಗೆ ಕಥೆ ಹೇಳುತ್ತೀರಾ?

೮. ನಾನು ನಿಮಗೆ ಅದನ್ನು ಹೇಳುತ್ತೇನೆ.

೯. ನನಗೆ ಮನೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟರು.

೧೦. ಯಾರಿಗೆ ಕಥೆ ಹೇಳಿದರು?

೧೧. ಯಾರು ನಿಮಗೆ ಹಣ್ಣು ಕೊಟ್ಟರು?

೧೨. ಅವರು ನನಗೆ ತುಂಬ ತೊಂದರೆ ಮಾಡಿದರು.

೧೩. ನೀವು ಈ ಕೆಲಸ ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಡಿದಿರಿ?

೧೪. ಆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಎಲ್ಲಿದೆ?[4]

೧೮. ಅದನ್ನು ನನಗೆ ಕೊಡುತ್ತೀರಾ?

೧೯. ನನಗೆ ಸತ್ಯ ಹೇಳುತ್ತೀರಾ?

Vocabulary

ಅನ್ನ	*anna*	rice (cooked)
ಊಟ	*ūṭa*	(cooked) meal
ಕಥೆ	*kathe*	story
ಕೆಲಸ	*kelasa*	work
ಕೊಡು	*koḍu*	to give
ತೊಂದರೆ	*toṃdare*	trouble
ನೆನ್ನೆ	*nenne*	yesterday
ವಿಷಯ	*viṣaya*	matter, thing, topic
ಸತ್ಯ	*satya*	truth
ಸಾಕು	*sāku*	it is enough
ಸಾಲದು	*sāladu*	it is not enough
ಹಣ	*haṇa*	money
ಹಣ್ಣು	*haṇṇu*	fruit
ಹೇಳು	*hēḷu*	to say
ಹೋಗು	*hōgu*	to go

Notes

[1] Colloquially one may hear a geographic destination spoken about in the root form, without the ending for the dative, such as *'avanu Maisūru hōdanu'*.

[2] In a later chapter we will also see the important function of the dative of verbal nouns for indicating purpose or reason: 'for doing *x*'.

[3] In the following examples, *koṭṭ-* is the verb stem for the past tense of the strong verb *koḍu* 'to give' (not **koḍid-,* as one would ordinarily expect). The

formation of the past tense stems of strong verbs is discussed in lesson 5, p. 70, and in the separate appendix.

[4] The commonly contracted form of ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಇದೆ, with elision of the final *i* of ಎಲ್ಲಿ *elli.*