

## The anatomy of the Dravidian unconditional

Rahul Balusu (*kodiguddu@gmail.com*), EFL-U, Hyderabad

**CONTRIBUTIONS:** The Dravidian concessive morphemes (we focus mainly on Malayalam *engil-um* and Telugu *ai-naa* here) build NPIs, FCIs and unconditionals (UNC). While the NPI/FCI spectrum is theoretically unified (Chierchia 2013, among others), UNC's have been treated as involving question semantics, and are not put under the same umbrella as polarity items (PI). We find striking evidence in Dravidian that UNC's are built of the same elements that form NPI/FCIs. We provide a PI account of Dravidian UNC's to explain this. Thus our analysis unifies the NPI/FCI/UNC domain of Dravidian, tracking the concessive particles used to form all three constructions. A similar phenomenon occurs in Hungarian (Szabolcsi 2018).

**MORPHOLOGY OF DRAVIDIAN UNC:** It is formed by composing a *wh*-item with a clause-final concessive conditional particle in the antecedent clause –*aal-um* in Tamil, *aal-um* and *engil-um* in Malayalam, *-ar-uu* in Kannada, *-naa* in Telugu, (1). *-aal/-engil/-ar* are conditional morphology, and *-um/-uu* are (scalar) conjunctive particles.

- (1) a. aarə wann-**aal-um** ill-**engil-um** njaan poog-um MALAYALAM  
who come-IF-UM not-IF-UM I go-will  
'Whoever comes or not, I will go.'
- b. nii jaar-a kuupT-**aal-um** naan partii-kku vara-Num TAMIL  
you who-ACC call-IF-UM I party-to come-MUST  
'Whoever you call, I must come to the party.'
- c. avaLu eSTu heeLid-**ar-uu** keeLal-ee illa KANNADA  
she how.much told-IF-UU listen-EMPH not  
'Whoever much she was told, (she) didn't listen.'
- d. evaru vacci-**naa** raaka-pooyi-**naa** neenu vella-taanu TELUGU  
who come-NAA come-not-NAA I go-will  
'Whoever comes or not, I will go.'

**STANDARD ANALYSIS OF UNC = QUESTION SEMANTICS:** A UNC (Zaefferer 1991) asserts that the consequent is true regardless of which of the antecedent set of propositions obtain, (2), a characteristic termed 'relational indifference'. Rawlins (2008, 2013) builds on the interrogative morphology of English UNC's, (2)b, and analyses the antecedent as a question.

- (2) a. Whoever objects, I'll go to the party. b. Whether Mom objects or not, I'll go.

The English construction lacks explicit marking of a conditional antecedent (*if*), but is given the interpretation of a Lewis-Kratzer-Heim conditional. Pointwise application of the conditional to each member of the antecedent question set, followed by a generalized conjunction of all the conditional statements on the top derives the UNC meaning and relational indifference. For Rawlins, though constituent UNC's like (2)a, appear like *ever* free relatives (and have been so analysed by Dayal 1997, Izvorski 2000), they are actually interrogatives.

**PRIOR ANALYSIS OF DRAVIDIAN UNC:** Concessive conditionals in Malayalam are briefly mentioned in Jayaseelan (2001, 2018), but their syntax/semantics not explored. Iyer (2017) applies Rawlins (2013) semantics to the Tamil UNC, and equates the *-aal* with the IF operator, and the *-um* as the morphological realization of universal closure on top, thus morphologically transparently realizing the semantics of Rawlins. An immediate problem (leaving aside the bigger picture that we get to next) for this analysis is an alternative UNC in Tamil, (3). Here, we find *-aal-um* on each alternative. The question then is why there are two universal closure operators. The problem here for Iyer is that of too many actors for one role.

- (3) nii Ravi-a kuupT-aal-um Rajesh-a kuupT-aal-um naan partii-le vara-Num  
 you Ravi-ACC call.IF-UM Rajesh-ACC call.IF-UM I party-in come-MUST  
 ‘Whether you call Ravi or Rajesh, I must come to the party.’

**THE BIGGER PICTURE: DISTRIBUTION OF *-engil-um*, *(aad)-ar-uu* & *(ai)-naa*:** On first blush the Dravidian UNC with explicit conditional and conjunction marking looks like the Hebrew UNC (Rubinstein & Doron 2015). But curiously, the conditional plus conjunction duo also appear sub-clausally, to mark NPI/FCIs in combination with *wh*-items, (4), as what are labelled concessive scalar additive particles (CSAP); Lahiri (2009). We tabulate their distribution in (5).

- (4) a. ii kuppaaayam aar-kk-**engil-um** paakam aak-um MALAYALAM  
 this dress who-DAT-if-UM fitting be-will  
 ‘This dress will fit somebody or other.’  
 b. kurach kuttikal eed-**engil-um** HW ceytu  
 few kids which-IF-UM HW did  
 ‘Few kids did any HW.’  
 c. Ravi-**engil-um** varum  
 Ravi-IF-UM come-will  
 ‘At least Ravi will come.’

	<i>-engil-um/-ar-uu/-naa</i> is →	sub-clausal	clause-final
(5)	$\alpha$	EVEN <sub>conc</sub>	IF <sub>conc</sub>
	$\alpha \dots \beta$	∨ <sub>EXCL</sub>	UNC
	<i>wh</i> -	NPI/FCI	UNC

In sum, while there is explicit conditional marking, there is no evidence for a question meaning in the antecedent –neither *-naa*, *-ar-uu*, *-aal-um* or *-engil-um* head alternative/*wh*-questions, nor do they form *wh-ever* items. The bigger picture argues against a question semantics for the Dravidian UNC.

**OUR ANALYSIS:** In the Dravidian UNC, the *wh*-item introduces alternatives (Hamblin alternatives) that compose pointwise with the rest of the clause. These alternative propositions further pointwise compose with the conditional, *-aal/-engil/-ar*, and are exhaustified by the EVEN operator associated with *-um/-uu*, (6).

- (6) a. endə waangi-(y)-**aal-um** discount var-um.  
 which buy-EVEN IF discount come-will  
 ‘Whatever you buy, you will get a discount.’  
 b.  $\forall p \in C \forall w \text{ EVEN [ IF you buy } p \rightarrow \text{ you get a discount] = [ if you buy } p \text{ in } w \rightarrow \text{ you get a discount] } \wedge \text{ [ if you buy } p \text{ in } w \rightarrow \text{ you get a discount] } <_{\mu} \forall q. q \neq p \text{ [ if you buy } q \text{ in } w \rightarrow \text{ you get a discount] }$   
 c. Implicature:  $\forall q. q \neq p \text{ [ if you buy } q \text{ in } w \rightarrow \text{ you get a discount] }$

Notice that here IF takes wide-scope, at the clausal level. In the CSAPs, the IF takes narrow-scope, at the phrasal level.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Our analysis of Dravidian UNCs as EVEN PI phenomena unifies them with NPI/FCIs and thus explains why the same pieces (*-engil-um/-ar-uu/-naa*) show up in both domains. Crosslinguistically, these UNCs therefore are different from those of English, where there is good evidence that the antecedents are embedded questions. They are similar to Hungarian UNCs (Szabolcsi 2018) and Spanish UNCs (Quer & Vicente 2009) in employing PI morphology and semantics, and the UNC antecedent being a PI that is exhaustified like NPIs and FCIs in an alternatives-and-exhaustification model.