

2.1 Phrase Level in the Grammatical Hierarchy

The phrase level in the grammatical hierarchy is that level which is below the clause level and above the word level. According to Cook (1969 : 30), ‘the phrase level is that level of the grammar at which the structured word groups which are not clauses are broken down into words’. The phrase is composed of words or a word group and typically fills clause level slots that are filled by single words.

2.2 The Phrase Defined

To ascertain what a phrase is and what its position is in the grammar, let us consider various definitions of phrase.

Traditionally, a phrase is defined as ‘any group of words which is grammatically equivalent to single word and which does not have its own subject and predicate (Lyons : 1969 : 171). But this definition is not adequate for the purpose of grammatical analysis since it does not establish its level and position in the grammatical hierarchy. A better definition than this would be that a phrase is a sequence or a potential sequence of two or more words which interrelate with each other in such a way that they function as a single unit to fill clause level slots. Though this seems better than the earlier one, it is not also free from inadequacies because it does not distinguish phrase from clause, and moreover, it merely says that the phrase fills clause level slots which is not always true.

The next one is that of Longacre (1964 : 74). He defines a phrase as ‘a group of syntagmemes of a hierarchical order ranking above such syntagmemes as the word and/or stem and below such syntagmemes as the clause and sentence’. This definition is more comprehensive and adequate, but indicates only that the phrase is a group of syntagmemes lying between word and clause levels in the grammatical hierarchy which is not always true since there are instances of embedding of clauses within phrases (back-looping), eg: ‘The pants you brought are nice’, (Te) a:meteccina kotta ci:ralu ‘The new series she brought’; phrases within phrases, eg: ‘The left eye of the white cat’, (Te) ni:bha:rya anna doduku

vacca:du. 'The son of your wife's elder brother came'. The most appropriate and adequate definition of phrase is that 'a phrase is a unit composed, potentially of two or more words, but which does not have the characteristics of a clause; and which typically, but not always, fills slots on the clause level' (Elson and Pickett (1965:73)), or in other words, a phrase is a grammatical unit composed potentially of two or more words ranking at a level above the stem or the word and below the clause or sentence.

Various features of this definition are elaborated below.

- (1) A phrase is not defined as 'always' composed of two or more words; but defined as 'potentially' composed of two or more words; and also it may be a sequence of words or a single word which may be expanded as is the case with ka:gitam in the following example.

(a)				ka:gitam
(b)			rangu	ka:gitam
(c)		patstsa	rangu	ka:gitam
(d)	a:ku	patstsa	rangu	ka:gitam
(e)	i	a:ku	patstsa	ka:gitam
	'this'	'leaf'	'green'	'colour'

- (2) The words 'which does not have the characteristics of a clause' allude to the types of tagmemes manifested by the constituents of the phrase. The type of tagmemes which make up phrase constructions are modifier, head, relator, axis, item and appositive. The position of the phrase is determined in terms of levels ranking below and above the phrase. It is a syntagmeme when word and stem are constituent tagmemes and it is a tagmeme when clause is a syntagmeme. As an example:

va:lu manci pallu ti:sukonna:du
 'he' 'good' 'fruits' 'took-he'
 'He took good fruits'

is a clause level syntagmeme whose phrase level tagmemes are

- (a) va:du + S : pn
 (b) manci pallu + O : NP
 (c) ti:sukonna:du + P : tv

Again the phrase *manci pallu* is a phrase level syntagmeme whose word level tagmemes are

- (a) manci
 (b) pallu

This phrase then consists of the following slots and fillers:

Modifier : manci
 Head : pallu

and is represented in terms of the following formula:

Modified Noun Phrase = + Mod:aji +H : n

(3) The words ‘typically, but not always, fills slots on the clause level’ show the distributional features of phrases. In addition to this, phrases may also be found embedded in other phrases as in

a: tella ci:ra amma:yi
 ‘that’ ‘white’ ‘sari’ ‘girl’
 ‘That girl in white sari’

The above noun phrase is a triple embedded phrase, since the modifier a: tella ci:ra is itself a head modifier noun phrase which in turn contains a head modifier adjective phrase as its modifier. On the other hand, tella ci:ra ‘white sari’ which itself is a headmodifier noun phrase is embedded in the head modifier noun phrase a : amma:yi ‘that girl’.

In this context, Elson and Pickett (1965:73-74) point that sometimes they may even occur as sentences, ‘usually of a dependent nature in response to such questions as “Which one shall I bring?” e.g., “The little one”’.

Thus, a Telugu phrase is a group of words, or minimally a single word, potentially expandable into a group of words, which is positioned in the grammatical hierarchy below the clause level and above the phrase level, which does not possess the characteristics of a clause, and which typically, but not always, fills, slots on the clause level (or embedded to manifest tagmemes on phrase level). The words of this group are typically linked together as modifier to head, relator to axis (This will be dealt with later in 2.3 II and also in 3.3) and head to head (coordination and apposition to head).

2.3 Types of Phrases

Phrases are classified into different categories on a number of criteria. The most important and more common criteria are the word classes (functional criterion), the internal structure of the phrases (formal criterion), the external referent they have and the nucleus of the phrases. In the following paragraphs different types of phrases based on these criteria are discussed.

1. Word Classes (functional)

On the basis of word classes the phrases can be divided into mainly those of noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb and postpositional (or prepositional) types.

(i) Noun Phrases

Noun phrases are those which can replace a noun in the construction. eg.,

a: amma:yi vaccindi ravi ra:dzu vacca:ru
 ‘That girl came’ ‘Rave and Raju came’

My red book is lost
Mary and Betty came

The noun phrases in the above sentences can be replaced respectively by *amm:yi* 'girl', *kamala* 'Kamala' *a:me* 'she', etc., *abba:yilu* 'boys', *pillalu* 'children', *va:llu* 'they', etc., 'book' and 'it'; and 'girls', 'children', 'they', etc.

(ii) Pronoun Phrases

Pronoun phrases are not different from noun phrases from the functional viewpoint, since these phrases also replace nouns like noun phrases.

eg.,

<i>potti a:me</i> evaru?	<i>va:du mi:ru vell:tu</i>
'Who is the short woman?'	'He and you went'
<i>He and She</i> came	

The pronoun phrases in the above sentences can be replaced respectively by *a:me* 'she', *mi:ru* 'you (pl.)' and 'they'.

(iii) Adjective Phrases

Adjective phrases are those phrases which replace a single adjective in a construction.

eg.,

tsa:la:andamaina amma:yi a:mi
'She is a very beautiful girl'
Very beautiful girl

The adjective phrases in the above sentences can be replaced respectively by 'andamaina' and 'beautiful' alone.

(iv) Adverb Phrases

Adverb phrases are those which replace a single adverb in a construction.

mo:hini *tsa:la andanga* :nadustundi
'Mohini walks very beautifully'
Talk *very slowly*

The adverb phrases in the above sentences can be replaced respectively by the single adverbial words 'andanga:' and 'slowly'

II Internal Structure (formal)

Based on the internal structure or the formal criterion the phrases can be classified into the following five broad categories.

(i) Head - Modifier Phrase

Head-modifier phrase is a phrase which contains an obligatory head tagmeme and

one or more modifier tagmemes. In other words, the head modifier phrase consists of a head constituent plus one or more constituents which in some way refer, delimit, modify, specify or qualify what is indicated by the head. The modifier tagmemes are optional and subordinate to the head tagmeme. The 'head' which is obligatory member of the phrase, is a member of the same form class as the phrase, of which it is the head. The member or members other than the head are in a modificational relationship to the head. In head-modifier phrases, the distinction between the head constituent and the modifier constituent or constituents is determined on the basis of the potential substitutability of a single constituent for the whole phrase; and that constituent which is most easily substituted for the whole phrase is taken as the head and all the other constituents are considered as modifiers.

The head-modifier phrases can be divided into different functional categories again depending on the type of the head word.

(a) *Head-Modifier Noun Phrase*

This is a head-modifier phrase with a noun as its head. The modifiers include descriptive and participle adjectives, demonstratives, determiners, quantifiers, possessives, etc., and they are in an adjectival or attributive relationship with the head.

eg.,

manci pustakam

'Good book'

Delicious food

(b) *Head-Modifier Adjective Phrase*

This is a head-modifier phrase with an adjective as its head. The modifiers include intensifiers, comparators, etc.

eg.,

tsa:la:manci

'Very good'

Pure white

(c) *Head-Modifier Verb Phrase*

This is a head-modifier phrase with a verb as its head. The class of modifiers include intensifiers, adverbials of manner, time, locations, etc., (The modifiers occur postpositionally in English).

eg.,

ba:ga:tinna:du

'(He) ate well'

Sam runs fast

Mary eats late

a:lasyanga:vellu

'(you) go late'

(d) Head-Modifier Adverb Phrase

This is a head-modifier phrase with an adverb as its head. The modifiers include intensifiers, comparators, quantifiers, etc.

eg.,

tsa:la:andanga:
'Very beautifully'
Very slowly
More faster

koncem tellaga:
'A little whitish'

(ii) Coordinate or Serial Phrase

Coordinate phrase is a multicentred phrase having two or more heads with or without a connectr adding them (In Telugu no phrase connectors exist). These heads have different external referents and belong to the same form class and individually fill the same slots as the entire construction.

As in the case of the head-modifier phrase, the coordinate phrase also can be divided into four functional categories.

(a) Coordinate Noun Phrase

This phrase is formed by cojoining two or more nouns or their substitutes such as pronouns and noun phrases or combinations of both.

eg.,

ravi si:ta
'Ravi and Sita'

a:yana mi: na:nna
'He and your father'

ninna sa:yantramu i: ro:dzu
'Last evening and today'

He and she
Bill and Harry

(b) Coordinate Adjective Phrase

This phrase is formed by cojoining two or more adjectives, or adjectival phrases, or both.

eg.,

tsallati tiyyati
'Cold and sweet'
'Young and beautiful'

(c) Coordinate Verb Phrase

This phrase is formed by cojoining two or more verbal forms whether finite, or infinite such as participles or even auxiliaries (In Telugu finite verbal forms cannot be conjoined to form coordinate phrases as in English, eg: *She is singing and dancing*. The verbal forms that are

so conjoined should belong to the same 'functional subclass'. The term 'functional subclass' is used here to indicate verbal participles such as present progressive participle, past participle, negative participle, etc., when all the verbal forms belong to a 'functional class'.

eg.,

va:llu vastu: po:tu: tsu:sa:ru

'They saw while coming and going'

vacci tsu:si vellindi a:me

'She went after having come and seen'

They are *eating and drinking*.

(d) Coordinate Adverb Phrase

This phrase is formed by conjoining two or more adverbial words or their substituting adverbial phrases. The adverbials so conjoined must belong to the same functional class as temporals, locationals, manner indicators, instrumentals and so on.

eg.,

a:me ikkadi nunci tsallaga: mellaga: dza:rukondi

'She slowly slipped away from here'

a:yana nida:nanga: nattala:ga: nadusta:du

'He walks slowly like a snail'

He talked *carefully and cautiously*

She closed it *gently and with care*.

(iii) Axis-Relator Phrases

An axis-relator phrase is a structured group of words with only two immediate constituents, a word or word group called axis and a phrase relator which governs the former. Consequently, it has only two tagmemes, both obligatory, of which neither is the head. This axis relator construction is exocentric since none of the constituents alone fills the clause level slots as the axis-relator phrase. The axis-relator phrases generally fill clause level slots of manner, time, location, benefactive, purpose, etc. The traditionally known prepositional phrases of English and the postpositional phrases of the Indian Languages come under this category (Relator-Axis in English and Axis-Relator in Indian Languages). These phrases are also known as 'directive-axis (or axis-directive)' or 'orienter-focus (or focus-orienter)' phrases though more commonly they are called 'relator-axis' or 'axis-relator' phrases.

When the word classes are taken into consideration, there are nominal, adjectival and adverbial phrases are more common.

(a) Nominal Axis-Relator phrases

These are the phrases whose axis slot is filled by a noun, pronoun or a noun phrase and the relator slot is filled by a post-position (or preposition) or a case maker. These axis-relator

phrases more typically fill peripheral slots at the phrase level.

eg.,

maisuru nunci evaru vacca:ru?

‘When came from Mysore?’

mi: pustakam lo: bommalu unna:ya:?

‘Are there pictures in your book?’

Gopal came *from Delhi*.

Give this book *to your father*.

(b) *Adjectival Axis-Relator Phrases*

These are the axis-relator phrases that fill the predicate attribute slot at the clause level and the noun modifier slots at the phrase level. They fill the slots at both the clause and phrase levels that are filled by single adjectives.

Some of the adjectival phrases that fill the modifier slot of noun phrases are nested phrases and these manifest a layering of phrase within phrase. Though in Telugu these adjectival axis-relator phrases precede the head noun while filling the modifier slot, in English nested relator-axis phrases occur immediately after the head noun.

eg.,

nu:tiki okadu ko:tiki okodu

‘One in a hundred or ten millions’

i:ro: dzu la:nti ro:dzu

‘A day like today’

The president *of India*

cepplo:ra:yi

‘A stone in the sandal’

The boy *in the white dress*

The girl *with the earrings*

In the above English phrases, the relator-axis phrases can be transformed into proposed modifiers, in which case these transformed phrases illustrate another type of adjectival relator-axis phrases, in which a bound relator, or ‘phrase clitic,’ governs the phrase (See Cook, 1969:96-97). Thus, the above English sentences can be transformed as

The white dressed boy

India’s President

The ear ringed girl.

(c) *Adverbial Axis-Relator*

These axis-relator phrases fill clause and phrase level slots that are filled by single adverbials. These phrases at clause level fill peripheral slots or manner, time, locations, etc. The adverbial axis-relator phrases can further be classified into different groups on the basis of the slots they fill. The axis-relator adverbial phrases that fill the slots at the clause level that are generally filled by adverbs of ‘time’ are called ‘temporal axis-relator phrases’. These are the phrases that answer the question word *eppudu* (when), the temporal interrogative pronoun.

eg.,

ra:trilo:

‘in the night

in the evening

udayam nunci

‘since morning’

since yesterday

The axis-relator adverbial phrases that fill the slots at the clause level which are generally filled by adverbs of ‘place’ are called ‘locational axis-relator phrases’. These are the phrases which answer the question word *ekkada* (where), the locational interrogative pronoun.

eg.,

maisuru lo:

‘in Mysore’

in the hotel

inti nunci

‘from home’

at the theatre

The axis-relator adverbial phrases that fill the slots at the clause level which are generally filled by adverbs of ‘manner’ are called ‘manner axis-relator phrases’. These are the phrases that answer the question *etta:lala:* (how), the manner word interrogative pronoun. These manner axis-relator phrases are less common in Telugu however, phrases of the following type are not uncommon.

eg.,

gobha:luna

‘all of a sudden’

with caution

bussuna

‘with hissing noise’

by means of installments

(iv) Appositional or Item-Apposition Phrases

The appositional phrases have two and only two heads having the same external referent, and they are not joined by connectors as in the case of coordinate phrases (in English and Hindi). As in the case of coordinate phrases the two heads of construction must fill the same tagmemic slot in the structure. As appositional phrase is obtained by juxtaposing an item tagmeme to an appositional tagmeme. To have this type of construction, both the tagmemes must occur, and neither is optional. Concord in appositional phrases is more generalized as both the item and the appositive have the same external referent and generally the concord that occurs in these phrases is of number, gender and case.

Appositional phrases are mostly noun phrases but phrases of the type ‘that is’, ‘for example’, ‘for instance’, etc., are also found in English and some other languages.

eg.,

pradha:na mantri indira:ga:ndhi

‘The Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’

‘We the citizens of this country’

(v) Close-knit Verb Phrases

Close-knit phrases are found in the languages in which the pattern of auxiliary verb

plus main verb exist. These phrases appear to be different from the modified verb phrases in structure and meaning. These phrases involve the systems of tense, mood and aspect, negative (as in Hindi and English), etc.

eg.,

a:yana	vacci	vellipo:bo:tunna:du
'he'	'having'	'about to go away'
'He came and is about to go away'		
She has come		
I have been telling him		

III External Referent

According to the external referent (i.e. on the basis of whether the phrase as a whole has the same external referent as its constituents or different) the phrases can be classified into two distinctive types, viz., endocentric and excentric phrases.

(i) Endocentric Phrases

Endocentric phrases are centred phrases and have the same external referents as their head constituents, that is the entire construction fills the same clause level slot as the head of the construction. Endocentric constructions may be either single head (head modifier) or multiple head (appositional and coordinate) constructions. In the multiple head constructions, two or more heads may be either coordinated, or may be in item-apposition relationship if both of them have the same external referent (Appositional phrases have two and only two heads with the same external referent).

The following formal types of phrases come under endocentric phrases.

Single Head Phrases:

- Head Modifier Phrases
- Close-knit Phrases

Multiple Head Phrases:

- Coordinate Phrases
- Appositional Phrases

(ii) Exocentric Phrases

Exocentric phrases are those neither of whose constituents has the same external referent as the whole phrase. That is, the exocentric phrase as a whole does not fill the same clause level slots as filled by any one of its constituent tagmemes. In other words, these constructions are non-centred constructions. The only (formal) type of phrases that come under exocentric phrases are the axis-relator type.

IV Nucleus

Taking the nucleus of the phrases into consideration the phrases can be divided into two categories as *single head* phrases and *multiple head* phrases. However, the axis-relator and the close-knit phrases cannot be put under these categories since they do not contain any head.

Thus, the classification is defective since it cannot bring all types of phrases into its coverage and includes only the head-modifier, the coordinate and the appositional phrases.

(i) Sing Head Phrases

Only the head-modifier type comes under this category.

(ii) Multiple Head Phrases

They include both the coordinate phrase-two or more heads, and the appositional phrases - two and only two heads.

In the present book the functional labels (word classes) such as the noun phrase, the adjective phrases, the verb phrase and the adverb phrase are used as chapter headings. Under each of these, the phrases are described as the head modifier phrase, the coordinate phrase, the axis-relator phrase and the appositional (item-apposition) phrase taking their internal structure into consideration.