

# Morphological Changes in Karada Dialect of Kasaragod Under Dravidian Influences

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## Abstract

Languages and dialects are dynamic and constantly evolving entities shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they are used. This evolution often results in morphological changes, which refers to the process of changes in the form of structure of words, phrases, or sentences of a language or a dialect over the time due to the behaviour of speakers. Tracing the morphological changes in Karada dialect of Kasaragod, would also mean understanding its demographic distribution, historicity and regional linguistic influences on it. Originally, Karada brahmins belong to the place of Karada, situated in Satara district of Maharashtra, from where they migrated to Dakshina Kannada and Kasaragod probably during the early sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Thus, Karada brahmins of Kasaragod are essentially multilingual, Since their identity and existence depended on Tulu and Kannada when communicating outside their community, as Tulu was dominant in the working space and Kannada was majorly used in administration and educational governance of Kasaragod. The influence of Malayalam is less, since it became dominant in Kasaragod only after the linguistic re-organization of states. The above influences had not only resulted in morphological changes, but had also elucidated on the acceptance and practice of certain culture of the above Dravidian groups by the Karada brahmins, therefore becoming a part of linguistic and cultural diversity of Kasaragod. Karada also becomes unique through various other sub-dialectical variations to it caused by the significant structural and lexical borrowings from Tulu, Kannada and Malayalam, resulting in morphological changes. In view of the above, this study employs qualitative research methodology and examines the basic morphological changes in Karada dialect caused by the predominant regional Dravidian languages of Kasaragod.

**Key Words:** karada dialect, karada identity, morphology and dravidian influences

## Introduction

The word Karāḍa has evolved from the word Karahāṭa or Karahāṭaka, which was a prominent province before 10<sup>th</sup> CE AD in the south western part of Maharashtra. The copper plate inscription of 703 AD belonging to the Chalukya king Vijayaditya, refers to the emergence of this group.

Janna, one of the well-known Kannada poets of the early 13<sup>th</sup> CE AD refers to the place of Karahāṭaka in his epic “*Yashodhara Charité*”.<sup>1</sup> A similar allusion is portrayed in “*Karahāṭaka*

<sup>1</sup> G.R Bhandarkar . *Early History Of The Dekkan.*(pp.97-105). The Shilāhārās who were the rulers of Karahāṭaka were attracted to Jainism through the influence of “*Yashodhara Charité*” composed by Janna in 1209 AD.

*Mahātméyam*" belonging to 1860 AD. It refers to the existence of a place called Karahāṭaka in a region near the conflux of Krishna-Veni and Koyana rivers. Nagavarma-The Second, a Jain poet and a semanticist of 12<sup>th</sup> CE AD in "*Bhāshābhōshāna*" provides an example for Taddhita Pratyaya, where he says, "*karahāṭadol puṭṭidātan karahaḍicham*" meaning, the one who is born in Karahāṭa (Also known as Karahāṭaka) is known as karahaḍi. The word "Karahāṭaka" later shifted its position from the name of a province to a community reference word. With the passing of time, this word changed into "Karāḍa".

Approximately, seventy kilometres away from the northern boarders of Karnataka lies Karada, a region midst Satara and Kolhapur. According to Vasudeva Atale, Karada brahmins being essentially Rigvedi brahmins followed Ashwalāyana Sūtra and first migrated in many numbers to Konkan through Dharavad i.e; towards the western coast of India from Karahāṭaka.

Most of the groups settled in Goa, Karnataka (Dakshina Kannada-Tulunadu) and Kasaragod (which had the culture and language of Tulunadu or Dakshina Kannada and was under Madras Presidency). By then, a few Karada groups had shifted towards north of India. All the migrated groups of brahmins from Karahāṭaka were identified as Karāḍa brahmins and others who remained in Karahāṭaka were identified as Déshastha brahmins.

The major reason for their migration is not well known or documented. However, one of the assumption posits that Karada brahmins might have migrated due to a severe and prolonged famine, also known as Durgadevi famine, that struck the deccan region of India, particularly the regions between the Godavari and Krishna rivers, in Maharashtra around 1396 AD till 1407 AD.

The migration of Karada brahmins towards Kasaragod (which became a part of Kerala after the States Re-organization Act of 1956) is described in "*Agalpāḍy Mahātmya*" by Khanderi Ananta Shastry. It says,

*"tī dhāravādēpi cha puṇyapattanē bhrovalli kāyāmapi kēralādīshu.*

*vīlīyirē prītihṛdo hi bhūsurāha svajīvitāyām nihitādhibhārāha."*

Marathi Naiks who belonged to a tribal group also migrated along with Karada brahmins to Kasaragod and ascribed themselves to Tulu, since it was a language spoken in the working space which paralleled their position as subordinate working caste under Karada brahmins. Thus, Karadas became the chief priests of Marathi Naiks as well as Kotékarās. *The Madras District Manuals: South Canara*, published in 1894 AD, says that " Karadi brahmins are their priests and owe allegiance to the head of the Sringeri math".<sup>2</sup> However, there are no proper documents to track the time of their migration. It is said that Karahāṭaka province was earlier ruled by Shilāhārās who were the sāmantās of Chalukyas. According to historians, Shilāhārās who curbed Konkan might have acquainted these brahmin priests of Shakala clan along with

<sup>2</sup> *Chapter 4-The People.* (1894). *Madras District Manuals: South Canara*, Vol.1. (pp.163). J, Sturrock. Government Press, Madras. Retrieved from <https://indianculture.gov.in> >gazettes

them. Further, they were called as Karada brahmins by the people of Konkan, since these brahmin priests came from Karahāṭaka, the capital of Shilāhārās.<sup>3</sup>

At present, Karada brahmin settlements are dominantly found in Dharavada, Goa, Dakshina Kannada and certain regions of Kasaragod such as Āvala, Agalpādy, Thairé, Paḍumalé, Baayar and Padre, where their temples are present. Among the group which migrated towards the Dravidian region, the dialect of that group which settled in Kasaragod and Dakshina Kannada came to be known as Karada, which is a dialect of an Indo-Aryan language called Marathi. This dialect was influenced by the regional Dravidian languages such as Tulu, Kannada and Malayalam. Approximately, twenty to thirty percent of the words spoken in Karada is largely from Kannada and Tulu, because Kasaragod (which was the part of South Canara district of the Madras Presidency) continued to be a part of Dakshina Kannada after Independence, where Tulu and Kannada were dominant. However, the influence of Malayalam is less, because Kasaragod became a part of Kerala only in 1956 AD, when India underwent a linguistic re-organization of states. The above influences led Karada to carry out lexical and structural borrowings from the regional Dravidian languages, thereby evoking linguistic and cultural changes within it.

The morphological changes in Karada dialect of Kasaragod occurred in terms of changes in phonemes, nouns, noun morphemes, verbs, adjectives, numerals, negations, particles and the employment of demonstrative pronouns.

## 1. Phonemes, Nouns and Noun morphemes

Karada dialect possesses its own nouns and noun morphemes. Among these include several of Kannada language, which exists in minor or complete modification. Apart from this, Karada also employs abundant nouns and noun morphemes of Marathi. As Karadas settled in Kasaragod, they had to naturally adapt themselves to the Tuluva culture, accepting Tulu in order to communicate with the farmers who laboured in their fields. Therefore, Tulu words got seeped into Karada dialect. On the other hand, Kannada and Malayalam flourished in this Dravidian landmass associating themselves to the educational and administrative sectors. Moreover, Kannada was also used as a language of inter-communication among various brahmin communities. Thus, Karadas had to ascribe to Kannada and later to Malayalam for maintaining formal public communications and to hold their position in the above two sectors. All these made Karada dialect to absorb several words from Kannada, Tulu and Malayalam under varied intensities.

The following depicts the changes in various phonemes of Karada dialect when compared to Kannada and Tulu. These phonemic changes resulted in morphological changes which is a part of lexical borrowings from the Dravidian languages.

ga>ka = tégu (Kan.)> déku (Kar.) : Burp

<sup>3</sup> Shrinivasa Bhat, Kottanguli. *Karhāḍa*. (pp.35)

According to historical sources, Kamaladevi, the queen and her minister Madhava had summoned some Karadas to Goa and they were appointed as priests. These Karada brahmins were called as 'Pāḍhyé' brahmins in Goa.

ja>zha = jiralé (Kan.)> zharlo (Kar.) : Cockroach

ṭa>ḍa = koṭṭigé (Kan.)> Koḍakké (kar.) : Barn

ṇia>na = saṇṇa (Kan.) >sāṇa (Kar.) : Small

pa>va = dīpa (Kan.) > dīva (Kar.) : Light or Lamp

va>ya = bāvi (Kan.) > bāya (Kar.) : Well (Noun.)

sa>sha = ségaṇi (Kan.) >shéṇa (Kar.) : Cow dung

sa>tsa = suṇṇa (Kan.) > tsunno (Kar.) : Lime

ḷa>ṇa = dāsavāḷa (Kan.) > désuṇa (Kar.) : Hibiscus

There are nouns and noun morphemes borrowed directly from the Dravidian languages of Kasaragod which are used in Karada without any morphological changes. For example;

boggi (Tulu) : Female Dog

kuṇi (Tulu, Mal.) : Small

béndi ( Havyaka Kan.) : Something that is cooked, usually a curry

éḍā(Mal.) : Informal address, often addressing a male

éḍī (Mal.): Informal address, often addressing a female

pérmāri (Tulu) : Python

anna (Kan.) : Elder brother

However, there are also instances where the borrowed nouns or noun morphemes undergo slight morphological changes. For example;

mogékāyi (Kan.) = maghé (Kar.) : Madras Cucumber

divasa (Kan.) = dīsu (Kar.) : A day

kélasiga ( Kan.) = kélashi ( Kar.) : A barber

injittayar ( Mal.) = injittayara (Kar.) : A curry made from curd and ginger

érishéri (Mal.) = vélshéri (Kar.): A coconut-based gravy made from vegetables and spices

aviyal (Mal.) = avilu (Kar.): A coconut-based vegetable stew made from different vegetables

kudikké (Tulu) = kudikko (Kar.): Fox

Thus, the adoption of these words in Karada dialect shows the influence and acceptance of culture, practices, cuisines and geography of this region by the Karada community.

Further, the morphological changes in the nouns and noun morphemes of Karada has employed the phoneme ‘~’ at their ends which makes Karada dialect to possess no consonant words.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when Karada underwent Dravidian influences, it has accepted and changed the consonant words of the regional Dravidian languages within itself into the words ending in phoneme ‘~’. For instance;

kaḷan(Mal.) > kāḷa~ (Kar.) : A thick and sour curry made from yogurt, coconut and tubers

navilu (Kan.) >navila~ (Kar.) : Peacock

Karada has also intrinsically modified the end phonemes of the accepted Dravidian words by inducing its own specific phonemes which led to minor morphological changes. For example;

é>a = péralé (Kan.) > pérala (Kar.) : Guava

é>o = kūvē (Kan., Tulu) >kūvo (Kar.) : Arrowroot

ā>o = bāva (Kan.) >bāvo (Kar.) : Brother-in-law

o>u = mōso (Tulu) >mōsu (Kar.) : Betrayal

a>u = galla (Kan.) >gālu (Kar.) : Chin

u>a = navilu (Kan.) > navila~ (Kar.) : Peacock

Karada has also assimilated its morphemes with that of the Dravidian morphemes to form several words. For example;

hollo (Kar.) : Big + aňna (Kan.) : Brother = holleňna (Kar.): Big brother, typically an elder brother

kuttaṭā (Tulu): A small attic below main attic + ḫri (Kar.): Above= kuttaṭāri ( Kar.) : Above the small attic

## 2. Verbs

Several verbs in Karada dialect, are largely borrowed from Kannada, as it was a major language of aristocracy and administration before Malayalam took its place in Kasaragod. Thus, it was accepted and spoken by the Karada community of Kasaragod. Karada adds specific suffixes to its borrowed verbs such as the suffix ‘-pa’ which makes the verbs as Infinitive verbs. For example;

kalasu (Kan.) > kallapa ( Kar.) : To mix

sérvudu (Kan.) > sérpa (Kar.) : To join

ottuvudu (Kan.) > ottupa (Kar.) : To press

Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi and Marathi use the morphemes ‘héin’ and ‘āhé’( Which are the forms of the verb ‘to be’) respectively to assert the completion of any action in a statement or a fact. Karada has two forms to express ‘hèin’ (Hindi) and ‘āhé’ (Marathi). They

<sup>4</sup> ‘~’ is a nasal phoneme articulated by means of partial closing of the mouth.

are, 'atsa' and 'hoyé'. The morpheme 'atsara' in 'dhounsara' is a part of one of these two forms. For example;

mazza nāva raméshānu dhounsara (Kar.)

purohiténa yaupa dhounsara (Kar.)

However, Dravidian languages do not follow the above convention. Therefore, they do not have morphemes to assert the completion of any action in a statement or a fact.

At present, sentences in Karada dialect are formed without the use of the morpheme 'atsara' as in 'dhounsara'. This is an influence of the regional Dravidian languages of Kasaragod on Karada. For instance,

mazza nāva ramésha (Kar.)

tī taḷa (Kar.)

### 3. Adjectives

Just like the Indo-Aryan languages including Sanskrit and others, Karada uses plural adjective forms to describe the plural nouns and singular adjective forms to describe the singular nouns. For example;

sāna (Kar., Sing. Adj.) kōṭa (Kar., Sing. Noun) : Small (Sing.) piece (Sing.)

sanni (Kar., Plu. Adj.) kuṭṭa~ (Kar., Plu. Noun) : Small (Plu.) pieces (Plu.)

dhavé (Kar., Sing. Adj.) phūla (Kar., Sing. Noun) : White (Sing.) flower (Sing.)

dhavi (Kar., Plu. Adj.) phulla~ (Kar., Plu. Noun) : White (Plu.) flowers (Plu.)

Dravidian languages do not follow the above convention. Instead, they employ singular adjective forms for both singular and plural nouns. For example;

olléya (Kan., Sing. Adj.) huḍuga (Kan., Sing. Noun) : Good (Sing.) boy (Sing.)

olléya (Kan., Sing. Adj.) huḍugaru (Kan., Plu. Noun) : Good (Sing.) boys (Plu.)

chériya (Mal., Sing. Adj.) magan (Mal., Sing. Noun) : Small (Sing.) son (Sing.)

chériya (Mal., Sing. Adj.) makkaḷ (Mal., Plu. Noun) : Small (Sing.) sons (Plu.)

However, due to the influence of the Dravidian languages of Kasaragod, Karada has begun to use singular adjective forms to describe singular and plural nouns. For instance;

kaḍu (Kar., Sing. Adj.) kārāta (Kar., Sing. Noun) : Bitter (Sing.) bitter gourd (Sing.)

kaḍu (Kar., Sing. Adj.) kārātī (Kar., Plu. Noun) : Bitter (Sing.) bitter gourds (Plu.)

### 4. Numerals

The numerals in Karada dialect are minorly modified versions of Sanskrit which also appear in Hindi and Marathi. For example;

dvi (Sans.), do (Hin.), don~ (Mar.), doni (Kar.)

pancha (Sans.), pānch (Hin.), pāch (Mar.), pāntsā (Kar.)

The numerals of Karada dialect are slowly eroding. Numerals up to fourteen and the numerals such as twenty, twenty five, thirty, fifty and hundred are currently in use. Other numerals are not popular, since they were not brought into practice. The numerals after hundred remain unknown, because they were not essential in domestic life of Karadas who depended on agriculture, which did not require the use of greater numerals long ago. Instead, Karada has adopted certain Kannada numerals. For example, Karada uses Kannada numerals after hundred and also uses Kannada numerals such as ‘ardha’ (half), ‘mukkālu’ (three fourth) and ‘kālu’ (one fourth) because, Karada numerals corresponding to the above were not brought into practice. Thus, the unavailability of such numerals in Karada has made it to rely upon Kannada, which causes for lexical borrowings, that further proves the influence of the regional Dravidian languages on Karada dialect of Kasaragod.

## 5.Negation

The negation suffix ‘-na’ in Karada is a consonant which remains as an independent morpheme. When used, ‘-na’ becomes ‘-nā’ with the addition of long vowel ‘ā’. For instance;

tujjēni paishé atsaki? -nā (Kar.)

The negation suffix ‘-nā’ also exists in plural form where it becomes ‘-nanti’. For example;

rūkhakhandiléki? -nanti (Kar.)

In Indo-Aryan languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi and others, the negation or negation suffix exists prior to the verb. For example;

nā (Neg.) gamishyāmi (Verb) (Sans.)

mat (Neg.) kar (Verb) (Hin.)

The Karada dialect follows the same rule. For instance,

té kélasa hāva~ nakkara (Neg.+Verb) (Kar.)

tékkā bassa~ naméla (Neg.+Verb) (kar.)

However, in the Dravidian languages such as Kannada, Tulu and Malayalam, the negation or negation suffix comes after the verb. For example;

māḍabéda (Verb+Neg.) (Kan.)

nokandā (Verb+Neg.) (Mal.)

baroḍchi (Verb+Neg.) (Tulu)

Recently, the negation suffix ‘-na’ in Karada has shifted its position after the verb due to the regional Dravidian influences leading to morphological changes. For example;

té kélasa hāva~ karnā (Verb+Neg.) (Kar.)

tō gharāni vachanā (Verb+Neg.) (Kar.)

## 6. The Employment of Demonstrative Pronouns

Just like the Indo-Aryan languages, Karada also employs demonstrative pronouns such as ‘té’, ‘tī’ and ‘to’, before the adjective in a sentence. For example;

té dhavé phūla (Kar.)

tī dhavi phulla~ (Kar.)

Meanwhile, the Dravidian languages colloquially do not employ any demonstrative pronouns before the adjective in a sentence. Karada has begun to follow the above convention of the Dravidian languages of Kasaragod. For example;

dhavé phūla (Kar.)

sāna chédvo (Kar.)

However, both Karada and the Dravidian languages use demonstrative pronouns before the adjective while writing formal sentences.

## 7. Particles

The particles such as ‘dā’, ‘dī’, ‘kaié’ and ‘kađé’ are used in Karada where ‘dā’ (masc.) and ‘dī’ (fem.) are adopted from Malayalam which is used to address a person informally under masculine and feminine contexts respectively. These two particles do not exist in plural form. For example;

égađé yo dā (Kar.) = injot vā dā (Mal.) : Come here, dā.

hanga rābha dī (Kar.) = ividé nikk dī (Mal.) : Stay here, dī.

It is assumed that the particle ‘kaié’ in Karada might have been adopted from Kannada. ‘kaié’ in Kannada is an informal particle used when addressing female acquaintances, which adds an affectionate tone in casual conversations. This particle is gender specific in Kannada. However, ‘kaié’ in Karada would imply “okay!”, which also adds an affectionate and convincing tone to the speech, but is not gender specific. For example;

tō vatsa kaié (Kar.) : You go, okay!

téne mhaļla~ kaiè (Kar.) : They said, okay!

Karada has also borrowed the particle ‘kađé’ from Kannada which indicates direction. For instance;

égađé [ yā+kađé] (Kar.) = īkađé [ ī+kađé ](Kan.) : This direction

tégađé [ tā+kađé] (Kar.) = ākađé [ ā+kađé ] ( Kan.) : That direction

This implies the impact of the Dravidian languages of Kasaragod over Karada, thus producing morphological changes.

### Conclusion:

Karada or Karahāṭaka is a region located in the south-west Maharashtra from where a brahmin group migrated to the regions of Kasaragod and Dakshina Kannada during the early sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. They spoke a dialect of Marathi known as Karada in Kasaragod. Thus, this group was identified as Karada brahmins based on their geographic origin.

The contact and influence of the Dravidian region, language and culture over the period of time resulted in certain linguistic and cultural changes within this brahmin group. However, these changes cannot be traced in a systematic process, since there is no ancient written literature or documents available in Karada language.

On the whole, linguistic or morphological changes in Karada dialect remains the pinnacle of all other changes caused due to the Dravidian influences. Morphological changes occur due to the behaviour of language users leading to the word formation processes and lexical borrowings which is another form of lexical innovation. Karada dialect is still undergoing morphological changes. Thus, this paper concludes that the morphological changes in Karada dialect due to the regional Dravidian influences has so far occurred in terms of phonemes, nouns, noun morphemes, verbs, adjectives, numerals, negation, employment of demonstrative pronouns and particles in specific.

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