Cognitive Construals underlying grammatical aspects and modalities in Dravidian Languages

by

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Dravidian languages

• 20+ languages predominantly spoken in southern India. Four major literary languages Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam.

• Typologically SOV, free word order, PRO drop languages (Steever, Sanford B, 1988, 2015).

• Clausal connection is peculiar; sequence of non-finite verbs with one finite verb at the end (Steever, Sanford B, 1988, 2015, Jayaseelan 2004).

• Problem of what finiteness even means (Sandhya Sundaresan 2014), Separation of tense and finiteness (Amritavalli 2014).

• Alleged tense amarkers in non-finite verbs (Amritavalli & Jayaseelan 2005).

• Finite clauses cannot be coordinated; Relative clauses are non-finite Jayaseelan 2014, Sandhya Sundaresan 2014)

• Lack of distinct function words – verbal non-finite inflections (Steever Stanford B, 1988)

Construction patterns to express grammatical aspects & modalities

• Current discussion – part of a larger theoretical work to understand Dravidian syntax from Construction Grammar perspective

• Discussion restricted to constructions involving grammatical aspects and modalities

• Grammatical aspects and modalities are expressed as MainVerb-AuxV1-AuxV2.. sequences

• Every verb in this sequence takes non-finite inflection and the final auxiliary verb shows the finite inflection

• Aspects show conjunctive participial inflection; modalities show infinitive participial inflection.

Example constructions for grammatical aspects

av-an **va-ndu** **iru-pp-An (Ta)**
dist-H.MASC. *come-CONJ* *exist-FUT-3.H.SG*
 'He would have come'

vA-Du **chepp-i** **un-nA-Du (Te)**
dist-H.MASC. *say-CONJ* *exist-PRES-3.H.SG*
 'He has said (something)'

  * avan vA iruppAn
  * vADu cheppu unnADu

➢Main verb shows Conjunctive participial inflection (non-finite). Auxiliary verb shows the finite inflection

➢Conjunctive participial form shows the so-called past morpheme
 .
➢When bare stem of the verb is used, the sentence becomes ungrammatical

➢The auxiliary verb is the syntactic head. Carries agreement (if marked by the language) and tense.

Example constructions for modalities

av-an   **var-a**   **vEND-um (Ta)**
dist-H.MASC.   come-INF   want-3.NH.SG
'He should come'

vADu   **chepp-a**   **galig-A-Du (Te)**
dist-H.MASC.   say-INF   able-PST-3.H.SG
'He could say (it)'

    * avan vA vENDum
    * vADu cheppu galigADu

➢ Again, using bare stem sequence makes the sentence ungrammatical

➢ Auxiliary verb shows finite inflection. Sometimes the finite inflection agrees with subject; in other cases it doesn't. Reason?

➢E.g. 'cheppa galigADu' – *he could say* - agreement with subject 'he'.

➢But 'nuvvu rA kUDadu' – *you should not come* - does not agree with 'you'

Example constructions for modalities

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Thesis: Non-finite inflections are meaningful

• Traditional notion: Tense, grammatical Aspects, modalities are formal semantic properties of an event denoted by a verb.

• The usual analysis - these non-finite inflections are just formal morphological patterns

- * avan Urukku pOnAn *matRum* naNbargaLai sandittAn.
- avan Urukku **pOy** naNbaragaLai **sandittAn**.
- He went to his town *and* met his friends.

•Our thesis: Grammatical aspects and modalities emerge as a result of meaningful discourse interactions between 'processes'.

•We argue that there are systematic discourse construals underlying these surface inflections.

Why should non-finite inflections be treated as more than formal patterns in V-Vaux sequence – Scope of negation

(1) **av-an   va-ndu   iru-pp-An**
   Dist-H.MASC.   come-CONJ   exist-FUT-3.H.M.SG
   'He would have come'

➢ **av-an   va-ndu   irukk-a   mATT-An**
   Dist-H.MASC.   come-CONJ   exist-INF   negate-3.H.M.SG
   'He would not have come'

   Negating the process and inception state

➢ **av-an   var-A-mal   iru-ndu   iru-pp-An**
   dist-H.MASC come-NEG-CONJ exist-CONJ exist-FUT-3.H.M.S

   'He would not have come' - Literally 'He would have remained, [in a state of] having not come'

   Here the process is negated and the inception state is described in discourse

   * av-an   var-A-mal iru-pp-An -> Infelicitous negation of (1)

(2) **av-an   var-a   vEND-um**
   Dist-H.MASC.   come-INF   aux-FIN
   'He should come'

➢ **av-an   var-a   kUDAdu**
   Dist-H.MASC.   come-INF   aux-FIN
   ' He should not come'

➢ **av-an   var-A-mal   iru-kka   vEND-um**
   D.H.MASC come-NEG-CONJ exist-INF   aux-FIN
   'He should not come'

   Literally, 'He should be in a state of having not come'

   * avan varAmal vENDum -> infelicitous   negation of (2)

Why should non-finite inflections be treated as more than formal patterns in V-Vaux sequence – Multiple interpretations

- **ravi   kuDi-ttu   iru-kkiR-An (Ta)**
  ravi   drink-CONJ   exist-PRES-AGR.
  'Ravi has drunk (recently)'
  'He has the experience of drinking (sometime in his life)'
  'He is drunk (currently)'

- Negation of the original sentence varies based on how it is interpreted.

- **'kuDikkavillai / kuDittadillai/ kuDittu illai**'
  'ravi ippo kuDittirukkiRAna?' - If the interpretation of this sentence is 'Is ravi drunk now?', the answer is:
  '**kuDittu** ellam onRum   **illai**.   teLivAga tAn irukkAn'
  'drink-CONJ….. ..   …No-exist-FIN. Sober   only exist-AGR
  'No, he is not drunk or anything. He is sober indeed'.

Discourse interactions underlying non-finite inflections

- **rAman   uRang-An   srami-ccu (Ma)**
  Ram   sleep-INF   try-PST-FIN
  'Ram tried to sleep'
- Negation scopes:

➢ **rAman   *uRang-An*   <u>srami-cc-illa</u>**
  Ram   sleep-INF   try-PST-NEG
  'Ram <u>did not try</u> ***to sleep***'

➢ **rAman   *uRang-A-te*   *irikk-An*   <u>srami-ccu</u>**
   Ram   sleep-NEG-CONJ remain-INF   try-PST-FIN
  'Ram <u>tried</u> ***not to sleep***' (Literally: He tried to remain, having not slept)

- There is no 'not to Verb' construction in Dravidian languages. You say 'Ram tried to remain [in a state], having not slept'.

Our analysis

- Four major construals underlying process – process interactions in discourse

- Conjunctive, Concurrent, Conditional, infinitive schemas

- Aspects arise as special cases of conjunctive schema meaningfully

- Modalities arise as special cases of infinitive schema meaningfully
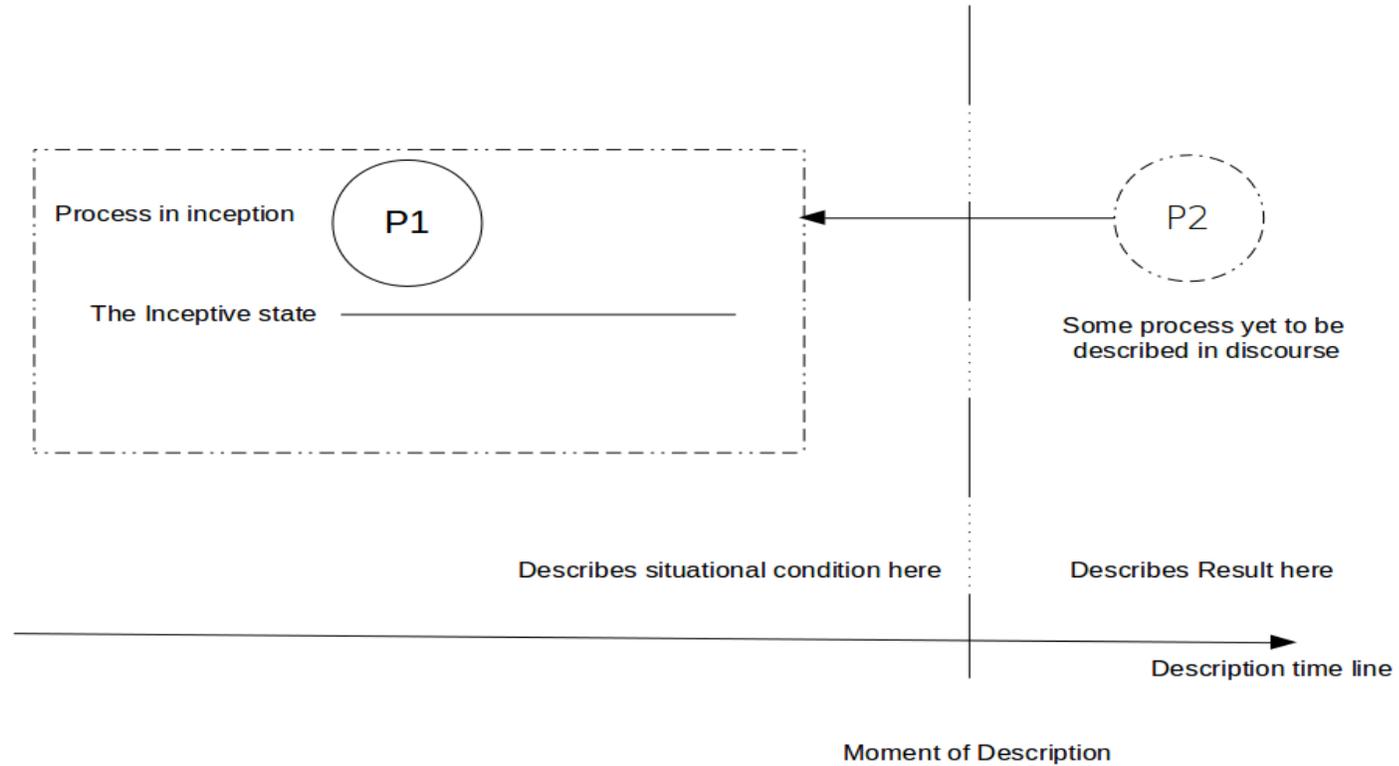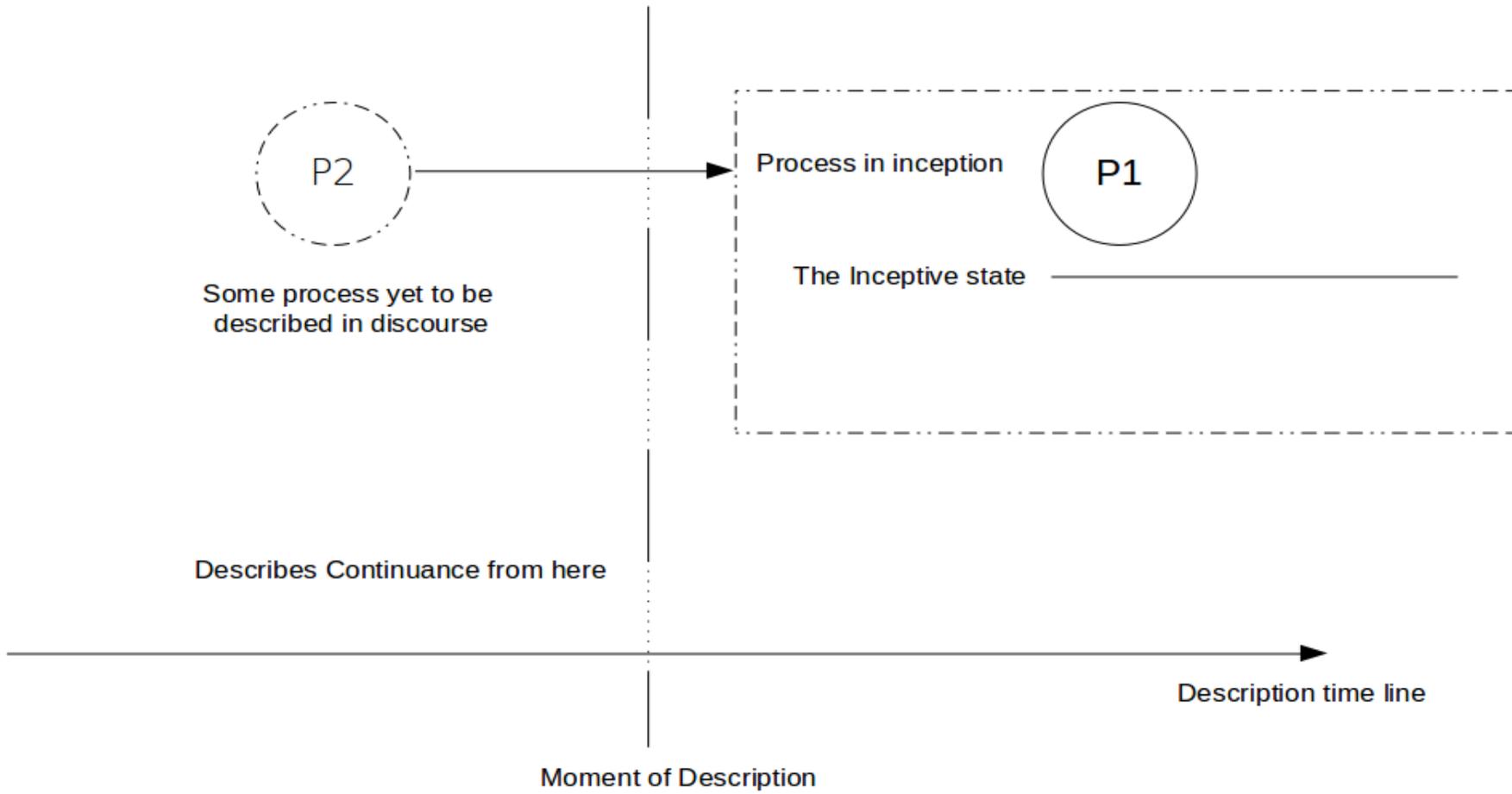
Conjunctive schema – The general Construal
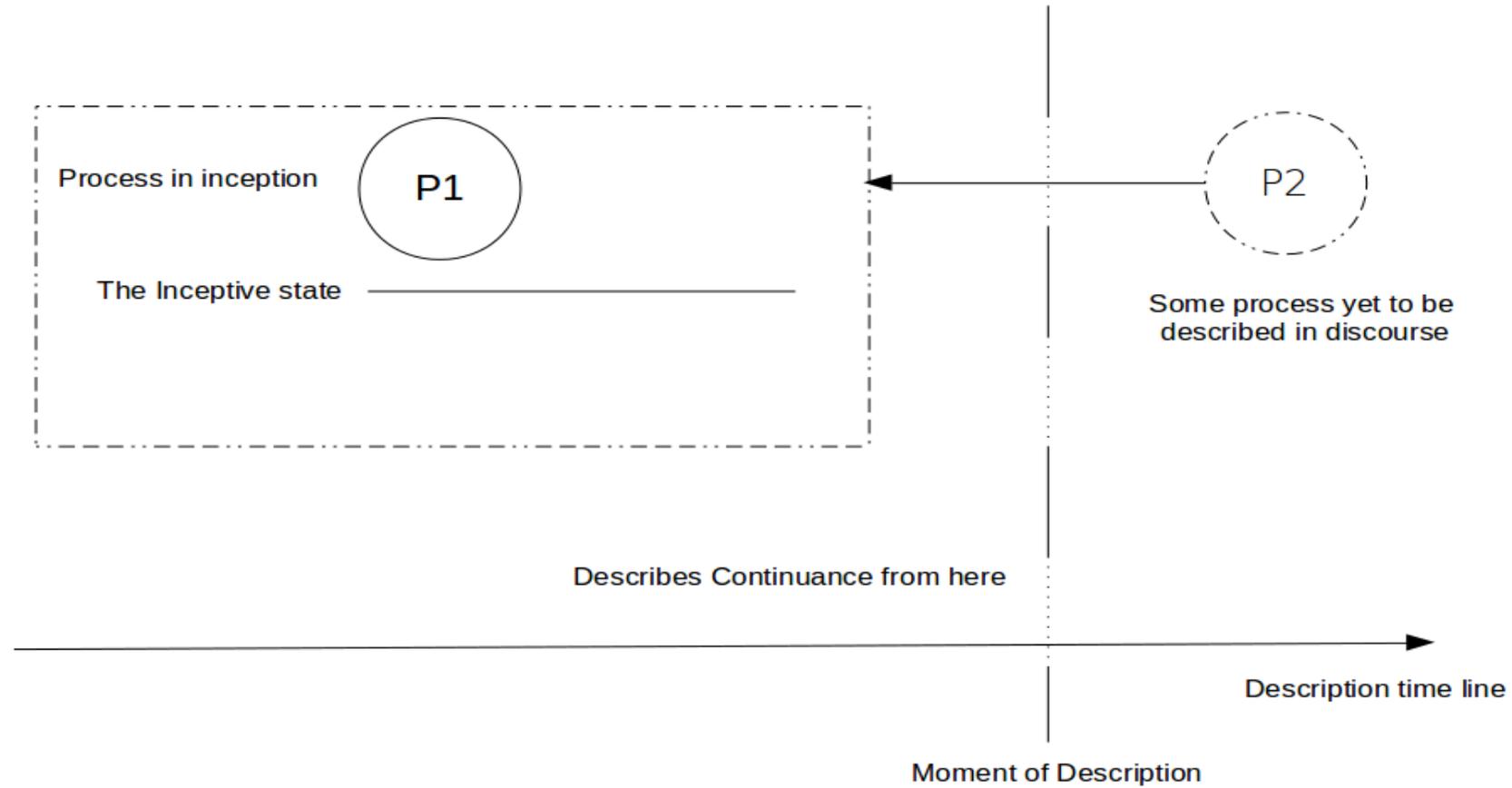
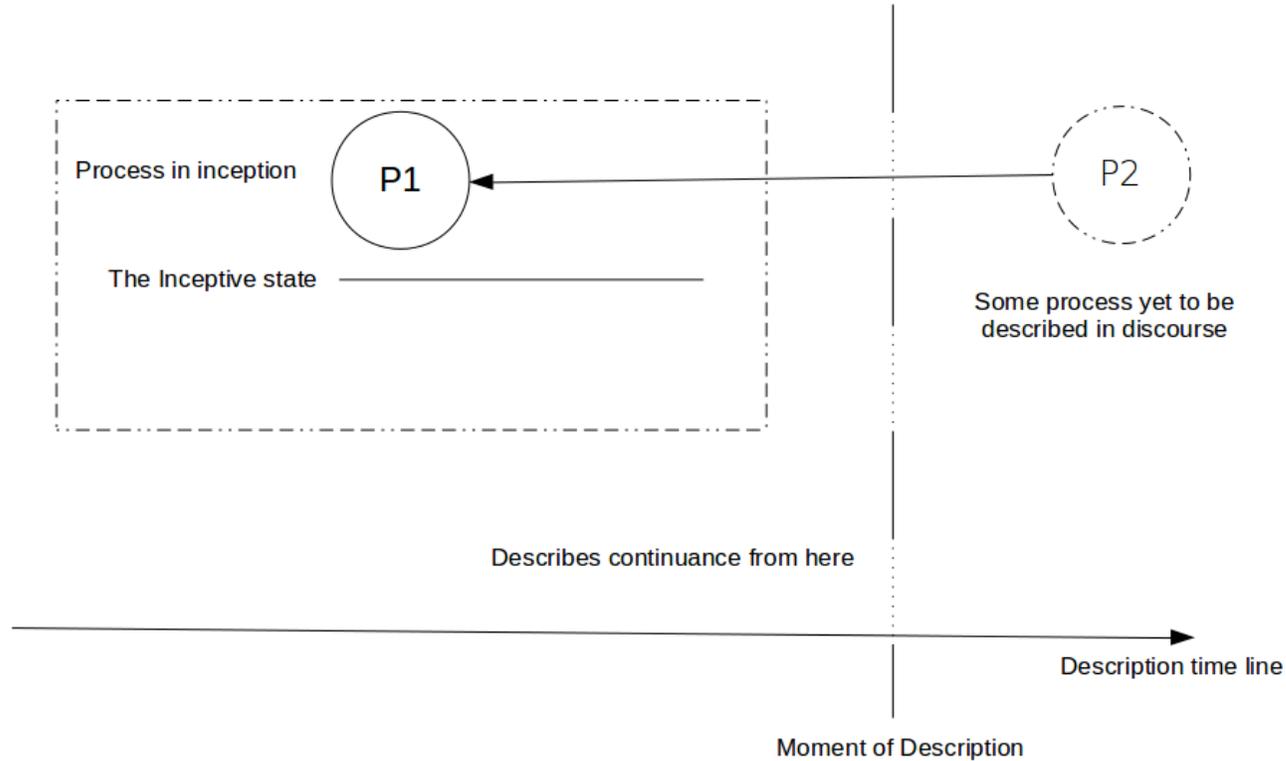# Concurrent schema – The general Construal
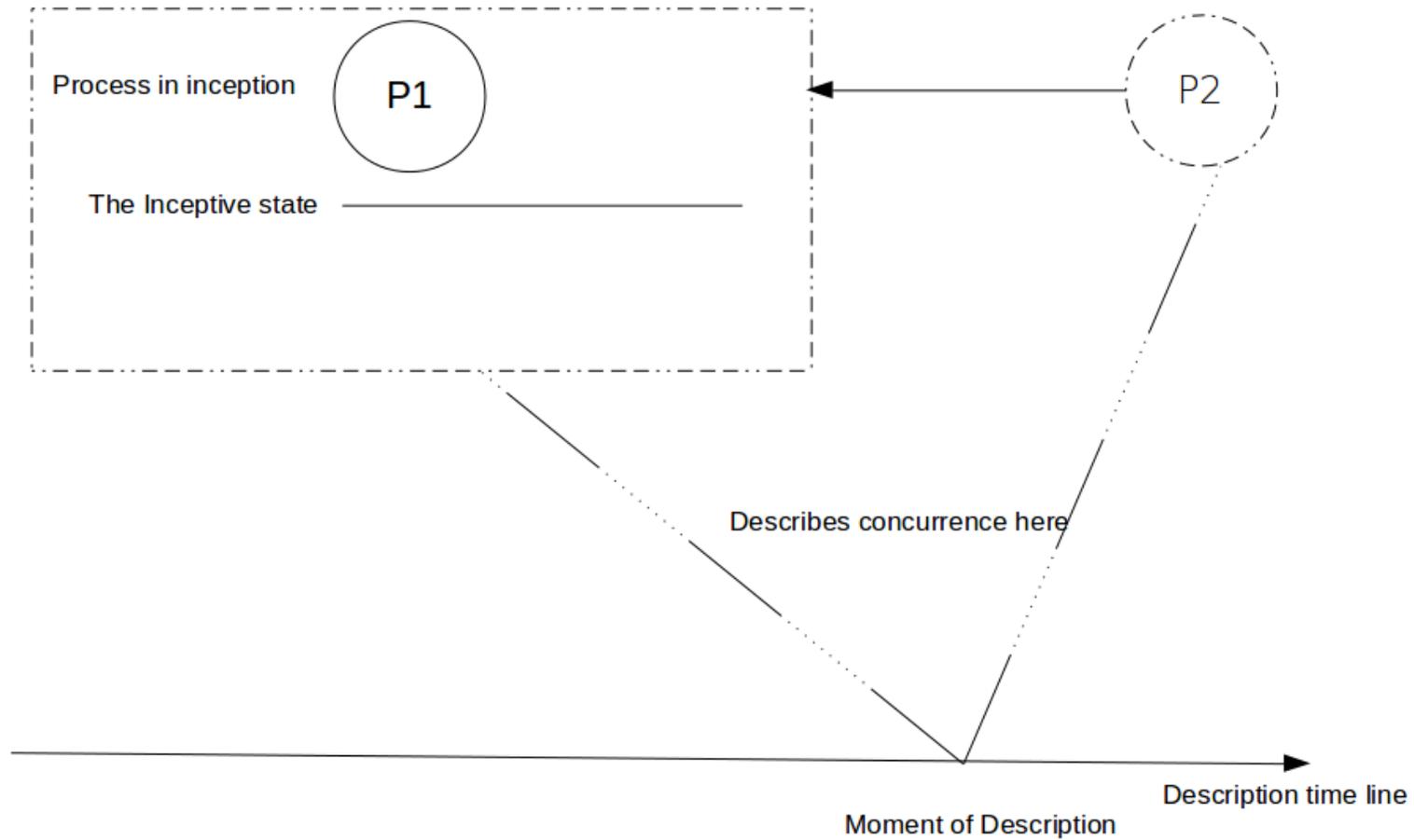
Conditional schema – The general Construal

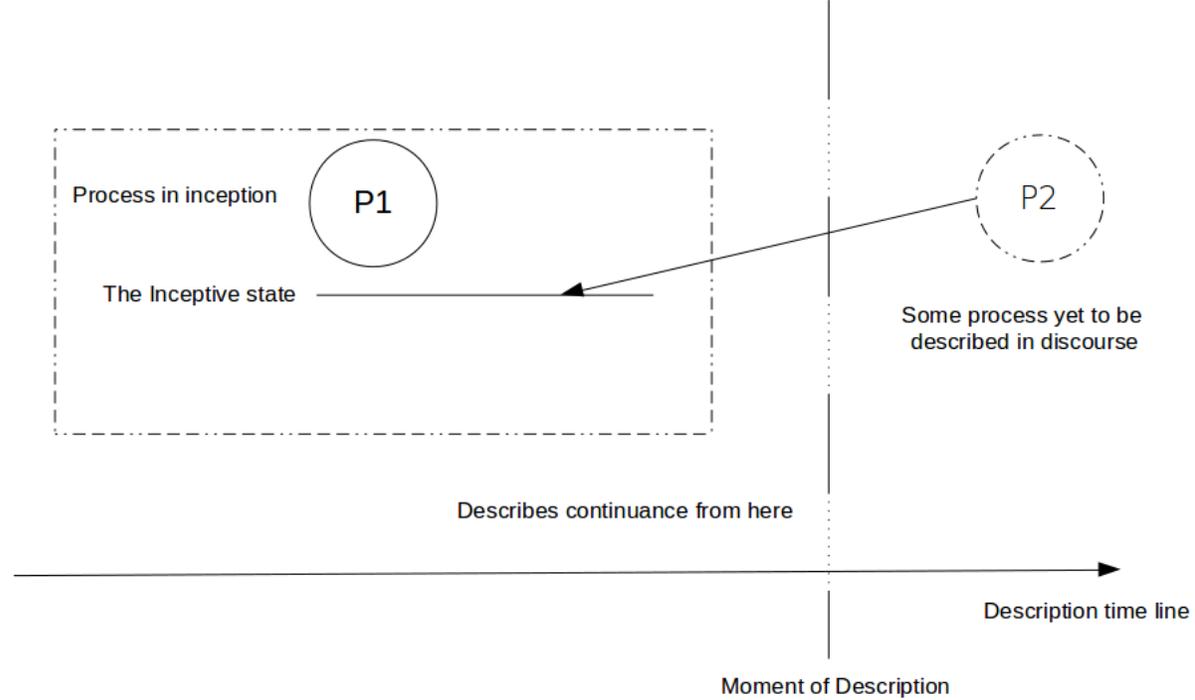# Infinitive schema – The general Construal

Conjunctive subtype 1 – Process continuance

Conjunctive subtype II – Grammatical aspect

Process in inception

P1

P2

The Inceptive state

Some process yet to be described in discourse

Describes continuance from here

Description time line

Moment of Description

Process in inception

P1

P2

The Inceptive state

Some process yet to be described in discourse

Describes continuance from here

Description time line

Moment of Description

How grammatical aspects are composed of the conjunctive schema

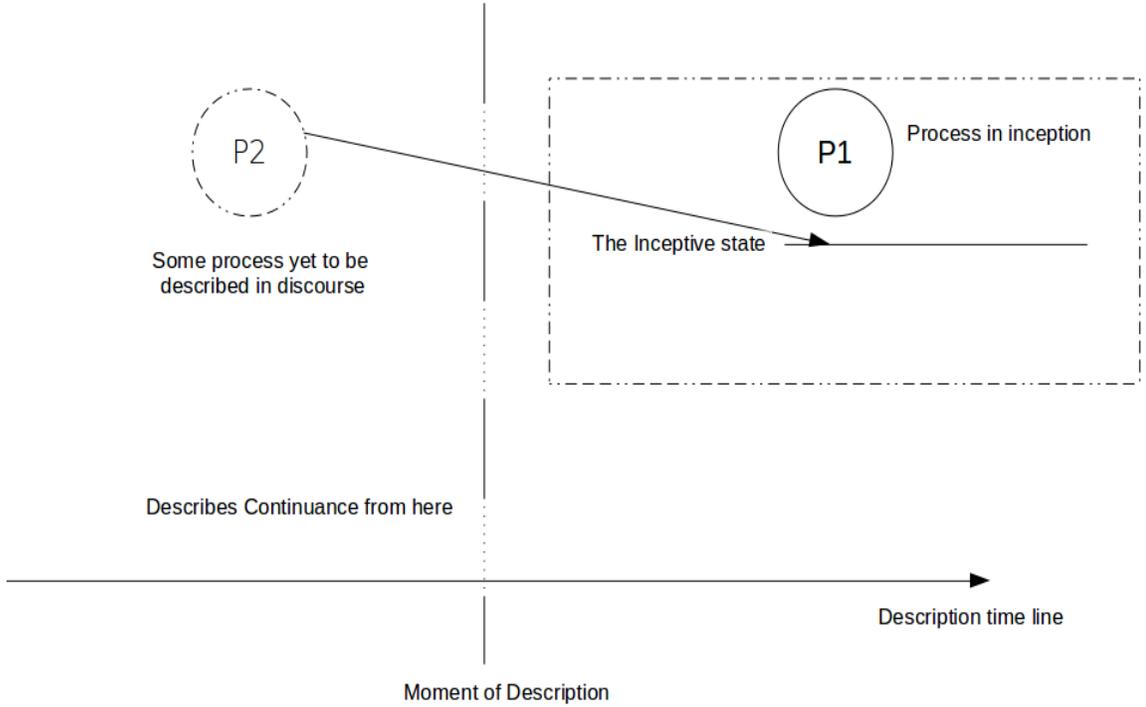| Expression	Literal meaning	Intended function
vandu irukkiREn	Having come, I exist (in the inceptive state)	I have come (recent event)
vandu irundEn	Having come, I existed (in the inceptive state)	I had come
vandu koNDu irukkiREn	Having come, having held (the i.state), I existed (in it)	I am coming (progressive event)
vandu viTTEn	Having come, I let go (the i. state)	I have come (completive interpretation)
vandu viTTu irundAL	Having come, having let go (the i.state), she remained (in the state)	She had come already (finished/completed)
ODi pOnAn	Having run, he went (to such a state)	He ran away
uDaittu pOTTAn	Having broken, he put (in the i.state)	He has broken [something] (Finished the activity)

How this discourse continuance explains spoken language data as well

- Explains both written and spoken data
- Written language: **vandu viTTAn** - having come, he let go. Meaning - He has come ('completed already 'sense)
- Spoken language: **vanduTTAn** - he has come ('completed already 'sense)
- Negation scopes of the above spoken form:
    1. Scope 1 **varalae** - 'He has not come' ; action negated, state is left undescribed in discourse.
    2. Scope 2 **varAma irunduTTan/viTTuTTan/pOyiTTAn** – ' He has not come'; action negated, state is described with another functionally salient verb.
        'He has remained (in a state), having not come'
        'He has let go(of a state), having not come'
        'He has gone (to a state), having not come'
    - Different valid ways to negate with scope 2.

Infinitive subtype 1 – Process expectance

P2

Some process yet to be described in discourse

Process in inception

P1

The Inceptive state

Describes Continuance from here

Description time line

Moment of Description

Infinitive subtype 1 – Modalities

P2

Some process yet to be described in discourse

Process in inception

P1

The Inceptive state

Describes Continuance from here

Description time line

Moment of Description
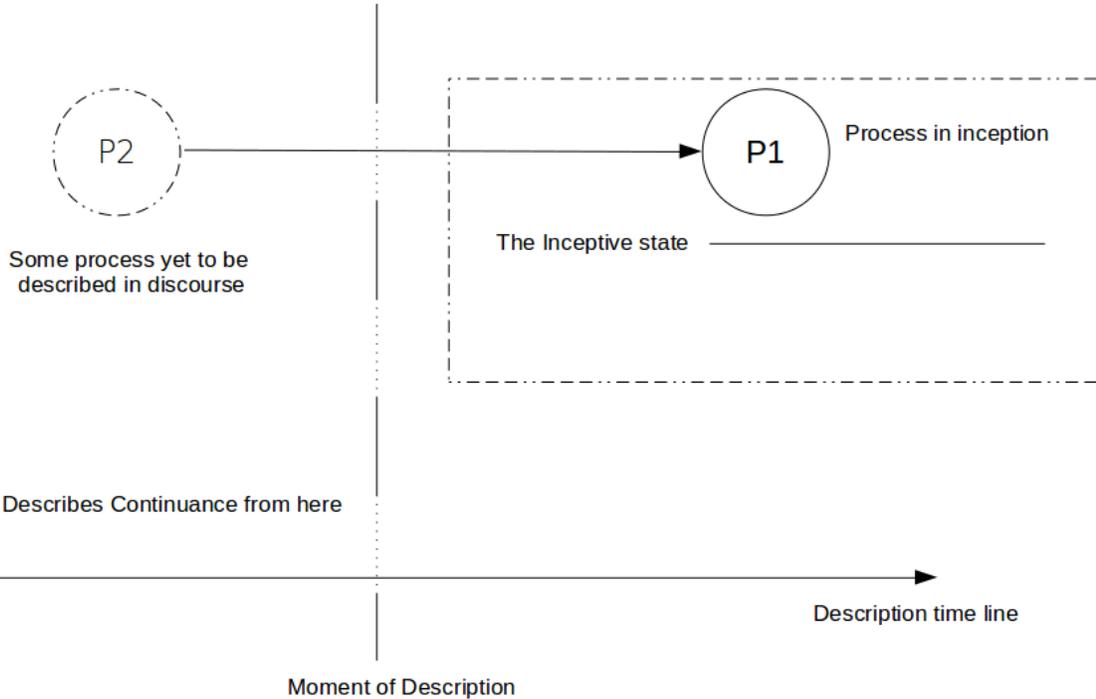
How modalities are composed of the infinitive schema

Expression	Literal meaning	Intended function
solla vENDum	To say, [such a state] wanted.	One should say
solla kUDAdu	To say, [such a state] will not join.	One should not say (Scope 1)
sollAmal irukka vENDUm	Having not told, to remain [in such a state], wanted.	One should not say (Scope 2)
vara muDiyum	To come, [such a state], will be capable	One can come (ability)
Vara muDiyAdu	To come, [such a state], won't be capable	One cannot come
varAmal irukka muDiyum	Having not come, to remain [in the state], will be capable	One can choose not to come

Auxiliary verbs are not just syntactic heads

•Even when original lexical meaning is lost – the construals hold good.
  e.g. Spoken language has fully grammaticalized the historical verbs as morphemes; still the conceptions hold good

•Because grammatical aspects and modalities are dynamically constructed as discourse interactions between processes describing an event and inception state of the event.

•Grammatical aspects of an event describe, not the event itself, but the **state** that is **conceived** by the speaker **once the process verb which describes the event is brought into the discourse**

•Modalities of an event describe, not the event itself, but the **state** that is **conceived** by the speaker **while the process verb which describes the event is expected in discourse**

•Explains why conjunctive participial inflection shows the 'perfect aspect' and infinitive inflection shows 'imperfective aspect'

•Auxiliary verbs describing aspects/modalities are not just syntactic heads, but semantic heads as well.

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