
[82] *Constituent-order in Sanskrit bahuvrīhi compounds. A dialogue between Pāṇini and generative grammar*

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This study is an attempt to show that a particular implementation of some crucial rules of Pāṇini's can predict, unlike modern analyses, constituent-order in Sanskrit bahuvrīhi compounds. Modern analyses take bahuvrīhis as being karmadhāraya (i.e., endocentric) compounds that become exocentric due either to the application of a null suffix (see, e.g., Whitney 1889:501-502; Gillon 2008:3-4; Lowe 2015:102-103), or to a figure of speech (a synecdoche, according to Bauer 2016:462-463). Thus, these analyses (more or less implicitly) assume that the material of which bahuvrīhis are made up is ordered in the same way as in endocentric compounds, but in so doing they fail to account for some facts pertaining to constituent-order: for instance, the qualifier (candra- 'moon') can follow the qualificand (mukha- 'face') in (1), which is a karmadhāraya, but not in (2), which is a bahuvrīhi:

(1) mukha-candra-ḥ. face-moon-NOM.MASC.SG. 'That moon of a face'.

(2) [candra-mukh-ā] iyam. moon-face-NOM-FEMM.SG she-NOM.SG. 'She whose face is a moon'.

No rule in Pāṇini's grammar deals with this mutual exclusion. Nevertheless, the combination of A 1.2.44 (ekavibhakti cāpurvanipāte) and A 2.2.30 (upasarjanam pūrvam) pinpoints a systematic correspondence between the fact that the case-ending of a constituent X in the source-phrase S of a compound C does not change, and the fact that X occupies the first slot in C. We suggest that such a correspondence can be exploited to reduce the problem of constituent-order to a problem of case-assignment: adopting the modern framework of generative grammar, and assuming that the case-ending of X does not change if X occupies a non-prominent position in S, we shall argue that candra- must stay in the left slot in (2) because well-known constraints on movement prevent it from moving to a prominent position with respect to mukha- in the S corresponding to (2); this movement is instead permitted in the S matching (1) for independent reasons, so that candra- becomes prominent with respect to mukha-, and can thus occupy the first slot in (1). If this is tenable, the study of the history of linguistics (of which the Indian grammatical tradition is an important chapter) will once again appear as being a source of inspiration for advancing fresh solutions to modern problems.

References: Bauer (2016). Re-evaluating exocentricity in word-formation. In Siddiqi&Harley(ed.), *Morphological Metatheory*,461-477. Benjamins. Gillon (2008). Exocentric Compounds in Classical Sanskrit, in Huet&Kulkarni(ed.), *First-International-Sanskrit-Computational-Linguistics-Symposium*. Lowe (2015). The syntax of Sanskrit compounds. *Language* 91(3),71-114. Whitney (1889). *A Sanskrit Grammar*.