

## Word Ordering in the Aṣṭadhyāyī

Subhadra Kumar Sen  
Calcutta University

The aphorisms in Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī is analyzed in this micro-study of the great book as a linguistic corpus. The corpus is studied from the point of view of syntax. We have used the word syntax here as the linear arrangement of meaningful elements.

The aphorisms show verb final structures. This category can again be subdivided into two groups -

- i) SV where S is contained within the verb and
- ii) SOV where S is contained in the verb. Examples of both the types are abundant. Examples of the first group are:

*Rakṣati* 'he preserves' (4.4.33), *prabhavati* 'he appears' (4.3.83), *tarati* 'he crosses' (4.4.5), *carati* 'he moves' (4.4.8) and *unchati* 'he gleans' (4.4.32). The example *prabhavati* (4.3.83) interpreted as 'it appears' will give us an example of an impersonal construction like Hittite *lukkezi* 'it brightens' where the verb contains a grammatical subject but the logical subject is elided. Compare Modern English 'it appears to me' and 'I think'. Examples of the second group are:

*dharmam carati* 'he practices religion' (4.4.41), *samavāyān samavaiti* 'he assembles the group' (4.4.43), *tad arhati* 'he deserves that' (5.1.63).

There are other examples of verb final sentence e.g.

*āprapadam prāpnoti* 'he reaches the forepart of the foot' (5.2.8), *nikate nivasati* 'he dwells close by' (4.4.73), *yojanam gacchati* 'he covers the distance of two miles' (5.1.74), *vratenā jivati* 'he lives by manual labour' (5.2.21), *parśvenanvicchati* 'he desires by crooked means' (5.2.75).

Within the examined corpus deviations are not unattested.

Volume 27, Number 1 & 2, Spring/Summer 1999

Subject occupies the final slot. VS structure is found in *vyāharati mrgaḥ* 'the deer roams' (4.3.51). The structure OVS is found in *somam arhati yaḥ* 'who deserves the some drink' (4.4.137). The last example may however have an alternative explanation.

A necessary concomitant of the SOV word ordering à la Greenberg, is that the genitive precedes the noun it modifies. Such examples abound in the corpus. Thus for example:

*tasya vikārah* 'its transformation' (4.3.134), *tasya apatvam*, 'his descendent' (4.1.92) *tasya nivāsaḥ* 'his dwelling place' (4.2.69), *hrdayasya priyaḥ* 'the beloved of heart' (4.4.95), *tasya īśvaraḥ* 'his god' (5.1.42), *tasya loṣaḥ* 'its disappearance' (1.3.9), *asurasya svam* 'the Asura's property' (4.4.123).

### Other syntactic features

Apart from the features mentioned above the language of the aphorisms show some other syntactic peculiarities. Some of these features are:

#### i) Nominal sentence

A nominal sentence is constructed without a finite verb. Examples occur in the examined aphorisms. Thus

*sā asva devatā* 'this (is) his divinity' (4.2.24), *tad asya brahmacaryam* 'that (is) his abstinence' (5.1.94), *sosya nivāsaḥ* 'that (is) his residence' (4.3.89), *gehe kaḥ* 'who (is) in the house?', *adarśanam loṣaḥ* 'invisibility (is) elision,' (1.1.60), *tad asya sodham* 'that (is) his custom, (Katre)', (4.3.52), *tatra sādhuḥ* 'there (is) a hermit' (4.4.98), *sa eṣām grāmaṇiḥ* 'he (is) their chief' (5.2.78) etc.

#### ii) Asyndetic construction

In the examined corpus asyndetic construction consisting of three finite verbs is found.

*sambhavaty avaharati pacati* 'he meets [and] takes away [and] works' (5.1.52).

#### iii) Group inflection

Group inflection i.e. the mode of adding the inflection to the final member in an appositional construction is also found.

Thus

*śabdadarduram karoti* 'he makes sound (and) pot' (4.4.34)  
*pakṣi(n) matsyamṛgān hanti* 'he kills birds, fish and animals'  
 (4.4.35), *pāryāṇaturāyaṇa cāndrāyaṇam/turāyaṇa vartayati* 'he  
 performs *pāryāṇa*, *turāyaṇa* and *cāndrāyaṇa* (5.1.72),  
*parovaraparamparaputraputram anubhavati* 'he enjoys  
 ancestors, descendants, sons and grandsons' (5.2.10).

From this limited micro survey it is quite apparent that Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī is not only an epitome of exceptional human intellectual brilliance and achievement but also is an equally exceptional mass of linguistic data which can be studied from the point of view of syntax to which Pāṇini devotes only one aphorism *samarthaḥ padavidhiḥ* (2.1.1.).