



Review Article

LINGUISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS SAMHITA: AN ATTEMPT TO REREAD ASTANGAHRUDAYAM

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ABSTRACT

Aptavacana, one among the prime *Pramana*, to attain knowledge in Ayurveda is composed in *sutra* style of literature written in Sanskrit language. This indicates the necessity to know the language along with its basic grammatical elements. **Materials and Methods:** *Ashtaṅga Hrudayam*, other relevant books and articles related to Sanskrit language. Most commonly used grammatical elements were used to illustrate instances, where without its application could either result in flaw or to decipher deeper understanding of the text. **Results:** Certain examples of *Sutra* pertaining to each of the domain of basic grammatical elements were selected randomly from *Ashtaṅga hrudayam*. There were changes in perception of *Sutra* when viewed through the lens of grammar. **Discussion:** Grammatical elements were not mere linguistic elements. They often possess a hint to possible author intention. **Conclusion:** The knowledge of grammar is essential for precise understanding of the text. Their proper application could prevent misinterpretation and facilitate deeper understanding of the text.

INTRODUCTION

Pramana are the tools to attain knowledge. Despite the difference in number of *Pramana* being accepted by different schools, *Śabda*, *Pratyaksha*, and *Anumana* are dealt with prime importance in *Caraka Samhita* [1]. Among them, *Śabda pramana* occupies a prior position. *Śabda* is otherwise termed as *Aptavacana*. *Apta* is an eminent person with transparent memory, specialised knowledge and devoid of any attachment and aversion [2]. Ayurvedic *Aptavacana* are composed in the form of *Sutra*, written in Sanskrit language. The necessity of learning the language is irrefutable. The term Sanskrit itself is a neutral noun, derived from the root “*Kr*” by the addition of prefix “*Sam*” and suffix “*Kta*”. It means ‘Constructed well, ‘perfected’ and ‘refined’ [3]. It is an ancient and classical language of India, believed to be in use predominantly between 4th Millenium BCE and 5th century CE. As the time passed, the usage of Sanskrit also declined [4].

MATERIALS

- *Ashtaṅga hrudayam*
- Other relevant books and articles related to Sanskrit language.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this article initially involved identifying and defining most commonly used grammatical elements that could demystify the *Samhita* and then classifying them into domain. *Ashtanga hrudaya* was then analysed through the lens of grammar. This text was chosen as *Sutras* were composed in *Padya* format and easy to identify the instances. Those illustrations, where without application of grammar, a flaw could be suspected were then highlighted after defining each domain of grammatical elements. Both the *Sutra* and *Adhyaya* from which the *Sutra* was chosen, were selected randomly.

RESULTS

The domains selected were *Nirukti*, *Pratyayam*, *Upasargam*, *Avyayam*, *Sandhi* and *Samasam*.

Nirukti

“*Niśeshena ukti nirukti*”- *Nirukti* is defined as a term through which the meaning of the word can be described completely. The concept of *Nirukti* was

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developed by *Yaska*. Through the knowledge of *Nirukti*, understanding the meaning of a *Sutra* beyond a description could be attained. For instance, the word “*Matra*” is etymologically derived from the root “*ma*,” which signifies “*Mana*” or “quantity”. Looking deeper into the *Paṭabheda* of the *Matraśītiyamadhyam*, two quotations were found that reflect the significance of the root “*Ma*”- “*Tra bhukta maranaya*” i.e., consuming food without an attention to its quantity, result in destruction of the body and “*Matrabhukta pranatranaya*” i.e., if consumed analysing the correct requirement of the body, sustains it. The key difference

between these two sentences lies in the fact that there is absence of the root “*Ma*” in the former sentence. This subtle omission of “*Ma*” changes the very purpose of the meaning conveyed through the former sentence [5].

Similarly, the same *Padartha* might be addressed through different terms at different contexts. Those synonyms might be used by the author to describe the nature of single entity. The appearance of synonyms of same word at different context could signify the necessity of *Nirukti*. This could be illustrated based on the synonyms of *Rakta* and *Purisha*.

Table 1: Example of *Nirukti: Rakta*

Synonyms	<i>Nirukti</i>	Meaning	Interpretation
<i>Rudhiram</i>	<i>Rudhir avarane</i> [6]	That which is enclosed	Vascular nature
<i>Raktam</i>	<i>Ranj rage</i> [6]	That which imparts colour	Pigmentation property
<i>Lohitam</i>	<i>śonr varna gatyoho</i> [6]	Means colour and flow	Pigmentation and haemo - dynamicity
<i>śonitam</i>	<i>Ruha bija janmani pradurbhave ca</i> [6]	Giving origin to cells	Erythropoiesis
<i>Asrk</i>	<i>Asu kshepane</i> [6]	Which provides	Circulatory aspect
<i>Asram</i>	<i>Aśu bhakshane</i> [6]	Which engulfs	Phagocytic and haemolytic property.

This tabular column, in short, attempted to throwback light on the possible perspective of the author in describing the properties and functions of the entity “*Rakta dhatu*” through mentioning of its synonyms at different contexts.

Table 2: Example of *Nirukti: Mala*

Term	<i>Nirukti</i> and meaning	Interpretation of possible reason placing the term in the <i>śloka</i>
<i>Malam</i>	<i>Maladharane</i> [7]	<i>Doshadhatumala mulam sada dehasya</i> [8]
	To support	The waste product is denoted through the term “ <i>Mala</i> ” in this quotation. This stresses on the point that “ <i>Mala</i> ” is also one among the key factors, required to support the body.
<i>Purisham</i>	<i>Pr palane puranayoho</i> [7]	<i>Avashṭambha purishasya</i> [9]
	Support and nourishment	The term “ <i>Purisha</i> ” might have been used in this quotation to emphasise the fact that upholding the body is also a function of excretory products.
<i>Kiṭṭam</i>	<i>Kiṭṭa gatau</i> [7]	<i>Pacatyannam vibhajate sarakiṭṭa prthak tatha</i> [10]
	That which undergoes transformation	The probability of the term “ <i>Kitta</i> ” being placed in this quotation is to refer that the waste product is formed as a byproduct of a transformation carried out by <i>Pacaka pitta</i> .
<i>Viṭ</i>	<i>Viśa praveśane</i> [7]	<i>Krtacankramanam mukta viṭ mutram śayane sukhe</i> [11]
	That which has entered <i>Gudam</i>	The term “ <i>Viṭ</i> ” is used in this context to denote the waste referred here needs to be eliminated and should have reached <i>Gudam</i> .
<i>Śakrt</i>	<i>Śakrti śakrnti</i> [7]	<i>Śukrartava śakrt mutragarbhanishkramanakriyaha</i> [12]
	That which is ready to expel	The term “ <i>Śakrt</i> ” is used in this quotation. This might be because through this quotation the body’s tendency to expel out <i>Mala</i> needs to be emphasised.

Though a same word is described by different terms at different contexts, *Nirukti* could be a guiding tool to analyse the placing of terms in apt *Sloka* to convey the intended meaning.

Pratyaya

Pratiyate vidhiyate iti pratyaya - The word combined at the end of a root word, noun or pronoun to form different or any other word with an alteration in their meaning is known as *Pratyaya*^[13]. *Pratyaya* can be broadly categorized into four types: *Krit*, *Kriya*, *Taddhita*, and *Stri pratyaya*.

Table 3. Common examples of Pratyaya

<i>Pratyaya</i>	Purpose	Example	Transformed meaning
<i>Krit</i>	Transform a verb into its noun form	<i>Anu+ranj+kta- Anurakta</i>	<i>Ranj</i> - Impart colour <i>Anurakta</i> - Affectionate
<i>Kriya</i>	Modify a verb to different verb forms	<i>Gam +tumun - Gantum</i>	<i>Gam</i> - Go <i>Gantum</i> - Going
<i>Taddhita</i>	Refine a noun into another noun form	<i>Stula + an - Staulya</i>	<i>Stula</i> - Obese <i>Staulya</i> - Obesity
<i>Stri</i>	Change a masculine noun into its feminine counterpart	<i>Bala: + षाप- Bala</i>	<i>Bala:</i> - Male child <i>Bala</i> - Female child

To illustrate the necessity of understanding the concept of *Pratyaya*, an example was taken from the title of each chapter. Each title in the *Ashtanga hrudayam* has a similar ending "*Iyam*" - *Ayushkamiyam*, *Roganutpadaniyam*, *Matraśitiyam* and *Dvidividhopakramaniyam*. The similarity is due to the addition of "*Ca pratyaya*"^[14]. It is a *Taddhita pratyaya*. For instance, *Ayushkama* transforms to *Ayushkamiyam* on adding *Ca pratyaya* and so on. The *Pratyaya*, thus added has a profound meaning to impart i.e., "*Tasmai hitam*", meaning that which is beneficial. Through this linguistic refinement, the intention of the author might have been to convey that "*Ayushkamiyam*" elucidates what is beneficial for attaining longevity, while "*Roganutpadaniyam*" clarifies upon what is beneficial for disease prevention and so on.

Upasarga

Upasargena dhatvartho baladanyatra niyate- Upasarga are linguistic elements that combine with a root verb to modify or enhance its meaning ^[16]. They function as modifiers, expanding and refining the semantic scope of the root. There are 22 *Upasargas*: *Pra, Para, Sam, Apa, Anu, Ava, Nis, Nir, Dush, Dur, Vi, A, Ni, Adhi, Api, Ati, Su, Ut, Abhi, Prati, Pari* and *Upa*^[15]. *Upasargas* can be classified into three categories based on their purpose.

- Which imparts a negative effect
- Which adds a special emphasis
- Which does not impact the meaning of the word

Instance of significant implications of Upasarga in Ashtaṅga hrudayam

- The word "*Smarati*" when added with prefix "*vi*" becomes "*Vismarati*". In this context, on addition of prefix "*Vi*", there is a negative alteration in the meaning of the word. But in the verse quoting the benefits of *Anupana*, a term "*Viklitti*" is observed. It is

derived by adding the prefix "*vi*" to root word "*Klit*"^[16]. In this context, instead of imparting a negative meaning, it emphasises on removing the dryness i.e., the same "*Vi*" *Upasarga* under different context can be used to convey a negative meaning or act as an add on effect to the existing term.

- There is a controversy between the term "*Abala*" and "*Durbala*" mentioned in the indication and contraindication of *Snehapana* respectively. Although they appear similar, there is a difference. Commentary specifies that the *Upasarga* "*a*" combined conveys the meaning "*Alpa*" in this context and not "without" *Bala*. And the term "*Durbala*" is formed by the addition of *Upasarga* "*Dur*" to "*Bala*". On complete reading of quotation, it was observed beside the addition of an *Upasarga* the term *Durbala* is again added with another common *Upasarga* "*Ati*" mentioned at the beginning of the quotation. This conveys the meaning profound weakness^[17]. These subtle changes in the word meaning on addition of *Upasarga* helps to bring a clarity that if patient is mildly debilitated, *Snehapana* can be advised whereas contraindicated in those who are most debilitated. The emphasise here is to note the *Upasarga* "*a*", implies both totally negative meaning or in the sense of "less".

Samasam

When two or more words are joined together, a compound word is formed called *Samasa*. When required this compound could be resolved bringing a relationship between the words joined. The sentence that resolves a compound word is known as *Vigraha vakya*^[18].

Application of Samasam

In the context of explanation of pharmacodynamics, the prime factors by which a drug acts are discussed initially. The drug action may be

initiated by *Rasa, Virya, Vipaka, Prabhava and Gunantara*. The term *Gunantara* appears unique since the author could have used the term “*Guna*” instead of “*Gunantara*.” For clarification, initial segmentation of the term “*Gunantara*” is required^[19]. The *Vigraha vakya* of *Gunantara* is “*Anyat gunam*”, i.e., “a *Guna* which is different from”. Knowledge and observation of such peculiar terms divert the attention towards commentary. To understand the term, 2 commentaries - “*Sarvanga sundari*” and “*Ayurveda prakashika*” were referred. *Rasa, Virya, Vipaka* and *Prabhava* are also considered as *Guna* of a *Dravya*. In the verse, it discusses the possibility of *Dravya karma* by either *Rasa, Virya, Vipaka* or *Prabhava*. According to *Sarvanga sundari*, to highlight the existence of some *Guna* different from *Rasa, Virya, Vipaka* and *Prabhava* i.e., in short, to describe the pharmacodynamic property of *Gurvadi guna* indirectly, the term *Gunantara* is used^[20]. Whereas *Ayurveda prakashika* states those *Gurvadi guna*, not included below *Ashta vidha virya*, is conveyed through the term “*Gunantara*”. (*Gurvadi guna* excluding or other than *Ushna, Shita, Guru, Laghu, Manda, Tikshna, Snigdha* and *Ruksha*)^[21].

Avyayam

Shabda is classified into two types: *Vikari* and *Avikari*. *Avyayam* are categorised under *Avikari sabda*. They do not undergo modification with respect to gender, number and case. They remain the same under all circumstances^[22]. *Avyayam* can be classified into *Mula* and *Yougika*. *Mula avyayam* are those which are indeclinable by themselves – *Ca, Api, Na, Va, Vina, Saha, Tu, Kintu, Eva, Evam, Iti, Atra, Iha, Sada*. *Yougika avyayam* are those formed after addition of a *Pratyaya*. For instance, *Gatva, Drshtva* etc^[22].

Examples

Application of *Ca avyayam*

In the description of *Manodosha*, there is a repetition of “*Ca*” *avyayam* in the quotation “*Rajas tamaśca manasau dvau ca doshavudahrtau*”. “*Ca*” means “and”. In this context, the former “*Ca*” refers to *Rajas* “and” *Tamas*. The later “*Ca*” implies that *Rajas* and *Tamas* are “also” the *Manodosha*, subtly hinting the existence of some *Manodosha* other than *Rajas* and *Tamas*^[23]. It is clarified through the commentary that despite *Rajas* and *Tamas*, *Tridosha* are also responsible for psychological disequilibrium. To highlight the significance of consideration of *Tridosha* in the involvement of *Manoroga*, the *Avyayam* “*ca*” might have been repeated.

Table 4: Application of *param avyayam*

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Param</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Shodhana</i>	<i>Vasti</i> ^[24]
	<i>Shamana</i>	<i>Tailam</i> ^[24]
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Shodhana</i>	<i>Virecana</i> ^[24]
	<i>Shamana</i>	<i>Ghrtham</i> ^[24]
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Shodhana</i>	<i>Vamanam</i> ^[24]
	<i>Shamana</i>	<i>Kshauudram</i> ^[24]

In the description of *Shodhana* and *Shamana* mode of treatment for *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*, the *Avyayam* “*param*” is used. The word “*Param*” is emphasized in the *Śloka* to highlight that merely *Vasti* is not a treatment for *Vata*; rather, *Virecana* and *Vamana* may also be prescribed when the condition demands. However, *Vasti* remains the supreme therapy for *Vata*. The benefits of *Vasti* extend beyond *Vataja* disorders - it can be recommended even in *Pitta* and *Kaphaja* conditions as well. Yet, among the three *Doshas*, *Vata* derives the most profound results from *Vasti*. Similarly, in this *Shloka*, *Ghrta* is the best pacifier for *Pitta* and *Taila* for *Vata*^[24]. A difference in opinion is obtained from *Roganutpadaniyam adhyayam*, where due to *Vega dharana*, *Vata* is the *Dosha* that gets aggravated often. In *Mutravegarodha*, *Avapiḍaka sarpi prayoga* is mentioned instead of *Avapiḍaka taila*. Despite *Taila*, being the best option for *Vata*, *Ghrta* is adopted due to the property of *Vitmutra bandhatva* of *Tila taila*^[25]. It emphasises on the point that if the condition demands the best option could also be replaced. So, through the *Avyayam* “*param*”, in this context might be to provide a freedom to the physician to choose even other options for treatment.

Sandhi

Sandhi refers to the phonetic fusion of two adjacent *Aksharas* governed by specific linguistic principles^[26]. This merging results in a seamless and harmonious pronunciation. *Sandhi* can be either *Nitya* or *Eicchika* depending on its application. That is exception happens by the force of usage. *Sandhi* can be broadly classified into 3 types - *Svara sandhi* (vowel conjugation), *Vyanjana sandhi* (consonant conjugation) and *Visarga sandhi* (conjugation involving *Visarga*)^[26].

Example of *Sandhi*

1) A lack of knowledge of *Sandhi* can lead to incorrect word segmentation, as seen in the title *Roganutpadaniyam*^[27]. The term could have been inaccurately segmented as *Rogan + Utpadaniyam*, but this mismatches the focus of the chapter i.e., disease prevention, and not its production. Another possible error during splitting can be *Roganut +*

Padaniyam. The term *Padaniyam* is not a valid word and so this segmentation is also refuted. The correct segmentation is *Roga + Anutpadaniyam*, perfectly aligning with the chapter's intended meaning i.e., preventing diseases.

- 2) In certain instances, even when the rules of *sandhi* are applicable, they might have been deliberately ignored. For example, in the verse “*Vayuhu pittam kaphaśceti trayodosha samasataha*”^[28], the expected form would have been “*Vayurpittamkaphaśceti*” after the application of *sandhi*. Similarly, in the verse “*Bhishak dravyanyupasthatarogi-padacatushtaya*”^[29], the natural transformation after *Jashatva sandhi* would have resulted in “*Bhishagdravyanyupasthatarogipadacatushtayam*”. However, these changes might have been intentionally avoided to emphasize the significance of each of the term present in the quotations. In the first verse, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are given individual importance, and so the common rule of *Sandhi* is ignored. While in the following verse, *Bhishak* is highlighted as the most crucial element. To preserve this intended emphasis, *Jaśatva sandhi* is not applied. (*Bhishak* is not transformed to *bhishag*)

DISCUSSION

The article focusses on demonstrating the necessity of knowing the grammatical elements. Their function extends beyond being a linguistic ornament. They further aid in the interpretation of the text, providing further clarity in its description. Representation of a single entity through different *Paryayas* highlight the structural or functional aspect of it. Each word has its own *Nirukti* that makes it unique. The knowledge of *Nirukti* helps in understanding the logic behind placing a particular term in a specific *Sloka*. The variations in their nomenclature at various *Sloka* is not redundant rather the possibility of the purpose of those terms in holistic description of single entity cannot be denied.

The *Pratyayas* and *Upasargas* emphasise on the need of understanding the contextual meaning of a term. Despite the root word i.e., *Dhatu* being limited in number, the addition of *Pratyaya* and *Upasarga* aids in generation of innumerable words. Their extensive use in altering the meaning of a term wherever necessary is highly appreciable.

Avyayas are often considered as fillers to the meet the metrical requirement of a verse. Despite being a filler, in some context, their contribution needs attention. They might either drag the attention of a reader towards commentary for further clarification or give a hint to reader of a possible flexibility in understanding the meaning of a context.

The analysis of *Samasa* and *Sandhi* signifies the need of proper segmentation of a word. The incorrect usage of *Samasa* and *Sandhi* could lead to distorted perception of either a term or a concept. Conversely, the deliberate removal of usage of conventional rules of *sandhi* in some verses suggests these non-application aids in preserving the pedagogical clarity.

The knowledge of grammatical elements acts as a bridge between *Aptavacana* and the derivation of its meaning. Further, their knowledge could lessen the dependence of students on translated texts, which in turn could narrow the understanding of the reader, that their knowledge gets limited to the author's knowledge (Author of translated text).

CONCLUSION

The need of this article arises from the fact that the *Sutra* is composed in Sanskrit and there is growing demand in understanding the language. The proficiency in language could reduce the dependence of the students on the translated texts. All the findings converge finally to emphasize the indispensable need of knowledge of basic grammatical elements to fetch up the probable intention of author conveyed through the *Sloka*. They are not mere ancillary rather a foundation to *Samhita adhyayana*, serving as a tool in precise perception of the concept and clinical interpretation of the text.

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