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COMPLEX NOMINAL COMPOUNDS IN MALAYALAM

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Abstract

There are a variety of complex compounds in many of the world's languages. The common and often mentioned among them are two constituent and three constituent and phrasal compounds. A satisfactory morphological analysis has not been proposed for these constructions as their form and nature vary cross-linguistically. The main focus of this study is to identify and analyze complex nominal compounds in Malayalam, a language in the Dravidian family of languages. Complex compound category of having three constituents and above in a compound found both lexically and structurally diverse is mainly focused in this study. Technically, more than three constituent compounds are treated in this study as descriptive compounds. The three constituent complex compounds and descriptive compounds detailed in this study clearly suggest that Malayalam follows diverse ways of generating complex compounds. The nominal compound types and their formation illustrated are clearly an addition to the existing understanding on complex compounds in Malayalam in order to enrich the compound morphological studies of Malayalam in general.

1.1. Introduction

Compound morphology of Malayalam (Asher and Kumari 1997) has been well described by traditional grammarians (Gundert 1851, 1868, Śēṣagiri Pṛabhu 1904, Rajarajavarma 1895, 1917) and modern linguists (Panikkar 1967, Ravindran 1975, Asher and Kumari 1997). The native tradition in describing compounds is to divide them according to the Sanskrit model viz, tatpuruṣa, dvanda, bahuvṛīhi etc. Mostly traditional studies addressed two constituent

compounds. One of the exceptions to note is that Rajaraja Varma (1917) -in sūtra 187 describes that 'if the purpose of single meaning is served by constructions with discontinuous immediate constituents then that too can be considered as a kind of compound and he named as *vyvahitasamāsam*'. There is no attempt to note as any focused study made on *vyvahitasamāsam* either by Rajarajavarma or by any modern scholars. But as an exception to note here is that of an innovative addition made in the discussion on compound morphology of Malayalam by Panikkar (1967). His detailed observation on phrase word in Ernad dialect of Malayalam was a maiden attempt to describe the phrase word morphology of Malayalam. "A unit of utterance is referred to as a Phrase word by him when two or more word units fuse together to form one unit-barukaayi = about to come Vn (bar) + Vb stem (uka) + Vaux past tense (aayi), barañāl - if (he etc) does not come-) where placement of word juncture is not possible or when the meaning is different when the word units can be separated by junctures. Of the fused, one is a main unit called the nuclear, the other is auxiliary or non nuclear" (Panikkar 1967). He had displayed many auxiliary words formed by adding various inflectional and derivational suffixes to verbs and nouns stem. It is to be noted that such an amount of detailed exercise was not given due recognition in the morpho syntactic discourse in general and particularly in Malayalam. No doubt, Panikkar's study was a revelation to the discussion of compound morphology of Malayalam. However, the subject matter of the present study is to be accounted as yet another strand. Ravindran's detailed study (1975) on nominal compounds in Malayalam also has not surveyed beyond two constituent compounds. Krishnamurti (2003) displayed four kinds of two constituent compounds of Dravidian and included Malayalam examples. Asher and Kumari (1997) have moved from two constituent binding in compound morphology by exposing complex compounds of three constituent and four constituent in

nature (p-400,2.2.6.3.1.1.7). In their study the examples were shown from following types; ie. adjectival Noun + Noun + Noun-
bālykālasahi (childhood friend FEM), N+N+N -*malakkaṛitōṭṭam*
 (vegetable garden) and N+N+N+N -*kaiyeLuttugranthaśāla*
 (manuscript library). In sequel to this observation, this study will attempt to show diverse types of complex compounds in Malayalam. Technically, more than three constituent compounds are treated in this study as descriptive compounds. This kind of compounds is not productive to the extent of three constituent types. Also to be reported that descriptive compounds are domain specific in nature and otherwise not commonly observed. Chronologically speaking, Sreenathan (1992) had initially reported this kind of compounds elaborately but has remained unpublished.

The data is taken from the technical terminology related Kathakali (Sreenathan 1992), a classical dance drama of Kerala. Terms are collected and they are divided according to the Indian dramaturgy and the cultural background of *Kathakali* as a performing art. Most of these terms come under the four major heads of:

- i. General (General terms contains terms related to Kathakali and Indian dramaturgy in general. Eg: *abhinayam*, *natyam* etc).
- ii. *Abhinayam* (acting) - Terms related to acting is further divided into: ii. A. *Āṅgikam* (physical acting), ii.B. *Āhāryam* (costume and makeup), ii.C. *Vāchikam* (verbal), ii. D. *Satvikam* (spiritual),
- iii. *Avataranam* (performance and presentation - This category contains terms generally related to performance, acting based performance, music in performance and ritualistic elements in performance) and
- iv. *Abhyāsam* (Training- terms related physical fitness used only in training).

There are four kinds of terms identified and they are simple terms (37.63% of the total 954 terms), two constituent compounds (50.63%), three constituent compounds (5.24%) and descriptive

compounds (6.5%). It is clear from the above that two constituent compounds are more productive. However, this discussion is confined to complex compounds consists of three constituent and more. Three constituent terms are more found in ii.B and ii.D and descriptive compounds are more in iv and ii.A.

1.2. Three constituent compounds

This is a complex compound category of having three constituents in a compound. Both lexically and structurally they are diverse. Compounding lexical unit of different languages following different word formation means is their apparent specialty.

1.2.1. In this category, major combinations are listed below.

1. Malayalam+Malayalam+Malayalam combinations(MMM)

eg: *kuttu kāl muṟukkal* = a dance movement (sequence occurring in the concluding part of dance using the forepart of the feet).

2. Sankrit+ Sankrit+ Sankrit combinations(SSS)

catur +vidha +abhinayam = the fourfold acting comprising of *āṅikam, āhāryam, vācīkam* and *sātvīkam*

3. Malayalam+ Malayalam+ Sankrit combinations(MMS)

mula + koral +hāram = armour like ornament worn by women characters

4. Sanskrit+Malayalam+Sanskrit combinations(SMM)

katha + kaḷi + mēḷam = orchestration of *Kathakaḷi*

5. Sankrit+ Sankrit+ Malayalam combinations(SSM)

strī +vēṣa +puṭava = the pleated white cloth worn below the waist by female characters

6. Sankrit+Malayalam+Malayalam combinations(SMS)

katha + kaḷi +kōppu = costumes and ornaments of *Kathakaḷi*

7. Malayalam+Sanskrit+Malayalam combinations(MSM)

karutta + Rīṣi + muṣi = cylindrical headgear

In this, MMM and SSS combinations are equally productive
Followed by SMS and MMS. Rests (SSM, SMM and MSM) are
marginal in existence.

1.2.2. Structurally, three constituent compounds are of the
following types.

1. N+N+N

eg: parutti kkā maṇi / paruttikkāmaṇi

Cotton plant fruit seed = ornament shaped like cotton seed

2. N+N+ nominal suffix- kāran

eg: iṭa ttara kkāran, / iṭattarakkāran

Space between type nominal suffix = secondary character

Ādya avasāna kkāran / Ādyavasānakkāran

beginning end nominal suffix = character from beginning to
end (role of protagonists)

3. N+VN+N

eg:katha kaḷi yōgam / kathakaḷiyōgam

story play group = a kathakali troupe

4. N+Vp+N

eg: vaṭṭam iṭṭu kalāśam / vaṭṭamiṭṭukalāśam

circle place dance at the end = circular dance performed at the end

5. NN+ N+N

eg: catur vidha ābhinayam / caturvidhābhinayam

four manner acting = four kinds of acting

- pāti puṛa ppāṭu, / pātipuṛappāṭu
 half back appearance = a dance composition
- nava rasa stāyi / navarasastāyi
 nine rasa permanent = nine dominant rasas
6. ADJ.N +N+DeverbalNominal (DVN)*
 eg: etir pārśva cuLippu, etirpārśvacuLippu
 opposite side flexion NOM = a special dance playing in opposite manner
7. PFX + N+N
 eg: up āṅa sādhakam / upāṅasādhakam
 sub part routine practice = routine practice of minor body parts above the neck
8. PFX+ADJ+N
 eg: anu vṛtta dṛṣṭi / anuvṛttadṛṣṭi
 with circular eye = looking up and down swiftly
9. Vp +ADV+DVN
 cuLiccu pinnōkkam cāṭal / cuLiccupinnōkkamcāṭal
 curl pp backwards jump NOM = One of the exercise
10. Vp +Rp +DVN
 valicc eṭukkuunna cuLippu / valicceṭukkuunnacuLippu
 pull pp take Rp.m curl NOM = kind of dance movement
- vecc iruttunna cuLippu
 place pp sit rp.m flexion = one kind of choreographic motif involving rotary movements of hands and trunk.

11. N+locative+DVN

eg: nilāv il irikkal

moon light LOC sit NOM = sitting in the moonlight- an
eye practice

ara il nīkkam / arayilnīkkam

hip LOC move NOM = a physical training

12. ADV+ Vp + DVN

piṅṅōkkam caviṭṭi cāṭal

backwards kick pp jump. NOM

13. Appellative Rp + N+N

pacca cuvappu vāl paccacuvappuvāl

green (character type) red tail (strip of cloth) = red cloth
used by pacca character type -krishna

14. Vp +N+VN

kuttu kāl muṇṇukkal / kuttukālmūṇṇukkal

fix pp leg tie NOM = a dance sequence

15. Vp +Rp+N

iḷaki yāṭṭa ślōkam

move p.m dance r.p.m hymn = the hymns using from outside
the performed text

16. Vp +DVN+ DVN

valicc eṭukkal cuLippu / valicceṭukkalcuLippu

pull pp take NOM flexion NOM = kind of dance movement

17. Adj.N + Vp +N

vattam ittu kalāśam / vattamittukalāśam
 circular put pp dance movement = circular dance
 movement performed at the end

18. N+ Dat.case+ VN

eg: pōr nu viji / pōrinuviji

war DAT calling = actors enactment of a padam (kathakli song) where the words are challenge to a duel

19. N+Dat.+ DVN

eg: gaṇapati kku koṭṭal / gaṇapatikkukoṭṭal

god ganesa DAT beat NOM = a percussion composition

20. N+Loc+ DVN

eg: ara il nīkkam arayilnīkkam

hip LOC move NOM = kind of body movement where moving the trunk forward in an arc while in basic position.

This part clearly attests the richness of three constituent compounding in Malayalam. It is a new addition to the observation made by Asher and Kumari (1997) which otherwise reported earlier (Sreenathan. 1992). Majority of the three constituent compounds (44 out of 50) are not represented in any of the lexicographical works of Malayalam (Sreenathan 1992).

1.3. Descriptive compounds

Terminologies related to physical fitness are terms used only in training and are peculiar to Kathakali and the martial arts of Kerala from which most of the systems are adopted into the training of Kathakali is taken as the data for this study. They are descriptive compounds, a kind of complex compound that describe the process and functioning as names of the exercise. The meaning

of the compound is derived not only from the combined lexical meanings of its components, but also from the meaning signaled by the pattern of the order and arrangement of the stems. The data used in this study is not representing a familiar domain; hence it is necessary to introduce some of it in the text.

eg: *kaivīsitiriññucāṭal* - An exercise in which the hands are moved in circles and the body swayed onto the left and right leg alternately. Along with the swaying the trainee should jump towards that side.

kaivīsittiriññumaṇiyal - Sitting on the front leg in an outstretched position, the hands are raised over the head and the body is stretched. Then the hands are moved in a circle downward and are lifted over the other side of the body moving the hip and turning the body simultaneously.

21. Noun + verbal participle + verbal participle + deverbal nominal (N+Vp +Vp +DVN)

eg: *kai vīsi tiriññu cāṭal / kaivīsitiriññucāṭal*

hand whirl- pp turn pp jump NOM = Name of an exercise - reverse jump with whirled hands

22. N+Vp+N+ DVN

eg: *ara nīkki mey vaḷakkal / aranīkkimeyvaḷakkal*

hip move-pp body bend NOM = Name of an exercise- the trunk is bent backwards by turning the hip sideways

23. VP+N+VP+ DVN

eg: *caviṭṭi kāl piṭiccu kuṭayal / caviṭṭikālpiṭiccukuṭayal*

kick pp leg hold- pp shake NOM = Name of an exercise-

(Standing with both the hands raised, lift the right leg with the help of the right palm, hold the big toe of the right foot with the right hand and throw the leg forward)

24. ADJ+N+ Loc+ DVN

eg: ceṟu maṭakk il nilkk al

small fold LOC stand NOM = a kind of improvisational acting

vaṭṭa kāl il nilkkal

circular leg LOC stand NOM = a basic posture in training and performance

25. Adj+N+N+N

eg: veḷutta stṛi vēṣa ppuṭava

white women character type dress = female character's white dress

26. Adj+N+VN+N

eg: valiya koṭṭāram kaḷi yōgam

big palace play club = a kathakali troupe

27. N+Vp +COORD+Vp +DVN+COORD

eg: Kāl maṭṭa vum tiriccu poṭṭikkalum

leg alteration COORD. return-pp crush NOM. COORD = Name of an exercise -involving intricate movements of legs, hands and body

28. Vp +Vp +Vp + DVN

eg: keṭṭi ccāṭi veccu caviṭṭal

tie pp . jump pp. place pp .kick -NOM = Name of an exercise

-from the basic posture the right foot is raised to the level of knee and turned upwards so that the sole is partly visible; it is then swung to the right in an arc and lowered with a leap. following this the left foot is moved along the ground, with a slant to the right. lastly the right leg with upturned foot is stamped in front of the left foot, the mudra is shown during the movement of the legs.

29. N+Acc.+Vp +N

tal ē kkeṭṭu vāl

head Acc tie. pp tail (piece of cloth)

30. N+DVN +COORD+Vp+Vp +Vp +Vp + DVN +COORD = a strip of cloth hanging on the back of the headgear

eg: ara iruttal um cuLiccu kutti ninnu cennu valiññu nivaral um

hip sit -NOM- COORD curl pp stand pp reach pp extend pp
straight NOM-COORD

Name of an exercise - Move the hips from one side to the other with clenched fists near the chest. then rotate the hands from right to left over the head and bring them down on the floor on both sides of the outstretched legs and move the body until it comes horizontally.

The descriptive compounds (sixty reported by Sreenathan, 1992) are not represented in any of the lexicographical works of Malayalam.

1.4. Discussion

The three constituent complex compounds and descriptive compounds detailed above clearly suggest that Malayalam follows diverse ways of generating complex compounds. The types described above are no doubt an addition to the existing understanding on complex compounds in Malayalam and

compound morphology of Malayalam. According to different ways of compounding, two types of compounds, those formed exclusively after a composition pattern and those derivational compounds formed by a simultaneous operation of two types of word-formation namely composition and derivation.

It is a well known fact that discussion of compounds addresses the question of lexical object or syntactic object. The lexicalist hypothesis (Chomsky 1970, Anderson 1988) claims that the syntactic rules apply to words regardless of their internal structure. But it is argued (Di Sciullo and Williams, 1978) that the compounds are characteristically different not in its syntactic rule oriented production but the failure of syntax to see its internal structure like in phrases or idioms. Syntactic rules can manipulate the elements inside phrases but they cannot manipulate the elements inside words. In this respect, compounds differ from idioms. Based on such inferences, a significant question to be addressed is that whether descriptive compounds should be treated as phrases or compounds. In this compound, formative constituents in total provide a unique meaning. A mere change in the order of stems with the same lexical meanings brings about a radical change in the lexical meaning of the compound word. Nevertheless, nominalization seen in this study supports the earlier premises. In the derivation of these compounds, two processes are involved; composition and derivation. On account of this one can call them as derivational compounds. These nouns are names of actions. But their appearance as subjects in a sentence can only be argued but in practice, such contextualization doesn't arise. Thus marking for case in fixing their abstractness or finding transformation from a verbal unit cannot be found viable. No doubt, it reflects abstract level of nominalization. This action nouns express more nouniness than verbiness (Ross 1972). The process of derivation of such nouns is not found regular too. In this context, treating them as separate compounds and placing them in the theoretical discussion

would be productive than framing them into the existing discussion of compounding by delineating its phrase structural rules. However, type 27 and 30 are different from the rest being coordinated constructions with -um- coordinating marker. This type is more of a syntactic nature than of lexical compounds. But these multi compound combinations too reflect the nominalization characterization of a combined exercise.

We cannot define some compounds in which they possess deverbal head as verbal compound (Selkirk 1982). It is found that non verbal head cannot be fixed as an argument of the deverbal head in this data. These are nominalised endocentric compounds. The compounds *Ādyavasānakkāran* and *iṭattarakkāran* suggests an exocentric pattern. Exocentric construction does not have a centre or head, so that neither of the constituents can be considered as the expansion of others. The construction forms a unity, i.e. syntactically related to the defining environment as an undivided whole. Looking at the position of head noun in compounds the general pattern in Malayalam is that the modifiers precede the head noun (Asher and Kumari 1997). Headness of complex compounds prove that except the above two are endocentric- headed- compounds and head appear in the right side and can be a Noun, or Deverbal Noun or verbal noun. Adjectival/Adverbial/relative participle and verbal participle always precede the head -noun or deverbal noun. Deverbal heads are found frequent, which justify the action nominalization of these compounds.

1.5. Conclusion

The present study could contribute many additional evidences for complex compounds in Malayalam. In addition, it could introduce a new set of derivational compounds - descriptive compounds. This study exposes the complex compounds from the functional point of view (Functionally compounds are viewed as words belonging to grammatical category made the compounds)

and the means by which the components are joined together which in turn enriches the compound morphology of Malayalam.

* Deverbal nominal compounds in Malayalam are accounted as verbal nouns by both traditional and modern scholars (Gundert 1851/1868, śeṣagiri prabhu 1904, Rarajavarma 1895, 1917, Prabodhachandran Nayar (1972), Sreenathan 1992, Asher and Kumari 1997) have contributed in the same manner. This study showed such verbal nouns as deverbal nominals in Malayalam. It is done by accommodating the derivational status from verb roots under the notion of degree of 'nouniness' and verbiness introduced by Ross (1972). However deverbal nominal derivations of Malayalam needs to be separately undertaken.

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