

The Evolution of Prosodic Morphology: Vedic long reduplicated perfects

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A number of synchronic studies of prosodic morphology have analyzed the rich array of reduplication patterns in Sanskrit. The present study focuses on the history of one of these, the Vedic perfects with a long reduplication vowel, such as *vāvrđúr* (RV 2,20,4). These formations are the subject of a monograph-length study by Krisch (1996). The present study adopts the view represented there, that laryngeal loss in the syllable rhyme and concomitant compensatory lengthening is responsible for the vowel length in the reduplicant, e.g., late PIE $*h_1ge-h_1gor-e$ > Skt. *jā-gār-a* (RV 5,44,14) (cf. Gk. ἐγροήγορα).

My proposal differs, however, in that I assume that the “Saussure Effect”¹ operated to delete laryngeals in the context $\backslash + _$ Ro.² A reconstruction that takes the “Saussure Effect” into account offers an improvement over previous analyses on several counts. First, it captures the asymmetry between perfects formed to (synchronic) stop- and sonorant-initial roots, since the root-initial laryngeal was only deleted in o-grade contexts of HR-initial roots.

HT-initial, R(o): $*h_1ge-h_1gór-e$ > *jā-gār-a*

HT-initial, R(e/z): $*h_1ge-h_1gr-d^hí$ > *jā-gr-dhí*

HR-initial, R(o): $**h_1we-h_1wóld^h-e$ > $*h_1we-wóld^h-e$ > *va-várdh-a*

HR-initial, R(e/z): $*h_1we-h_1wld^h-ís$ > *vā-vrđh-úr*

Vedic perfects that derive from HR-initial roots and reflect an old R(o) have a short vowel in the reduplicant by sound law: *vavárdha* (5,2,2), *yuyódha* (6,25,5). Furthermore, the “Saussure Effect” produces inner-paradigmatic alternation of long and short reduplicants (*vavárdha*, *vāvrđhúr*), and in doing so, sets the stage for the later prosodic conditioning of long reduplication, which is accomplished by

¹cf. esp. Nussbaum (1997) with references.

²The + symbol here refers to the morphological boundary between reduplicant and stem. Details about the precise formulation of the “Saussure Effect” are addressed in the full version of the study.

a simpler type of analogical change. This, in turn, allows us to better understand the mechanics of the development of prosodic morphology.

References

Krisch, T. (1996). *Zur Genese und Funktion der altindischen Perfekta langem Reduplikationsvokal*. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft.

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