

Metrical Exigencies and Taddhitas in the Mahābhārata: A Formulaic Approach

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The study of the epic from a formulaic-language point of view has been productive to gain significant insights into the areas like style, diction and metric analyses of the Mahābhārata. Taddhitas form an interesting area in the whole of the formulaic study of the epic, because of their bi-, tri-, and quadra-syllabic nature, which comes through to satisfy the metrical exigencies and thus dominate the diction of the epic.

In this formal and structural study of the taddhitas in the Mahābhārata, we aim to study:

- Which types of taddhitas are dominant in the diction of the Mahābhārata: The study reveals that, apatyavācaka and janapadaṣatriya taddhitas dominate the taddhita diction in the Mahābhārata.
- How these have been distributed throughout the text of the Mahābhārata: Here, it has been studied how certain taddhitas are specific to certain chapters of the epic and how within the metrical structure they are positioned. We hypothesize that a narrative or theme governs the diction, and taddhitas come through to cope up with the arising metrical exigencies and further gain a formulaic status when they get a consistent cadential position.
- Relative frequency, recurrence and special occurrences of certain taddhita forms: Here, some statistical data about the relative frequency of some metrically significant taddhita-forms have been provided. Their recurrence, special role and pertinence with respect to the narrative, meter, style and diction have also been discussed.
- Some miscellaneous observations on the taddhita-forms in the Mahābhārata.

Several studies like Bhate (1989), Dev (2007) and Joshi & Roodbergen (1991) are available pertaining to taddhitas. This study is remarkably different from them as this is not a grammatical and Pāṇinian study of the taddhitas. The nature and role of taddhitas in the diction of the Mahābhārata is studied here, from a formulaic-language approach. Here, we study the very form and structure of the taddhitas, as how they come through to remediate the metrical exigencies in the epic.