



Word Structure in Gond

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I. Introduction

In terms of numerical strength Gonds are a very dominant tribe of central India. Their habitation includes five different states, namely, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Odisha and Telangana. The Gond population according 2011 census in these states is as follows: (i) Andhra Pradesh - 1,44,259 (Now Telangana) (ii) Chhatisgarh - 8,06,254; (iii) Madhya Pradesh - 6,75,011; (iv) Maharashtra - 4,41,203 and (v) Odisha - 51,948. The total Gond population is 21,24,852. Out of the total population of India 0.25% is the Gond population. 8,99,567 Gonds are bilinguals knowing two languages (42.34%) and 1,34,156 Gonds are trilinguals knowing three languages (6.31%).

As they are spread in a vast area, they have heterogeneously stratified society. They exhibit a cultural variation which is from most primitive to the advanced states. The northern region of Gond habitat shows varying degrees of acculturation whereas the southern region is comparatively less exposed to the external influences. The Gond society consists elements of both the southern and northern social system including kinship norms.

II. Derivational Word Structure of Gond

The derivational word structure depends on the abstract system of definitions such as:

- (a) The word form is a root plus one or more inflectional affixes,
- (i) A root
- (ii) A root plus a derivational affix
- (iii) A root plus another root
- (iv) A word plus a derivational affix
- (v) A word plus another word.

According to Motsch (1988) if I assume that inflectional affixes, derivational affixes and roots are separate categories of word structure, then inflectional morphology, derivational morphology, and compounding may be considered as different branches of morphology, dealing respectively with three separate types of systematic relations between words and inflectional affixes, between bases and derivational affixes, and between words within a word. But there are several problems with this distinction. Lieber (1980) argues that both inflectional word structure and derivational word structure require the same sort of formal processes.

The literature available on morphology makes it clear that from a grammatical point of view derivatives are considered to be the products of rules. A word structure rule tells that the set of words on which it can operate. This set is known as the “base” of that rule. Every word structure rule gives, furthermore, a unique phonological operation performed on the base, which usually consists of the attachment of an affix. A word structure rule, therefore, is a mechanism, which takes a base as its input and gives an output. The rule has to account for all the differences between input and output. The status of word structure rule is somewhat different from the status of other rules of the grammar in the sense that they can be considered ‘once only the rules’. This means speakers do not apply a word structure rule every time they use a complex word; instead once a new complex word is found it is stored in the lexicon. In Aronoff’s (1976) terms word structure rules have two functions: they not only account for ‘new’ words but they also account for the internal structure of already existing words. From this it is evident that word structure rules are structure building rules. This means that at every step they add structure.

The formal description of derivational processes has to give the following sorts of information:

- (i) Phonological form of the affix
- (ii) Syntactic category and sub-category frame of the derivative
- (iii) Restrictions defining the class of bases available to the affix
- (iv) Diacritical features of the derivative
- (v) Semantic form of the derivative.

As (ii) and (v) show significant relations to the same sort of information in the representation of the corresponding bases it is necessary to analyse in detail the systematic aspects of argument inheritance or the re-building of argument structures in derived words, as well as types of semantic amalgamation. The traditional linguistic approaches to derivational words postulated a separate component dealing with word structure.

An attempt is made in this paper to study the word formation through derivational process in Gond. In Gond, new words are formed by adding the derivational suffixes to nouns, adjectives, or verbs. The paper tries to describe the derivational processes and the productivity within the framework of Aronoff (1976:37).

Aronoff (1976) proposes “to reduce the issue of productivity to that of compositionality. Any word where properties can be exhaustively predicted from the properties of existing words together with the set of word

formation rules is implicitly possible, on this view and its existence need not be further stipulated. In so far as the word formation rule is systematically incomplete, though, or the word has some idiosyncrasy of form, meaning, or syntax, it must be explicitly given in the lexicon. The mere idiosyncrasy of a given formation is, the less information can be extracted in the formulation of a rule for it, and hence the less productive it will be ..." (Quoted in Anderson 1992). With this background in view, I propose to look at certain aspects of word structure in Gondi. The following are the derivational suffixes in Gondi:

III. Nominals Derived from Verbs

$x] - mār]_n$

(Lexical item *mār* is preceded *x* which represents several items of that category in their combination they provide intended)

Gerundival nominals are formed through a process of word structure rule. The rule applies to almost all verbs without any exception. This is the most productive process of word structure rule in Gondi. The gerunds so formed indicate the meaning of action indicated by the verb stem.

Verb	Meaning	suffix	gerund	meaning
<i>aṭṭ</i>	'to cook'	<i>-mār</i>	→ <i>aṭṭ mār</i>	'cooking'
<i>sēy</i>	'to sweep'	<i>-mār</i>	→ <i>sēymār</i>	'sweeping'
<i>nēsk</i>	'to breath'	<i>-mār</i>	→ <i>nēskmār</i>	'breathing'
<i>ūṇ</i>	'to swing'	<i>-mār</i>	→ <i>ūṇ mār</i>	'swinging'
<i>kars</i>	'to play'	<i>-mār</i>	→ <i>karsmār</i>	'playing'

$x]_{V(t)} - vāl$

Another very productive process of word structure rule is that of affixing *-vāl* to a transitive verb. The $X]_{V(t)}$ has the shape of (C)VCC type. The nominal so derived has not only the meaning denoting the action of the verb stem but also the one performing the action.

Verb	meaning	suffix	gerund	meaning
<i>vār</i>	'to sing'	<i>-vāl</i>	→ <i>vārvāl</i>	'singer (one who sings)'
<i>tīn</i>	'to eat'	<i>-vāl</i>	→ <i>tīnvāl</i>	'eater (one who eats)'
<i>ēnd</i>	'to dance'	<i>-vāl</i>	→ <i>ēndvāl</i>	'dancer (one who dances)'
<i>un</i>	'to drink'	<i>-vāl</i>	→ <i>unvāl</i>	'drinker (one who drinks)'
<i>aṭṭ</i>	'to cook'	<i>-vāl</i>	→ <i>aṭṭ vāl</i>	'cook (one who cooks)'

$X]_{V(t)} - nāl$

This word structure rule is constrained by certain constituent structure conditioning rule in that the nominalising suffix (*-nāl*) is added to the verb to form the gerund provided this suffix is further followed by the postposition (*-vēri*).

Verb	meaning	Nominaliser	Post position	meaning
<i>so</i>	'to go'	<i>-nāl</i>	<i>vēri</i> → <i>sonnāl vēri</i>	'until (one) goes'
<i>vā</i>	'to come'	<i>-nāl</i>	<i>vēri</i> → <i>vānāl vēri</i>	'until (one) comes'
<i>veh</i>	'to tell'	<i>-nāl</i>	<i>vēri</i> → <i>vehnāl vēri</i>	'until (one) tells'

Nominal Derived from Adjective

$X]_{Adj} - yāl]_n X]$

The endings in [-i] are de-adjectivalised by the *-yāl* rule whereas the other take the *-āl*.

Adjective	meaning	Suffix	Noun	meaning
<i>kamka</i>	'yellow'	<i>-āl</i>	→ <i>kamkāl</i>	'yellowness'
<i>dhāvra</i>	'white'	<i>-āl</i>	→ <i>dhāvrāl</i>	'whiteness'
<i>kāri</i>	'black'	<i>-āl</i>	→ <i>kāryāl</i>	'blackness'

Adjectives Derived from Nouns

$X]_N - mēn]_{Adj}$

This rule acts as a denominaliser and forms adjectives. These are quantifiers. There are more than twenty such adjectives derived from nouns.

Noun	meaning	Suffix	Adjective	meaning
<i>burri</i>	'pot'	<i>-mēn</i>	→ <i>burrimēn</i>	'potful' (Te.kunḍeḍu)
<i>koṛo</i>	'manika'	<i>-mēn</i>	→ <i>koṛomēn</i>	'measure of volume equal to four'

	(a measure)			<i>mānikās</i> full'
<i>kūṭa</i>	'eight inches'	<i>-mēn</i>	→	<i>kūṭamēn</i> 'a measure of eight inches full'
<i>passa</i>	'palm'	<i>-mēn</i>	→	<i>passamēn</i> 'palmfull'

IV. Compounds

Nominal compounds are quite common in Gondi than the words formed through Derivation. Most of the compounds so structured are endocentric type. Some of the compound words structured through the derivation are listed below.

Attributive Compounds

1. "A" is a descriptive adjective and "B" is a noun (head)

<i>raggāl tōḍi</i>	'red soil'
<i>tikkāl yēr</i>	'white water(lit)' '(clean water)'
<i>cuḍḍur kāṇḍi</i>	'small boy'
<i>kank rājin</i>	'bamboo sticks'
2. "B" is made up of "A"

<i>tōḍita buḍḍi</i>	'clay pot'
<i>sōnetān gājulin</i>	'gold bangles'
3. "A" is the cause and "B" is the result

<i>rūsita punḍu</i>	'wound formed due to cutting with a knife'
knife wound (lit)	
4. "B" refers to some specific item of class "A" (common) such as flora and fauna

<i>marka paṇḍi</i>	'mango fruit'
<i>surjo pungār</i>	'sunflower'
<i>jāṭa ḍāri</i>	'a kind of pulses'

Copulative Compounds (dvandva samāsa)

<i>novrā novrī</i>	'bridegroom and bride'
<i>dādāl tammūr</i>	'elder brother and younger brother'

V. Conclusion

The present study I tried to bring out the important word structure rules in major Dravidian tribal language Gondi. There are variations within Gondi itself. Therefore the Gondi language needs further investigation and an in-depth study.

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