

The totalizing function of the Vedic particle *cid*

The interpretation of particles is often exceedingly difficult, especially in extinct languages (cf. Goldstein 2019:269–271). These problems become even more grave in an attempt to reconstruct the functions of a certain particle in Proto-Indo-European.

The enclitic particle $*=k^h id$ can be safely reconstructed for Proto-Indo-European. Its most productive reflexes are attested in Indo-Iranian but other Indo-European branches exhibit reflexes as well (cf. Dunkel 2014:448–451). In order to reconstruct not only the form but also the functions of this particle properly, thorough synchronic examinations of its reflexes in the oldest stages of the languages in which it is reflected are necessary, in particular those in which it is used productively.

This paper is concerned with a detailed analysis of one reflex, namely the particle *cid* in the Rigveda, the oldest Indo-Iranian text. It is attested there 691 times. In the Rigveda, *cid* can fulfill a number of functions, among others that of an additive focus particle ‘even, also’ (e.g. Grassmann 1873:454f., Lühr 2017:283–285). This paper will concentrate on one function of this particle which until now has not received proper treatment in the literature, namely its totalizing function.

It is a well-known fact that the particle *cid* is cliticized to interrogative proforms in order to form indefinites, e.g. *kás cid* ‘some, any, every’. However, some scholars assume that also *cid* alone possesses such a function (e.g. Gonda 1954–1955:281). Thus, *cid* itself has also been translated as ‘all’ (e.g. Grassmann 1873:455). I will argue that although such a translation of *cid* is adequate in certain contexts such occurrences are to be differentiated from those of the particle in indefinite proforms. For even though indefinites formed by interrogatives and additive particles like *cid* are typologically widespread, additives themselves usually do not function as indefinites or universal quantifiers (König 2017:40; Ying 2017:218–226). I assume that instead of being a quantifier *cid* possesses a function which according to Forker (2016:84–86) is also attested for additive particles in other languages and may be called ‘totalizing’. This means that it emphasizes that all elements of a set are referred to, but I will argue that in spite of the resemblance to universal quantification, *cid* is not a genuine quantifier. I will show that this function can be identified after numerals, universal quantifiers, demonstratives, the pronominal adjective *anyá-* ‘other’ and possibly after multiplicative adverbs.

I will also discuss another context where I assume this function of *cid*, namely after *purá* ‘before, of old’. When *purá* occurs with a verb in the perfect or present it expresses a norm or habit in the past (Mumm 2004:55–61). There, I consider it to emphasize that the event or state denoted by the predicate is true for the entire time span that is loosely defined by *purá*. In this case, *cid* can be translated as ‘always’ but again, unlike the English adverb, it does not quantify over a set of time points because the habituality is already expressed without the particle.

The results of the synchronic investigation of Vedic *cid* have consequences for the reconstructed semantics of Proto-Indo-European $*=k^h id$. Dunkel (2014:451) assigns it an additive and a generalizing function. However, both the Vedic and typological data suggest that the generalizing function is not part of the semantics of the particle itself but that it only occurs in combination with interrogative proforms. In order to corroborate this assumption and to determine whether $*=k^h id$ also possesses a totalizing function further synchronic analyses of its reflexes are necessary.

References

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