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Sanskrit Grammarians and the 'Speaking Subjectivity'

Emilie Aussant

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Specimen

Inhalt / Contents / Sommaire

Aufsätze / Articles

- Émilie Aussant:
Sanskrit grammarians and the ‘speaking subjectivity’ 1
- Raf Van Rooyt:
“Πόθεν οὖν ἡ τοσαύτη διαφωνία;” — Greek patristic authors
discussing linguistic origin, diversity, change and kinship 21
- Gonçalo Fernandes:
Vernacular and language teaching in the Portuguese Middle Ages.
The ms. Digby 26 and the *Reglas pera enformarmos os menyos en latim* 55
- Mercedes Quilis Merín:
Observaciones sobre pronunciación en el *Tesoro de la lengua castellana
o española* (1611) de Sebastián de Covarrubias 71
- Rolf Kemmler:
The *Grammatica Anglo-Lusitanica* (London, 1701), a translation
of Bento Pereira’s *Ars grammaticæ pro lingua Lusitana addiscenda
Latino idiomate* (Lyon, 1672)? 87
- Esther Hernández:
Remarks on 17th-century bilingual dictionaries of Spanish
and indigenous languages of America 103
- Pierre Swiggers:
Une figure de grammairien : Léon Clédat (1851–1930) 121
- Klaas-Hinrich Ehlers:
Kongress am Kriegsbeginn. Archivalische Hintergründe zum fünften
Internationalen Linguistenkongress, der 1939 in Brüssel offiziell nicht
stattgefunden hat 141
- Kurzrezensionen / Short Reviews / Notes de lecture 165

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Émilie Aussant

Sanskrit grammarians and the ‘speaking subjectivity’¹

1. Introduction

The present study bears on the *speaking subjectivity*,² an expression which denotes, in Western Human Sciences, various notions (the physical producer of the utterance, the subject who is in charge of the act of speech, the source of the point of view expressed in the utterance, the reference point of deictics, the native speaker, the speech community, etc.). It is a fundamental question for several trends in Western Linguistics which, within the field of technical Sanskrit literature on language — grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), exegesis (*mīmāṃsā*) and dialectic (*nyāya*) — has been selectively treated by Indologists (to my knowledge, only the notion of *vivakṣā* “intention to speak” was studied in depth).³

My approach can be described as follows. *Vyākaraṇa*, the ancient Sanskrit grammatical tradition, is traditionally described as one of the six Vedic auxiliary sciences (*vedāṅga*) which were developed in ancient Brahmanical India to preserve the sacred texts of the Veda⁴ and to guarantee the correctness of the

1) This is the publication of two lectures given on the occasion of the 12th *International Conference on the History of Language Sciences (ICHoLS)*, held in 2011 in St. Petersburg for the first and on the occasion of the 7^e *Journée Monde Indien*, held in 2012 in Paris for the second.

2) I borrow the expression from Charaudeau and Maingueneau (2002: 224).

3) See §3, 2 for references. Jamison’s study *The Rig Veda between two worlds* provides valuable information on the speaking subjectivity’s manifestations within Rigvedic hymns, even if it is more a study devoted to poetic and linguistic facts than to the native analysis of these very facts.

4) Such is the original aim of Phonetics (*śikṣā*), Metrics (*chandas*), Etymology (*nirukta*) and Grammar (*vyākaraṇa*). Despite of its Vedic auxiliary status, Grammar broke free from the religious sphere; it quickly developed in an autonomous way, focusing on language and not only (or preferably) on the Vedic texts.

ritual practices.⁵ It is therefore intended first for members of the priestly (and elite) class, the brahmins.⁶ In such a framework, where the reflection on language is originally and inextricably linked to the oral transmission of sacred texts, is there any space, in Vyākaraṇic texts, for the users of the language or, broadly speaking, for the speaking subjectivity? If so, what kind of space? This paper is a tentative answer to these questions: starting from the grammatical terminology, I give a panorama of the speaking subjectivity manifestations according to Sanskrit grammatical texts, from the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini to the *Paramalaghumañjūṣā* of Nāgeśa.⁷

2. The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini

Pāṇini's grammar — the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (A), 5th cent. B.C. — describes an early Indo-Aryan linguistic variety which is located at a transitional period between — what Western scholars call — late Vedic Sanskrit and classical Sanskrit. This grammatical treatise, which is made up of nearly four thousand statements called *sūtra*, describes Sanskrit by means of a derivational system: correct sentences “are derived from posited abstract utterances which Pāṇini arrives at by letting affixes (*pratyaya*) be introduced to bases under meaning conditions and co-occurrence conditions” (Cardona 1997: 1). This derivational procedure, which goes from the more to the less general, is like a sequence of algorithmic instructions; but it is a non-deterministic algorithm, that is to say, it implies choices.⁸ And it is there, at the very level of these choices, that the speaker's subjectivity makes its entrance onto the grammatical stage.

The choices of the speaking subject — embodied in the grammar user — take place at various stages: before, during and after the derivation. Before the derivation are the lexical options. To denote rice, for example, the speaker/grammar user may choose the word *odana*, *taṇḍula*, *pāyasa* or *peyā*. This kind of option is not mentioned in Pāṇini's grammar; the choice is supposed to have been made before the beginning of the derivation. During the derivation, there are syntactico-semantic options such as choosing between a nominal or a ver-

⁵ Such is the aim of Astronomy (*jyotiṣa*) and Ritual (*kalpa*).

⁶ Members of the three highest classes are theoretically allowed to perform a sacrifice (and then to pronounce some Vedic verses). Therefore, they are also likely to be concerned by the grammatical knowledge.

⁷ The list of Indian authors and Sanskrit texts mentioned in the paper is given in a table after the conclusion.

⁸ Some consider that this is only one of the two ways of using the A. According to them, the A was probably used not only as a generative procedure of linguistic data (a top-down grammatical model), but also as an analytical procedure of already produced linguistic data (a bottom-up grammatical model). This issue, regardless its importance for the history of linguistic thought in Ancient India, is beyond my scope here.

bal sentence, choosing — in the case of a verbal sentence — between the active or the passive voice,⁹ choosing semantic roles (agent, patient, instrument, recipient),¹⁰ choosing the person, number and time for a verb, choosing the number and gender for a noun, etc. This kind of option is simply enabled by the system. Take for example the following case: a man is cooking rice. To describe the situation, the A enables different sentences to be made, among which an active verbal sentence: *sa odanaṃ pacati* “he cooks rice” and a nominal sentence: *sa odanasya paktā* “he is [the] rice cooker”. According to Pāṇini, the syntactic and semantic relation is the same in both sentences; the structural differences are only due to the speaker/grammar user's choices. The starting point, in both cases, is the verbal root *pac-* “to cook”; if the speaker/grammar user wants to focus on the agent, he will start the derivation of the sentence *sa odanasya paktā* by applying the *sūtra* A 3.4.67 *kartari kṛt* // “[The] *kṛt* [suffix is added to the verbal root < A 3.1.91] to denote the agent” to the root *pac-*; if he wants to use a verbal sentence, he will apply a succession of *sūtras* (A 3.4.69, A 3.4.77–78, A 3.2.123 and A 1.3.14 or A 1.3.78) to the said root, which will enable him to select the desired affixes of person, time, and so on. In such cases, the option is only indicated by the applicability of the rules to the same form. Choices occurring after the derivation can be described as follows: when a word has been derived according to one method, another form of the word — derived by a different method — may be introduced as an alternative. In such cases the optional characteristic is described with great care. It is most frequently indicated by the use of the disjunctive particles *vā*, *vibhāṣā* and *anyatarasyām*,¹¹ as one can observe in the following examples:

— A 2.3.71 *kṛtyānām kartari vā* // “[The genitive ending < A 2.3.50 is] optionally [used] to denote the agent of the gerundive” → *bhavataḥ kaṭaḥ kartavyaḥ* “you have to make a mat” (the other possibility is to use the instrumental (cf. A 2.3.18) → *bhavatā kaṭaḥ kartavyaḥ*);

— A 3.1.120 *vibhāṣā kṛ-vṛṣoḥ* // “[The gerundive suffix *kyap*¹² < A 3.1.106 is] optionally [used] after *kṛ-* “to do” and *vṛṣ-* “to rain” → *kṛtya* “to be done”, *vṛṣya* “to be rained upon” (the other possibility is to use the gerundive suffix *ṇyat* (cf. A 3.1.124) → *kārya*, *varṣya*);

⁹ For the roots accepting both.

¹⁰ For example, if the speaker/grammar user wants to describe a situation where a man is cutting a tree with an axe, he has to choose between the presentation of the axe as the agent (use of the nominative case) or as the instrument (use of the instrumental case). See Cardona (1974, 1975) and Scharf (2002).

¹¹ According to Paul Kiparsky (1979: 1), *vā* means “or rather, usually, preferably”, *vibhāṣā* means “or rather not, rarely, preferably not, marginally” and *anyatarasyām* means “either way, sometimes, optionally, alternatively”. Other terms used to denote (non-conditioned) options are *ubhayathā*, *pariyāyeṇa*, *bahulam*, *vibhāṣita*. They are not frequently used (cf. Kiparsky 1979: 205–208).

¹² Bold letters are metalinguistic markers (*anubandha*).

— A 3.1.122 *amāvasyad anyatarasyām* // “[The irregular form] *amāvasyat* [is] optionally [used]” → *amāvasyā* “new-moon day” (the other possibility is to use the regular form *amāvāsya* (cf. A 3.1.124)).

Another way to indicate a post-derivation option is by the use of names referring to a place, indicating that the alternative form is geographically conditioned, as in A 6.3.32 *mātara-pitarāv udicām* // “[The compound] *mātara-pitarau* “mother and father” [is used] among the northerners” (for non-northerner speakers the compound is *mātā-pitarau*), or of ethnonyms as in A 4.2.76 *strīṣu sauvīra-sālva-prākṣu* // “[The suffix *añ* is used to designate place names < A 4.2.71] in the feminine gender, [the place being in the region] of the Sauvīras, of the Sālvas or in the eastern region” (obtained forms: *Dāttāmitrī* for the Sauvīras, *Vaidhūmāgnī* for the Sālvas, *Kākandī* in the East; the use of the suffix *añ*, in these linguistic communities, causes the acute accentuation on the first syllable; in other communities, another suffix is used which bears the accent). In such a case, the alternative is introduced as culturally conditioned. The use of names of grammarians or scholars¹³ also indicates post-derivation options, as in A 6.1.127 *ikaḥ asavarṇe śākalyasya hrasvaś ca* // “According to Śākalya, [the vowels] *i, u, r, l*, [keep their original form] before a non-homogeneous [vowel] and, [if the original is long] the short is substituted to it” (*dadhi + atra = dadhi atra*; according to A 6.1.77 *iko yañ aci* //, *dadhi + atra = dadhy atra*).

Some words are also introduced in the A as resulting from a choice made by the speech community, in other words, a conventional choice. In this case, I use the word *choice* in the sense of “tacit agreement”. This “conventional choice” label is used, in the A, for introducing linguistic forms which possess a specific meaning and which are lexicalized (Kiparsky 1979: 124) — whether they are derivable or not —.¹⁴ For example, the *sūtra* A 4.3.27 *saṃjñāyām śarado vuñ* “*vuñ* (i.e. the suffix *-aka*) [is used] after *śarat* “autumn” [to signify “born at that time” < A 4.3.25, the obtained form] being a proper name” introduces the form *śaradaka* which literally means “born in Autumn” and which denotes a kind of plant; *śaradaka* has a place in the A only because it possesses a specific meaning, otherwise it would have been rejected, the regular form being *śarada*. The term *saṃjñā*, which literally means “agreement, common knowledge”, is the main indicator of such conventions (or opaque terms).¹⁵

¹³ These names are: Āpiśali (A 6.1.92), Bhāradjāva (A 7.2.63), Cākravarmaṇa (A 6.1.130), Gālava (A 6.3.61, A 7.1.74, A 7.3.99, A 8.4.67), Gārgya (A 7.3.99, A 8.4.67), Kāśyapa (A 8.4.67), Śākalya (A 1.1.16, A 6.1.127, A 8.3.19, A 8.4.51), Senaka (A 5.4.112) and Sphoṭāyana (A 6.1.123). Note that the term *ācārya* “teacher” is also used twice (A 7.3.49, A 8.4.52).

¹⁴ That is: technical terms, proper names, terms whose denotation bears any relation to the etymological meaning, terms extracted from a particular context.

¹⁵ One remark on the use of the term *ācikyāsāyām* “when there is desire to express” used in A

To sum up briefly: the speaking subject — embodied in the grammar user — is constantly implied within the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, but is neither expressed nor named. The existence of choices — whether they are indicated or not — is his only manifestation. The speaking subject appears as someone freely choosing such and such a lexical item, such and such a syntactic structure — either in the stock of his linguistic aptitudes or in the glossaries and the grammar —, the only constraint apparently being what he wants to say. One will also note that the linguistic levels subject to the speaker’s choices are phonetics (*sandhi*), prosody, verbal and nominal morphology (declensions, derivatives, compounds, gender) and syntactic-semantics.

3. The *Vārttikas* of Kātyāyana and the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali

The earliest extensive discussion of Pāṇini’s rules which has come down to us is contained in the *Vārttikas* (V) of Kātyāyana (3rd cent. B.C.), which themselves are known only as quoted and commented on in Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya* (M, 2nd cent. B.C.). Kātyāyana and Patañjali discuss the validity of various rules, their formulation and their relation to other rules. Discussing the Pāṇinian *sūtras* is the occasion, for both grammarians, to develop some thoughts about different language facts. Human manifestations in language are one of them. One can distinguish between not less than five categories of terms denoting these:

- 1) The category which was made, in the A, of numerous terms referring to different kinds of variability, is now reduced to the particle *vā* “or” only, which indicates option in a very general way.
- 2) A second category is made up of terms denoting the speaker’s intention, either derived from a word signifying “wish” or from a desiderative form of a root.¹⁶ One finds in this category:

2.4.21 *upajñā-upakramaṃ tad-ādy-ācikyāsāyām* // “[A determinative compound < A 2.4.19] ending in *upajñā* “invention” or *upakrama* “initiative” [is neuter in gender < A 2.4.17] when there is desire to express the beginning [of the said invention or initiative]”. The *Kāśikāvṛtti* (KV) paraphrases *ācikyāsāyām* saying *ākhyātam icchā* “the desire (*icchā*) to express (*ākhyātam*)”. In my opinion, the information given by *ācikyāsāyām* can be compared to several others which are described by Indian commentators as meaning conditions and which are indicated, in the Pāṇinian *sūtras*, either by the locative case, as in A 3.2.49 *āśiṣi hanaḥ* // “[The suffix *ḥa* < A 3.2.48, when co-occurring with a nominal stem functioning as its object < A 3.2.1 is used] after *han-* “to kill” to denote benediction”, or by the accusative case, as in A 3.1.102 *vahyaṃ karaṇam* // “[The irregular form] *vahyaṃ* [is used to denote] an instrument”, or by the word *arthe*, as in A 2.1.9 *sup pratīnā mātṛā-arthe* // “An inflected [word combined] with *pratī* [forms an indeclinable compound < A 2.1.6] to denote a small quantity”. According to this view, *tad-ādy-ācikyāsāyām* simply amounts to “to denote the beginning [of the said invention or initiative]”.

¹⁶ One also finds the use of *abhiprāya* “intention”, see for example M on V 15 on A 3.1.26

– the adverb *yatheṣṭam*, (i.e. *yathā-iṣṭam*, *iṣṭam* is derived from the root *iṣ-* “to wish, to desire”), as well as its synonym *kāmam* (derived from the root *kām-* “to desire, to love”)¹⁷ which means “according to one’s wish, at will”.¹⁸ The term is used in relation to free word order, as in the following passage:¹⁹

sub-alopo vyavadhānam yatheṣṭam anyatareṇa abhisambandhah svarah iti // [...] yatheṣṭam anyatareṇa abhisambandho bhavati vākye / rājñah puruṣaḥ puruṣo rājña iti / samāse na bhavati / rāja-puruṣa iti // (M on V 1 on A 2.1.1, vol. I, 362)

Non-disappearance of case-ending, intervention [by another word], connection of [one word] with another according to one’s wish, accent (these are the characteristic features of words in a non-compound word-group). [...] The connection of [one word] with another according to one’s wish occurs in a sentence (i.e. a non-compound word-group). [Example:] *rājñah puruṣaḥ* (“king’s man”), *puruṣo rājñah* (“man of a king”). In a compound, it does not occur. [Example:] *rāja-puruṣaḥ* (“king-man”).²⁰

Kaiyaṭa, in his commentary on the *Mahābhāṣya* (*Pradīpa* – P – 11th cent.) adds:

yatheṣṭam iti / vākye aniyata-paurvāparyeṇa padānām prayogaḥ samāse tu niyata-paurvāparyah / sa ca artha-abhedā-nibandhanah / yathā karka iti prayoktavye rkaka iti na prayujyate / (P on M on V 1 on A 2.1.1, vol. III, 19)

yatheṣṭam — In a sentence (i.e. a non-compound word-group), words are used without a determinate order, but in a compound, order is determinate. This comes from [the fact that a compound has] a single meaning. Just as, when one should use the *k-a-r-k-a* [sequence, which means “white”], one does not use the *r-k-a-k-a* [sequence, which is meaningless].

Another occurrence of the term *yatheṣṭam* (V 2 and M on A 1.1.72, vol. I, 183) concerns the qualifier/qualified relation (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya-yoga*). The classical example given by Indian grammarians to illustrate this point — which is clearly a semantic one — is the following: in the sequence *kṛṣṇo gauḥ* “the

(topic: morphology). The term *iṣṭa* “desired” is often used (see, among others, M on V 2 on A 1.1.50 and M on V 7 on A 1.4.2) but, in all of its occurrences, it denotes a correct linguistic form which is aimed at or expected. A detailed analysis of the term within the grammatical sphere is to be carried out.

17) E.g. *kāmam atidiśyatām vā sac ca asat ca api na iha bhārah asti / kalpyo hi vākya-śeṣo vākyaṃ vaktary adhīnam hi //* (M quoting a *śloka-vārttika* on V 6 on A 1.1.57, vol. I, 147) “The application or the non application [of a grammatical operation to a linguistic form] may be transferred at will. Here (in the case of A 1.1.57) we need not bother. Because a suitable supplement of a statement can [always] be assumed, for [the meaning of a statement] depends on the speaker.” I follow the translation given by Joshi and Roodbergen (1990: 233).

18) There are also two occurrences of the adjective *yadrchā* (i.e. *yad-icchā*, *icchā* is derived from the root *iṣ-* “to wish, to desire”), which means “according to the wish of the one [who speaks]”. The context is the arbitrary use of names (cf. Aussant 2009: 55–68).

19) Other occurrence: M on V 1 on A 1.1.58.

20) I follow the translation given by Joshi (1968: 56).

cow is black”, one can equally say that the cowness qualifies the black colour and that the black colour qualifies the cowness. The final understanding depends on the speaker’s intention alone.

The last occurrence of the term concerns the derivation of denominals, that is to say morphology:

vā nāma-dhātūnām (V4) // vā nāma-dhātūnām ṛṭṛyasya dve bhavata iti vaktavyam / aśvīyīṣati / aśīśvīyīṣati // apara āha / yatheṣṭam vā / yatheṣṭam vā nāma-dhātūnām iti / puputṛīyīṣati / putṛīyīṣati / putṛīyīṣati //

(V 4 and M on A 6.1.3, vol. III, 8)

(V4) [The reduplication of the third syllable] is optional for denominals. One must say: the reduplication of the third syllable is optional for denominals. [Examples:] *aśvīyīṣati* [and] *aśīśvīyīṣati* (desideratives of the denominal verb *aśvīyati* “to desire horses” derived from *aśva* “horse”). Others say: or [the reduplication of the third syllable for denominals] is according to one’s wish. Or, [the reduplication of the third syllable for] denominals is according to one’s wish. [Examples:] *puputṛīyīṣati*, *putṛīyīṣati* [and] *putṛīyīṣati* (desideratives of the denominal verb *putṛīya* “to wish for a son” derived from *putra* “son”).

One notes that, here, *yatheṣṭam* seems to denote an unbridled option, where the choice goes beyond the mere alternative.

— Still in the category denoting the speaker’s intention, one finds the noun *vivakṣā* (and forms like *vivakṣāta*, *vivakṣita*, *avivakṣita*) derived from the desiderative form of the root *vac-* “to say” and which means “the wish to say”. This term, usually translated by “speaker’s intention” has been studied in great detail by various Western scholars.²¹ I will therefore content myself with briefly summing up the data. The term is used in the following contexts: the qualifier/qualified relation (M on A 1.1.66–67, 2.1.57), the number of nouns (M on A 1.2.58, 1.2.59, 1.2.64, 4.1.93), the gender of nouns (M on A 1.2.64, 1.2.68, 4.1.3, 4.1.92, 6.3.42), the object of words (individual *versus* generic property, M on A 1.2.64), the semantic roles (M on A 1.4.23, 1.4.24, 2.3.52, 2.3.67, 3.1.87), the verbal voices (M on A 1.3.72), the nominal and the verbal sentences (M on A 2.3.50), the verbal expression of time (M on A 3.2.110, 3.2.120, 3.3.132).²² The notion of *vivakṣā* was also the occasion, for Patañjali, to make a distinction between two kinds of “wish to say”. While

21) Renou (1940), Van Nooten (1983), Radicchi (1993), Scharf (1995, 2002).

22) The use of the term *iti* (quotative marker, see Aussant 2005), in the A, is sometimes interpreted as a means of referring to the usual intention (*vivakṣā*) with which a linguistic form is used in the current usage. In such cases, *iti* should be understood as signifying “this linguistic form is taken from current usage, with the intention it usually has there”. See, among others, A 2.2.27 and 4.2.21, as well as the KV on those *sūtras*.

commenting on the *sūtra* A 5.1.16, he indeed distinguishes the *prāyoktrī vivakṣā* from the *laukikī vivakṣā*:²³

vivakṣā ca dvayī / asty eva prāyoktrī vivakṣā asti laukikī // prāyoktrī vivakṣā / prayoktā hi mṛdvyā snigdhayā ślakṣṇayā jihvayā mṛdūn snigdhañ ślakṣṇāñ śabdān prayunkte / laukikī vivakṣā yatra prāyasya sampratrayayaḥ / prāya iti loko vyapa-diśyate /
(M on A 5.1.16, vol. II, 342–343)

The wish to say is of two [kinds]: there is the wish to say of the [language] user and the wish to say of mundane [usage]. The wish to say of the [language] user: the [language] user indeed, by means of a soft, unctuous, smooth tongue, uses soft, unctuous, smooth words. The wish to say of the mundane [usage]: this is where there is general agreement. “general agreement” [means] current [usage].

It seems here that the distinction lies more between the individual mispronunciation — as the words *mṛdu* and *jihvā* would suggest —²⁴ and the current correct use of language than between the individual speech activity (the Saussurian “parole” or the Chomskyan “performance”) and the linguistic system (the Saussurian “langue” or the Chomskyan “competence”). This at least is the interpretation given by Kaiyaṭa:

mṛdūn iti / apabhraṁśān ity arthaḥ / tasmāt prayoktr-vivakṣā na āśriyate, prayoktuḥ svātantryān niyama-abhāvāt / prāyasya iti / samagra-kalpasya ity arthaḥ /
(P on M on A 5.1.16, vol. IV, 284)

mṛdūn — the meaning is “corrupt [words]”. That is why there is no reference [here] to the [language] user’s wish to express [himself about *a, b, c*, etc.], given his unlimited freedom (i.e. the speaker is free to say what he chooses). *prāyasya* — the meaning is “all of the right [speech practices]”.

3) The agent noun *prayoktr* “[language] user” we have just met with constitutes, with the agent noun *vaktr*, the category made up of terms denoting the speaker. The noun *prayoktr* occurs in various contexts (M on A 1.1.44, 1.2.51, 3.2.111, 8.1.4), perhaps more when the topic under discussion pertains to semantics. The agent noun *vaktr* is mainly used to denote the speaker as a speech sounds pronouncer — i.e. it lays stress on the phonatory production (cf. M *Paspasā*, M on A 1.1.57, V 5 on A 1.1.70, A 1.2.27, A 1.2.69, A 1.4.109, A 4.2.3, A 5.3.57).

²³ The reason why Patañjali mentions *vivakṣā* is the use of *iti* in the *sūtra* (cf. the previous footnote).

²⁴ As it appears in the *Pradīpa* quoted below, *mṛdu* “soft” designates *apabhraṁśa* “corrupt [words]”. The dialects of Sanskrit, the Prakrits, are often characterised as using “sweet” sounds (because of a marked phenomenon of assimilation, the disappearance of a lot of internal consonants, etc.). Abhyankar, in his *Dictionary of Sanskrit Grammar*, notes that *mṛdu* is the name given to the first, third and fifth consonants of the five classes of Sanskrit consonants. The term *jihvā* always denotes, in the grammatical field, the tongue as a phonatory organ.

4) The fourth category which is by far the richest, brings together terms denoting kinds of speakers. Four terms are used to denote good or authoritative speakers:²⁵

— the noun *ācārya* (“one who knows or teaches the *ācāra* (rules)”), which is frequently used by Patañjali to refer to grammarians (e.g. V 3 and M on A 1.1.1), in the continuity of the A (A 7.3.49, A 8.4.52);

— the noun/adjective *ārya* (“hospitable, welcoming”), which occurs in two contexts (M on A 2.4.10, 6.3.109) where it denotes the Āryans, the Sanskrit speakers living in a region called the *Ārya-āvarta* (one will see an occurrence below);

— the noun *ṛṣi* (“seer, sage, poet”), which denotes ancient partially mythicized sages of the Vedic period whose authority is unquestioned (cf. Deshpande 1998: 9), as it appears in the following passage:

yarvāṇas-tarvāṇo nāma ṛṣayo babhūvuḥ pratyakṣa-dharmāṇaḥ para-apara-jñā vidīta-vedītavyā adhigata-yāthātathyāḥ / te tatra-bhavanto yad vā nas tad vā na iti prayoktavye yarvāṇas tarvāṇa iti prayuñjate yājñe punaḥ karmaṇi na apabhā-ṣante /
(M, vol. I, 11)

There were sages (*ṛṣayo*) named *yarvāṇas-tarvāṇas* who perceived the nature of things, who knew the far and the near, who knew what could be known [and] who had come to realize ultimate reality. These honourable [sages] used *yarvāṇas tarvāṇaḥ* when they should have used *yad vā naḥ tad vā naḥ* (“whatever [happens] to us, [let] that [happens] to us”). But at the time of a ritual act, they did not spoke in a corrupt way.²⁶

— the adjective *śiṣṭa* (“taught, learned”), which denotes a kind of speaker one could compare — contrary to what the etymological meaning of the word implies — to what Western linguists call “native speakers”. The following discussion is found in the M:

[...] *evam tarhi nivāsata ācārataś ca / sa ca ācāra ārya-āvarta eva / kaḥ punar ārya-āvartaḥ / prāḡ ādarsāt pratyak kālaka-vanād dakṣiṇena himavantam uttarena pāriyātram / etasmūn ārya-nivāse ye brāhmaṇāḥ kumbhī-dhānyā alolupā agrhya-māna-kāraṇāḥ kiñ cid antarena kasyās cid vidyāyāḥ pāragas tatra-bhavantaḥ śiṣṭāḥ // yadi tarhi śiṣṭāḥ śabdeṣu pramāṇaṃ kim aṣṭādhyāyā kriyate / śiṣṭa-jñāna-artha-aṣṭādhyāyī / katham punar aṣṭādhyāyā śiṣṭāḥ śakyā vijñātum / aṣṭā-adhyāyīm adhyānaḥ anyam paśyaty anadhīyānam ye atra vihitāḥ śabdās tān prayuñjānam / sa paśyati / nūnam asya daiva-anugrahaḥ sva-bhāvo vā yaḥ ayaṃ na ca aṣṭādhyāyīm adhīte ye ca atra vihitāḥ śabdās tāms ca prayunkte / ayaṃ nūnam anyān api jānāti / evam eṣā śiṣṭa-parijñāna-artha-aṣṭādhyāyī //*
(M on A 6.3.109, vol. III, 174)

²⁵ The word *āpta* is not used (neither in the V, nor in the M) with this meaning.

²⁶ I follow the translation given by Joshi and Roodbergen (1986: 156–157).

[...] [One defines *Śiṣṭas*] by their place of residence and their way of life. And that way of life [is found] only in [the region of] *Āryāvarta*. — What is this *Āryāvarta*? — It lies to the east of *Ādarśa*, to the west of *Kālakavana*, to the south of *Himavant*, and to the north of the *Pāriyātra*. Those brahmins who live in the land of the *Āryas*, who possess a basketful of grain, who are not greedy, who without any motive have attained the highest wisdom in some branch of learning, these are the honourable *Śiṣṭas*. — If the *Śiṣṭas* are authoritative concerning [the correction of] words, then what is the function of [Pāṇini's] *Aṣṭādhyāyī*? — The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* aims at helping one recognize these *Śiṣṭas*. — How the *Śiṣṭas* can be recognized by means of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*? — Someone who has studied the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* observes another person who has not studied [it but] who uses words taught in it. The [student of Pāṇini's grammar] observes: it must be either divine grace or some innate nature that this [person] who does not study the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* uses words taught in it. He probably knows even other [correct words which are not taught in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*]. This way the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* aims at helping one recognize these *Śiṣṭas*.

According to Patañjali then (and probably Kātyāyana), *Śiṣṭas*, defined by their place of residence and their way of life, naturally know correct and incorrect words.²⁷

To close the list of terms denoting kinds of speaker, one must note the use of a term referring to bad speakers, that is the noun *mleccha* which would mean “barbarian”²⁸ and which one finds in the following passage:²⁹

te asurā helayo helaya iti kurvantaḥ parābhabhūvuḥ / tasmād brāhmaṇena na mlecchitavai na apabhāṣitavai / mleccho ha vā eṣa yad apaśabdaḥ / mlecchā mā bhūma ity adhyeyaṃ vyākaraṇam / (M, vol. I, 8)

These demons, having said *helayo helayah* (“O enemies, O enemies”), were defeated; that is why a brahmin must not utter barbarisms (*mlecchitavai*) [that is to say] must not speak in a corrupt way (*apabhāṣitavai*); barbarism, indeed, [is the same as] a corrupt word. Not to become barbarians, we should study grammar.

27) Bhartrhari makes different use of the term, as remarks Deshpande (1993: 104–105): “[...] while Patañjali is speaking about a real community of ideal speakers residing in the region of *Āryāvarta*, a community of learned *Brāhmaṇas*, Bhartrhari has almost mythologized the conception of *Śiṣṭa*. It has no specific regionality or temporality, but it has a very high degree of spirituality. This high degree of spirituality seems to indicate that he is not speaking about any contemporary persons, but mythologized great sages of the golden age of Sanskrit grammar.” Still, in both cases, the characteristic of *Śiṣṭas* lies in the fact that they know (naturally according to Patañjali, thanks to mystical powers according to Bhartrhari) which words are correct and which words are not.

28) Leemans and Hansman (quoted in Driem 2001: 1036) give another analysis for *mleccha*: the term would be connected — like Pāli *mīlakkha* — to *meluḥḥa*, which is found in cuneiform Mesopotamian documents (cf. Parpola 1994: 13–14, 170), probably as a Harappan ethnonym.

29) Patañjali also uses terms such as *apa-śabda* “irregular form” (the prefix *apa-* indicates absence or, as here, inferiority), *apa-bhraṃśa* “corrupt form” (derived from *braṃś-* “to deviate”) and *mleccha(śabda)* “barbarism”.

All these terms then distinguish kinds of speaker according to their authoritativeness — or lack of authoritativeness — regarding speech. As the number of terms suggests it, this is a very important matter for Indian grammarians whose first task is to preserve Sanskrit or, according to their own point of view, correct language.

5) The fifth and last category brings together terms referring to mundane or current use of language, that is to say, to the social dimension of speech activity. One finds here:

— the noun *loka* (“open space, place, world”) which denotes the current usage of speech. This term, very frequent in the M (138 occurrences), is used in contexts where general social conventions regarding language are referred to, as for example gender³⁰ and the word-object relation as it appears in the following passage:

katham punar jñāyate siddhaḥ śabdaḥ arthaḥ sambandhaś ca iti / lokataḥ / yal loke artham artham upādāya śabdān prayuñjate na eṣāṃ nirvṛtau yatnaḥ kurvanti / ye punaḥ kāryā bhāvā nirvṛtau tāvat teṣāṃ yatnaḥ kriyate / tad yathā / ghaṭena kāryaṃ kariṣyan kumbha-kāra-kulaṃ gatvā āha kuru ghaṭaṃ kāryam anena kariṣyāmi iti / na tadvac chabdān prayokṣyamāṇo vaiyākaraṇa-kulaṃ gatvā āha kuru śabdān prayokṣya iti / tāvaty eva artham artham upādāya śabdān prayuñjate // (M *Paspaśā*, vol. I, 7–8)

But how does one know that the relation between the word and its referent is established? On account of the current [usage] (*lokataḥ*).³¹ Because in the current [usage] (*loke*), [people] use words the meaning/object of which is already known, they do not make an effort to create [them]. On the other hand, in the case of created things, they make an effort to create [them]. For example, one who needs a pot for some purpose, goes to the house of a potter and says: “You make a pot. I need a pot for some purpose”. [But] one who wants to use words does not go to the house of a grammarian and say: “You make words. I want to use them”. He just uses words the meaning/object of which is already known (i.e. words are already there, ready for use).

— The same kind of usage is observed for the adjective *laukika* (“mundane”), derived from *loka* (e.g., M on A 4.1.3, vol. II, 197);

— as well as for the word *prayoga* (“usage”), often qualified by *laukika* (e.g., M *Paspaśā* on V 5, vol. I, p.9 and M on V 19 on A 1.2.64, vol. I, p.237).

30) See, for example, the regularly mentioned maxim *lingam aśiṣyam loka-āśrayatvāl lingasya* “Gender is not to be taught because it is based on current usage” (see, among others, M on V 5 on A 2.1.36).

31) The point is the following: by giving derivational processes of words, does the grammar create the said words? If so, the eternity of words (and of the Vedas) would be beyond question.

These three terms do denote a form of subjectivity which is from a different level from the one considered up until now: it is a collective subjectivity.

To close this chapter devoted to Kātyāyana and Patañjali, two points may be highlighted. First, human subjectivity is sometimes referred to to indicate language arbitrariness, either individual (such as word order), or collective (such as the word-meaning/object relation).³² The second point concerns the importance of the authoritativeness of the speaker: in a context where linguistic, religious and social otherness is becoming stronger and stronger (as it probably was by Patañjali's time), the identification of the norm and of its sharers is crucial. After the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali, the glossary of the subjectivity in language can be considered as definitely established. Very few new terms will appear with the later grammarians. The various examples quoted above show that the linguistic levels where this subjectivity — either embodied in the individual speaker or in the speakers' community — intervenes are syntax, morphology, gender and semantics.

4. *Vākyapadīya* of Bhartrhari

Most of the terms we have previously met with are used by Bhartrhari with the same meaning. Few innovations are nevertheless introduced. Some familiar notions are used in different contexts or to denote different objects³³ and some new notions or expressions appear, like:

- 1) *āpta* (“one who has obtained, reached”), which denotes authoritative speakers (VP 3.12.7);
- 2) *viguṇa* or *aśakta abhidhātṛ* (“one who speaks badly or without having any capacity”), which denotes bad speakers (VP 1.181, 182);
- 3) *ukti* (“uttered”) and *vinīyoga* (“use”), which denote the deliberate use by the speaker of a word in a particular meaning (VP 2.403).³⁴

Two other points deserve special attention: the first because of its fundamental character and the second because of its frequency.

1) In the A, language was considered from the derivational point of view, great attention was therefore paid to the cutting up of language into units and

³² The question of gender and number is already mentioned by Pāṇini (cf. A 1.2.53).

³³ 1) *ṛṣi* (e.g. VP 1.23) and *śiṣṭa* (e.g. VP 1.29) denote the ancient Sanskrit grammarians (cf. Deshpande 1993, 1998); 2) *laukika* and *alaukika* respectively denote the concrete reality of spoken and understood sentences and the internal reality of mental speech (cf. Biarreau 1964: 401); 3) *vivakṣā* (cf. Radicchi 1993) is used in relation to the following topics: the words used with their first or second meaning (e.g. VP 2.304), the wish to express oneself (e.g. VP 1.119), the presentation of something which does not yet exist as an agent (VP 3.7.103), the gender (e.g. VP 3.13.19).

³⁴ See Subramania Iyer (1977: xlv).

to their forms. The V and the M, being explicit commentaries of the A, unavoidably follow the same approach, even if philosophical aspects are occasionally developed. Bhartrhari, in his *Vākyapadīya* — which is not presented as a commentary on the A —, intends to cast new light on the Pāṇinian treatise in developing its metaphilosophical assumptions. According to him, grammar has, as a fundamental principle, a theory of knowledge (*jñāna*) and his aim is to provide a detailed analysis of it. According to ancient Indian scholars, any knowledge always implies three elements: 1) the object of knowledge (*idam x* “this *x*”), 2) the knowledge process (*jānāmi* “I know”), 3) the knowing subject (*aham* “I”).³⁵ Within the context of language, the object of knowledge is the utterance and the knowing subject is the hearer.³⁶ One of the recurrent questions of the VP then is: how does the hearer obtain knowledge of the sentence enunciated by — and previously thought by — the speaker?³⁷ This is an occasion for the use of terms denoting the hearer. The most frequent is *pratipattṛ* (“one who knows, understands”),³⁸ as one finds in the following verse:³⁹

vaktrā anyathā eva prakrānto bhinneṣu pratipattṛṣu |
svapratyaya-anukāreṇa śabda-arthaḥ pravibhajyate || (VP 2.135)

The referent of a word, intended by the speaker in a specific manner, is diversely understood by different hearers, according to their own experience.

³⁵ The sentence “Here is a pot” (*ayaṃ ghaṭaḥ*) is traditionally analysed by Indian logicians as follows (Foucher 1949: 87): “La démarche suivante, laquelle pour cette raison prend le nom d’*anuvyavahāra* et correspond à notre “fait de conscience”, consiste à rapporter cette cognition de la cruche (*ghaṭa-jñānam*) au moi qui la possède, ce qui se traduit par: *ghaṭa-jñānavān aham* ou plus simplement “*ghaṭam jānāmi* Je connais la cruche”. Dans une proposition de ce genre il faut donc distinguer trois choses: *a*) un objet (la cruche); *b*) l’action exercée sur cet objet, laquelle s’exprime ici par la racine verbale “*jñā* connaître”; *c*) le sujet de cette connaissance, représenté par la désinence de la première personne du présent de l’indicatif [...]. Entre *b* et *c*, comme entre toute Substance (ici l’Âme) et ses Qualités (ici la Connaissance), il y a une relation coessentielle (*samavāya-sambandhaḥ* [...]); entre *a* et *b*, il ne peut être question d’une relation de ce genre [...] il reste que ce soit une “relation d’un genre particulier: *svarūpa*” déterminée par l’objet de la connaissance (ici par une cruche).”

³⁶ Cf. Matilal (1985: 417): “When we say that a particular hearer *a* understands the meaning, we mean thereby that *a* has a particular ‘structured’ thought. It may be said, therefore, that the Indian philosophers were concerned with the ‘hearer’s meaning’ rather than the ‘speaker’s meaning’.”

³⁷ An interesting occurrence of the notion of *vivakṣā* and the freedom it implies is VP 2.432–437.

³⁸ The term *grahītṛ* “one who grasps” is used once in VP 1.54, as well as *puruṣa* “man” in VP 2.333. Note that verbs of knowledge imply the knowing subject, such as *pratyate* in VP 3.3.1, 3.3.32.

³⁹ Other interesting occurrences are: VP 1.87, 1.94, 2.17, 2.18, 2.317, 2.319, 2.346, 2.474–475, 3.3.19, 3.7.114, 3.9.67, 3.14.44, 3.14.77, 3.14.473.

2) The second point I would like to highlight, because it occurs rather frequently in the VP, is the role of the speaker when using polysemous words (and synonyms), as it appears in the following *kārikā*:⁴⁰

*bahuṣv eka-abhidhāneṣu sarveṣv eka-arthakāriṣu /
yat prayoktā abhisamdhatte śabdāḥ tatra avatiṣṭhate //* (VP 2.406)

When several [referents] have one word to express them [and] when all [words] cause [the comprehension] of one referent, the word is applied to [the referent] the [language] user is aiming at [and the referent is denoted by the word the latter wants to use].

This idea will be often mentioned by later commentators.⁴¹

5. Further innovations

Two further innovations have to be noticed.

— First, the use of the word *tātparyā* (“fact of being wholly engaged or occupied in”) as denoting speaker’s intention. As far as I know, the first occurrence in the grammatical sphere is in the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, the oldest extant complete running commentary on the A (7th cent.). While commenting on the Pāṇinian *sūtra* A 3.2.81 (which is given below), it is said:⁴²

bahulam ābhikṣṇye // (A 3.2.81)

[The suffix *in* is used < A 3.2.78] variously [after a verbal root] to express repetition.

[...] *ābhikṣṇyam paunaḥpunyam / tātparyam āsevā_eva tācchilyād anyat / [...]*
(KV on A 3.2.81, vol. II, 511)

ābhikṣṇyam [means] constant repetition. What is aimed at (*tātparyam*) is repetition, which is different from habitual disposition.

It is very much later with Nāgeśa, the last great grammarian of the Pāṇinian school (17th–18th cent.), that the notion will be fruitfully used in the grammatical discourse, as in the following passage of the *Paramalaghumañjūṣā*:

nānā-artha-sthale loke tātparyam tv etat padaṃ vākyam vā etad-artha-pratyayāya mayā uccāryata iti prayoktur icchā-rūpam / tātparyā-niyāmakaṃ ca loke prakaraṇa-ādīkam eva /
(*Paramalaghumañjūṣā*, 84)

But in the case of polysemy in the current usage (*loke*), intention (*tātparyam*) consists in the wish (*icchā*) of the [language] user (*prayoktur*) that such a word or sentence uttered by him makes understood such referent. And in the current usage, situational context (*prakaraṇa*), etc. serve to delimit what is intended.

⁴⁰ Cf. Aussant (*in prep.*).

⁴¹ E.g. P on M on A 1.1.20 (vol. I, 298).

⁴² The two other occurrences of *tātparyā* in the KV are on A 3.4.56 and 7.2.59, rules which concern verbal morphology.

Nāgeśa’s use of the word is probably more influenced by the logicians’ use than due to mere scholastic heritage. One has to recall that ancient Indian logicians mainly dealt with means of arriving at correct knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and speech (*śabda*), as conceived as the statement of a trustworthy person, is one of these. Within this framework, factors helping in the understanding of the meaning of a sentence, such as *samnidhi* (phonetic contiguity), *yogyatā* (logical consistency), *ākāṅkṣā* (syntactic expectancy) and *tātparyā* (speaker’s intention) received special attention.⁴³ The use of *tātparyā* within the context of Indian logic would deserve a study entirely devoted to it, which is beyond my scope here.

— The second innovation consists in the use of some of the previously mentioned terms, mainly *prayoga* and *vivakṣā*,⁴⁴ to legitimize new linguistic forms which can hardly be conciliated with Pāṇinian *sūtras*.⁴⁵ For example, the *Durghaṭa-vṛtti* of Śaranadeva, a 12th cent. commentary on the A,⁴⁶ takes up about five hundred rules together with particular forms, and proposes interpretations whereby the rules account for the forms.⁴⁷ The speaker’s intention criterion is used here as a grammatical device which makes wider — and then more approximate — the scope of Pāṇinian *sūtras*.⁴⁸

6. Conclusion

Indian grammarians of Sanskrit in fact paid very close attention to human subjectivity in language; they clearly perceived its omnipresence, the speaking subject being involved in all of his linguistic choices (phonetic, morphological, syntactical, semantic). In the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the speaking subjectivity manifests itself through the existence of options or choices within the derivations. In the

⁴³ Cf. Kunjuni Raja (1963: 149–187).

⁴⁴ But also *bahulam*.

⁴⁵ Pāṇini already had recourse to a process enabling a linguistic form conflicting with a *sūtra* to be accepted. This process consists in introducing the linguistic form as a *nipātana* (literally “one which is put down”). Cf. Nāgeśa’s *Paribhāṣā* (110): *bādhakāny eva nipātanāni* “[Linguistic forms which] are put down, [though conflicting with a *sūtra*] just suspend [the said *sūtra*].”

⁴⁶ George Cardona (1976: 284), quoting Gaṇapati Sastri, recalls the purpose of the work: “[...] it is an exposition (*vṛtti*) reconciling those Lakshyas (forms of words) and Pāṇini’s *Sūtras* which appear difficult to reconcile (*durghaṭa*) with each other.” Śaranadeva takes up about 500 rules, together with particular forms, and proposes interpretations whereby the rules account for the forms.”

⁴⁷ Occurrences of special interest are: DV on A 1.3.36, 1.3.40, 2.2.8, 2.4.62, 3.1.26, 3.3.139, 6.3.25.

⁴⁸ This device will take the form of a metarule (*paribhāṣā*) in the *Cāndravyākaraṇa* (a 5th cent. Sanskrit grammar for Buddhists): *vivakṣā-vyāpter iṣṭa-avasāyaḥ* “the desired [i.e. correct linguistic forms] depends on what one wants to express.”

Vārtikas and the *Mahābhāṣya*, the idea of choice is still there, but human subjectivity also begins to become the sign of unpredictability in the — individual or collective — use of language. In late commentaries, the intention to speak will be a well-known grammatical device introducing new linguistic forms. The language user is undeniably present in the grammatical discourse of the *Mahābhāṣya*, but the majority of terms denoting him as such concern his authoritativeness regarding speech. This tendency hardens in the *Vākyapadīya*. But it is also Bhartṛhari who first brings the hearer into existence, as a knowing subject. A last point. As far as I know, speech was never considered by ancient Indian grammarians from a dialogical perspective.⁴⁹ The ordinary domain of what we call the token-reflexivity (semantic functioning of personal pronouns, demonstratives and time indices) was a matter of no interest to them (with the exception of: 1) the notions of *paro'kṣa* “invisible” and *pratyakṣa* “visible”,⁵⁰ 2) *prakaraṇa* “situational context”, mainly referred to in cases of ambiguity⁵¹ and 3) *ūha* “modification”, which denotes the linguistic adaptation of a hymn or of a prayer to a ritual different from the original one; each of these notions deserves a study which cannot be carried out here). This is surprising, when one thinks about the importance of orality in India, all through its history. But the orality, in brahmanical India, is restricted to texts recitation and to standard discourses or intercourses (scholarship, literature, education, politics). It is not, therefore, the oral language of spontaneous daily intercourses: the speaking subject is only a spokesman who conveys an eternal truth.

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⁴⁹ However, dialogical situations are absent neither from Vedic texts (cf. Jamison 2007: 45 *et al.*) nor from the grammatical discourse itself; but they never constitute the aim of the study as such.

⁵⁰ These terms, which imply a fixed point (i.e. the speaker), are used in relation to the verbal expression of time (see V and M on A 3.2.115 and 119) as well as in relation to demonstrative pronouns (cf. Speijer 1886: 202–205).

⁵¹ Mentioned by Patañjali (e.g. M on V 4 on A 1.1.23), Bhartṛhari (e.g. VP 2.314–315, 317), Nāgeśa (*Paramalaghumañjūṣā*, end of the *Śaktivicāra*, 51) and poets (cf. Kunjuni Raja 1963: 50).

Abbreviations

A	<i>Aṣṭādhyāyī</i>
DV	<i>Durgāṭavṛtti</i>
KV	<i>Kāśikāvṛtti</i>
M	<i>Mahābhāṣya</i>
P	<i>Pradīpa</i>
VP	<i>Vākyapadīya</i>
V	<i>Vārtika</i>

List of authors mentioned and Sanskrit texts

Author	Date	Work
Pāṇini	5th–4th cent. B.C.?	<i>Aṣṭādhyāyī</i> (“The Eight Chapters”) Grammatical treatise providing the generation of correct Sanskrit forms; basic text of the Pāṇinian school, composed in <i>sūtras</i> (“aphorisms”)
Kātyāyana	3rd cent. B.C.	<i>Vārtika</i> (“Remarks on the Procedure”) Commentary on a part of Pāṇinian’s <i>sūtras</i>
Patañjali	2nd cent. B.C.	<i>Mahābhāṣya</i> (“The Great Commentary”) Commentary on Kātyāyana’s <i>Vārtikas</i>
Bhartṛhari	5th cent. A.D.	<i>Vākyapadīya</i> (“The Work Dealing with Sentences and Words”) Treatise on philosophy of grammar
Candra	5th cent. A.D.	<i>Cāndravyākaraṇa</i> (“Candra’s Grammar”) Sanskrit grammar for Buddhists
Jayāditya-Vāmana	7th cent. A.D.	<i>Kāśikāvṛtti</i> (“Benares’ Gloss”) Extant complete running commentary on Pāṇinian’s <i>sūtras</i>
Kaiyaṭa	11th cent. A.D.	<i>Pradīpa</i> (“The Lamp [of the Great Commentary]”) Complete commentary on Patañjali’s <i>Mahābhāṣya</i>
Śaraṇadeva	12th cent. A.D.	<i>Durgāṭavṛtti</i> (“The Gloss [on Words] Hard to Form”) Commentary on a part of Pāṇinian’s <i>sūtras</i>
Nāgeśa	17th–18th cent. A.D.	<i>Paramalaghumañjūṣā</i> (“The Very Light Basket”) Work on semantics and philosophy of grammar <i>Paribhāṣenduśekhara</i> (“Paribhāṣās’ Moon-Crested”) Commentary on the Pāṇinian collection of metarules

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