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Pāṇini - The Father of Linguistics: Prof Madhav Deshpande, University of Michigan & Prof Ramanathan

Study notes by Sanskrit AI Universe, based on this video

Video by Madhav Deshpande (University of Michigan) · Atharva Forum · 26 Dec 2020

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About these notes

— Official title: Pāṇini - The Father of Linguistics: Prof Madhav Deshpande, University of Michigan & Prof Ramanathan

— Speaker and channel: Madhav Deshpande (University of Michigan) · Atharva Forum

— Published 26 Dec 2020 · Running time 1 h 10 min · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5BcwDcb6Rs

— Official description: 1:03:21 Grammars of other languages modeled on Panini's work

— Catalogue caution: 'Father of linguistics' is the title's phrase, a popular honorific rather than a claim to test.

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From the talk · 0:07–6:45

— Pāṇini stands Pāṇini stands as the testimony of Bharatavarsha's sublime intellect, sublime intellect, which represented a logical path in pursuit of the ultimate truth.

— As we have Noam Chomsky showering his choicest praise, thus I quote, "The first generative grammar in the modern sense was Pāṇini's grammar." Unquote.

— We're indeed happy to have with us Dr. Madhav Deshpande, who is an emeritus professor of Sanskrit and linguistics in the University of Michigan.

— Well, thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk about Pāṇini, which is the love of my life.

From the talk · 6:48–13:48

— Uh The kind of language that he talks about, he doesn't give kind of a temporal sense of Sanskrit.

— So, general rules of Pāṇini apply to language across the board from contemporary Sanskrit contemporary Sanskrit to Vedic Sanskrit.

— So, the structure of the grammar is there is set up one whole language with internal subdivisions such as Vedic and the colloquial.

— But uh Kashika, the next the major commentary on Pāṇini tells us that the river Sutlej in Punjab in Punjab the Sanskrit name is Sharavati.

From the talk · 13:51–20:37

— And as we move from Pāṇini to Kātyāyana and Patañjali, slowly there is deterioration and loss of the svaras.

— Whereby we infer that such an approach towards language towards language did not actually originate in Pāṇini.

— So, first thing uh is that going back to the Vedic literature, uh what sort of awareness of language do we see there?

— And it says, "In this Om, a kodhatu kim pratipadikam?" kim pratipadikam?" Uh so, this is the Brahmana already asking these questions using somewhat technical language.

From the talk · 20:41–27:32

— Uh Now, Pāṇini is also aware of the so-called Vikriti Pathas Vikriti Pathas of the Vedas.

— The next vikriti patha is arguably also known to Pāṇini and that is called so-called krama patha.

— Uh Now, of course, Pāṇini refers to about nine previous grammarians by name, and then a kind of a generic uh acharyas.

— And we can see, you know, whether that matches where Pāṇini is quoting him in his rules.

From the talk · 27:35–34:59

— But the grammatical rule coming from Vyadi and Galava says no in our dialect we don't change i to ya but we say nadiyatra.

— So we can see, you know, that within Sanskrit I think sometimes we have this idea that Sanskrit was completely monolithic.

— Whether they are purely regional or they are also temporal because Patañjali comes after the end of the Mauryan period.

— Uh the modern investigators, even when they study the oldest language, the oldest text like the Ṛgveda for example.

From the talk · 35:01–42:43

— And then it's like you tell the people will laugh at us, you know, because Akshini is a plural form, Padaha is a plural.

— If you look at the Prakrit languages from Ashokan inscriptions onwards, the category of dual disappears in all Prakrit languages.

— That the Buddhists have preserved and the Jains have preserved to some extent inscriptions have preserved a humongous amount of this so-called hybrid Sanskrit.

— So, that's I think she was from Sanskrit like Devasya has been generalized in Prakrits in Prakrits to many other environments.

From the talk · 42:45–49:21

— So, my next question is more on the pedagogy or the way it is being taught Sanskrit is being taught today.

— So, the question is on the one hand, we have Pāṇinian method that is very powerful and robust that has stood the test of time.

— It is observed that the that only those who specialize in Sanskrit get to study Pāṇinian methods Pāṇinian methods much later in their scholastic engagement.

— Uh I think what we what we notice, for example, you know, that Pāṇini's grammar is a an analytical shastric description of that language.

From the talk · 49:22–56:25

— So I mean if you look at the word dvādaśa in Sanskrit, how do you go from dvādaśa to bāraha?

— The Then the other things that were created but they were called uh teaching Sanskrit to a Prakrit speaker.

— So one direction is uh sort of commentaries on Pāṇini uh and his grammar uh in a as a kind of a continuum.

— It was recovered by a Buddhist uh Acharya and then the Chandra Acharya who so sort of restarted the teaching of Patañjali.

From the talk · 56:27–1:03:24

— And William Jones says these similarities could not have come about as a matter of accident, that they must be part of an inheritance.

— So, linguistics starts linguistics starts with inspiration from Pāṇini, but then it develops in completely different directions. different directions.

— And then branching out from there into every possible direction, so we have sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics to computational linguistics.

— And the perimeter that separates the island of knowledge and the ignorance keeps on expanding as your island of knowledge also grows.

From the talk · 1:03:27–1:10:04

— only person who wrote a grammar somewhat similar to Pāṇini's grammar, inspired by Pāṇini, uh was a German scholar named Otto Böhtlingk.

— And so he was a good Pāṇinian scholar and so he uh tried to use those ideas. those ideas.

— And commentators have said that the grammar of Indra uh was also something that inspired uh Katantra. uh Katantra.

— So again, taking inspiration from not just Pāṇini, but Pāṇini, Katantra, Sanskrit Kavyashastra and applying it to Tamil. to Tamil.

Sources and credit

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