

Course Name: 'Introduction to Pāṇinian Grammar'
Professor Name: Prof. Malhar Arvind Kulkarni
Department Name: Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS)
Institute Name: IIT Bombay
Week:02
Lecture:07

Welcome. I welcome you all to this lecture in the course 'Introduction to Pāṇinian grammar'. So far, we have studied some basic information regarding Pāṇinian grammar. We looked at the linguistic background in which Pāṇinian grammar flourished. We also took a note of the names of 10 grammarians whom Pāṇini mentions in his text the Aṣṭādhyāyī. We also looked at the non Pāṇinian grammatical systems of Sanskrit. We also studied some of the very important authors in the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition and noted their contributions. This we did in two stages from Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, Patañjali onwards up to Nāgeśabhaṭṭa 18th century CE, that is the first stage and post Nāgeśabhaṭṭa, that is post 18th century CE up to this day. In the same vein, we also studied in brief the orality related to the transmission of Pāṇinian grammar. We also looked at certain techniques which are used to memorize the text of Aṣṭādhyāyī. We also studied the current teaching methodology of Pāṇinian grammar. So, this has given us a clear view about the general information about the grammar of Pāṇini.

The name of the grammar written by Pāṇini as we have earlier seen is Aṣṭādhyāyī and this text is divided into 8 chapters, each chapter into further 4 sub chapters and this each sub chapter consists of sūtras. We have also said that we will be studying this grammar from two points of view, the systemic point of view and the textual point of view. But both these views, both these approaches, they are complementary to each other. We need to understand the textual nuances of Pāṇini's grammar in order to understand the entire system built by this grammar.

In today's lecture we move ahead and focus on the meta-language of Pāṇinian grammar. This is an extremely important topic from textual as well as systemic point of view, the meta-language of Pāṇinian grammar. It is important to know the basic features of the meta-language used by Pāṇini in his grammar, only then it is possible for us to make an attempt to understand the system that he built. So, first of all let us try to understand what is a meta-language. So, this is an often visible phenomenon when we look at any grammar, that there are at least two languages, that are available in any grammar. One is called an 'object' language and the other one is the 'meta' language. It is necessary for us to be clear on both these points that will make us understand, the importance of the meta-language in Pāṇinian grammar far better.

So, what is an object language? Object language is a language which is being described in the grammar. So, object language is a language which becomes an object of the action of analysis

undertaken, carried out in the grammar. It can also be said to be a language that is spoken by people, for example or that was spoken by people at some point in time for example, such a language is called an object language.

Now, what is a meta-language? Meta-language on the other hand is a language which describes, which describes the object language. So, meta-language can be also said to be a language which becomes a means to analyze a language. Certainly, meta-language is not a language that is spoken by people. Meta-language is the language of grammar. Object language is the language that is spoken by people, this is the difference. So, if we view the features of both these languages at one go, this is what is the picture that we get.

An object language is a language, which is described and a meta-language is a language which describes. Object language is a language, which becomes an object, an object of the action of analysis. Whereas, meta-language is a language, which becomes a means to analyze this language. Object language is a language that is spoken by people for example, but meta-language is a language that is not spoken by people. These are the differences between an object language and a meta-language, they need to be noted very carefully.

Let us take some examples, let us look at the combinations of object language and meta-language in different kinds of grammar. I would however restrict myself to Sanskrit grammar later on, but initially let us look at some examples. So, this example will clarify what is an object language and what is a meta-language further. So, we have taken a sentence, sentence 1 which is put in the inverted commas 'ghoḍā' which means 'a horse' of course! "'Ghoḍā' is a masculine noun", suppose we look at this sentence and we analyze the sentence. So, what does this sentence describe? One might say it describes a horse, but that is not what is described. This sentence cannot be said to describe a horse which is actually the meaning. This sentence is not describing the properties of a horse. This sentence is describing the properties of a word 'ghoḍā'. The property namely masculinity and also a noun matches with the word and not with the meaning namely the horse.

So, this sentence cannot be said to describe a horse which is the meaning; this sentence can be said to describe a word which is 'ghoḍā'. Now, if we look at the vocabulary of some languages of which the word 'ghoḍā' is a part of, we can say that 'ghoḍā' is a word which is a part of the vocabulary of let us say Hindi, Marathi, Guajarati etcetera. Therefore now we can say that, this sentence can be said to describe the languages namely Hindi, Marathi and Guajarati etcetera.

So, we can also conclude from this discussion that the object language in this particular case sentence 1 can be said to be Hindi, Marathi or Guajarati. Similarly, we can also say that the sentence is written in English, "'ghoḍā' is a masculine noun"; this sentence is written in English in

which the word 'ghoḍā' acts as the subject according to the English grammar and is a masculine noun, 'is' is the verb and this language, this sentence and this language is actually describing Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati.

So, the language which describes Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati etcetera can be said to be English in this case and therefore, once again we can conclude by saying that in this case, the meta-language is English. So, if we look at sentence 1 once again which is "'ghoḍā' is a masculine noun", we can say that the object language in this case is Hindi, Marathi Gujarati etcetera and the meta-language in this case is English.

So, in this case the object language and the meta-language, they are two different languages; Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati being the object language and English being the meta-language. Sometimes the object language could be the same as the meta-language, that is same language can be described using the same language and sometimes in some cases an object language could be different than the meta-language.

What it means is one language can be described using another language. In our case, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati etcetera is a set of languages which was described using another language, namely English. This combination is extremely important for our present study. We need to understand this difference very clearly. So, let us look at some examples in which these combinations can be clearly demarcated.

The first we have example where the object language and the meta-language both are same, one and the same language. Thus for instance, the grammar of Marathi written by Moro Keshav Damle, M. K. Damle, this is written in Marathi. Moro Keshav Damle who wrote a grammar of Marathi in Marathi. So, what we observe here is that the language described in this grammar is Marathi, which is actually spoken by people and the language that is used to describe Marathi is also Marathi. The language that is used to describe Marathi is also Marathi. So, this is an example where this combination becomes more clarified. This example is such that the object language and the meta-language are the same. The example is that of a grammar of Marathi written by a scholar named Moro Keshav Damle, M. K. Damle, he wrote a grammar of Marathi in Marathi. This example is cited for our theoretical clarity. So in this particular case, the grammar describes the language called Marathi. This language Marathi is spoken by people and the language that is used to describe Marathi in this grammar is also Marathi with some additional specifications. So, the object language in this case is Marathi and the meta-language also is Marathi. I would like to add here that the Marathi that is the meta-language is highly technical and as we saw earlier is not actually spoken.

Let us continue looking at a similar example. We know that Wren and Martin, they wrote a grammar of English in English. So, if we closely analyze the situation over here, we observe that the language described in this particular grammar is English and the language use to describe English is also English. Let us continue to look at a similar combination with another example. We know that Wren and Martin wrote a grammar of English in English. If we analyze the situation over here in this particular grammar, we observe that the language that is being described by this grammar is English and the language used to describe English is also in fact English. So, we can say that in this grammar the object language is English and the meta-language is also English. With an addition of some technical devices, technical terminology to describe the object language and that technical terminology and devices they are not actually spoken, they are the creativity of the grammarian.

Now, let us look at the other kind of grammars where the object language and the meta-language are two different languages. For example, there is a Sanskrit grammar written in Persian by a great scholar C. Kunhan Raja. In this particular grammar Sanskrit language is described in Persian language and also the script. So, if we look at this grammar, we observe that the language that is being described in this grammar is Sanskrit and the language that is used to describe Sanskrit is Persian. Therefore, the object language in this grammar is Sanskrit and the meta-language in this grammar is Persian. So, there are these two different languages.

We also have a Sanskrit grammar written in Russian for example, in this case we can say that Sanskrit language is being described in Russian language. So, the language described is Sanskrit and the language used to describe Sanskrit can be said to be Russian. So, the object language is Sanskrit and meta-language is Russian in this particular case.

When we look at a Chinese Sanskrit grammar, a Sanskrit grammar written in Chinese language, we observe that Sanskrit language is described in Chinese language in this grammar. So, in this case we observe that the language that is being described in this grammar is Sanskrit and the language that is used to describe Sanskrit is Chinese. So, we can say that the object language in this case is Sanskrit and the meta-language is Chinese.

Let us take one more example, a Japanese Sanskrit grammar, a grammar of Sanskrit written in Japanese. In this grammar we observe that Sanskrit language is being described in Japanese language. So, the language that is being described in this grammar is Sanskrit and the language that is used to describe Sanskrit is Japanese. So, in this case we can say that the object language is Sanskrit and the meta-language is Japanese.

Then, let us look at the English Sanskrit grammar, Sanskrit grammar written in English. This was done by A. A. Macdonell, Arthur Antony Macdonell. In this grammar, the language that is described is Sanskrit. In fact, an old Vedic and the language used to describe Sanskrit is English. So, the object language in this case is Sanskrit and the meta-language is English.

Then, we look at another example. This is one more Sanskrit grammar written in English, there are several, but we will stick to these few examples. This grammar was written by William Dwight Whitney. In this case we observe that Sanskrit language is described in English language. So, we observe that the language that is being described in this grammar is Sanskrit and the language that is used to describe Sanskrit is English. So, the object language in this grammar is Sanskrit and the meta-language is English.

Then, we take the example of French Sanskrit grammar, Sanskrit grammar written in French. This was composed by another great scholar Louis Renou. In this grammar Sanskrit language is described in French language. We observe that, in this case the language that is being described is Sanskrit and the language used to describe Sanskrit is French. So, the object language over here is Sanskrit and the meta-language is French.

Then, there is a German Sanskrit grammar, Sanskrit grammar written in German language by Jacob Wackernagel. So, in this case once again an old Sanskrit that is being described. So, Sanskrit language is described in German language. If we study this grammar, we observe that the language that is being described in this grammar is Sanskrit and the language used to describe Sanskrit is German. Therefore, the object language here is Sanskrit and the meta-language is German.

And finally, so in all these cases, we have observed that the object language and the meta-language could be two different languages. Now, if we look at the grammar of Sanskrit written by Pāṇini, we can describe it in this fashion, Sanskrit grammar written in Sanskrit. This was composed by Pāṇini and this is what we are studying right now and we observe after studying this grammar that in this grammar Sanskrit language is described in Sanskrit language. So, this grammar of Pāṇini falls in the first category where object language and meta-language, they are one and the same languages.

So, Sanskrit language is described in Sanskrit language. So, we can say that the language described in this grammar is Sanskrit, is Sanskrit and the language used to describe Sanskrit is also Sanskrit. Therefore, the object language of this Pāṇinian grammar Aṣṭādhyāyī is Sanskrit and the meta-language also is Sanskrit. But then, as we saw earlier there are some additional features of the meta-language which are extremely important and different than the object language. So, what are the features of Pāṇini's meta-language?

So, Pāṇini's meta-language has certain different features than the object language Sanskrit. This needs to be studied closely in order to understand the text of the grammar and in order to understand the system, it aims to develop. There are three main differences, which we shall focus our attention on here on words. These three differences are from the object language Sanskrit. They are noted down on the slide. They are related to the meaning of a word, what does the word mean. They are also related to the meaning of the cases, the case endings or the 'vibhaktis' and finally, they are related to the technique of 'pratyāhāra' and we shall study each one of these in detail in the coming lectures.

To summarize, we can say that object language and meta-language are two important languages involved in a grammar. They could be the same language or could be different. When it is the same language, it is extremely important to observe the differences between the object language and the meta-language if any. In case of Pāṇini, they do exist and make a world of difference and in case of Pāṇini, they are to be noted very carefully and this is what we shall devote our time to in the coming classes. Thank you so much.