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## From *nivṛttapadārthaka* to *āropa*: The Turning Point in the Interpretation of Negation in the Eyes of Vaiyākaraṇas

**Abstract** Negation was analysed by Indian grammarian-philosophers from the very beginning of the linguistic thought in India. Over the centuries its understanding developed from purely formal to more semantically and pragmatically oriented analysis. Some of this analysis was influenced by concepts developed by other philosophical schools, which led to the change in the interpretation of negation in the school of Vyākaraṇa. The article first presents the early interpretations of negative expressions in the school of Sanskrit grammarians and then discusses the semantic shift that took place around the 11th century CE in the meaning of negation, especially the implicative (*pariyudāsa*) type. It analyses the passages from various grammatical and philosophical commentaries which introduce the concept of *āropa* (superimposition) to interpret negation.

**Keywords** negation, superimposition, *āropa*, Vaiyākaraṇa, *pariyudāsapraṭiṣedha*, *naṣamāsa*, *nañārtha*

### 1 Introduction

The importance of negation in describing and defining the surrounding world was noted at a very early stage in the Indian thought. A brief look at the passages in the earliest Vedic hymns shows that negative statements were frequently used to describe the state our world emerged from, which could not be otherwise described or expressed. Therefore it comes as no surprise that Sanskrit grammarians, etymologists and philosophers studied the notion of negation, both sentential and nominal, from the very beginning of the development of Indian intellectual thought. When discussing negation in Sanskrit, a number of factors should be taken into account. Firstly, it is the division into *prasajya*- and *pariyudāsapraṭiṣedha*, traditionally explained as sentential (non-implicative) and nominal



(implicative) types of negation.<sup>1</sup> This division was accepted not only within the school of Sanskrit grammarians (*vyākaraṇa*), but by all the other philosophical schools in India. Secondly, it is the actual meaning of negation, more precisely the negative particle; whether it is expressive only of absence (non-existence) or perhaps it encompasses other meanings, such as opposition, difference etc. The preponderance over the semantic aspect of negation is closely linked to the discussion across philosophical and linguistic schools in India as to whether particles can be considered meaning carriers; whether they are expressive (*vācaka*) or merely suggestive (*dyotaka*) of a meaning. Consequently, if the negative particle (or other particles not formally negative but exhibiting negative polarity) is not expressive, how is the negative meaning achieved and understood? Finally, it is the evolution the notion of negation that went over centuries. Throughout the history of linguistic and philosophical development in India we can observe how the interpretation of the meaning of negative expressions, the meaning assigned to the negative particle, changed; how it evolved from pure morphological analysis to context driven explication. The development is particularly noticeable in the grammarians' analysis of nominal negation and constructions they term negative compounds (*nañsamāsa*). The turning point in the interpretation of such constructions seems to be around the 10th–11th century CE. In various grammatical and philosophical commentaries composed around that time we find the concept of *āropa* (superimposition) used to explain the *paryudāsapraṭiṣedha* in *nañsamāsa*. This article aims to discuss this interpretational shift based on the excerpts from relevant texts of that period in the tradition of the Vaiyākaraṇa school.

The school of grammarians, which originated with Pāṇini and his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>2</sup> at a certain point diverged and kept developing its more formal analytical branch alongside the one more philosophically, epistemologically and ontologically, oriented. Despite different focus, commentaries composed in both these branches discussed topics covered by Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (A) either explicitly or implied by the structure of the *sūtras*. In this article, I am focusing on the discussion regarding mostly, albeit not exclusively, *paryudāsapraṭiṣedha* (implicative, nominal negation) expressed by negative compounds (*nañsamāsa*), which incorporates the concept of superimposition into the interpretation of the meaning of negation and the cognitive process behind it. I am analyzing the relevant passages from the Kaiyaṭa's *Pradīpa* (Pr, c. 11th century CE)—the commentary on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (VMBh, c. 2nd century BCE), Jinendrabuddhi's *Nyāsa* (Ny, c. 9th century CE) and Haradatta's *Padamañjarī* (PM, c. 11th century CE)—both commentaries on the *Kāśīkāvṛtti* (KV, Jayāditya and Vāmana, c. 7th

<sup>1</sup> Cardona 1967: 34; Staal 1962; Timalsina 2014.

<sup>2</sup> This statement is a simplification. Linguistic tradition existed before Pāṇini's time in India as evidenced from the names of grammarians he himself mentions in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, as well as the complexity of the system he created.

century CE), as well as Helārāja's *Prakīrṇaparakāśa* (PP, c. 980 CE)—the commentary on Bharṭṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* (VP, c. 5th century CE). The commentaries under discussion represent both branches of the school of grammarians, thus demonstrating that formal linguistic topics often merged with epistemological issues creating a unique school of philosophy of language in India.

## 2 Early interpretations

The discussion on the types of negation and the meaning behind a variety of negative statements is limited at an early stage of Sanskrit grammatical thought. Pāṇini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (c. 4th century BCE) does not discuss those topics; the only rule that shows how negation should be interpreted to an extent is the rule where he introduces negative *tatpuruṣa* compounds, P. 2.2.6 *nañ* ('[The negative particle] *nañ* [combines with a syntactically connected nominal *pada* to form a *tatpuruṣa* compound]').<sup>3</sup> This rule specifies that the negative particle *nañ*, despite being an indeclinable,<sup>4</sup> is part of compounds of *tatpuruṣa* type. This further means that the relation within such a compound is of *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa* (qualificand-qualifier) character, and it bears particular morphological consequences. It is the latter member of a compound that determines the number and gender of the entire formation. Negative *tatpuruṣa* compounds represent, in the majority of cases, *paryudāsa* negation; they point to the difference of the object rather than pure absence, thus implying a positive object in itself albeit expressed in a negative manner.<sup>5</sup>

It was Yāska (the author of the *Nirukta*, Nir, 5th century BCE) who provided a more semantic approach to negation by mentioning two meanings that a negative particle can express.

*neti pratiśedhārthīyo bhāṣāyām | ubhayam anvadyāyam | nendraṃ devam amaṃsate | iti pratiśedhārthīyaḥ | purastād upācāras tasya yat pratiśedhati | durmadāso na surāyām | ityupamārthīyaḥ | upariśād upācāras tasya yenopamimite | (Nir 1.4)*

The word *na* has the sense of negation in common language, and both (i.e. the sense of negation and comparison) in Vedic Sanskrit: thus in the passage, 'They did not

<sup>3</sup> Translation Katre: A(1): 128. P. 2.2.6 stands for the second *adhyāya*, second *pāda* and sixth *sūtra* in the A.

<sup>4</sup> Indeclinables can also form compounds in Sanskrit, the *avyayibhāvasamāsas*. They are of adverbial type with the second member serving to specify the former.

<sup>5</sup> The fact that negative compounds possess a positive, external, referent was the subject of discussion within the school of Vyākaraṇa starting with Patañjali. It was also picked up by Bharṭṛhari in the VP and the commentators of the later period. For some discussion of the potential types of negative compound classification see Timalsina (2014) and Sulich-Cowley (2021).

recognize Indra as a god,' it has the sense of negation. The established use is [to place it] before that which it negates. In the passage 'Like hard drinkers of wine,' it has the sense of comparison. The established use is [to place it] after that which it compares.<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to the description provided by Pāṇini, Yāska concentrates on negation standing alone (that is, not compounded) in a sentence and emphasises the distinction between the Vedic and common language. He seems to be limiting the semantic distinction into negation proper (*pratiṣedha*) and comparison (*upamā*) expressed (or indicated)<sup>7</sup> by the particle *na* to the Vedic language, thus implying that common Sanskrit does not differentiate into these two aspects of negation. It seems, however, that this dual semantic aspect of negation, despite proper definitions and terminology (namely later used *prasajya* and *pariyudāsa*), was clear to Indian grammarians, etymologists and philosophers already at that early stage of the development of Indian linguistic thought.<sup>8</sup>

The earliest detailed analysis of negation in the school of grammarians is found in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. He uses the terms *prasajya* and *pariyudāsa* in his commentary in various contexts, and discusses the difference in their interpretation. His commentary on P 2.2.6 is of particular importance, because Patañjali's interpretation of negative compounds (and of compounds in general) was the initial turning point in the understanding of negation by grammarians and later grammarian-philosophers. Although stemming from a very formal analysis of Pāṇini, his interpretation concentrated on the semantic aspect of compounds by introducing the notion of headedness (*prādhānya*); thus from this perspective the negative compounds would be considered *tatpuruṣa* because the head of a compound lies at the end (*uttarapadārthapradhānya*). Such an approach of the author of the MBh can be viewed as a transition stage between the formal classification proposed by Pāṇini in the A and more context dependent interpretations.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This is a modified translation of Sarup (Nir I: 7–8), who translates *bhāṣā* as 'classical' and *anvadhya* as 'Vedic' language.

<sup>7</sup> Sanskrit linguistics divides the types of words (*padajāta*) into expressive (*vācaka*) and suggestive (*dyotaka*) depending whether they are independently meaningful or serve only to illuminate the meaning inherent in accompanying words. Vaiyākaraṇas are of the opinion that particles (*nipāta*) are suggestive.

<sup>8</sup> The analysis of negation used by Pāṇini in his rules shows that he was well aware of the distinction between *prasajya* and *pariyudāsa*, even though he never defined them. There are negative rules which prohibit the application of an operation (*prasajya*) and others which exclude certain elements from the domain of a given operation (*pariyudāsa*). See Cardona (1967) for more details.

<sup>9</sup> Pāṇini uses various criteria to classify compounds, they are not purely semantic as proposed in the commentatorial literature (see e.g. Wujastyk [1982: 181]). An important feature of

In his commentary on P 2.2.6 Patañjali discusses two examples of *nañsamāsa*s, namely *abrāhmaṇa* (lit. ‘a non-Brahmin’ or ‘a bad Brahmin’) and *aneka* (lit. ‘not one’, ‘many’). Despite their superficial similarity, they are not tackled in the same manner by Patañjali. In the passage discussing *abrāhmaṇa*, its similarity to and difference from regular *tatpuruṣa* compounds, Patañjali says:

*athavā punar astūttarapadārthapradhānaḥ | nanu coktam abrāhmaṇam ānayet ukte  
brāhmaṇamātrasyānayanam prāpnoti | naiṣa doṣaḥ | idaṃ tāvad ayaṃ praṣṭavyaḥ –  
atheha rājapurūṣam ānayet ukte puruṣamātrasyānayanam kasmān na bhavati? asty  
atra viśeṣaḥ | raja viśeṣakaḥ prayujyate tena viśiṣṭasyānayanam bhavati | ihāpi tarhi  
nañ viśeṣakaḥ prayujyate tena viśiṣṭasyānayanam bhaviṣyati | kaḥ punar asau? nivṛtta-  
padārthakaḥ | (VMBh\_2: 669.3–670.2)*

Alternatively, let it be that [a compound] has the latter member as predominant. But has it not been said that when [a sentence] ‘Fetch a non-Brahmin’ is uttered, it would result in fetching just a Brahmin. This is not a fault. This is indeed what he should be asked—in this case then, when [a sentence] ‘Fetch a king’s man’ is uttered, how come just a man is fetched? Here is the difference. [The word] *rājan* is used as a qualifier so there is fetching [of a man] qualified by it. Here as well then *nañ* is used a qualifier and there will be fetching [of a Brahmin] qualified by it. What is that? It is [a Brahmin] whose object-meant/meaning has been removed.

In this case, the second member (*uttarapada*) stands for a positive entity specifying the meaning to be denied. If, however, we take a word to stand for a collection of qualities (such as birth, asceticism and proper conduct in the case of a Brahmin),<sup>10</sup> negation will serve the purpose of excluding only some of them, not the entirety of an entity. Or to put it differently, it will bring to our attention the absence of some qualities necessary for the designation of *brāhmaṇa* to be obtained. Patañjali gives an example of a person who is mistakenly taken for a Brahmin due to their impeccable behaviour and ascetic nature. What the person lacks, however, is the birth right; this mistake in the designation is rectified by the usage of a negative form *abrāhmaṇa*. Here again Patañjali refers to the removal (*nivṛtti*) of the original meaning but he says that this removal is caused by the person’s descent:

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those criteria is the notion of *upasarjana* (‘a subordinate element’), the identification of which allows us to decide the type of compound.

<sup>10</sup> *tapaḥ śrutaṃ ca yoniś cety etad brāhmaṇakāraṇam |  
tapaḥśrutābhyāṃ yo hino jātibrahmaṇa eva saḥ ||* (VMBh\_1: I 411.16–17 / VMBh\_2: 673.3–4)  
‘Asceticism, learning and descent make a Brahmin; without asceticism and learning he is nothing but a Brahmin by birth.’, translated by Bronkhorst (2016: 114 ft 16).

*jātihine sandehād durupadeśāc ca brāhmaṇaśabdo vartate | sandehāt tāvat – gauram śucyācāram piṅgalaṃ kapilakeśam dr̥ṣṭvādhyavasyati brāhmaṇo 'yam iti | tataḥ paścād upalabhate nāyaṃ brāhmaṇo 'brāhmaṇo 'yam iti | tatra sandehāc ca brāhmaṇaśabdo vartate, jātikṛtā cārthasya nivṛttiḥ | (VMBh\_2: 674.6–675.2)*

In the case of a person of low birth the word *brāhmaṇa* is used as a result of a mistake or wrong instruction. [Let us see the example of it being] a result of a mistake first—having seen a person that is light (skinned?), of pure conduct, having red and brownish hair, a person determines that ‘this is a Brahmin’. Then afterwards they realise that it is not a Brahmin, [they say,] ‘this is a non-Brahmin’. Therefore, as a result of a mistake the word *brāhmaṇa* is used and the cessation of this meaning is caused by a [person’s] descent.<sup>11</sup>

In both these cases Patañjali explains that the word loses its original meaning; in the latter case the role of cognitive errors is emphasised. This error can be ours or can be caused by others, but it is the foundation for the usage of negation in the first place. There is no discussion in the *Mahābhāṣya* as to how this error actually occurs; what happens when a non-Brahmin is mistaken for a Brahmin. As we will see, this process will be explained by later commentators through the mechanism of superimposition (*āropa*) starting with the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries.

Interestingly, his analysis of the compound *aneka* does not follow similar lines of *paryudāsa*, the option that is considered by Kaiyaṭa, but he suggests that what we are observing in this case is *prasajyapraṭiṣedha*.

*katham punar ekasya praṭiṣedhena dvibahūnām sampratyayaḥ syāt? prasajyāyaṃ kriyāḡṇau tataḥ paścān nivṛttiḥ karoti | (VMBh\_2: 676.1–2)*

How again should we get the comprehension of two and many by the negation of one? Having established the possibility of an action or a quality [first], he then, subsequently, removes [it].<sup>12</sup>

There is no reference to a mistake made or wrong instructions, and we do obtain the meaning of ‘many’ associated with *aneka* yet it is not done as in the cases of *paryudāsa* discussed earlier. The problem that seems to occur in this line of interpretation is how to get the positive meaning out of pure negation, which *prasajya* is. If *paryudāsa* implies the existence of another object different from, yet still similar in some aspects to, the one that is negated, where does the implication

<sup>11</sup> The passage continues to describe an example of a person being wrongfully instructed; I omit it here because the structure of an argument and conclusions are identical.

<sup>12</sup> Joshi and Roodbergen 1973: 107 (in [Lowe and Benson 2022: 63]).

come from in the cases such as *aneka*. Patañjali does not elaborate on that but Kaiyaṭa points out that every action and every quality need to have a substratum (*āśraya*) and in this case a substance is implied with an undetermined number (*aniyatasaṃkhyadravya*). This implication allows us to comprehend other numbers (i.e. two or more) in *aneka* when the number one is negated.

### 3 Superimposition (*āropa*)

As we can see, the earliest discussions on negation concentrated on the meaning of denying, removal or absence without explaining in detail how the process happened. What we read in the MBh is that the removal of the meaning is natural and is revealed by the particle *nañ*. The representatives of later Vaiyākaraṇa school seemed to have been dissatisfied to an extent with Patañjali's approach. They went further in explaining not only what happens, namely there is a cognitive error that needs to be rectified, but also what the process looks like. There is a visible shift in interpretation of the passages discussed above occurring around the end of the 10th and 11th centuries CE. The group of commentators flourishing at that period, whose passages I am analysing below, begin to resort to the concept of *āropa* (superimposition) rather than limiting themselves to *nivṛtti* as the meaning of negative compounds; this notion of superimposition which was not explored often in earlier grammatical texts.<sup>13</sup>

#### 3.1 Kaiyaṭa's *Pradīpa*

Let us start with Kaiyaṭa's commentary on MBh. Kaiyaṭa begins with commenting on the three options related to headedness in *nañsamāśas*, namely whether it is the former (*pūrvapada*), latter (*uttarapada*) or external (*anyapada*) element that is predominant. His stand on this is flexible, as he claims that they are all equally possible because despite the meaning not being taught, it is still understood based on the power of denotation. The reason why Patañjali opts for *uttarapadārthaprādhānya* is that it is the least problematic solution.<sup>14</sup> Kaiyaṭa explains the conundrum of the expression *abrāhmaṇam ānaya* ('Fetch [me] a non-Brahmin') by treating *nañ* as a qualifier, which does not serve to destroy a particular quality but is there to explain the quality that is undetermined:

<sup>13</sup> This is not entirely precise. The concept of *āropa*, *adhyāsa*, *adhyāropa* can be found in earlier grammatical texts, for example in the VP of Bhartṛhari (VP III.3.39–41, the chapter on relations—*sambandhasamuddeśa*, see Houben (1995: 257–262). It is not, however, used with reference to negation and is not developed further.

<sup>14</sup> *yadyapīhārtho na nirdiṣṭas tathāpy abhidhānaśaktisvābhāvīyāl labhyate | [...] evaṃ pa-  
kṣatrayasambhāve ṭpapratividheyapakṣam āśrayitum āha – uttarapadārthaprādhāna iti |* (VMBh\_2:  
667. 5–7).

*ihānīyataguṇasya guṇaviśeṣapratipādanāya viśeṣaṇaṃ pravartate na tadupaghātāya*  
| (VMBh\_2 667.7–8)<sup>15</sup>

Here (i.e. in a language), a qualifier functions to explain a particular quality of an object whose quality is undetermined, not to destroy it.

Negating the meaning of *brāhmaṇa*, however, leads to the said meaning being entirely absent, which consequently, questions its predominance in a compound. So, the word is meaningless because it fails to express the difference and what we might observe is the synonymy between both *brāhmaṇa* and *abrāhmaṇa*. Yet, Kaiyaṭa still claims that such a compound which is formed of partly meaningful and partly meaningless elements is valid, because its explanation has been provided<sup>16</sup>.

In response to Patañjali's removal of the original meaning of the stem (*padārthasya nivṛtṭiḥ*) Kaiyaṭa resorts to the notion of superimposition.

*nañviśiṣṭasyeti | āropitabrāhmaṇasya kṣatriyāder ity arthaḥ | kaḥ punar asāv iti*  
| *bhāvābhāvayor virodhān nañviśiṣṭo brāhmaṇārtho nopapadyate iti bhāvaḥ | nivṛt-*  
*tapadārthaka iti | nivṛttaḥ padārtho mukhyaṃ brāhmaṇyaṃ yasmin sa kṣatriyādir*  
*arthaḥ | sādrśyādinādhyāropitabrāhmaṇyo nañdyotitadavastha ity arthaḥ |* (VMBh\_2:  
670.5–8)

[Let's explain:] of [the word] qualified by *nañ*. The meaning is this: of a *kṣatriya* etc. on whom Brahminhood has been superimposed. What is it then? The meaning *brāhmaṇa* qualified by *nañ* is not possible due to the contradiction between existence and non-existence—such is the meaning. It is [a Brahmin] whose object-meant/meaning has been removed. This is the meaning a *kṣatriya* etc. in whom the meaning, the primary [meaning] of Brahminhood, has been removed. And that state of Brahminhood being superimposed due to similarity is revealed by *nañ*—this is the sense.

As Kaiyaṭa finds it difficult to accept that non-existence (*nañ*) can qualify existence (*brāhmaṇa*) due to their contradictory character, he suggests that there is a secondary underlying meaning in the stem (*kṣatriya*) on which Brahminhood was superimposed, and the condition—of not being a Brahmin by birth—is revealed by the accompanying particle. Kaiyaṭa also refers to the metaphorical meaning (*upacāra*) when explaining how negative compounds of *abrāhmaṇa* type

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Haradatta's KV 2: 105.13–15 and his explanation below in 3.3. This and following Kaiyaṭa's comments are almost identical to Haradatta's. On two authors' relative chronology see Pathak (1931).

<sup>16</sup> See also Joshi and Roodbergen (1973: 76).

are understood. What he means is that while using the word *brāhmaṇa*, a primary notion of a Brahmin is created, as per acknowledged usage, and this—wrongful in this case—notion is subsequently removed with the help of *nañ*.

*ayam atrārthaḥ – kevalo brāhmaṇaśabdaḥ prayujyamānaḥ prasiddhavaśān mukhya eva brāhmaṇārthe pratyayam ādadhāti, nañprayoge tu nirṛtṭapadārthakatā brāhmaṇaśabdasya pratiyate | (VMBh\_2: 671.9–10)*

This is the meaning here—the word *brāhmaṇa* used alone signifies only the primary [meaning] according to acknowledged usage, and creates the notion of the meaning of a Brahmin; but when *nañ* is used, it is understood that the word *brāhmaṇa* has its meaning removed.

When it comes to the example *aneka* analysed above, which could be interpreted along the lines of *prasajya* or *paryudāsa* negation, what Kaiyaṭa is saying is that in both cases the secondary meaning of ‘many’, rather than pure negation, is feasible. When *aneka* is treated as *prasajyapraṭiṣedha* and when number one is negated, the understanding of two etc. arises as it is impossible to have an action or quality without a substratum:

*nirāśrayoś ca tayor asaṃbhavād aniyatasamkhyadravyākṣepe saty ekapraṭiṣedhād bahūnāṃ pratītir ity arthaḥ | (VMBh\_2: 676.9–10)*

It is impossible to have these two (i.e. action and quality) without a substratum; when there is the rejection of the substance of the undetermined number due to the negation of [the number] one, there is the understanding of many—such is the sense.

When *aneka* is interpreted as *paryudāsa*, however, its meaning is connected to the numbers other than ‘one’, and the process which allows us to comprehend that meaning involves superimposition, not simple negation. Kaiyaṭa notices that there is no difference in how we analyse *abrāhmaṇa* and *aneka*; in this latter case the notion of oneness (*ekatva*) is superimposed on two etc. and subsequently negated. Just as Brahminhood is wrongly superimposed on a *kṣatriya* to be eventually corrected.<sup>17</sup> The example of *aneka* is particularly interesting because it allows us to observe the semantic division in interpretation between negation

<sup>17</sup> *paryudāse tu dvyādisamkhyāyukta evānekaśabdasyārthaḥ | yasmād dvyādiṣv ekatvam āropya praṭiṣidhyate yathā kṣatriyādau brāhmaṇatvam | tato yathā – abrāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyādir ucyate tathānekaśabdena samkhyāntarayuktaḥ | (VMBh\_2: 676.11–13).*

of *prasajya* and of *paryudāsa* types, where the former is limited to the negation of an action, later explained with *abhāva*, and in the latter case the notion of *āropa* (the superimposition of wrongful ideas) is resorted to.

### 3.2 Helārāja's *Prakīrṇaparakāśa*

Kaiyaṭa's *Pradīpa* was heavily influenced by Helārāja's commentary on Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*. Helārāja refers to Patañjali's *nivṛttapadārthaka* concept in numerous places, but he also employs the notion of *āropa* in his explanation of *nañsamāsa*s. The concept of superimposition used by the commentators from the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards can be traced to Bhartṛhari's 'ideas' in his explanation of mistaken cognition underlying the use of negative compounds, *abrāhmaṇa* in this case.

*ḷṣatriyādaṃ paḍaṃ kṛtvā buddhiḥ sattāntarāśrayā |*  
*jātyā bhinnāṃ tataḥ sattāṃ prasaktāṃ apakarṣati || VP 3.14.262*

An idea based on some other existence is first applied (by mistake) to *ḷṣatriya* and the like and [when the negative particle is used], it removes the existence applied to something different from that based on a universal.<sup>18</sup>

Helārāja explains that the reason for the usage of the word *brāhmaṇa* is an error through which an idea of a Brahmin is applied to a *ḷṣatriya*; this error of the mental effort (*mithyādhyavasāya*) upon whose realisation the negative particle is used to correct it.

*brāhmaṇasattāviṣayā buddhir yadā kutaścid bhrāntikāraṇāt ḷṣatriye pravartate tadā*  
*brāhmaṇasābdaṣ tatra prayujyate | so 'yaṃ mithyādhyavasāyo yadā tattvajñānān nivar-*  
*tate tadā nañḥ prayoga ity ayaṃ viṣayo nañsamāsayā | (VP\_1: 274.1–4)*

When an idea whose scope is the existence of a Brahmin is employed to a *ḷṣatriya* on account of some mistake, then the word *brāhmaṇa* is used in that case. When after realising the truth that this is the error of the mental effort one corrects it, then [the particle] *nañ* is used; this is the scope of a negative compound.

Bhartṛhari uses the notion of *upacārasattā* here, metaphorical or figurative existence; a thing is perceived by the mind regardless of its actual existence in the real world. Superimposition that Helārāja resorts to is an entirely intellectual process (*buddhiṣtha*). What superimposition requires is, explained yet again—similarity of objects.

<sup>18</sup> This is a modified translation of S. Iyer as given in VP\_2.

*nāyaṃ brāhmaṇo mīthyā tv evam avasitas tatsadṛśo 'brāhmaṇo 'yam iti, sadṛśaḥ kṣatriyādir eva samāsārthaḥ sampadyate na loṣṭādi(h), samāropanibandhanasya sādṛśyāder abhāvāt | (VP\_1: 274.5–7)*

This is not a Brahmin, but he has been thus wrongly understood; *abrāhmaṇa* is someone similar [to a Brahmin]. And the meaning of a compound is that what is similar is a *kṣatriya* etc. only, not a lump and such, due to the lack of similarity being the cause of superimposition.

The meaning that is conveyed by the word is secondary. Words are capable of containing both aspects (existence and non-existence) and the only way in which we are able to discern which aspect is meant is by using negation.<sup>19</sup>

The argument is repeated in the section of the VP that elaborates on *uttara-padārthapradhānya* in a compound. In his comment on the *kārikā* 280<sup>20</sup> Helārāja points out that negation should not be the only meaning expressed by negative compounds; we use those constructions not only to negate the superimposed object (*pratiṣedhamātropakṣayatve tu nañsamāsasyātrāsādhanah samāsārthaḥ syād iti na samāropitarūpapraṭiṣedhamātre 'sya vyāpārah | [VP\_1: 281.3–4]*). When a *nañsamāsa* is used, the notion of superimposition should also always be followed; and the reason why the latter member of a compound gets predominance is because it shows an object/word used metaphorically that is to be negated (*sarvatra prasiddhe nañsamāse samāropo 'nugantavyah | upacāritapadārthapraṭiṣedhena hy uttarapadārthapradhāno nañsamāsa ity | [VP\_1: 281.5–6]*). This seems to imply that superimposition is one of the meanings of the particle *nañ*, the idea that will be later discussed by Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa in the 17th century CE.

As mentioned above, Kaiyaṭa follows Helārāja's interpretation and we find in the PP the similarity between the case of *abrāhmaṇa* and *aneka*, both explained with the help of superimposition following Bhartṛhari's *upacārasattā*. What Helārāja says is that numbers other than 'one' are understood from the form *aneka* by resorting to *sādṛśya* (similarity). So yet again, there is a mistaken superimposition of 'oneness' onto other numbers and this mistake needs to be rectified (*tatra cādhyāropito durupadeśādīnā nimittentottarapadārtha iti sarvatra samānam | [VP\_1: 283.12–13]*).

The possibility of interpreting *aneka* along the line of *prasajya* as well as *paryudāsa pratiṣedha* was discussed in the VP by Bhartṛhari, but it is worth point-

<sup>19</sup> Chaturvedi 2001: 86.

<sup>20</sup> *asamyagupadeśād vā nimittāt saṃśayasya vā | śabdaprayatīr na tv asti loṣṭādiṣu viparyayāt || (VP 3.14.262)*

'Either through faulty instruction or through some cause of doubt, a word is applied to a wrong object. It is not applied to a clod of earth and the like because of the non-existence (of the above two circumstances).'

ing out that despite the differences in the subject of negation when in a sentence versus in a compound, the word *eka* follows its own properties in both cases (*tasmān nañō viṣayaprakṛtyartham ekaśabdaḥ prayujyamānaḥ pradhānārtha iti svadharmān anuvartate vṛttivākyayor aviśeṣeṇety āha* | [VP\_1: 283.20–21]). Both in a *vākya* as well as *samāsa*, it does not have to abandon its own number in order to stand for other numbers (i.e. two etc.). In spite of the fact therefore that Sanskrit grammarians distinguish between *prasajyapraṭiśedha* expressing (or suggesting) mere negation, the negation of an action or existence, and *panyudāsapraṭiśedha* implying the existence of a different, yet similar enough, object, in the case of *aneka* the result is actually the same. Whether we opt for implicative or non-implicative interpretation of negation, the expression is still able to convey the positive implication of secondary numbers.

### 3.3 Haradatta's *Padamañjarī*

Interestingly, KV itself does not elaborate on the *sūtra* P 2.2.6; it merely states that a negative compound is of *tatpuruṣa* type and gives a couple of examples. *Kāśikā's* commentators investigate the matter much further quoting extensively from earlier sources, both Kaiyaṭa's Pr and Bhartṛhari's VP. Haradatta, following Patañjali, discusses the three options of interpreting headedness in *nañsamāsas* and similarly to other commentators of the later (post-Bhartṛhari) period, especially Kaiyaṭa, perceives all three views as equally acceptable from the semantic perspective and the preference for *uttarapadārthaprādhānya* seen as rooted in morphology. In his *Padamañjarī*, he addresses the problem of the particle *nañ* being a qualifier in a compound, whose role is to specify the quality an object possesses but not to destroy it. So, if the meaning of *brāhmaṇa* is entirely to be negated by the use of *nañ*, how is it possible to assume the predominance of a non-existing element in a compound?<sup>21</sup> And if the *uttarapada* (in *abrāhmaṇa*) should be considered predominant, that would render *nañ* useless; as a consequence, despite the correctness of forming a compound of both meaningful and meaningless units, wouldn't we face the problem of fetching a Brahmin, instead of a non-Brahmin, in the already quoted and analysed example *abrāhmaṇam ānaya*?<sup>22</sup> In his response to these issues, Haradatta follows Kaiyaṭa; he brings in the loss of original meaning and the role of superimposition, but also mentions that in the process a secondary meaning of the word emerges.

<sup>21</sup> *katham nañ nāma syāt, aniyataguṇasya guṇaviśeṣapratipādanāya hi viśeṣaṇam pravarttate, na tadupaghātāya | nañā ca brāhmaṇārthaḥ sarvātmanā praṭiśidhyamānāḥ praṭiśidhyata iti katham asataḥ prādhānyam syat* | (KV 2: 105.8–11).

<sup>22</sup> *tasmād uttarapadārthaprādhānyam icchatāsmīn viṣaye nañ anarthakaḥ, anvākyanasāmarthyāt tāsādhutvam evambhūtasārthavadanarthakāvayavasya samāsyeti vācyam, tataś ca brāhmaṇamātrasyānayanam prapnoti* | (KV 2: 105.11–14).

*naīṣa doṣaḥ, nivṛttapadārthako 'tra brāhmaṇaśabdaḥ, sā ca nivṛtṭiḥ svābhāviki nañā dyotyate, ko 'rthaḥ? kevalo brāhmaṇaśabdaḥ prayujyamānaḥ prasiddhivaśān mukhyam eva brāhmaṇam ācaṣṭe; nañprayogeṇa tu kṣatriyāḍau sādrśyādīnā nimittenādhyāropitaṃ brāhmaṇyaṃ na tātvikam iti dyotyate | tad evaṃ mukhyo brāhmaṇaśabdasyārtho nivṛtto jātaś cāmukhyaḥ kṣatriyādir iti na brāhmaṇamātrānayanam, nāpi na kasya-cidānayanam iti siddham | (KV 2: 105.15–20)*

This is not a fault. Here the word *brāhmaṇa* has its meaning removed; and this removal being natural is revealed by *nañā*. What is the meaning [then]? The word *brāhmaṇa* used alone signifies only the primary [meaning] that is a Brahmin according to acknowledged usage. By the use of *nañā*, however, superimposed Brahminhood onto a *kṣatriya* etc. as a result of similarity is revealed, not the real one. In such a way, the primary meaning of the word *brāhmaṇa* is removed and a non-primary one of a *kṣatriya* emerges. [Thus the instruction *abrāhmaṇam ānaya*] will not result in fetching only a Brahmin or not fetching anyone—this is achieved.

What Haradatta seems to be saying here is that the word *brāhmaṇa* has the potential, or contains, both a primary and secondary meaning. When used alone, it is only the main meaning that is understood; the secondary meaning arises (*jāyate*) when Brahminhood is superimposed on a *kṣatriya* triggered by a mistaken judgment. This emergence of a non-primary meaning allows for the instruction *abrāhmaṇam ānaya* to result in fetching a person that is different than a Brahmin. This superimposition takes place only on a linguistic level, of course, not in reality, but it allows for the correct interpretation of the negative compounds, such as *abrāhmaṇa*.

To support his line of argumentation Haradatta quotes the *kārikā* from the VP

*prāk samāsāt padārthānaṃ nivṛttir dyotyate nañā |  
svabhāvato nivṛttānāṃ rūpābhedād alakṣitā || VP 3.14.250*

Before entering into the compound the negative particle indicates (*dyotyate*) the non-existence of things which had naturally ceased to be but which had not been noticed because of identity of form.

He thus emphasises that despite the loss of the primary meaning, the usage of the latter member in the *abrāhmaṇa* compound is essential in order to specify the meaning that is being removed.

Haradatta adopts a similar approach when discussing the form *aneka* ('not one, many'), which he again analyses through superimposition. In the case of *aneka*, oneness is superimposed on other numbers, such as two etc, and the primary meaning ('one') is subsequently negated; this—again—allows for the retaining of the predominance of the latter member of a compound.

*ihāneko jana āgata iti dvyādiṣv ekatvam āropitaṃ pratiyate, mukyaṃ tu pratiśidhyate, kṣatriyādāv iva brāhmaṇyam ity ekavacanam eva bhavati dvyādiśaṃkhyā pratiyate | tad evam uttarapadārthapradhāna iti sthitam | (KV 2: 106.11–13)*

In this case, [in the expression] *aneko jana āgata* ('Many people have come'), it is understood that oneness was superimposed on two etc., and the primary [meaning] is negated. Just like in the case of a *kṣatriya* etc. Brahminhood is used, the single number only is used [here, but] the number two etc. is understood. In such a way, it is established that [the compound *aneka*] has the latter member as predominant.

Not only does Haradatta use superimposition here again, but he also suggests the process of the primary meaning disappearing and the secondary one emerging. In such a way he is able to explain both the semantic shift we are observing in *aneka* from one to many while retaining the grammatical form conforming to the original stem.

### 3.4 An odd commentary—Jinendrabuddhi's *Nyāsa*

The case of KV and its commentaries is very helpful to us to observe the influence, or the lack thereof, of various external philosophical trends on the school of grammarians. Jinendrabuddhi is said to have lived around the 8th–9th century CE<sup>23</sup> and his analysis of P. 2.2.6 differs from the interpretations presented above belonging to the period two centuries later. Jinendrabuddhi closely follows what Patañjali states in the *Mahābhāṣya*:

*yady evam – abrāhmaṇam ānayetv ukte brāhmaṇamātrasyānayanam prapnoti? atha nivṛttipadārthako 'yaṃ brāhmaṇaśabdaḥ; sā ca nivṛtīḥ svābhāviki nañā dyotyata iti matam, evaṃ ca saty abhāva evāsyārtha ity abrāhmaṇam ānayetv ukte na kasyacid ānayanam prapnoti? naiśa doṣaḥ, sarvaṃ hi padaṃ svārthe prayujyamānaṃ prayogapratijñānam apekṣate | tathā cuktam – 'ātmā buddhyā sametyārthān mano yuikte vivakṣaya'<sup>24</sup> iti | (KV 2: 104.28–106.24)*

<sup>23</sup> Hayes 1983: 709, 716 fns 26–27. Hayes refers to Scharfe and his suggestion that Jinendrabuddhi could be placed as late as the 11th century. If that were the case, that would make his commentary even more interesting as the one disregarding the notion of *āropa* in the interpretation of negation when contrasted with all the others composed around the same time. That seems unlikely, however, given the number of various authors quoting Jinendrabuddhi's *Nyāsa* (see Pathak [1931: 247]).

<sup>24</sup> This is a quote from the *Pāṇinīyaśikṣa* (PŚ 3ab) and the entire passage refers to the speech production. PŚ postdates Pāṇini but was composed before Bhartṛhari's VP. See Cardona (2014: 108 fn. 63) and Kulkarni (2021: 487).

If this is so—when it is said ‘Fetch a non-Brahmin’, does fetching only a Brahmin not result? Then the word *brāhmaṇa* is one whose meaning has been removed;<sup>25</sup> this removal is natural and is revealed by *nañ*—this is the view. If this is so, its (i.e. the particle’s) meaning is absence (*abhāva*) only, and when it is said ‘Fetch a non-Brahmin’, would it not result in fetching no one? This is not a fault, because every word used in its own meaning is expected to assert of usage. Thus it is said—‘The soul, having collected the meanings through the intellect enjoins the mind with the desire to speak.’<sup>26</sup>

He goes on to explaining the basis for using negative compounds such as *abrāhmaṇa* and emphasises the role of a mistake in the process. According to Jinendrabuddhi, *mithyājñāna* is the reason why we need to correct our statement—with the help of *nañ*. So, what Jinendrabuddhi, following Patañjali, is saying that we make a mistake (as a result of our senses being misled—*duṣṭendriyahetuka*) and then correct it, thus removing the original meaning from the statement. This mistake is based on similarity between two objects, which is crucial for the error to occur, hence the term *abrāhmaṇa* referring to a *kṣatriya*. There is no mention of superimposing of one notion onto another of any sort. Jinendrabuddhi thus states that there are two factors enabling the creation of a negative compound, namely the initial cognitive error and the similarity of mistaken objects. He does hint as to the process that occurs in our minds but does not elaborate on it and does not view it as superimposition.

The concept of superimposition was further developed by the philosophers and grammarians of the later period, such as Bhaṭṭoji Dikṣita in the *Vaiyākaraṇamatonmajjanakārikā* or Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa in the *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇa*, including its abridged versions;<sup>27</sup> its development culminates in the works of Nāgeśa in the 17th century CE.<sup>28</sup> Although the very term *āropa* was quite evidently borrowed from external sources, it seem that *Vaiyākaraṇas* adjusted it to their own semantics and epistemology, thus creating a unique concept. Further investigation into mutual relations and the transfer of ideas between those schools of thought which utilise the concept of superimposition in their philosophy would definitely prove to be a worthy endeavour.

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<sup>25</sup> The text read *nivṛttipadārthaka* but it seems to be a mistake; the former member of the compound should not be an action noun (*nivṛtti*) but rather a past passive participle (*nivṛtta*) defining *padārtha*.

<sup>26</sup> The translation of the PS passage after Kulkarni (2021).

<sup>27</sup> For detailed analysis and translation of the *Nañnirṇaya* in the *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra* in Japanese see Ogawa (1984)

<sup>28</sup> For the edition, translation and analysis of the treatment of negation in *Paramalaghumañ-jūṣā* see Lowe and Benson (2022).

#### 4 Concluding remarks

The majority of analysed passages contain references to the concept of superimposition (*āropa*) in their analysis of negative compounds and the meaning they assign to negation. They use it to interpret the natural (*svābhāvika*) loss of the original meaning of the word (*padārthasya nivṛtṭiḥ*); the interpretation of *paryudāsa* proposed by Patañjali. The texts analysed above seem to have refined further the distinction between the *paryudāsa* and *prasajya* types of negation; they still retained the concept of *nivṛttapadārthaka* but interpreted it via *āropatva* in the case of compound formations.

We can observe that the term *āropa* starts to appear in this context only around the 11th century CE. This is not to say that it had not been known before; we can find references to the erroneous cognition and resulting from it superimposition of the wrong concept onto the correct one already in the *Vākyapadīya* of Bharṭṛhari in the 3rd *kaṇḍa* in the section devoted to relation.<sup>29</sup> These passages, however, are very scarce and do not refer to the topic of negation.<sup>30</sup> All the commentaries composed c. 11th century CE exhibit the same feature and seem to understand the original statements in the same way sometimes even quoting one another almost verbatim. The concept of superimposition did not seem to have entered the school of grammarians much before that time, which can be evidenced by Jinendrabuddhi's *Nyāsa* and his analysis of the passage in question. He follows Patañjali's line of argumentation very closely and elaborates on the types of cognitions that people have, but does not mention *āropa* and the transfer of concepts at any point. Given the date of Jinendrabuddhi and the relative chronology of Haradatta and Kaiyaṭa, we can assume that the concept of superimposition could not have been used by the grammarians in the context of negation before the second half of the 10th century. We can also see that despite referring to the same, employed in a relatively new way, concept, all commentators belonging to the 11th century CE approach the subject slightly differently. It is only in the following centuries that grammarian-philosophers will establish the role of superimposition for explaining *paryudāsapraṭiṣedha* and even consider it one of the meanings of the particle *naī*.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See fn. 12 above.

<sup>30</sup> As mentioned above, Bharṭṛhari explains negation through the notion of *upacārasattā* (secondary/metaphorical existence). The term *āropa* is never used in this context. It is only Helārāja who explains the secondary existence, secondary meaning via superimposition.

<sup>31</sup> There have not been many studies on negation in the later grammatical tradition in India. Two studies devoted to two philosophical treatises are Ogawa's treatment of the *Naīnirṇaya* of the *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra* (Ogawa 1984) and a recent edition, translation and analysis of the section on negation in Nāgeśa's *Paramalaghumañjūṣā* by Lowe and Benson (2022).

It seems that the concept of erroneous cognition was not only adopted by the grammarians, but it was also adapted and extended to fit their concept of negation. The idea of a mistake underlying the use of negative statements was already expressed by Patañjali while discussing *nañsamāsas* and *pariyudāsapratīṣedha*, but the adoption of *āropa* not only allowed for a more thorough analysis of semantics of negation, but also added a cognitive dimension to this analysis by explaining how said error occurred; or to be more precise, what the process of making a mistake looked like.

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