Old Theme, New Debates
Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa on Autonymy

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Abstract   Identified at an early date, autonymy has always been an important theme in the discourse of Indian Sanskrit grammarians. But this phenomenon also aroused the interest of other ancient Indian language theorists, and rightly so. In the section of the *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra* devoted to the object(s) of noun (*nāmārthanirṇaya*), Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa comments on two kārikās taken from Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *Vaiyākaraṇasiddhāntakārikā* relating to autonymy. It is not a mere gloss: the seventeenth century grammarian seeks above all to reaffirm the authority of the theses developed within the Pāṇinian school by refuting doctrines defended in other circles. This is an opportunity for us to study the dimensions of the autonymic phenomenon around which the 'new' debates crystallize. For between Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* and Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra* are the ins and outs of the autonymy issue the same? What is at stake at Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's time? These are the main questions this paper tries to provide answers to.

Keywords   Autonymy. Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita. Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa. Sanskrit. Vyākaraṇa.

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1   Introduction

Like all natural languages, Sanskrit has a metalinguistic function that enables it to describe itself.[1] The essential feature of this metalinguistic function is the production of what Western linguists call 'autonyms'. Indian Sanskrit grammarians have also clearly identified the autonymic phenomenon, usually illustrating it with a pair of sequences:

(1)   *gauś calati*
      The cow moves.[2]

Where the word *gauḥ* makes one understand its usual *artha* 'object' (i.e., to put it quickly, a cow); the word *gauḥ*, in this case, is qualified as *artha-padārthaka* which has as its object [its] object', and

(2)   *gaur ity ayam āha*
      He says '*gauḥ*'.[3]

Where the word *gauḥ* does not convey its usual *artha* 'object' but the word *gauḥ* of sequence (1); the word *gauḥ* of sequence (2) is qualified as *svarūpa-padārthaka* 'which has as its object its own form', or *śabda-padārthaka* which can be rendered, in this context of use, as 'which has as its object [one/its] form'.

The autonymic phenomenon is thus identified by Indian Sanskrit grammarians, and it is so at an early date, as attested by the formulation of the *sūtra* 1.1.68 of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (hereafter A), which I would translate simply as follows ('simply', i.e. deliberately leaving aside various problems of interpretation that commentators will raise and that would take us far beyond the topic of this paper):

(3)   *svaṃ rūpaṃ śabdasya_aśabdasaṃjñā ǁ* (A 1.1.68)
      A word designates its own form, unless it is a technical term.

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2   Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

3   Indian Sanskrit grammarians present this example as being taken from 'current usage'. (Cf. *loke gaur ity ayam āheti gośabdād itikaraṇaḥ paraḥ prayujyamāno gośabdaṃ svasmāt padārthāt pracyāvayati ǀ*; MBh *ad* A 1.1.44, 102).

If one sticks to this translation/interpretation,[4] the aphorism states that in grammatical *sūtra*s, words (mainly nominal or verbal bases to which suffixes have to be added) are mostly autonyms,[5] and that words functioning in a 'normal' or expected way, i.e. non-autonymous words that convey their *artha*, their usual purpose, are the technical terms of grammar (the *saṃjñā*s, actually less numerous than autonymous words). In grammar, one is therefore dealing with a situation that is the reverse of that of common usage, which the *Mahābhāṣya* (hereafter MBh) sums up in the following terms:

> *śabdena_uccāritena_artho gamyate | gām ānaya dadhy aśāna_ity artha ānīyate 'rthaś ca bhujyate | [...] | iha vyākaraṇe 'rthe kāryasya_asaṃbhavaḥ | agner ḍhag iti na śakyate 'ṅgārebhyaḥ paro ḍhak kartum |* (MBh on *vārttika* 1 *ad* A 1.1.68, 175-6)

> When a word is uttered [in common usage], an object is understood. [When one says:] 'bring the cow', 'eat the curd', an object is brought, an object is eaten. [...] Here, in grammar, it is impossible to apply a [grammatical] operation to an object: [when the *sūtra* A 4.2.33] *agner ḍhaK* ('After *agni*, [one adds the suffix] *ḍhaK*'),[6] one cannot add [the suffix] *ḍhaK* to hot coals.

Indeed, if one interprets *agni*, in the *sūtra* A 4.2.33, as implying its usual *artha*, i.e. burning coals or fire, this does not make sense because it is obviously the word *agni* itself that is intended here, in grammar. And this applies to the vast majority of words found in the *sūtra*s of the A.

The characteristic of autonymous words in grammatical rules is that they are not specifically marked. This is easy to understand: autonyms are everywhere, they represent 'the norm', as it were. The *sūtra* A 4.2.33 is a perfect illustration of the phenomenon: *agni* is not followed by the particle *iti* (nor is it in composition with a term like *pada* or *śabda*), so it is submited to the syntax of the 'sentence' and is inflected like a noun. In grammatical rules, the convention of marking

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4 Commentators (at least those whose texts have come down to us) consider this *sūtra*, whatever its function (*paribhāṣā-* or *saṃjñā-sūtra*), as ultimately... useless! For more details on interpretation issues posed by the aphorism and the various analyses (both Indian and Western) which were made of it, and which I cannot repeat here, see Aussant 2005 and Candotti 2006.

5 Cf. *Vākyapadīya* (hereafter VP) 2.130: *loke 'rtharūpatāṃ śabdaḥ pratipannaḥ pravartate | śāstre tūbhayarūpatvaṃ pravibhaktaṃ vivakṣayā ||* "In common usage, the word is understood as consisting in its meaning/object. In grammar, however, [one can understand] either one (i.e. the meaning/object or the form of the word) according to the speaker's intention".

6 The sequence *ḍh-* of *ḍhaK* should be replaced by *ey-*. The addition of this secondary suffix leads to the formation of the derivative *āgneya* '[oblation] whose deity is Agni'.

autonyms is reversed compared to that of common usage where the autonymous word is marked either by *iti* (cf. *gaur ity ayam āha*) or by a 'presenter' term (e.g. *gośabda* 'the word *go*'). I will come back to the case of inflected autonyms later.

Unsurprisingly, the *sūtra* A 1.1.68 will generate a long series of debates[7] among ancient Indian grammarians. One discussion predominates quite clearly in the commentaries and sub-commentaries that have come down to us: it is about explaining the relationship between the word *agni* that appears in the *sūtra* A 4.2.33 and the word *agni* that receives, in practice, the suffix *ḍhaK*. I will be addressing very briefly this discussion in the first part of the paper, which is devoted to the first debates on autonymy. In the same part, I will recall another debate, whose scope and stakes, *a priori* much more modest, do not foreshadow the role it will later play in thoughts on the autonymic phenomenon. In the second part, I will present the issues around which the grammarian Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa articulated his reflection on autonymy at the very beginning of the seventeenth century. If the phenomenon is still under discussion, are the horizon and the 'effects' of these discussions really the same? Have other points of interest emerged over time? If so, which dimensions of the autonymic fact do they revolve around?

2 The First Debates on Autonymy

The two terms mentioned at the very beginning of this article, *artha-padārthaka* 'which has as its object [an] object' and *svarūpa-/śabda-padārthaka* 'which has as its object [one's own] form', can already be found at an early date in texts relating to *Vyākaraṇa*. However, these terms appear sporadically, i.e. without being associated with a precise context of discussion and without giving rise, either, to specific developments.

The most significant debates are eventually focussed on two Pāṇinian *sūtra*s: (1.1) the *sūtra* A 1.1.68 mentioned above and (1.2) the (*pratyāhāra*)*sūtra* 2 *ṛḷK*, which teaches the sound units *ṛ* and *ḷ* which respectively represent the class of *ṛ* timbre vowels and the class of *ḷ* timbre vowels. Let us take a quick look at them again.

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[7] Why was this *sūtra* formulated, what is its status or function (*paribhāṣā*- or *saṃjñā-sūtra*), exceptions and/or additions to point out, mainly.

2.1   Discussions about A 1.1.68

The main framework here is exclusively grammatical and even, to be quite exact, metagrammatical: the aim is to explain, as I briefly reminded us in the introduction, how the word *agni* used in the *sūtra* A 4.2.33 (a word qualified as *sūtra-sthā* 'which stands in the rule') can refer to the word *agni* which receives grammatical operations and is intended for common use (a word qualified as *prayoga-sthā* 'which stands in usage').

Several answers were proposed by grammarians. Those most frequently encountered (because they were agreed upon?) emphasize two points:

1.   the *agni* word of the *sūtra* and the *agni* word that receives grammatical operations are united by a naming relation: the word of the *sūtra* is the name (*saṃjñā*) of the word that receives grammatical operations (*saṃjñin*);
2.   being related, these two words are distinct.

The question of the distinction between the word of the *sūtra* and the one which receives grammatical operations has been variously dealt with (cf. Aussant 2005). These various treatments can be summarized as follows:

• some grammarians (Kaiyaṭa, Haradatta) considered that the word *agni* of the *sūtra* A 4.2.33 is a universal (or 'word-type', *sāmānya* or *jāti*) and that the word *agni* which receives grammatical operations is a particular (or 'word-occurrence', *vyakti*);
• others (Patañjali, Vāmana and Jayāditya) defended the idea that the word *agni* of the *sūtra* A 4.2.33 is a whole (*samudāya*) and that the word *agni* which receives grammatical operations is a part (*ekadeśa*) of this whole;
• still others (Bhartṛhari would probably be the first), thought of the word *agni* of the *sūtra* A 4.2.33 as having the capacity to be a means of understanding (*grāhakatva-śakti*) and the word *agni* which receives grammatical operations as having the capacity to be an object of understanding (*grāhyatva-śakti*).

2.2   The *pratyāhārasūtra* 2 *ṛḷK*: *anukaraṇa* and *prakṛti*

The autonymic phenomenon is also mentioned, albeit incidentally, on the occasion of another discussion, relating to the teaching of *ḷ* in the *pratyāhārasūtra ṛḷK*, a *sūtra* that has, *a priori*, no link with the linguistic phenomenon in question. For the earliest commentators, a question immediately arises, which can be formulated as follows: is it justified to teach *ḷ*, a sound unit that is scarcely encountered in

the language? A first answer is put forward (and this is the 'final' view, that of the *siddhāntin*): this sound unit must be taught because it is found, among others, in imitations of faulty, corrupted forms. The expression used is *aśaktijānukaraṇa*, literally 'imitation [of what is] produced by incapacity'. An example is given: a Brahmin woman pronounces *ḷtaka* instead of *ṛtaka* (which is an individual's proper name); the *ḷtaka* pronounced by the Brahmin woman is certainly a corrupted form; but if someone 'imitates' this *ḷtaka*, in other words, if someone, for example a grammarian, quotes this form saying "the Brahmin woman said '*ḷtakaḥ*'" (*brāhmaṇy ḷtaka ity āha*), will the imitation (*anukaraṇa*)[8] of this *ḷtaka* itself be corrupt?[9]

A debate ensues (under the 3rd *vārttika*),[10] during which two conceptions of imitation are confronted:

- according to the first conception (defended by Kātyāyana?), imitation is like the original (*prakṛtivad anukaraṇaṃ bhavati*),[11] which means that it aims at the same thing, i.e. the same result (*artha*!) as the original and entails the same consequences as the original. The imitation of a reprehensible act (the examples cited are drinking alcohol, killing a Brahmin... and corrupted uttering of a word) is therefore just as reprehensible as the act imitated;
- according to the second conception (defended by Patañjali), if the imitation has no other purpose than to imitate, drinking alcohol in order to do as or to represent what X does (and not to get drunk), killing a Brahmin to do as or to represent what Y does (and not to take revenge), in other words, if it is a mechanical or symbolic imitation (cf. Renou 1942, 25), it certainly resembles the original (since it is performed in the same way), but it differs from it in that it does not aim at the

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8   Cf. Candotti 2006, sections 5.3 to 5.5.

9   The issue at stake is as follows: if the imitation of the corrupted form *ḷtaka* is considered as correct, the initial *ḷ* can be considered part of the vocalic sound units to be taught, and this allows the application of the *sandhi* prescribed in the A (e.g. the *ī* of *brāhmaṇī* becomes *y* in contact with *ḷ*). If it is not correct, the operations taught in the A cannot apply.

10   *anukaraṇaṃ śiṣṭāśiṣṭāpratiṣiddheṣu yathā laukikavaidikeṣu ||* (*vārttika* 3 *ad ṛḷK*, 20) "Imitation of what is taught, what is not taught or what is not forbidden [is considered as correct – *sādhu* is used in Patañjali's gloss], as in common and ritual practices". What is taught: donation, sacrifice, recitation; what is neither taught nor forbidden: hiccuping, laughing, scratching.

11   I.e. it behaves *or* must be treated like the original, whatever it may be. *ḷ*'s teaching advocate does not question this maxim, he simply restricts its scope to that of the grammatical treatise: it is the imitation of what is taught (and is therefore, by definition, correct) that behaves/is treated like the original. This does not apply to the imitation of a corrupted form.

same thing as the original... it aims at the original itself. Hence the following observation:

anyo 'paśabdapadārthakaḥ śabdo [...] *na cāpaśabdapadārthakaḥ śabdo 'paśabdo bhavati |* (MBh *ad ṛḷK*, 20-21)

the word that has a corrupt word as its object is different [from the corrupt word]; [...] and the word that has a corrupt word as its object is not a corrupt word.

From this point of view, the imitation of a reprehensible act, *because it does not aim at the same thing as the imitated act*, is not reprehensible.

One notes that here, unlike the discussions that unfold around the *sūtra* A 1.1.68, the framework of reflection is not exclusively grammatical: the starting point is the *imitation of an act*, and the examples cited (drinking alcohol, killing a Brahmin) quite explicitly evoke the theme of the retribution for acts[12] – and, perhaps, even the idea of the intention that would determine the punishment.

Back to the subject at hand, i.e. the imitation of a corrupted word, the two conceptions of imitation can be formulated as follows:

1. either one assumes that the 'imitation word' is identical to the word it imitates (the term used here is *prakṛti*, the 'base'; later, it will be *anukārya*): this means that the *ḷtaka* uttered by the grammarian, which imitates the *ḷtaka* uttered by the Brahmin woman, is also a faulty form of the proper noun *Ṛtaka*. The consequence will be the same in both cases (that of the imitated word *ḷtaka* and that of the imitation word *ḷtaka*): since grammar is not concerned with faulty forms, it does not have to teach the sound unit *ḷ*;

2. or we assume that the 'imitation word' is not identical to the word it imitates, insofar as the *ḷtaka* uttered by the grammarian, which imitates the *ḷtaka* uttered by the Brahmin woman, is not aimed at the individual named *Ṛtaka* but at the *ḷtaka* uttered by the Brahmin woman. As a 'good imitation', the *ḷtaka* uttered by the grammarian is correct; it therefore falls within the scope covered by grammar and the sound unit *ḷ* must be taught.

If, in this passage, the term *anukaraṇa* refers only to imitations of corrupted words, it will gradually designate imitations of words in general, until it becomes, in discussions of the autonymic phenomenon that are not related to the *sūtra* A 1.1.68, the consecrated term to designate autonyms.

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12 Presumably the *pauruṣakāra* (human initiative), here.

3 Debates in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries: Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra*

Let us now take a leap forward in time and see how Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa, a grammarian of the Pāṇinian school who lived in the early seventeenth century, presents the debates relating to the autonymic phenomenon. The general framework of reflection is no longer that of the 'beginnings', for under the influence of *Mīmāṃsaka*s and *Naiyāyika*s, the horizon of discussions relating to language has, over the centuries, gradually shifted: first the exegetes, then the logicians, were primarily interested in the sentence, and especially in the analysis of its meaning and the knowledge it generates (*śābdabodha*): it was no longer, or no longer only, the form of words (the grammarians' privileged object of study) which was at the heart of the discussions. Above all, *Mīmāṃsaka*s and *Naiyāyika*s, while elaborating their analyses of the sentence, resort to *Vyākaraṇa*'s tools but attribute new functions or meanings to them. It was undoubtedly this 'diverted' use of their tools that gradually[13] determined grammarians to take part in these new discussions, clarifying and defending their positions from the sixteenth century onwards.[14]

The work by Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa that interests us is very clearly part of this polemical context. In it, the grammarian comments on a collection of 76 *kārikā*s,[15] largely composed by his uncle, Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita (another famous name from the Pāṇinian school). These 76 *kārikā*s set out the theses defended by the grammarians concerning various semantic issues (*artha-prakriyā*); Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's commentary, which has come down to us in two versions (a long one, the *Vaiyākaraṇa[siddhānta] bhūṣaṇa*, and a short one, the *Vaiyākaraṇa[siddhānta]bhūṣaṇa-sāra*) explains them showing that only the theses put forward by the great masters of *Vyākaraṇa* (generally Patañjali and Bhartṛhari) are admissible for they are supported by valid arguments.

3.1 Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *kārikā*s

In the section he devotes to the object of the noun (*nāmārthanirṇaya*), Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa comments on three of Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *kārikā*s, the

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13 Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*, even if it does not take a polemical approach, can probably be seen as 'laying the foundations' for this grammarian appropriation of the thinking about the sentence (but Bronkhorst 2012, 75, seems to think that this 'challenge' has been ignored for a long time).

14 Cf. Cardona (1980, 305) and above all Bronkhorst (2012).

15 This work would have been commented on only twice: by Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa (who wrote several versions of his commentary) and by a student of Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita (cf. Joshi 1993, 10).

last two of which directly concern autonymy. The first of the three *kārikā*s is formulated as follows:

ekaṃ dvikaṃ trikaṃ cātha catuṣkaṃ pañcakaṃ tathā |
nāmārtha iti sarve 'mī pakṣāḥ śāstre nirūpitāḥ || (VSK 25)

What we call the object of a noun [consists of] one, two, or three [elements], but also four [or] five [elements]; all these theses have been explained in grammar.

This first *kārikā* teaches that grammarians considered that nouns could have up to five *artha* 'objects' (universal, particular or individual substance, gender, number, *kāraka*).[16] The second *kārikā* states the following:

śabdo 'pi yadi bhedena vivakṣā syāt tadā tathā |
no cec chrotrādibhiḥ siddho 'py asāv artho[17] *'vabhāsate ||* (VSK 26)

If one wishes to express a difference [between the word imitated and the word that imitates it], the word too (i.e. the word imitated) [is] so (i.e., is the object of the word that imitates it);[18] if one does not [wish to [express a difference between the imitated word and the word that imitates it, i.e. if one considers that there is only one and the same word], this [word], because[19] it is grasped via auditory perception, etc., manifests itself as an object.

The two conceptions of imitation expounded in the *Mahābhāṣya*, in the passage relating to imitations of corrupted words, are found here, albeit formulated slightly differently (*anukaraṇa* is not used, in particular). In the present context, i.e., articulated to the preceding *kārikā* (25), one understands – and this is how Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa invites us to interpret things – that, in the case of the word that imitates/the

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16 The history of this list is to be made. One can probably consider the *padakāṇḍa* of Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* as an essential first milestone... where the (own) form of the word is not mentioned among the possible *artha*s (autonymy is not absent from the work, however: it is mentioned occasionally, in each of the three *kāṇḍa*s). In the *Mahābhāṣyadīpikā*, Bhartṛhari's comments on *sūtra*s A 1.1.1 and A 1.1.68 are missing, but reflections relating to autonymy can be found, notably under A 1.1.44 (cf. Candotti 2006, 301, 306, 308-9).

17 The Ānandāsrama Sanskrit Series' edition (1901) gives *artho*, but the variant *arthe* is indicated by the editor. The Śrī Veṅkateśvara Vedic University's edition (2016) gives *artho*. Deshpande (1992, 197) and Das (1990, 132) read *arthe*. In his *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇa* (edition used: Pondicherry 2019 – where *arthe* is given in the *kārikā*), Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa suggests to read *arthe va bhāsate* and to understand *arthavad bhāsate*.

18 That is to say that, in this case, *śabda* is the sixth *nāmārtha*.

19 I follow Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's reading here, who glosses *api* by *hetu*.

case of the autonymous word, one can:

1. either consider that it possesses an *artha* 'object' (i.e. the imitated word, which is then the sixth *artha* of nouns);[20]
2. or consider that the autonymous word does not possess any *artha*, and that it is the word itself, insofar as it is perceived, that is understood.

In the long version of his commentary – and this is one of the 'new issues' around which discussions of autonymy crystallize among 'the moderns' – Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa explains that the first conception of imitation (the difference thesis) makes it possible to justify the inflected forms of autonyms (a case typically encountered in the Pāṇinian *sūtra*s, as seen previously with *agner ḍhaK*) because, according to the *sūtra* A 1.2.45 *arthavad adhātur apratyayaḥ prātipadikam*, any linguistic form possessing an *artha* (derivatives and compounds being covered by A 1.2.46) is a 'nominal stem' (*prātipadika*) and can therefore be inflected. The second conception of imitation (the non-difference thesis) on the other hand, justifies uninflected forms of autonyms – two examples of which are given in *kārikā* 27, which follows – the idea being that a linguistic form which does not possess any *artha* is not a nominal stem, and therefore cannot be inflected.

I will come back to this second conception later, as Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa links it to another thesis that grammarians, especially the 'moderns', have been at pains to defend, and which is also one of the 'new issues' of schools' debates.

The third *kārikā*, therefore, ties in with the previous one (26) and teaches the following:

ata eva gav ity āha bhū sattāyām itīdṛśam |
na prātipadikaṃ nāpi padaṃ sādhu tu tat smṛtam || (VSK 27)

Thus (i.e., if one does not wish to express any difference between the word imitated and the word that imitates it), [a word] such as [*go* or *bhū* in:] 'he says *go*', '*bhū* [is used] in the sense of existence', is neither a nominal stem nor an inflected word, it is nevertheless considered as correct.

In the examples quoted, the terms *go* and *bhū* are not inflected, they are devoid of (nominal) endings. Since they are attested (and

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20   Formalization of the *svarūpa-/śabda-padārthaka* which is found at an early date. To be noted: Bhoja (eleventh century), in the *sūtra* 1.1.7 of his *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*, gives *anukaraṇa* as a *prātipadika* ('nominal stem') subtype, alongside *samāsa* ('compound') and *nipāta* ('indeclinable').

the second example is well-known to all specialists of grammar: *bhū sattāyām* is a sequence in the *Dhātupāṭha*, the ordered list of verbal roots that accompanies the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*), the grammarian has a duty to explain them. This is what Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita does (the idea is already clearly formulated in the *Prauḍhamanoramā* ad A 1.2.4):[21] the absence of inflexion in the given examples can be explained if one considers that the word that imitates is not different from the word imitated: the word that imitates then has no object of its own (i.e., not distinct from that of the imitated unit) and therefore it cannot be a nominal stem nor, *a fortiori*, an 'inflected word' (*pada*, defined as a base ending with a nominal or verbal inflection – cf. A 1.4.14 *sUP-tiṄantaṃ padam*).[22]

The 'modern' debate around autonymy therefore seems to be limited, if one sticks to Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *kārikā*s 26 and 27,[23] to the rehabilitation of the two conceptions of imitation, conceptions already expounded in the *Mahābhāṣya* but, as one has seen, with an emphasis on the thesis of the difference between the word that imitates and the word imitated. The two theses (difference and non-difference between the imitating and the imitated word), however irreconcilable they may be, seem to be fully accepted by sixteenth-century grammarians, who opted for one or the other depending on the form to be explained (it would therefore be the linguistic form – and its context of use – that would point towards one thesis or the other, not membership of a school or, more simply, fidelity to an argumentative line). This is the clear conclusion reached by Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa, at the end of this chapter devoted to the *artha* 'object' of words, *in the brief version of his commentary*. His particularly dense demonstration echoes the debates of his time, and I would now like to say a word about two other issues about which reflection on autonymy crystallized in the sixteenth century.

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21 *anukaraṇeṣu tu anukāryeṇa sahābhedavivakṣāyām arthavattvābhāvād eva na prātipadikatvam | 'bhū' sattāyām iti yathā | bhedavivakṣāyāṃ tu saṃjñā syād eva | 'bhuvo vuk' [A 6.4.88] iti yathā |* (2003, 367-8).

22 On non-inflected *anukaraṇa*s: Patañjali seems to tolerate – tacitly: he says nothing – the phenomenon. It is in the *Kāśikāvṛtti* (*ad* A 1.1.16) that the role of speaker's intention (whether or not to indicate a difference between the imitating and the imitated word) is first mentioned (cf. Candotti 2006, 332).

23 The discussion is also found in the *Śabdakaustubha ad* A *ṛIK* (1898, 49-52).

3.2 (Other) Issues in the sixteenth-century Autonymy Debate

3.2.1 One or Several Meaning Relation(s)?

When it comes to explaining how a word can denote itself, Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa begins by ruling out recourse to *lakṣaṇā*, the 'function' or 'secondary meaning relation'.

The meaning relation[24] that generally links a word (*pada*) to its object (*padārtha*) is called *vṛtti*. Most ancient Indian language theorists consider that this *vṛtti* can be of several kinds – the 'basic' distinction (the *Nyāya* one) corresponding roughly to the one one makes between 'primary meaning' and 'secondary' or 'figurative meaning':

a. the *vṛtti* is primary when it links the word to its primary meaning/object (*artha*), e.g., the word *go* and a cow; in this case, it is often designated – as here – by the term *śakti* '[expressive] capacity';[25]

b. the *vṛtti* is secondary when, due to an incompatibility between the primary meaning/object of the word and its context of use, it links the word to a 'secondary meaning/object' *via* the primary meaning/object, e.g., the word *go* and a simple-minded person; in this case, it is designated by the term *lakṣaṇā* 'trope/figurative use'.

Grammarians are probably the only ones to have always defended the idea that words have a single meaning relation (the *śakti*), whatever their use; a secondary meaning is not linked to the word by a specific meaning relation, according to them. The fact that the word *go* can be used either to denote a cow or to denote a simple-minded person is explained by the will of the speaker (*vivakṣā*): he alone decides to limit the *śakti* of the word to the denotation of this or that *artha*. Logicians, on the other hand, accept the idea of *lakṣaṇā*; and in the context of the autonymic use of a word, it works perfectly: in *agner ḍhaK*, the understanding of the primary object 'fire/burning coals' does not occur on hearing the sentence, so it is the word *agni* itself/ the form of the word *agni* that is understood, *secondarily*. In this case, logicians resort to the *lakṣaṇā* of the *nirūḍha*-type, which can be translated by 'conventional' and is equivalent, to put it quickly, to a fixed metaphor. This type of *lakṣaṇā* functions very much like the *śakti*: the understanding of the object, though secondary, is instantaneous. The thesis of the single *śakti* is therefore seriously put to the test in cases of autonymous words, and in much of the early

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24 Sometimes conceived as a 'function' (*vyāparā*). Cf. Gerschheimer 1996, 1: 49-50.

25 One finds also *abhidhā* 'expression/designation' and *mukhyavṛtti* 'principal *vṛtti*'.

part of his commentary (even before the citation of the *kārikā* 26), Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa endeavors to reaffirm its effectiveness and economy (on the explanatory level).

3.2.2 *Śakti* and the Non-Difference Thesis

The *śakti* comes up again when the thesis of non-difference between the imitation word and the imitated word is explained. According to this thesis, as one has seen, the autonymous word is not provided with an *artha* 'object' and it is the word itself, insofar as it is perceived, that is understood or, to use Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's words, that becomes the content (*viṣaya*) of verbal knowledge (*śābdabodha*).[26] Formulated as it is, this thesis does not involve the *śakti* at all, it seems to reduce the understanding of the word to purely auditory perception – a conception which leads to a whole series of problems, not to mention the fact that it does not 'fit' with the imperative, for grammarians, to go through the *śakti*.

Reaffirming that only an entity that is connected to the *śakti* can become the content of verbal knowledge (what is grasped by pure auditory perception cannot be), Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa reintroduces the *śakti* into the process but without assigning it an 'active' role, so to speak. To do this, he resorts to a mode of analysis he borrows from the *Navya-Nyāya*, which consists in presenting the *śakti* as a property (*dharma*) residing in a support (*āśraya*) – the word – and conditioned by a 'determinant' (*nirūpaka*)[27] – the object of the word. The word, insofar as it possesses the *śakti*, and the object of the word, insofar as it conditions it, are both connected to the *śakti*. As such, both can be contained in verbal knowledge, i.e. can be understood by hearing the word. To support his point – and perhaps, too, to give it a more grammatical tone – Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa quotes a famous *kārikā* by Bhartṛhari:

> *grāhyatvaṃ grāhakatvaṃ ca dve śaktī tejaso yathā |*
> *tathaiva sarvaśabdānām ete pṛthag avasthite ||* (VP 1.56)

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[26] *śabdārthayor abhede pratyakṣe viṣayasya hetutvāt svapratyakṣarūpāṃ padajanyopasthitim ādāya śābdabodhaviṣayatopapattir iti |* (1901, 30) "If there is no difference between the word (i.e. the imitation word) and its object (i.e., the imitated word), once the knowledge produced by the word has been grasped, [knowledge] which consists in the direct perception [of the word] itself, the [word-]content of knowledge, [because it is] perceived, being cause, it (i.e., the word) becomes the content of verbal knowledge". Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra* is one of the first *Vyākaraṇa* texts in which the 'verbal knowledge' (*śābdabodha*) theme, developed by *Navya-Nyāya*, is addressed. Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa was at least preceded by Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita who, 'challenged' by the theory of verbal knowledge, took a fresh look at *sphoṭa*. Would Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's master in this field have been Rāmakṛṣṇabhaṭṭācārya (cf. Bronkhorst 2012, 69-73)?

[27] Cf. Ingalls 1988, 46; Gerschheimer 1996, 22-3.

Just as light has two capacities, [that] of being perceived and [that] of causing perception, so these two [capacities] exist, distinct, in all words.

If one glosses explicitly the parallel between the word and the light, this means that when one hears the word//sees the light, one understands//perceives two things: the word itself//the light itself and the object of the word//the pot that the light enlightens. If, due to the speaker's will//an obstacle interposed between the light and the pot, the word//the light is not in contact with its object//the pot, one understands//perceives the word//the light alone; if one can understand the word alone upon hearing the word, it is precisely because it is linked to the *śakti*, as a support.

4   Concluding Remarks

Reaching the end of this investigation, it appears that the treatment of the autonymic phenomenon, as Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa presents it, is linked only to the debate that is formalized (in part – perhaps it already exists, elsewhere, in another form) in the *Mahābhāṣya*, in connection with the imitation of corrupted words (*brāhmaṇy ḷtaka ity āha*) and which will surpass the disciplinary field of 'strict' grammar. If this debate 'catches on' in other disciplines, it is undoubtedly due to its starting point (the imitation of corrupted words), which is far less technical than that embodied by *agner ḍhaK* and, beyond the purely linguistic dimension, touches on themes central to several fields (retribution for acts, intention and sanction). No mention is made of the purely grammatical debate that developed long ago in connexion with the *sūtra* A 1.1.68, which primarily tackles the autonymic phenomenon as a naming relation and which sets out to distinguish the two terms of the relation.

The reason for this seems to be that only the first debate, which presents the two conceptions of imitation, makes it possible to explain why some autonyms are inflected and others are not, a problematic situation if ever there was one, and one on which grammarians were presumably summoned, by theorists from other schools, to take a stand. Moreover, Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's argument in this context illustrates quite well the relentlessness of grammarians in defending the thesis of a single (primary) meaning relation – the *śakti*, and the idea that, even in the thorniest cases, one cannot do without it. The permanence of the *śakti* theme in Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa's commentary may also indicate that the fundamental debate, particularly 'sharpened' by the autonymic phenomenon, is indeed that of the – or *the* – meaning relation(s).

One final point should be mentioned. In the short version of his commentary, Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa does not take sides with either of the two theses (difference or non-difference between the imitation word and the imitated word): he 'merely' presents them, condensing to the extreme the main arguments that grammarians (notably Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita) have been led to formulate to justify them. This is not the case in the longer version of his commentary, where he openly states that the non-difference thesis is more appropriate (*tasmād yuktataram abhedapakṣaṃ pratīmaḥ* – 2019, 515). The argument he puts forward is that cases of non-inflected autonyms – explained by the non-difference thesis – are more numerous: in fact, all autonyms found in common use (*laukika*) of the language, marked by *iti* or a presenter term, fall into this category. The flexion of autonyms, found mainly in grammatical literature, is qualified as *sautra*, i.e. linked to the conventional procedures (cf. A 1.1.68) adopted in the Pāṇinian treatise, in other words, it is a marginal phenomenon. Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa, no doubt influenced by the debates that have led grammarians to move beyond the restricted framework of thought on Pāṇinian metalanguage, therefore opts for the thesis that covers the greatest number of cases, all domains of use taken together.

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A = Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.
  See Renou 1966.
MBh = Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*.
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Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra of Kauṇḍabhaṭṭa.

See VSK.

VP = Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* (*kārikā*s).

See Rau 2000.

VSK = Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *Vaiyākaraṇasiddhāntakārikā*s.

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