

Derivation and interpretation in Pāṇini's system

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Pāṇinīyas are aware from the outset that there are two aspects to communication: speakers (*prayoktr*) form utterances, which they utter to communicate what they wish to convey, and listeners (*śrotr*) interpret what they hear. In his derivation system accounting for Sanskrit usage, Pāṇini operates from the standpoint of a speaker: meanings to be conveyed are made the causes for the formation of utterances (*vākya*) and their constituent words (*pada*). The *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, moreover, is a set of rules for such derivations which presuppose native speakers as their interpreters, so that Pāṇini formulates certain metarules in accordance with conventions known to such speakers. I shall discuss evidence relating to these two aspects, emphasizing that Pāṇini's derivations do indeed start from meaning and taking up illustrative points concerning how rules are interpreted.