

## Mediativity in Classical Sanskrit: A New Approach to the Particle *kila*

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This paper examines the particle *kila* in Classical Sanskrit, for which no uniform interpretation has yet been established. It provides a novel interpretation that expands our understanding of its function within the context of evidentiality.

While previous research (Emeneau 1969, Ickler 1976, Van Daalen 1988) has convincingly shown that the particle *kila* fulfils the function of expressing indirect evidentiality – although it has never been explicitly described using this term – this study introduces the concept of mediativity, a related but distinct linguistic category, in order to offer a more comprehensive analysis. The paper begins by outlining key theoretical concepts in the study of evidentiality and mediativity, establishing a theoretical framework for the analysis. Western dictionaries and Indological resources mostly treat *kila* as an emphatic and reportative particle, while Indian *kośas* such as the *Nāmalīṅgānuśāsana* or the *Anekārthasaṃgraha* try to attribute as many meanings as possible to the particle, most of which can be regarded as subsidiary. Additionally, the paper reviews the already mentioned secondary literature on *kila*, which primarily understands the particle as conveying reported or inferred knowledge. This points towards understanding it as expressing indirect evidentiality. Despite the soundness of such understanding, there remain instances where the function of *kila* is unclear, leaving its overall role somewhat ambiguous.

Building on this background, the paper proposes that *kila* should be reinterpreted not merely as a marker of indirect evidentiality but as a particle that conveys mediativity. Mediativity, as introduced by Lazard (1999; 2001), refers to a category that combines elements of report, inference, and surprise, often indicating a degree of detachment or distancing from an utterance. By examining instances from Classical Sanskrit texts, particularly in *kāvya* literature, the paper demonstrates that *kila* also signals surprise, a function that aligns more closely with mediativity rather than indirect evidentiality. By analysing these two concepts, the study provides a unified explanation for the function of *kila* in Classical Sanskrit, contributing to broader discussions on evidentiality and mediativity in Indo-European languages.

### References

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