Chapter 1

LINGUISTIC STUDIES IN ANCIENT INDIA

1.1 Introduction

From Vedic times, India has given a prominent place for language studies. The subsidiaries of Vedic studies known as Vedāṅgas are the best examples. The concept of Vedapurusa and his limbs as the six disciplines connected with Vedas are of significance in linguistic studies of ancient India. Among these Vedāṅgas, Śīkṣā (Phonetics), Chhandas (Metre), Vyākaraṇa (Grammar) and Nirukta (Etymology) are directly connected with the formal parts of the language studies. These disciplines
enunciate the different paths and areas that were developed in
the science of language at that time. The symbolic concept is
also conveying the divergent concerns that were illustrated by
them. The famous verse-

cchandaḥ pādau tu vedasya hastau kalpo’tha paṭhyate
jyotiṣāmayanam caṅsūḥ niruktam śrotramucyate.
śikṣā ghrāṇam tu vedasya mukham vyākaraṇam smṛtam
tasmātsaṅgamadhityaiva brahma-loke mahīyate.

(Vaiyākaraṇa Siddhāntakaumudi, vol.IV, p.826)
depicts this thought in a beautiful manner. All the six branches
are appropriate ways to understand and preserve the Vedas with
their purity. Among these branches Vyākaraṇa and Nirukta
deal with linguistic aspects. These two branches are considered
reciprocal or complementary to each other. The Nirukta of
Yāska which is a unique treatise on Sanskrit etymology deals
with the semantic problems. The main object of the work is to
explain all the possible meanings of Vedic words for the later
generation who are generally unaware of the meaning of Vedic
passages.
The studies on Vedic etymology and semantics are thus closely related with the *Nirukta* of Yāska. The present study ‘Vedic Etymology and Semantics - A Linguistic Approach’ is more or less concentrated on the linguistic aspects of Vedic etymology. As a preliminary to this study the terms of the research title are discussed as follows.

### 1.2 Vedic Etymology

The term ‘Vedic’ is used in the sense ‘connected with Vedas’. In India, a number of disciplines like Dramaturgy, Āyurveda, and Music tried to explain the source of all wisdom related to the Vedas. In India, from a very earlier stage, this approach was deep rooted in the interpretation of systems of wisdom.

Every system of Indian philosophy which accepted the Vedic authority, had interpreted the term ‘Veda’. According to *Mīmāṃsā* tradition, the term is explained as-

‘*tatra vedo dvividhaḥ-mantrarūpo brāhmaṇarūpaśceti*’

(*Mīmāṃsā paribhāṣā*, p.20).
Veda is twofold: *mantrarūpa* and *brāhmaṇarūpa*. The great commentator of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, viz. Śaḍguruṣiśya explains the phrase ‘*vedānaṅgopāṅgapūrṇān*’ (vol.I, p.2) as follows -

\[\text{cchandaśśāstram vyākaraṇam niruktam} \]
\[\text{śikṣā jyotiśśāsanam kalpaśūtram.} \]
\[\text{āṅgāni śaḍ nyāyavidyā purāṇam} \]
\[\text{mīmāṁsānaṁ smṛtayaścetyupāṅgam.} \text{ (vol.I, p.2)}\]

This implies that the Vedic studies should be completed only with the learning of the four Vedas, six *Vedāṅgas*, and *Upāṅgas*. Vedantins or *Aupaniṣadikas* highlighted the spiritual meaning for the term ‘Vedic’. According to Bhartṛhari, the term ‘Vedic’ means -

‘*anādimavyavacchinnāṁ śrutimāhurakartākāṁ*’

( *Vākyapadīya* I.145).

These are the various definitions of the term Vedic, by ancient Indian scholars. Western Indologist scholars like A.A. Macdonell, explains the term ‘Vedic’ in a number of ways.
According to Macdonell, the term 'Vedic' is used in a religious sense. He says:

‘for a period more than thousand years, Indian literature bears an exclusively religious stamp; even those latest productions of Vedic age which yet mean to further religious ends. This is, indeed, implied by the term Vedic’.

(A History Of Sanskrit Literature, 1972, p.29).

In short, various definitions of the term ‘Vedic’, encompasses the vast area of Indian literature from the Vedic age to the age of smṛtis and śāstras namely, Dharmasūtras and Dharmashastra texts like Manusmṛti, Yājñavalkyasmṛti and the other śāstra texts like Nyāya philosophy and so on.

For the present study, the term Vedic is used to denote the earliest treatises on Vedic literature; that is from the period of Samhitā texts of Vedas to the period of Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. And they are considered as the further developments and supplements of the Samhitā portions.
The term ‘Etymology’ which is of Greek origin, is considered as a branch of modern linguistics. The etymology of the word etymology from Greek ‘etumon’ ‘true meaning or form’, in turn from ‘etymous’ ‘true’ is a perfect illustration of ‘etymological fallacy’, the view that the earliest meaning of a word is true or more acceptable than subsequent meanings.

*International Encyclopedia of linguistics* defined the term etymology as:

‘As an aspect of linguistics, a scholarly activity, or a specimen of such activity, etymology is widely recognized, but it is not a proper field in itself. Taken most strictly as a relationship, an etymology is the history and prehistory of a locution, it is sometimes presented as a recitation of evidential sets containing the locution in question, which exemplifies systematic correspondences through cognates that validate a genetic familial relation among languages’ (vol.II, p.7)

‘More technically an etymology is an excerpt, over
a selected bundle of morphonological and semantic features, from the known historical grammar(s) of a set of culturally connected language stages. To every extent possible, the dating of all stages, attested forms must be specified, either through relative chronology or through external evidence or documentation. As an excerpt, a good etymology will mention as many ancestor and related forms and stages as are relevant and permitted by constraints of space and format. If the total reconstruction can not be shown, sufficient forms should be supplied to outline and substantiate the argument’. (vol.II, p.9)

Webster’s *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* explains it as follows-

‘The history of a linguistic form (as a word) shown by tracing its development since its earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found, by tracing its transmission from one language to another, by
analyzing it into its component parts, by identifying its cognates in other languages, or by tracing it and its cognate to a common ancestral form in an ancestral language' (1987, p.427).

All these explanations of the term ‘etymology’ according to modern linguistics generally elucidate the idea of word analysis. It should be a research on the history of the word concerned. Further these statements about etymology stress that it should be a documentation of tracing all possible meanings of that word.

From a very remote past, the word analysis was considered as an important branch of language in India, as in western countries. Approaches on etymological studies are the main areas of Indian hermeneutics. At first, it was connected with the Vedic words and forms for the interpretation of Vedic texts. For instance, the word **arka** meaning a **stotra** is etymologized in the *Rgveda* as:

\[
\text{\textit{indramidg\text{"a\text{"}thino b\text{"}hadindramarkebhirarkin\text{"}ah}}}
\]

(*Rgveda* 1.7.1)

The etymological expression *arkebhirarki\text{"}nah* is of great emphasis. Similarly *Br\text{"}h\text{"}ma\text{"}na* texts promoted this as a device
to a great extent and used for illustrating many words. The word  āhuti  is etymologized in the  *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* as:

\[
\hat{\text{āhutayo vail nāmaityā yadāhutayah.}}
\]

\[
\text{etābhīrdevānayajamāno hvayati.}
\]

\[
\text{tadāhutīnāmāhutītvam (vol.I, p.2).}
\]

Subsequently, Sanskrit literature and hermeneutics accepted this word analysis as a strategy for explaining word meaning. From the classical age Indian hermeneutical approaches were highly influenced by etymology, which has been named as  *nirukti* by ancient scholars. The critic of Indian dramaturgy, Bharata, was a practitioner of this style of word analysis. In  *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Bharata answers the questions of the seers on the concept of  *rasa*, in a three fold method. The three devices for the detailed illustrations - ‘*samgraha*’, ‘*kārikā*’ and ‘*nirukta*’ as mentioned by Bharata are :

\[
\text{aham vah kathayisyāmi nikhilena tapodhanāḥ.}
\]

\[
\text{samgraham kārikām caiva niruktam ca yathākramam.}
\]

(vol.I, p.262).
Besides, Bharata gives a notable explanation for ‘nirukta’ as follows:

nānānāmāśrayopetam nighaṇṭunigamānvitam.
dhātvartahetusamyuktam nānāsiddhāntasādhitam.
sthāpito’rtho bhavedyatra samāsenārthasūcakāḥ.
dhātvartho bhāvayedyatra niruktam tatpracaksate.

(vol.1, p.262).

‘Nirukta is that text in which the etymological derivation of word established in relation to the meaning of root from which the noun forms are derived and are justified by the different texts of technical and scientific nature and as such it contain reasoning and arguments to establish the meaning of words in a concise manner’.

Later on commentators like Śaṅkara, Abhinavagupta and the famous poets like Kālidāsa have illustrated great importance on the etymological strategies for the proper use of words. Abhinavagupta, in his commentary of Nāṭyaśāstra explains the verses of Bharata and illustrates the concept of ‘nirukta’.
He uses the word *parīkṣātmaka* (experimental) for the word analysis. He says as follows-

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samāsena samkṣepena anekavyaktibheda
bhinnasyārthasya lakṣaṇīyasya yah sūcako’rtho
lakṣaṇātmaḥ sa yatrākṣepa pratisamādhānalakṣaṇe
vastuni sati sthāpito bhavati tatparīkṣārūpaniruktam.
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Here the word *samāsena* is defined as analytic. The word analysis or definition should be experimental; and the contextual meaning of the word is to be ascertained in a socratic method and this is the word meaning of *parīkṣātmaka*. Abhinavagupta’s explanation for the word *siddhānta* is of great emphasis. According to him, *siddhānta* means the four fold division of *nirukta* namely - *namnā* (by noun), *dhātunā* (by root), *dvābhyaṁ vā* (both by root and noun), *samayena ca* (and by contextual or technical aspects). Examples for the four types of *niruktis* are also given. The first is illustrated thus - *ūrdhve khamasyeti ulūkhalam*. The second thus - *rasyata iti rasah*. The third thus - *piśitamaśnātīti piśācaḥ*. And the contextual
or technical is again subdivided into three as - laukika, vaidika and \textit{pratiśāstrapārṣada} (according to each śāstra text). The respective examples of the three types given by him are -

\begin{itemize}
\item bhū sattāyām,
\item dīdhing dīptidevanayoḥ,
\item gāndharvavede gītakavisēse oveṇakādiśabdaḥ.
\end{itemize}

He explains the purpose of \textit{nirukta} as follows -

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{samkṣepeṇārthasūcakaḥ} (comprehension of the meaning in a concise manner).
\end{itemize}

The history of etymology in India can be traced back from the Vedic literature. As mentioned above, some glimpses of etymological explanations can be found out in \textit{Samhitā} portions. And later on, \textit{Brāhmaṇa} texts developed this to a great extent. Yāska’s ‘\textit{nirukta}’ is the most remarkable treatise on etymology. It is the only available text which discusses Vedic words etymologically.

\textit{Nirukta} explains selected Vedic words. It deals with the purpose of deriving and explaining the Vedic words through etymology. In the beginning of the \textit{Nirukta}, Yāska says that
the traditional list of Vedic words has been handed down and it should be explained -

\[ \text{samāmnāyaḥ samāmnātāḥ sa vyākhyaśtavyaḥ} \quad (\text{Nirukta.I.1}). \]

Durga, the great commentator of the \textit{Nirukta}, explains the task on this treatment of Yāska as- ‘people nowadays are short lives and of lacking intelligence. So they cannot understand the real meaning of Vedas. The great seer Kaśyapa collected the traditional list of Vedic words - \textit{samāmnāyaḥ}, starting with \textit{gauḥ} and ending with \textit{devapatni}. For the accurate knowledge of Vedas, these words are to be explained.

\[ \text{gavādidevapatnyanto vaidikasabdasamudāyaḥ}. \]

Yāska further states that \textit{samāmnāyaḥ} is also known as \textit{nighanṭavaḥ} and both these terms are used as synonyms. Here ‘Vedic Etymology’ refer to the etymologies of the words listed in the \textit{Nighaṇṭu}.
1.3 Semantics and Etymology

Ancient Indian disciplines have discussed the semantical features and influence in language analysis to a great extent. Most of the disciplines like *Mīmāṃsa*, *Nyāya*, *Vedānta* and to some extent *Vyākaraṇa* deal with syntactic and semantic problems. They are - cognition of meaning and relation of words in a sentence, theories of verbal comprehension, occurrence of multiple meaning, primary meaning of a word, definition of metaphor, conditions of knowing the meaning of a sentence (*ākāṅkṣā*, *yogyaṭā*, *sannidhiḥ*) and classification of functions (*vṛttis*) such as *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, *vyañjanā*. The Buddhist philosophy took a great interest in such topics and provided extensive contribution to the studies on semantics.

Modern linguistics is of an interdisciplinary attitude towards the various branches of sciences like sociology, psychology, anthropology and the like. It has extended its possibilities by establishing a variety of approaches. There are a number of methods to study language, which analyze the various phases of
modern linguistics. Among them the most accepted applications on language studies of the last hundred years are historical and comparative methods. These two are interrelated and for historical study, comparison of languages is an important factor. But in the twentieth century a different style on the study of language was developed which considers language as a living phenomenon.

Modern Linguistics has accepted synchronic method. Diachronic method approaches language, giving importance on historical and comparative nature. To consider historical material is to enter the domain of diachronic linguistics. Synchronic linguistics on the other hand considers language as a living whole, existing as a state at a particular point in time. We can imagine this state as the accumulation of all the linguistic activities that a language community engages during a specific period. Here the time factor becomes irrelevant. The profounder of modern trends of linguistic science, Ferdinand de Saussure, emphasizes the importance of studying language as a living
phenomenon (as against the historical view), of studying spoken
text (as opposed to written texts), of analyzing the underlying
system of a language in order to demonstrate an integrated
structure (in place of isolated phonetic tendencies and occasional
grammatical comparisons), and of placing language firmly in its
social milieu (as opposed to seeing it solely as a set of physical
features).

Yāśka’s approaches on Vedic words are closely related with
the concept of synchronic method on linguistic studies. Yāśka
deals with the Vedic words and passages of Vedic literature with
a contextual analysis. The discourses on Nirukta are interacting
with language spectrum of Vedic age in a living mode. In this
context, the remarks of Kunjunni Raja about the synchronic
method of approaches on Indian linguistics are relevant. He says
that -

‘Ancient Indian scholars did not pay serious attention
to the problems of diachronic linguistics; they were only
concerned with the synchronistic approach.... The lack
of interest in diachronic approach on the part of the ancient Indian scholars is quite apparent in the case of semantics. Even from the time of Yāska, the aim of etymology in India has not been to find out the origin and history of words, but to understand the essence or their real significance. Here etymology was not a subject of mere antiquarian interest, but has been of great importance to the study of meaning'.

(Rājasudhā, p.175)

This observation of Kunjunni Raja about the etymological interpretation of Yāska imparts an insight on the methodology and concerns of Indian linguistics in its profundity. Lack of diachronic approach is not a matter for modern perspectives of linguistic study. At the same time, synchronic approaches are admitted in the main stream of linguistic analysis and far stretched in its various dimensions on possibilities of meanings.
1.4 Linguistic approach

In recent times, linguistic studies are interconnected with all human cultural and social activities. Post structural approaches on all cultural activities deal with the linguistic turn with the power structure which governs the society. The languages like Sanskrit, in the various stages of origin, development and emotional evolutions, are not only studied merely with the tools of grammatical rules, but are to be thoroughly checked with the help of modern socio cultural approach. The study of ancient texts like Brāhmaṇas, the Nirukta and others reveal the fact that they are rich in providing much data on the social condition and the human relations through language studies.

Although from the very early stage, the Nirukta was considered as one among the six Vedāṅgas, there are no sufficient commentaries on Nirukta as in the area of Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhyāyī. This may be due to the exegetical nature of the work itself. Further the tradition of Yāska which stresses on etymology was accepted by various Sanskrit scientific disciplines and even
by literary works in their expositions as hermeneutical and structural analysis. But the real notion of Yāska which was emphasized on the meaning of Vedic texts was not followed much by Indian tradition. Yet there are some commentaries on the *Nirukta* from medieval India. Three commentators Ugra, Skandasvāmi and Durga are known to have elucidated Yāska’s work. The most important one of these commentators is Durga. He may be considered as the only available commentator who approached the *Nirukta* in the traditional way of Sanskrit.

According to modern aspects of linguistics there are remarkable studies on the etymologies of Yāska based on their philological, philosophical and exegetical speculations. Critical edition of Lakshman Sarup, *The Nighaṇṭu and The Nirukta* is an authoritative study on the *Nirukta* of Yāska. Siddheshwar Varma has given a momentous and critical discussion about Yāska’s etymologies based on comparative philology and phonetics. Mantrini Prasad exemplifies the language of the *Nirukta* comparing with Vedic and classical
Sanskrit features of grammar. Eivind Kahrs approaches the *Nirukta* as a strategy for analyzing Indian tradition through the meaning patterns available from the work.

In the present study, etymologies of Yāska has been analyzed with some of the modern linguistic tools as mentioned above. This study further examines the linguistic and semantic speculations in *Nirukta*, which are of real value in the language studies of ancient India. Socio linguistic features referred to in the *Nirukta* are also noted in the present study for consideration.

### 1.5 Linguistics in India - before Yāska

Language functioned as a promoting agent in exploring cultural and social diversity, and unity too. From a very remote past, Indian tradition understood the enormous power of language in society. Hence from the Vedic age, various disciplines in India had engaged in the discussions on language problems and semantic aspects of linguistic studies.

Vedic literature especially the *Samhitā* portions highlights
the predominance of language in its various dimensions in a
sublimely poetic language. The greatness of \textit{vāk} (the word),
was referred to in a number of Vedic hymns. There are many
passages which illustrate the marvelous beauty and power of \textit{vāk}
in different situations. In the tenth \textit{maṇḍala} of \textit{Ṛgveda} speech
or \textit{vāk} (with its metaphysics) is the subject matter of an entire
\textit{sūkta}. It starts from -

\begin{quote}
\textit{brhaspate prathamam vāco agram}
\textit{yatprairata nāmadheyam dadhānāḥ}.
\textit{yadesām śreṣṭham yadaripramāsit}
\textit{preṇā tadesām nihitam guhāviḥ}. (\textit{Ṛgveda} X.71.1).
\end{quote}

This verse explains the various extensions and directions of \textit{vāk}
which depict the essential standpoint in human being's life. In
this \textit{sūkta}, various dimensions of \textit{vāk} have been discussed, which
helps man to establish the powerful position in society through
availing knowledge, and knowledge is the fruit of \textit{vāk}.

The second hymn of the same \textit{sūkta} explains the power of
\textit{vāk} which may help in making real knowledge and freindship.
The hymn is as follows -

saktumiva titaunā punanto
yatra dhīrā manasā vācamakrata.
atrā sakhāyaśakhyāni jānate
bhadraśām lakṣmīṁnihitādhi vāci (Ṛgveda. X.71.2).

‘When the wise created speech in their minds, winnowing it as men winnow flour with a sieve, then friends know friendship; grace is placed upon their word’.

Only the mindful has the authority of vāk. Vāk offers itself to him as a loving wife offers her husband:

utatvaḥ paśyanna dadarśa vāca-
mutatvāḥ śṛṇvanna śṛṇotyenām.

utotvasmai tanvam visasre
jāyeva patya uṣāti suvāsāḥ (Ṛgveda X.71.4.).

‘Some see speech indeed but does not perceive her, Some heed her, but has not heard her; to some she offers herself still as a well dressed loving wife’.
There is another hymn which illustrates the four states of \textit{vāk}, and various disciplines like grammar, linguistics etc. have used this quote to elucidate their own techniques from Vedic exegesis. It is as follows -

\textit{catvāri śrṅgā trayo asya pādā}
\textit{dve śīrṣe saptahastāso asya.}
\textit{tridhā baddho Vṛṣabho roravīti}
\textit{maho devo martyān āviveśa} (Rgveda. IV.58.3).

‘Four are his horns, three are his feet; his heads are two and his hands are seven. Bound with a triple bond the Steer roars aloud: the mighty God hath entered the mortals’.

There are various interpretations for this Vedic passage. The great commentators of Sanskrit literature and grammar like Yāska and Patañjali had illustrated this hymn. \textit{Mahābhāṣya} explains the hymn as follows -

‘The four horns are the four kinds of words viz. noun, verb, preposition and particle; the three feet are three
tenses - past, present and future; the two heads are the
two souls of sound, nitya and kārya; the seven hands
are the seven cases; and the divine Steer bound three
fold (in the chest, throat and head) is roaring’.

The four kinds of vāk or speech is known only by the wise
men, says another hymn-

\[
\text{catvāri vāk parimitā padāni}
\]
\[
\text{tāni vidurbrāhmaṇā ye maniṣīṇah.}
\]
\[
\text{guhā triṇi nihitā neṅgayanti}
\]
\[
\text{turiyam vāco manusyaṇaḥ vadanti (Ṛgveda. I.164.45).}
\]

‘The Vedic seers who are wise men, perceived four
kinds of vāk; three of them are hidden (they are not
 perceivable) only the fourth one human being’s perceive.
The other three remains unknown to them’.

Above mentioned hymns explicit the idea that the Vedic
seers have a keen attention in the divergent areas of language.
They noticed the possibilities of language in empirical life. These
hymns expound the immense power of knowledge of meaning and
the vast area of language.
Later on, *Vedāṅgas* elaborated the different perspectives of language studies to a great extent. Among the six *Vedāṅgas*, four are attributed to specific areas linguistic studies. i.e. *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar) maintained the formal accuracy of Vedas, *Śiksā* (phonetics) observed the correct pronunciation, *Chandaḥ* (metre) explained the various metrical usages in Vedic hymns and *Nirukta* (etymology) explained the meaning of Vedic terms and words.

All these disciplines are dealing with different areas of linguistics. Among these *Nirukta* concentrates in the discussion of meaning. To provide all the possibilities of meaning it uses the etymological devices on Vedic words. Yāska’s *Nirukta* is the only available treatise in this field. The contributions of early writers may be traced out from the *Nirukta*. Some glimpses of etymological observations are seen in Vedas. *Brāhmaṇas* engaged in etymological observations and discussions on words to a considerable length. Further, Yāska’s treatment on etymology is indebted to the discussions of *Brāhmaṇa* texts to some extent.
The etymological approaches of Vedas and *Brāhmaṇa* texts need special attention in the present study.

### 1.6 Etymological observations in Vedas and *Brāhmaṇas*

Some basic and elementary observations of etymological analysis of words are available in Vedic literature. *Ṛgveda* may be considered as the earliest treatise on the etymological approaches on words. The ideas of etymology are spread all over the Vedic literature from the *Ṛgveda* to the *Upaniṣads*. In the present study, an analysis on some observations of etymological approaches in Vedic literature will provide some valuable information about the origin of etymology in India.

In *Ṛgveda* there are a few terms such as *arka* traced from *arkiṇah*, *yajña* traced from *ayajanta*, *aśvinau* from *aśnantau* and so on. Some instances are illustrated here. The word *aśvinau* is explained as *aśnantau-

\[ \text{ā vahete parākāṭ pūrvāśnantāvasvā.} \]
The word is traced from the root *asūng vyāpta samghāte ca.*

The word *gāyatrināḥ* occurs in a hymn addressed to Indra and is traced from the root *gai gāne.* It has been explained as follows -

\[ gāyanti tvā gāyatrināḥ \ (Rgveda \ I.10.1) \]

Vājasaneyi Samhitā of Yajurveda explains the word *tapas* as follows-

\[ bhṛgūṇāmaṅgirasāṁ tapasā tapyadhvam \ (I.8) \]

Here the explanation *tapasā tapyadhvam* is an etymological observation. According to Taittariya Samhitā the word *rudra* is derived from the root *rudir aśruvimocane - yadarodīt taddrdrasya rudratvam* (I.5.1.1).

Some preliminary observations which may be connected with etymology are also seen in Sāmaveda. The word *gātham* is explained by Sāmaveda as *viprāya gātham gāyata* (I.446) from the root *gai gāne.*

According to Atharvaveda the word *jātavedāḥ* (which is an epithet of Agni) is derived thus -
These three explanations illustrate the word *jātavedāḥ*. They are also valuable sources in etymological observations.

All these explanations are to be considered as the primary stages of etymological treatments of words. There are an abundance of words in Vedic literature, which are treated in the above mentioned method. According to Nargis Verma,

‘The etymologies of Vedas are much fond of alliteration. The Vedic seers had a predilection for poetic expression and enjoyed the figures of speech as well, thus making their etymological efforts more effective in order to be successful. With the profundity of expression, these etymologies are expressed both ways through direct and indirect mode. The etymologies in Vedas, therefore on the whole are significant and striking’

(Nargis Verma, 1992, p.28).
As mentioned above, the extensive and elaborate approaches on etymology are treated by *Brāhmaṇa* texts. For instance, the word *jātavedāḥ* has been explained in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* in connection with a legend. This story is connected with the naming of Agni as *jātavedāḥ*. The story explained in the text is related with the daughters of Prajāpati. His daughters left him and had gone away. Agni found them. Then Prajāpati attributed the term *jātavedāḥ* for Agni which means ‘the offsprings are born from me and you found them, hence the name *jātaveda*’. The *Brāhmaṇa* passage is as follows -

prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata. tāḥ srṣṭāḥ parācyā
evāyan na vyāvartanta. tā agninā paryagacchat;
tā agnimupāvartanta. tamevādyāpyupāvṛttāḥ.
so’bravijjātā vai prajā anenāvidamiti. yadabravijjātā
vai prajā anenā vidamiti tajjātavedasyamabhavat.

This is an interesting story narrated in the context of Agni being called *jātavedāḥ*. According to later explanations the word
The word meaning of *jātavedāḥ* has been illustrated in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* as -

\[\text{yeṅgārā āsamstenāṅgirasobhavan}\] (III.34).

The word *āṅgira* means ‘burning coal’. This narration is connected with the character of the sage. He came from the burning coal or it had changed into *āṅgiras*. The etymological explanation of the word implies the rigorous and hot nature of the sage. There is no linguistic treatment for the derivation of the word *āṅgiras*. According to *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the above mentioned word *āṅgiras* is explained as *āṅgiṅā hi rasāḥ* (XV.(b),1,1,9,21).

The word *atūrta* means impassable, unsurpassed or not obstructed. According to *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the word is an epithet of Agni and which means

\[\text{atūrto hota- na hyetam raḥsāmsi taranti tasmādāha atūrto hoteti}\] (I-4,2,12).
In the present context it refers to *hotā* and the combination *atūrto hotā* illustrates *agni*. According to Nargis Verma this word is derived for the sacrificial purpose, and it may be considered in the category of morpho semantic nature (Verma, 1992, p.119).

The word ‘*virāṭ*’ has been illustrated as follows -

\[
\text{virājavānādyakāmah kurvīta. annam vai virāṭ.}
\]

\[
tasmādyasyaiveha bhūyiṣṭhamannam
\]

\[
\text{bhavati sa eva bhūyiṣṭham loke virājati}
\]

\[
\]

This etymology is mainly connected with the social standpoint and it explains the sacrificial purpose. Food is the main source of life. In social life abundance of food was considered for prosperity and dignity. During the Vedic age, *Brāhmaṇa* texts are revealing and promoting the social requirements of man. So the *virāṭ* or who wants to be a hero in society should perform the particular sacrifice. This may be considered as the *arthavādā* (explanatory passages) of sacrifices.
Brāhmaṇas are the basic texts on the treatments of sacrificial performances. According to Vācaspati Miśra, the definition of Brāhmaṇa is as follows -

nairuktyam yasya mantrasya viniyogah prayojanam.
pratisthānam vidhiścaiva brāhmaṇam tadihocyate.

(The Etymologies in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 1992, p.6)

The Brāhmaṇas aim at providing the etymology, application, use, basis and the injunction of mantras. This is a characteristic feature of Brāhmaṇa texts and they promote etymology as the right way to the awareness of meaning. So the treatment of etymology in Brāhmaṇas is helpful to elucidate the meaning of Vedic hymns and words for the sacrificial purposes; moreover it may be used to explain the historical background of the word. This is an interesting phenomenon for the modern etymological and linguistic features and the divergent areas of word meanings which may be traceable from the treatment of Brāhmaṇa texts.

The etymologies of Brāhmaṇa texts explore the divergent
areas of meaning exposition and through this attempt they promote various purposes of Brahmanic culture - yajñasamskāra and sacrificial performances. There are interesting narrations connected with word etymology. They promote the theory of root origin which may be characterized as the feature of Indian tradition of etymology.