1 Introduction

Sanskrit (संस्कृतम्), like Greek and Latin, is an *inflected* language. This means it shows *alteration in form especially by adding affixes*. The bulk of grammatical information is carried by morphology (i.e. the rules for forming admissible words).

A *morpheme* which is the minimal meaningful language unit, is of one of these types:

1. nominal stem (adjectives, pronouns, and indeclinables(अव्ययम्))

   - primary
   - secondary
     - derived from other nominals via affixation (e.g. कुरु + अ = कौरव, नर + त्व = नरत्व)
     - derived from verbal roots via affixation (e.g. गम् + अन = गमन, कृ + तृ = कर्तृ)
     - compounds (e.g. नर + पति = नरपति, चक्र + पाणि = चक्रपाणि)

2. verbal root (धातुः)

   - primary
   - secondary

3. indeclinables (अव्ययम्)

   - particles (e.g. उपरि)
   - pre-positions (e.g. अधि, परि, अनु)
   - post-positions
   - adverbs (e.g. सततम्)
   - connectives (e.g. च, वा)
   - (occasionally) nouns

The nominal stem is characterized by gender as an *intrinsic property* and it is grammatical, usually unrelated to semantics (though the living beings are usually masculine or feminine). There are three genders:

- masculine,
- feminine, and
- neuter

Between masculine and feminine, the former is *generic*, meaning it takes precedence. For pronouns, neuter is the most generic.

Declension of nouns (as we shall later see, declension serves the same purpose that prepositions serve in English) is affected by several factors such as their

- gender (masculine, feminine, neuter),

- final sound or sounds of the stem (e.g. अकारान्त, न्-कारान्त),

- number (singular, dual, and plural), and

- case (प्रथमा : nominative – I, द्वितीया : accusative – II, तृतीया : instrumental – III, चतुर्थी : dative – IV, पञ्चमी : ablative – V, षष्ठी : genitive – VI, सप्तमी : locative – VII, संबोधनम् : vocative – VIII). The following list may help describe the usual purpose of cases:

  1. nominative – serving as or indicating the *subject* of the verb (कर्ता)

  2. accusative – serving as or indicating the *(direct) object* of the verb (कर्म)

  3. instrumental – serving or acting as a *means* or aid (साधन, करण)

  4. dative – serving as the *(indirect) object* or the recipient (beneficiary) of the action of the verb (सम्प्रदानम्)

  5. ablative – indicating the *source or separation* of the agent, instrument, or location (अपादानम्)

  6. genitive – expressing *ownership* (–)

  7. locative – designating the *place or state or action* denoted by the verb (अधिकरणम्)

  8. vocative – identifying the person being *addressed* (सम्बोधनम्)

Here is the declension of a masculine अकारान्त word देव :

Singular (एकवचनम्)	Dual (द्विवचनम्)	Plural (बहुवचनम्)	
देवः	देवौ	देवाः	प्रथमा
देवं (देवम्)	देवौ	देवान्	द्वितीया
देवेन	देवाभ्यां (देवाभ्याम्)	देवैः	तृतीया
देवाय	देवाभ्यां (देवाभ्याम्)	देवेभ्यः	चतुर्थी
देवात्	देवाभ्यां (देवाभ्याम्)	देवेभ्यः	पञ्चमी
देवस्य	देवयोः	देवानां (देवानाम्)	षष्ठी
देवे	देवयोः	देवेषु	सप्तमी
हे देव	हे देवौ	हे देवाः	सम्बोधनम्

The verbal system is more complex and in the vedic system it is even more so [than the classical system]. The book describes complexities of the vedic verbal system and mentions that classical verbal system gradually got rid of a lot of constructs from the former. The language evolved to favor nominal sentences over verbal sentences. **However, it seems imperative to me to know at least a few constructs like, for example, लकाराः .**

The most remarkable feature of the classical language is the *compounds* (especially their phenomenal length). Here is an example from Jayadeva's गीतगोविन्द:

चन्दनचर्चितनीलकलेवरपीतवसनवनमाली।
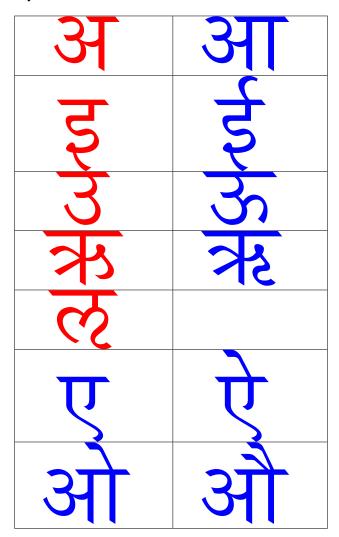केलिचलन्मणिकुण्डलमण्डित गण्डयुगः स्मितशाली॥

The author believes that several changes occurred to the vedic Sanskrit that Panini grammarized. There was also the influence of local languages. In spite of that, because of Panini's efforts, the language established itself as an "elite language". In such evolution, the language's *surface form*[1] were retained.

2   The संस्कृत Alphabet

2.1   Basics

2.1.1   Vowels (when not combined with consonants)

There are 13 vowels of which 5 are short (ह्रस्व) and 8 are long (दीर्घ). Not combined with consonants, here are they:

अ	आ
इ	ई
उ	ऊ
ऋ	ॠ
ऌ	
ए	ऐ
ओ	औ

There are 33 consonants and 2 special consonant clusters. The arrangement is according to the location and mechaism of sound production:

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[1]Surface form of a word is the form of a word as it appears in the text (e.g. "goes" is a surface form of the verb "go"). Contrast it with the lexical form which consists of things such as the root, the part of speech etc.

Velar (Guttral) (कण्ठ्य)	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
Palatal (मूर्धन्य)	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
Cerebral (तालव्य)	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
Dental (दन्त्य)	त	थ	द	ध	न
Labial (ओष्ठ्य)	प	फ	ब	भ	म
Semivowels	य	र	ल	व	
Sibilants (hissing sound)	श	ष	स		
Aspirate (rush of air)	ह				
Special consonant clusters	क्ष	ज्ञ			