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# **ФОНЕТИКА и НЕФОНЕТИКА**

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**TWO CALCULI FOR A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE VEDIC VERBAL SYSTEM\***

### **1. The Vedic Sanskrit verbal system: preliminary remarks**

The system of the finite forms of the Vedic Sanskrit verb (and, particularly, its variant attested in the most ancient Vedic text, the *Rgveda*) is generally considered extremely complicated and irregular as compared to the corresponding system of Classical Sanskrit.<sup>1</sup> Yet this opinion seems to have been imposed by the Sanskritist tradition (essentially going back to the approach of Old Indian grammarians), which usually takes Classical Sanskrit paradigms as a starting point for a grammatical description of Vedic. Such a perspective presents the Vedic paradigms in terms of a list of differences from the Classical Sanskrit system. This approach is, in a sense, anhistorical and methodologically (as well as pedagogically) misleading, since it does not reflect the evolution of the Old Indian morphological system. As is well-known, the Classical verbal system evolves from the Vedic, not the other way around.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, the former system can be regarded as a result of reduction of the latter.

To put it differently, the Vedic verbal system shows very few constraints on applying inflectional morphemes to various verbal stems as compared to what we observe in the Classical language. In fact, the Vedic system can be said to be much larger and yet much simpler, in terms of the number of combinatorial constraints, as compared to the much smaller Classical system.

In what follows, I will describe two calculi that represent a compact scheme for generating the bulk of the Vedic (as well as a few marginal post-Vedic) verbal finite forms.<sup>3</sup>

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\* I am much indebted to Nick Nicholas for valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> One of the best surveys of the Vedic verbal paradigm can be found in [Macdonell 1916: 117ff.]. For the most compact and well-organized outline of the Classical paradigm, see [Зализняк 1976: 841–863].

<sup>2</sup> It is also important to note that during the early Vedic period Sanskrit was (probably) used as a spoken vernacular, whilst in the middle and late Vedic, let alone the post-Vedic (Classical) period, Vedic language could only be employed in a variety of special discourses — in particular, in ritual ceremonies and scholarly discussions.

<sup>3</sup> There are very few formations that are not generated by this calculus. These include, in particular, medio-passive aorists in *-i* (3rd person singular) and *-ran* (*-ram*) (3rd person plural).

Section 2 outlines a calculus that offers a general survey of formations constituting the Old Indian verbal finite paradigm, without entering into details of the type of stem.

In section 3, I will describe a calculus which generates the variety of forms attested within the present tense system.

## 2. A calculus for the system of Vedic finite forms

In this section, I will present the Vedic verbal system as a calculus based on two parameters: (i) the type of stem and (ii) the type of inflection. There are four types of stems: present (PR), aorist (AO), perfect (PF) and future (FU). The types of inflection include:<sup>4</sup> (1) primary endings;<sup>5</sup> (2) augment *á-* + secondary endings;<sup>6</sup> (3) secondary endings; (4) imperative endings; (5) subjunctive morpheme *a* + subjunctive endings (which are distinct from primary or secondary endings only for some middle forms); (6) optative morpheme *ī/yā* (which coalesces with the preceding thematic vowel *a* into *e*); and (7) perfect endings. Combining these two sets, we obtain  $4 \times 7 = 28$  logically possible formations. Twenty three of them are actually attested in Vedic (though some are very rare). Only ten of them survive into the Classical Sanskrit paradigm, including present and aorist injunctive (which only survives with the prohibitive particle *mā*) and aorist optative (which is only preserved in the precative, based on the root aorist optative). Note that all formations that belong to the standard Classical Sanskrit paradigm (= boxes bordered with a shadowed line in Table 1) are also present in Vedic, though some of them are very rare (or even exceptional) in the early language, as is the case with the conditional (one attestation in the Rgveda).

Below I present this simple calculus as a table. In the header row of the table, the type of inflection is illustrated by 3sg. active and 3sg. middle morphemes. Some formations (= boxes in table 1) are marked as unattested, exceptional or rare in the early Vedic and / or post-Vedic language, etc. The rarity / frequency of the formations is indicated with various shadings, explained in the legend beneath the table.

### Explanatory notes to Table 1:

In the symbolic notation used below, PR, AO, PF and FU stand for the present, aorist, perfect and future stems, respectively; the type of inflection is indicated by Arabic numerals (1 = primary endings, 2 = augment + secondary endings, etc.).

<sup>4</sup> For a general survey of the Vedic verbal inflection, see [Macdonell 1916: 122ff.]; [Renou 1930: 400f.].

<sup>5</sup> 1sg.act. -*mi*, 2sg.act. -*si*, 1sg.act. -*ti*, ..., 3pl.act. -(*a*)*nti* / -*ati*, etc.

<sup>6</sup> 1sg.act. -(*a*)*m*, 2sg.act. -*s*, 1sg.act. -*t*, etc.

**Table 1. The Vedic verbal system: types of stems and types of inflection.**

Inflection

Stems		1. Primary endings: - <i>t̄i</i> , - <i>te</i>	2. Augment + secondary endings: ā-...-t̄i, ā-...-ta	3. Secondary endings: - <i>t̄i</i> , - <i>ta</i>	4. Imperative endings: - <i>tu</i> , - <i>tām</i>	5. Subjunctive: <i>a</i> + subj. endings: - <i>a-t̄i(i)</i> , - <i>a-te/tai</i>	6. Optative: <i>īyā</i> + secondary endings: - <i>yā-t̄i/...et̄i</i>	7. Perfect endings: - <i>a</i> , - <i>e</i>
PRESENT	Present			(Present) injunctive	(Present) imperative	(Present) subjunctive	(Present) optative	Stative (only 3sg., pl. med.)
	Aorist with prim. endings ('type <i>gathā</i> )		Aorist	Aorist injunctive	Aorist imperative	Aorist subjunctive	Aorist optative (with precative)	
AORIST								
	(Perfect with prim. [present] endings)		Pluperfect	Perfect injunctive	Perfect imperative	Perfect subjunctive	Perfect optative	Perfect
PERFECT								
	Future		Conditional	Future without augment	Future imperative	Future subjunctive	Future optative	
FUTURE								

— belongs to the standard Classical Sanskrit paradigm

— (relatively) rare in early Vedic, more common from middle Vedic (Brāhmaṇas) onwards

— (relatively) rare in early Vedic, exceptional / non-existent after early Vedic

— exceptional in Vedic, non-existent in post-Vedic Sanskrit

— **non-existent in Vedic, rare / exceptional in post-Vedic Sanskrit**

— non-existent

**PR-7.** This type includes statives which have a defective paradigm (only 3sg. and 3pl. forms, as well as participles with the suffix *-āna-*; cf. *hi* ‘impel’: 3sg. *hinv-é* ‘(it) is / has been impelled’, 3pl. *hinv-iré* ‘(they) are / have been impelled’, part. *hinv-ānā-* ‘impelled’) and do not occur after the R̄gveda. (hereafter abbreviated as RV). Synchronously, they share endings with the middle perfect; historically, middle perfects could have been secondarily created by adding the stative endings, 3sg. *-e* (going back to Proto-Indo-Iranian \*-á(i)) and 3pl. *-re* (< PIr. \*-rá(i)), to the perfect stem. For details, see [Kümmel 1996]; [Kulikov 2006].

**PF-1.** This type includes such forms as 3sg.act. *jāgár-ti* ‘watches’ ( $\sqrt{j}$  ‘become awake’), 3pl.act. *dīdy-atí* ‘(they) shine’ ( $\sqrt{dī}$  ‘shine’). These formations do not represent a separate synchronic category distinct from the usual presents (PR-1). Historically, these forms are based on perfects, which, at some stage, have been reanalyzed as belonging to the present system — most often, on the basis of non-indicative forms, which share endings with present forms. Once these forms had been transferred to the present system, they lost their synchronic link with the perfect system, becoming present formations with irregular (‘perfect’) reduplication. For details, see [Kümmel 2000: 59ff., 191–194, 227–230 et passim]; [Kulikov 2005: 434].

**AO-4, 5, 6, PF-4, 5, 6:** The non-indicative moods of the perfect and aorist are only attested in early Vedic and are non-productive already in the early language (for aorist imperatives, see [Baum 2006]).

**AO-1.** This group (‘aorist injunctives with present endings’, labelled by Hoffmann ‘the type *gathá*’) includes a few isolated forms attested in the RV. Here belong, in particular, 2du.act. *kr-tháḥ* ( $\sqrt{kr}$  ‘make’) RV 1.112.8, 5.74.5, 10.39.8; *bhū-tháḥ* ( $\sqrt{bhū}$  ‘become’) RV 6.67.5, 3du.act. *bhū-taḥ* RV 10.27.7, and 2pl.act. *ga-thá* ( $\sqrt{gam}$  ‘go’) RV 8.20.16; 1pl.med. *dhī-mahe* ( $\sqrt{dhā}$  ‘put’) RV 2.23.10 should perhaps be included into this group, too. These nonce formations (see [Lubotsky 1997: 439, 471, 747, 992]) do not instantiate root presents (contra [Whitney 1885: 21, 34]; [Macdonell 1910: 337]; [Campanile 1985]). As [Hoffmann 1952 [1957]: 128–130] = [Hoffmann 1976: 364–366] has demonstrated (see also [Joachim 1978: 69]; [Werba 1997: 307]), they are built on the basis of root aorist imperatives (such as 2du.impv.act. *kr-tám*, 2pl.impv.act. *kr-ta*, 2pl.impv.act. *ga-ta* etc.), and on the model of 2pl.pr.impv.act. *ha-tá*: 2pl.pr.ind.act. *ha-thá* ( $\sqrt{han}$  ‘kill’). Their status within the inventory of finite forms is clearly marginal.

**FU-3, 6.** Future injunctives (= conditionals without augments) and optatives are extremely rare. A few such forms are attested in Epic Sanskrit: 2sg.cond.act. *pari-trāsyah* ( $\sqrt{trā}$  ‘rescue’) MBh 8.13.24, 3sg.cond.act. *bhavisyat* ( $\sqrt{bhū}$  ‘become’) MBh 2.51.25, 3sg.opt.act. *dhakṣyet* ( $\sqrt{dah}$  ‘burn’) MBh 1.221.19 v.l., 3sg.opt.med. *drakṣyeta* ( $\sqrt{drś}$  ‘see’) Rām. 3.1074\*.4; see [Whitney 1889: 334]; [Renou 1930: 401f., 462]; [Oberlies 2003: 236f., 240].

Table 2. The Vedic verbal system: a selection of forms.

Inflection

1. Primary endings: -i, -te	2. Augment + secondary endings: á...-i, á...-ta	3. Secondary endings: -i, -ta	4. Imperative endings: -tu, -tām	5. Subjunctive: a + subj. endings: -a-ii), -a-tətai	6. Optative: <i>īyā</i> + secondary endings: -yā-tv...et, -ī-ta/...eta	7. Perfect endings: -a, -e
PRESENT	<i>bhára-ti</i> , <i>bhára-te</i>	<i>bhára-t</i> , <i>bhára-ta</i>	<i>bhára-tu</i> , <i>bhára-tām</i>	<i>bhárā-t(i)</i> , <i>bhárā-te</i> , -tai	<i>bhárē-t</i> , <i>bháre-ta</i>	<i>himv-ē</i>
AORIST	2du.act. <i>kṛ-tháḥ</i> , 2pl.act. <i>ga-thá</i>	<i>á-dhá-t</i> , <i>a-dhi-ta</i>	<i>dhá-t</i> , <i>ar-ta</i>	<i>dhā-tu</i> , 2sg.med. <i>kṛ-svá</i>	<i>kár-a-t(i)</i> , <i>kár-a-te</i>	<i>bhū-yā-t</i> (and prec. <i>bhū-yā-h</i> ), <i>ar-ta</i>
PERFECT	<i>jágárti</i>	<i>á-jagan</i> { <sup>o</sup> <i>m-t</i> }	<i>cákán</i> { <sup>o</sup> <i>n-t</i> }	<i>mamát-tu</i>	<i>cákán-a-t</i> ,	<i>jújos-a-te</i> , -tai
FUTURE	<i>bháviṣyáti</i> , <i>janiṣyate</i>	<i>bháviṣyá-t</i>	<i>bháviṣyá-ti</i> , <i>kariṣyá-h</i>	3pl.act.	<i>drakṣya-ntu</i> , 2sg.med.	<i>drakṣya-sva</i>

Stems

Roots that occur in examples given in Table 2: *\jṛ* 'move, raise', *\kan'* 'rejoice', *\kṛ* 'make', *\gam* 'go', *\jan'* 'be born, arise', *\jṛ* 'become awake', *\tyaj* 'abandon', *\dah* 'burn', *\dṛś* 'see', *\dhā* 'put, place', *\bhū* 'become', *\mad* 'rejoice, exhilarate', *\vṛt* 'turn', *\hi* 'impel'. For a few opaque forms I provide the morphophonological notation in curly brackets.

**FU-4.** Rare forms with imperative endings derived from future stems occur in the Epics; cf. the most complete inventory of possible forms derived from the root *dṛś* ‘see’: 1du.act. *drakṣyāva* MBh 1.18.5, 1pl.act. *drakṣyāma* Rām., 3pl.act. *drakṣyantu* Rām. 6.60.7 v.l., 2pl.med. *drakṣyadhvam* MBh, Rām. These forms are not included in the standard Sanskrit verbal paradigm by the Sanskrit grammatical tradition. However, the future imperatives appear to have grown into a separate morphological category in Epic Sanskrit (and therefore the corresponding box in Table 1 is bordered with a striped line), denoting “the projection of the command into the future” ([Oberlies 2003: 235–237], with a comprehensive bibliography and an exhaustive list of attestations in the Epics). The majority of occurrences (listed by Oberlies) are 1pl.act. and 2pl.med. forms; in addition, there are a few 1du.act. forms (8 occurrences)<sup>7</sup> and exceptional 2sg.med. (only one occurrence: *tyakṣyasva* ( $\sqrt{tyaj}$  ‘abandon’) MBh 4.13.17 v.l.) and 3pl.act. forms (3×).

**FU-5.** The only form of a subjunctive derived from a future stem attested in early Vedic is 2sg.fut.subj.act. *kariṣyāḥ* ( $\sqrt{kṛ}$  ‘make’) at RV 4.30.23 (and, probably, at RV 1.165.9, if we accept the emendation <sup>+</sup>*kariṣyāḥ* for *kariṣyā*); a few forms are also found in the Brāhmaṇas; see [Whitney 1889: 333f.]; [Macdonell 1910: 386, with fn. 13]; [Lubotsky 1997: 445] ; [Knobl 2004: 270ff.].

No verb attests of course the full inventory of forms which can, in theory, be generated by the above calculus. Table 2 gives a representative selection of forms derived from a few frequent roots. Examples given in the table are 3sg.act. and / or 3sg.med. forms, unless further specified.

### 3. A calculus for the system of Vedic present formations

The system of present formations is undoubtedly the richest subsystem of the verbal paradigm, which is often said to abound in irregular and abnormal forms. The traditional Old Indian system of ten ‘primary’ present classes satisfactorily captures the main morphological types. However, it is also simplistic in some respects, grouping together some types of clearly different nature. In particular, it disregards the important difference between (i) the two main thematic types, classes I (with the accent on the root) and VI (with the accent on the thematic vowel), on the one hand, and (ii) secondary thematicizations, i. e. present types which have been transferred from some athematic types to classes I and VI or can be regarded as such transfers (irrespective of their origin).

The calculus outlined below uses a few parameters which enable us to generate virtually all present formations attested in Vedic. Combining the three main morphological and morphophonological features, we obtain all present stems, including ‘minor types’, which find no place in the traditional

<sup>7</sup> Note, incidentally, that the imperative uses secondary endings in the 1pl.act., 1du.act. and 2pl.med. forms (-*ma*, -*va*, and -*dhvam*), thus sharing endings with the imperfect / injunctive. This leaves open the possibility for an alternative interpretation of these forms as instantiating future injunctives (= conditionals without augments) — discarded by Oberlies, however.

Indian nomenclature. These parameters include: (i) the present stem formative (symbolized as F in table 3): no present stem morpheme ( $\emptyset$ ); stem suffixes (-y(a)-, -nó-/nu- etc.); nasal infix -ná-/n- (placed between curly brackets in the illustrative examples); and reduplication; (ii) the presence of the thematic vowel -a-; and, for thematic present stems, (iii) the place of the main accent: on the root vs. on the thematic vowel. Note that the stem suffix (or infix) of the secondary thematic classes always appears in the zero grade and contains no vocalic element; for that reason, it cannot bear the accent. The only exception is class X, with the suffix -áya<sup>8</sup> — the only ‘primary’ present type that remains outside the system generated by this calculus.

For the sake of convenience, I use a complex notation which is made as close as possible to the traditional Indian system of ten classes (symbolized by Roman numerals). Each of the secondary thematic types (qualified by the Sanskritist tradition as belonging either to class I, or to class VI) is related to the corresponding athematic type (I $\leftarrow$ V, VI $\leftarrow$ VII, etc.), thus being presented as the result of thematicization. This is a purely synchronic notation: the arrow ( $\leftarrow$ ) does not necessarily mean that the thematic type in question historically goes back to a (hypothetic) athematic pendant. Thus, for instance, I do not argue that, for the class ‘VI $\leftarrow$ VII’ present *kṛ{n}t-á-ti*, we have to reconstruct the athematic class VII present \**kṛ{ná}t-ti*, etc. A few secondary thematic(ized) types are not actually attested. These include classes I $\leftarrow$ IX, VI $\leftarrow$ V<sup>9</sup> and VI $\leftarrow$ III.

In addition to the nine ‘primary’ classes, this calculus generates one type that is traditionally not included in the system of ‘primary’ present types, passives with the suffix -yá-.<sup>10</sup> The only formal difference between class IV presents and -yá-passives is the place of the stress (on the root vs. on the thematic vowel / suffix). Thus, this formal opposition follows the same pattern as the opposition between types I $\leftarrow$ VII (*sú/m/bh-a-ti*) and VI $\leftarrow$ VII (*kṛ{n}t-á-ti*). Note that the -yá-class also includes a few non-passive -yá-presents (symbolized as \*IV in table 3) of the type *mriyáte* ( $\sqrt{mr}$  ‘die’) with secondary accent shift ( $\leftarrow$  \**mr-ia-te*). On this type, see [Kulikov 1997].

There are no athematic presents with the suffix -i- in Sanskrit (= athematic counterparts of the -ya-presents); one of the few traces of the Proto-Indo-European athematic *i*-type might be the present *kṣéti* ( $\sqrt{kṣi}$  ‘dwell’) < \**tk-éi-ti*; see [Kortlandt 1989: 109]; [LIV 2001: 644, note 1].

Next to the main present classes, table 3 also includes two non-productive present types with the suffixes -cha- and -va-<sup>11</sup> (on which see, in particular, [Gotō 1987: 73]).

<sup>8</sup> Together with the -áya-causatives, which, however, are inconsistently grouped with ‘secondary’ formations by the Indian tradition.

<sup>9</sup> An example of this type might be the Rgvedic present *rnavati* (\**r-nv-á-ti* ?) ‘moves, raises’, which does not occur unambiguously accented, however.

<sup>10</sup> Instead, they are grouped with ‘secondary’ formations (which also include -áya-causatives, intensives and desideratives).

<sup>11</sup> The only formation which might be qualified as the athematic counterpart of this latter type is the RVic hapax *tar-u-te* ( $\sqrt{tr}$  ‘pass, overcome’), attested in RV 10.76.2.

Table 3. The Vedic system of present stem types.

Present stem formatives (suffixes and other morphemes)								
	∅ (no)	-y(a)-	-nó- / -nu-	-nā- / -nī-	infix /ná / n/	pres.reduplic.	-ch(a)-	-v(a)-
athematic: $\sqrt{\square}+F-$	II át-ti	— (kṣéti)	V, VIII su-nó-ti, ta-nó-ti ( $\sqrt{tan}$ )	IX pr-nā-ti	VII yu/ná/k-ti	III dá-dā-ti	—	(VIII) (tar-u-te)
thematic: $\sqrt{\square}+F+a-$	accent on the root: $\sqrt{\square}+F+a-$	I bháv-a-ti	IV lúbh-ya-ti	I→V í-nv-a-ti	(I→IX) —	I→VII śú/m/bh-a-ti	I→III tí-ṣṭh-a-ti	I <sub>cha</sub> gá-cha-ti
	accent on the them. vowel: $\sqrt{\square}+F+á-$	VI tud-á-ti	pass., *IV han-yá-te, mri-yá-te	(VI→V) (*r-ñv-á-ti ?)	VI→IX pr-n-á-ti	VI→VII kr/njt-á-ti	(VI→III) —	VI <sub>cha</sub> r-chá-ti

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## СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

От редактора.....	7
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### Сандро Кодзасов — ученый, личность, имя

Г. Х. Ибрагимов. Лингвист от Бога .....	9
T. M. Надеина. <i>Homo sapiens prosodicus</i> .....	14
A. E. Кибрек. Экспедиционные истории 2: Начало дагестанских сопоставительных штудий (1973).....	23
B. И. Беликов. Сандро и сандрики (лексикографические заметки) .....	33

### Лингвистическая теория и модели языка

T. M. Николаева. Почему лингвисты не любят «про интонацию»? .....	43
O. Ф. Кривнова. Ах, компонент, ах, компонент... Кого рожит, в какой момент? Структура и функции фонологического компонента в механизме речепорождения .....	53
I. A. Муравьева. Заметки по поводу так называемых «естественных классов» сегментов .....	62
A. K. Поливанова. О сортности сегментов и сегментных представлений текста	71
Ю. Д. Апресян. Модель «Смысл ⇔ Текст» на современном этапе: теория и приложения.....	87
A. A. Кибрек. Есть ли предложение в устной речи?.....	104
Victor Raskin. Computational Linguistics Is the Field Linguistics of Today — and Other Thoughts .....	116
A. Д. Вентцель. Нечто о математической лингвистике и о лингвистике .....	131

### Дагестанские языки

M. Е. Алексеев, A. С. Алисултанов. Редупликация глагольных форм в лезгинских языках.....	163
Gilles Authier. Aperçu de l'histoire des phonèmes du budugh.....	169
Igor Mel'čuk. Zero Affixes and Nominal Cases in Dagestanian Languages .....	176
Marina Chumakina, Greville G. Corbett. Archi: the challenge of an extreme agreement system .....	184
H. Р. Добрушина. Императивный конверб в арчинском языке .....	195
P. O. Муталов. Классификация простых предложений даргинского языка....	207

### Фонетика языков мира

A. И. Кузнецова. Фонетическая мозаика: задачки для Сандро Васильевича ...	215
F. И. Рожжанский. Марийская акцентуация (на материале староторъяльского говора) .....	226
L. M. Захаров, O. A. Казакевич. Фразовая интонация в эвенкийской речи (центр и периферия).....	240
C. Г. Татевосов. Разрешите удалиться: об одном тюркском просодическом ограничении .....	250

<i>Е. Ю. Калинина.</i> Этюд о гармонии гласных в негидальском языке, или не- гласные презумпции о гласных звуках .....	272
<i>Д. И. Эдельман.</i> Артикуляционная фонетика и этимология.....	283
<i>М. И. Каплун.</i> Тон, интонация и дефонологизация тонов.....	300
<i>В. Ф. Выдрин.</i> Метрическая стопа в языках манде.....	308
<i>Ю. Б. Коряков.</i> К типологии межзубных согласных .....	318

### Русская фонетика

<i>Л. В. Златоустова.</i> Из истории экспериментальной фонетики .....	331
<i>С. Оде.</i> Куда исчезли стилизации в иллюстрациях интонационных контуров?.....	337
<i>Р. Ф. Касаткина.</i> Многоликий ют.....	344
<i>Ю. В. Горячева, С. В. Князев, С. К. Пожарницкая.</i> Соотношение инициации, фонации и артикуляции как элемент речевой базы диалекта (на мате- риале говора д. Деулино).....	352
<i>А. В. Тер-Аванесова.</i> Рефлексы *о в корнях существительных мужского ро- да (на материале русских говоров с различием двух фонем «типа о») ..	369
<i>Е. Ф. Киров.</i> Суперфонемы, квазифонемы и нулевые фонемы в русском языке.....	379
<i>С. А. Крылов.</i> О частотном словаре фонетических слов (на материале гене- рального корпуса русского языка) .....	387
<i>Е. Л. Бархударова.</i> К проблеме создания национально ориентированных курсов русской звучащей речи.....	400
<i>А. М. Широкова.</i> Речевой ресурс СТЭЛ для решения задач автоматического распознавания и автоматической сегментации нескольких дикторов речевого сообщения .....	409

### Фонетика и синтаксис

<i>Е. В. Падучева.</i> Коммуникативная расчлененность и пути ее преодоления: инверсия подлежащего.....	417
<i>В. И. Подлесская.</i> Фразовая акцентуация в относительных предложениях: анализ корпусных данных.....	427
<i>И. А. Секерина, О. В. Фёдорова.</i> Просодические всходы на полях совре- менной американской психолингвистики .....	446
<i>К. Бонно.</i> Отождествление через проекцию (о постпозиции безударных определений в атрибутивных синтагмах) .....	457
<i>Н. В. Востrikова.</i> Предложения с экспериментивной семантикой: особенно- сти интонации .....	469
<i>Е. А. Лютикова, П. В. Гращенков.</i> Об одном предлоге о трех формах, о структуре русской именной группы и обо всем остальном .....	480
<i>И. М. Кобозева.</i> ВОТ: как оно расщепляется.....	507
<i>О. Д. Третьякова.</i> Интонационное оформление высказываний с неопреде- ленными местоимениями без маркера неопределенности в русском языке.....	519

### **Семантика и грамматика**

<i>И. Б. Шатуновский.</i> О троеком делении в области мнения в русском языке....	525
<i>А. А. Бонч-Осмоловская, С. Р. Мерданова, Е. В. Рахилина, Т. И. Резникова.</i> «Частные типологии» в лексике: лексическое поле боли.....	539
<i>В. Б. Борщев, Б. Х. Парти.</i> Бытийные, локативные и другие близкие к ним предложения .....	552
<i>К. И. Казенин.</i> «Из ничего и вышло ничего»? (о синтаксическом представ- лении предикатного эллипсиса).....	565
<i>Leonid Kulikov.</i> Two calculi for a description of the Vedic verbal system .....	579

### **Прагматика, коммуникация, дискурс**

<i>Г. Е. Крейдлин, С. И. Перееверзева.</i> Ориентация тела и его частей: коммуни- кативные ситуации и стратегии поведения .....	589
<i>Р. К. Потапова, В. В. Потапов.</i> Восприятие эмоционального поведения иноязычных и инокультурных коммуникантов.....	602
<i>М. В. Китайгородская, Н. Н. Розанова.</i> «Ты, Зин, на грубость нарываешь- ся...» (инвективные стратегии в современном городском общении).....	617
<i>Е. В. Ягунова.</i> Контекстная предсказуемость и коммуникативная структура в процедурах восприятия звучащего текста .....	630
<i>О. В. Александрова.</i> Когнитивно-дискурсивные особенности построения научно-популярного текста на английском языке.....	642
<i>М. Б. Бергельсон.</i> Структура нарратива в зеркале поэтического текста .....	648
<i>Т. Е. Янко.</i> Просодические средства эмфазы .....	658
<i>М. Д. Смирнова.</i> Об одном из способов речевого воздействия в русском языке .....	669

### **Язык — общество — этнос — культура**

<i>Т. И. Шевченко.</i> Комбинаторика просодических параметров темпа амери- канской речи: социокультурный аспект .....	681
<i>Г. М. Богомазов, Е. Ю. Спиридонова.</i> Два основных взаимосвязанных про- цесса возрастной фонологии в гендерном аспекте.....	690
<i>Е. В. Гусева.</i> Зоонимы как социально-культурное явление .....	701
<i>А. И. Коваль.</i> Форма носа и языковая категоризация (из лингвоэтнокуль- турных заметок) .....	710
<i>С. М. Толстая.</i> Языковая игра и вербальная магия (этнолингвистическая заметка).....	717
<i>В. М. Алпатов.</i> Сасими или сашими? .....	722
<i>О. В. Дедова.</i> Графико-орфографические деривации в Рунете .....	732
<i>А. Раскина.</i> Ксерете Русика? .....	741

### **Литературный текст: научный анализ и художественное воплощение**

<i>Е. А. Брызгунова.</i> «Гостья минута» в рассказах В. М. Шукшина (на мате- риале художественного чтения) .....	751
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

<i>И. А. Пильщиков. Проблема фонетического перевода.....</i>	754
<i>В. А. Плунгян. Писал ли Есенин «есенинским дольником»? .....</i>	766
<i>Л. Г. Зубкова. Ритмообразующие свойства морфемного строения частей речи.....</i>	777
<i>Н. Д. Светозарова. О полном и сверхполном типе произнесения и его отражений в тексте художественного произведения .....</i>	787
<i>А. Н. Баранов. «Просодия» письменного текста: заметки о семантике курсы в повести В. Маканина «Предтеча» .....</i>	798
<i>А. К. Жолковский. Шесть виньеток.....</i>	812

**Приложения**

<i>Ю. Б. Коряков. Лингвистические карты С. В. Кодзасова: где он бывал, что он слыхал.....</i>	824
<i>Список научных трудов С. В. Кодзасова.....</i>	826
<i>Авторы сборника .....</i>	835
<i>Алфавитный указатель авторов.....</i>	847