
Sanskrit action verbs ‘worship’ in the *Bhagavad Gītā*: A natural semantic metalanguage approach

Ni Nyoman Tri Gitayani*, Ni Luh Sutjiati Beratha, I Made Rajeg

Udayana University, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: trigitaayani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The semantic understanding of Sanskrit action verbs of worship involves nuances of meaning that frequently overlap, reflecting significant cultural and religious values in Hindu practices worldwide. Despite growing interest in Sanskrit linguistic studies due to the structural and functional complexity of its verbal system, semantic analyses that specifically focus on worship verbs using the semantic primes framework remain limited. Therefore, this research examines Sanskrit action verbs ‘worship’ through the framework of Wierzbicka’s Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, supported by van Valin and Lapolla’s semantic macroroles theory as the methodological combination that has rarely been applied to Classical Sanskrit texts. The data were taken from Chapters IX, X, and XI of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and were collected through documentation and note-taking techniques, subsequently analyzed using qualitative methods. The findings revealed several Sanskrit action verbs related to acts of ‘worship’, namely *upāsate*, *bhajante*, *praṇamya*, *grṇanti*, and *stuvanti*, which are classified under the types DO, DO and MOVE, also DO and SAY. In addition, the semantic macroroles of actor and undergoer were identified across the data, which are indicated as AGENT, RECIPIENT, and GOAL. The findings carry significant implications for both cultural and semantic inquiry, deepening understanding of how ‘worship’ is conceptualized in Hindu thought and indicating the potential to expand the application of NSM and semantic macroroles across languages worldwide.

Keywords: action verbs, Natural Semantic Metalanguage, Sanskrit, worship

Article history

Submitted:
3 December 2025

Accepted:
28 July 2026

Published:
31 July 2026

Citation (APA Style):

Gitayani, N. N. T., Beratha, N. L. S., & Rajeg, I. M. (2026). Sanskrit action verbs ‘worship’ in the *Bhagavad Gītā*: A natural semantic metalanguage approach. *LITERA*, 25(2), 172–183. <https://doi.org/10.21831/ltr.v25i2.92471>

INTRODUCTION

The fluency of communication greatly depends on understanding the meaning of the language. Language generally reflects the close relationship between a word and its meaning, and it can be described as systemic in nature (Adhiti, 2021). In linguistics, research on meaning is related to semantics, a branch that studies the meaning or significance of language and examines its development and changes (Arifianti & Wakhidah, 2020). A particularly compelling approach within semantics is the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), first introduced by Wierzbicka (1996), which focuses on analyzing word meaning clearly and without residue or circularity (Goddard, 1996:1). NSM examines meaning separately or in relation to a particular context. This context can include the paradigmatic relationship of a word, as well as the social and cultural context in which the word is used (Gladkova, 2023:225). In other words, NSM studies can facilitate a person's understanding of cross-language word analysis (Sukma, 2024). One language that can be analyzed using the NSM approach is Sanskrit, which has contributed significantly to Indonesian and Balinese vocabulary and maintained a close relationship with Hinduism and Indonesian culture (Tristananda, 2019).

In Indonesia, the use of Sanskrit is closely tied to religious rituals, particularly among Hindus. Generally, the use of this language is often found in *mantras* (sacred utterances), *pūja* (worship through offerings), and *stava* (hymn or chant to praise the deity or God), chanted by Hindu priests and written in lectures delivered by local religious leaders on religious topics (Siswadi, 2019:3). Although Sanskrit is not new to Indonesian society, it is undeniable that its use is often considered limited only to religious contexts. It is not surprising that there is a perception in society that Sanskrit is a dead language (Suparta, 2022). However, nowadays, various communities have begun introducing the Sanskrit language

learning to the wider community to dispel the stigma of “difficulty” that is often attached to its use. To strengthen the public's understanding of Hinduism, it is essential to promote Sanskrit language learning among Indonesians, thereby supporting the accurate use of its linguistic units and conveying the intended meaning of the speaker.

One of the lexical units that is particularly interesting to research in Sanskrit is the verb, since a single Sanskrit verb can develop into around 90 forms (Saraswati 1999:89). Verbs play a central role in the formation of a clause or sentence (Effendi et al., 2024). Among verb types, action verbs are the most frequently used type of verbs in everyday communication. Givón (2001:52) stated that prototype verbs that encode actions typically involve activities deliberately initiated by humans or other living beings. This view is supported by Sudipa (2021:10), who noted that this type of verb originates from the action category manifested in the form of DO, based on the semantic primes list. In Sanskrit, action verbs are derived from root verbs (*dhātuḥ*) that can change due to tense (*kalaḥ*), person (*puruṣaḥ*), and number (*vacanam*). In Sanskrit, one type of verb with several uses is found in verbs related to the activity of ‘worship’, since the language is inseparable from the religious aspects of Hinduism, which are also expressed in its sacred chants and Hindu literature.

One of the Hindu literatures with a diverse verb vocabulary is the *Bhagavad Gītā*. *Bhagavad Gītā* is a collection of ancient Hindu religious texts written in Classical Sanskrit by Mahārṣi Vyasa. In general, the *Bhagavad Gītā* can be identified as *Brahmāvidyā* (philosophy and theology) and *Yogasastra* (literature on the philosophy and practice of yoga), containing a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna before facing the Bharatayuddha War (Titib, 2024:94). It serves as a central guide for humanity, not only in ethical behavior, but also in directing humans towards a deep understanding of each behavior they perform in their lives (Arta, 2024). Moreover, the *Bhagavad Gītā* also guides individuals to recognize their shortcomings and weaknesses in their pursuit of perfection or happiness (Krishna, 2017:3). The text contains messages of morality, spirituality, and responsibility that reflect universal values. An analysis of linguistic aspects, particularly verbs, in the *Bhagavad Gītā* can offer new insights for Sanskrit speakers who often employ Classical Sanskrit in their worship.

The semantic analysis of Classical Sanskrit action verbs remains an underexplored area in linguistics, particularly from the perspective of NSM. Prior research has yet to systematically analyze the meaning of action-verb relations in Classical Sanskrit or examine the semantic macroroles of their arguments using this framework. This gap makes the current research significant, as it may yield new linguistic findings. NSM is particularly well-suited for this research because, as Wierzbicka (1996:22) argues, NSM enables people to explain meanings in any language using simple sentences, making them readily understood across cultures. This distinguishes NSM from approaches such as hypersemiotics, which emphasize the excess of signs, sign systems, and signifying processes that shape meaning through culture and history, thereby extending beyond the bounds of structural semiotics (Piliang, 2003:54). Unlike hypersemiotics, NSM offers a more universally applicable metalanguage for capturing semantic meaning across cultures and languages.

The study of verbs from the NSM perspective has tended to focus on the meaning of verbs in non-religious contexts without adequate discussion of the semantic roles of their arguments. This can be observed in research conducted by Thompson et al. (2022), Ardiantari (2023), Wahome & Kepirianto (2023), and Sukma (2024). Prior research on meaning relations, such as that by Charyyeva (2024), tended to examine the social meaning of linguistic units in general without specifically delving into verbs. Moreover, although Sanskrit has been used as a research object in recent studies, such as Butman (2025) and Prawira (2025), the analysis of verb meaning has not been comprehensively examined. Overall, these research have gaps compared to the current research, particularly in the selection of research objects and the focus of the analysis. Prior studies have not specifically addressed worship verbs through the NSM approach and the semantic macroroles theory, thus making the current research the first to bridge Sanskrit verbs with a universal semantic perspective. Despite these gaps, previous studies have contributed to this research by informing the detailed analysis and presentation of data.

NSM semantic explication, which positions X as the actor and Y as the undergoer, provides a systematic basis for identifying the arguments of Sanskrit action verbs, thereby enabling a deeper and cross-culturally applicable analysis of verbal meaning. Based on that description, research on Sanskrit action verbs in the *Bhagavad Gītā* was conducted using NSM, supported by the theory of semantic macroroles. Thus, this research aimed to analyze the semantic structures and semantic roles of the Sanskrit action verb related to the 'worship' lexicon in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Through an understanding of

Sanskrit action verbs related to the ‘worship’ activity from a semantic perspective, especially the NSM and semantic macroroles approaches, new insights can be gained, and people can be helped to simplify their understanding of the meanings of complex words across cultures and languages. Understanding the meaning of action verbs from these viewpoints can help prevent ambiguity and misunderstandings when using the language. Furthermore, this research has significant theoretical implications, as it indicates the potential to expand the application of NSM and semantic macroroles across languages worldwide. By enabling the universal interpretation of meanings that might otherwise be inaccessible, these frameworks also enrich cross-cultural inquiry into action concepts.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach to examine existing linguistic phenomena from a semantic perspective. According to Nartin et al. (2024:53), the qualitative approach can facilitate an understanding of the complexity of human phenomena in relation to social and cultural contexts, thereby exploring the subjectivity of data meaning. In this research, the qualitative-descriptive design was employed since the analytical objective was to explicate Sanskrit verbal meaning through NSM and to analyze their semantic macrorole arguments; both of which require in-depth interpretation of linguistic data rather than numerical measurement. Therefore, this research focused on analyzing the semantic structure of Sanskrit action verbs related to the act of ‘worship’ in the *Bhagavad Gītā* through the NSM approach, supported by the semantic macroroles theory.

In this research, the data source used was from *Bhagavad Gītā* Chapters IX (*Rāja Guhya Yoga*), X (*Vibhūti Yoga*), and XI (*Viśvarūpa Darśana Yoga*), consisting of 34, 42, and 55 verses. These chapters discussed the Yoga of the Greatest Secret, the Yoga of Divine Splendor, and the Yoga of the Universal Form, all written by Narasingha (2022). It is accessible via the link <https://www.rupanugabhajanashram.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Bhagavad-gita-Swami-BG-Narasingha.pdf>. Since the verses of the *Bhagavad Gītā* remain unchanged through the ages, Narasingha’s English translation serves as interpretative support for understanding the contextual meaning of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, especially for those who do not understand Sanskrit. These three chapters were selected as data sources because they contain a variety of action verbs used by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in their dialogue. This dialogue concerns the essence of yoga and the universe’s cosmic nature. As a result, the chapters provide diverse linguistic material for the analysis of Sanskrit verbal meaning and semantic macroroles. Furthermore, these chapters stand out for their diverse vocabulary and the dense use of action verbs. These features are considered representative of the broader verbal system in Classical Sanskrit.

In supporting this research, the documentation method was used to collect data, as it involves gathering information from documents, whether specific or general (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:303). The documentation method used to collect Sanskrit action verb data from a publicly accessible document, namely the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Related verbs of ‘worship’ were defined in this research as action verbs that semantically encode acts of devotion, ritual, offering, or spiritual submission, as performed by the participants in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Those action verbs were identified as verbs that are semantically related to acts of worship, spoken by Kṛṣṇa or Arjuna in the context of yoga/cosmology, and in the active form with identifiable arguments. The identification and classification of Sanskrit action verbs related to ‘worship’ were validated through a three-stage triangulation process, including check (verifying the classification of action verbs), check-recheck (confirming the appropriateness of the selected worship verbs for analysis, also cross-referencing with established Sanskrit lexical resources, including the Sanskrit dictionary proposed by Surada (2007), to ensure semantic accuracy), and cross-check (reviewing and re-verifying all data from the preceding stages). Furthermore, the researcher used the note-taking technique as a further manifestation of the documentation method. The note-taking technique was used to record every finding on Sanskrit action verbs in Chapters IX, X, and XI of the *Bhagavad Gītā* through the use of Microsoft Excel, making the data easily groupable and further analyzable.

Generally, data were analyzed using qualitative methods, which involved two main steps to identify the verb type as ‘worship’ based on the context of use. First, a semantic explication through the NSM approach was conducted to determine the meaning of each Sanskrit verb related to the action of ‘worship’ using the semantic primes. In this step, the Sanskrit action verb ‘worship’ was analyzed to identify the semantic core of its usage, and then explained using the combination of semantic primes

proposed by Wierzbicka (1996). Second, from the explication obtained, the arguments of each verb were mapped onto their respective semantic macroroles, namely actor and undergoer, in accordance with the principles of the semantic macroroles theory. The actor role was assigned to the argument that controlled the action described in the NSM semantic explication. In contrast, the undergoer role was assigned to the argument that received or experienced it. This determination was based on semantic criteria derived from the NSM explication, with morphological evidence from LGR used to support the identification of the verbal arguments. In addition, it is important to consider Sanskrit's grammatical case markers, which require changes in case (*vibhaktiḥ*), number (*vacanam*), and even gender (*liṅgaḥ*) in its grammatical elements (Chakraborty, 2021). The determination of the actor's role in Sanskrit is often influenced by the presence of nouns in the nominative case. In contrast, nouns in the accusative case have the potential to be identified as undergoers.

The NSM approach conducted by Wierzbicka (1996) was applied to explicate the meaning of each Sanskrit verb related to the 'worship' act in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which was examined through semantic explication using the NSM approach, identifying semantic components, and illustrating how the verbs captured distinct aspects of worship. There are 65 semantic primes commonly used as references in NSM analysis, as listed in the following table.

Table 1. List of Semantic Primes

1.	Substantives	I, you, someone, something, people, body
2.	Relational substantives	kind, part
3.	Determiners	this, the same, much-many
4.	Quantifiers	one, two, some, all, other-else
5.	Evaluators	good, bad
6.	Descriptors	big, small
7.	Mental predicates	know, think, feel, want, hear, see
8.	Speech	say, true, word
9.	Actions, events, movement, contact	do, move, happen, touch
10.	Location, existence, possession, specification	be (somewhere), there is be (someone's), be (someone-something)
11.	Life and death	live, die
12.	Time	when-time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, moment
13.	Space	where-place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside
14.	Logical concepts	not, maybe, can, because, if
15.	Intensifier, augmentor	very, more
16.	Similarity	like-way

In supporting this research, the analysis of the semantic role of each Sanskrit action verb argument related to the activity of 'worship' was also conducted using the theory of van Valin & Lapolla (2004). Semantic macroroles generalize the roles of arguments for certain verbs and have significant grammatical effects, also showing how nouns (nominal referents) relate conceptually to verbs. These roles allow different nouns to share a role or for one noun to take on multiple roles (Palmer et al., 2010:1). In general, the semantic role of an argument relates to the actor and undergoer. According to van Valin & Lapolla (2004:85), the roles of the actor and undergoer can be specified as follows: AGENT is an actor who intentionally performs an action; EFFECTOR is an actor who carries out an action unintentionally; EXPERIENCER is a participant who undergoes an internal state; INSTRUMENT is an entity used by someone to perform an action; FORCE is an entity that can be manipulated; PATIENT is an entity undergoing a change in state. BENEFACTIVE refers to a participant who benefits from an action; THEME is an entity that changes location; RECIPIENT is the entity that comes to possess something; GOAL is the endpoint of an action; SOURCE is the starting point of an action; PATH is the route.

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018:318), the basic procedure in presenting qualitative research results was to develop a description of the data obtained. In this research, the data were presented using a descriptive method, supported by contextual descriptions of the meaning of each base verb, followed by the use of symbols to facilitate semantic explication. The letter symbols used were X for referring to the actor and Y for the undergoer. In addition, the data presentation also used the Leipzig

Glossing Rules (LGR) proposed by Comrie et al. (2015) to facilitate morpheme-by-morpheme translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* verses. The use of LGR in analyzing Sanskrit action verbs related to ‘worship’ aims to transparently describe the morphological structure of Sanskrit verbs, thereby making it possible for readers to understand Sanskrit without having to study it first, as well as facilitating the identification of verbal arguments and the semantic roles of each verb in the NSM explication process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this section, the researcher presented data used for further discussion. Based on the data collected, there are several Sanskrit action verbs related to the ‘worship’ act found in Chapters IX, X, and XI of *Bhagavad Gītā*. Those findings can be seen as follows.

Table 2. Sanskrit Action Verbs ‘Worship’ in the Bhagavad Gītā

Data	Verbs	Verse	Type Verbs
1	Upāsate	<i>jñāna-yajñena cāpy-anye yajanto mām upāsate ekatvena prthaktvena bahudhā viśvato-mukham</i> (BG:IX-15)	DO
2	Paryupāsate	<i>ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy-aham</i> (BG:IX-22)	DO
3	Bhajanti	<i>mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ bhajanty-ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādīm avyayam</i> (BG:IX-13)	DO
4	Bhajanti	<i>samo 'ham sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy-aham</i> (BG:IX-29)	DO
5	Bhajante	<i>aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ</i> (BG: X-8)	DO
6	Praṇamya	<i>tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hr̥ṣṭa-romā dhanañjayah praṇamya śirasā devaṃ kṛtājālir abhāṣata</i> (BG: XI-14)	DO and MOVE
7	Gṛṇanti	<i>amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti kecid bhūtāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti svastīty-uktvā maharṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ stuvanti tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ</i> (BG: XI-21)	DO and SAY
8	Stuvanti	<i>amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti kecid bhūtāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti svastīty-uktvā maharṣi-siddhasaṅghāḥ stuvanti tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ</i> (BG: XI-21)	DO and SAY

Data 1

*jñāna-yajñena cāpy-anye yajanto mām upāsate
ekatvena prthaktvena bahudhā viśvato-mukham* (BG:IX-15)

<i>jñāna-yajñena</i> knowledge- sacrifice.INS	<i>ca</i> and.CONJ	<i>api</i> also.CONJ	<i>anye</i> A- others.NOM.PL	<i>yajanto</i> sacrificing.NOM- PL
<i>mām</i> U- 1SG.ACC	<i>upāsate</i> towards worship.3SG	<i>ekatvena</i> oneness.INS	<i>prthaktvena</i> separateness.INS	<i>bahudhā</i> in many ways.NOM.PL
<i>viśvato-mukham</i> all sided-faces.ACC				

“They are always glorifying Me, endeavouring with determination and firmly fixed in their vows. Offering their obeisance to Me with devotion, such bhakti-yogīs always **worship** me.” (BG:IX-15)

Data 2

ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ (BG: X-8)

<i>ahaṁ</i>	<i>sarvas</i>	<i>prabhavo</i>	<i>mattaḥ</i>	<i>sarva</i>	<i>pravartate</i>	<i>iti</i>
1SG.NO	ya	source.NO	1SG.AB	m	proceed.3SG.M	qu
M	N	M	L	C	ID	ot
<i>matvā</i>	<i>bhajante</i>	<i>mām</i>	<i>budhā</i>	<i>bhāvasamanvitāḥ</i>		
think.GER	worship.3PL.MID	U-	A-	devotion filled.NOM.PL		
		1SG.ACC	wise.NOM.PL			

“I am the source of everything. All things emanate from Me. Understanding this, the wise who are endowed with love, **worship** Me with all their heart.” (BG: X-8)

Data 3

tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hr̥ṣṭa-romā dhanañjayāḥ
praṇamya śirasā devaṁ kṛtājālir abhāṣata (BG: XI-14)

<i>tataḥ</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>wismaya-aviṣṭo</i>	<i>hr̥ṣṭa-romā</i>	<i>dhanañjayāḥ</i>
then.REL	3SG.M	wonder-	thrilled-	A-
		filled.NOM.SG.M	hair.NOM.SG.M	Arjuna.NOM.SG.M
<i>praṇamya</i>	<i>śirasā</i>	<i>devaṁ</i>	<i>kṛtājālir</i>	<i>abhāṣata</i>
having	head.INS	U-	handfold.NOM.SG	speak.3SG.PST.MID
bowed. GER		deity.ACC.SG.M		

“Thus, being overwhelmed with astonishment, Arjuna’s hair stood on end, **bowing** his head before the Deity, with hands together in prayer, he offered his obeisance and spoke.” (BG: XI-14)

Data 4

amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti
kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo gr̥ṇanti
svastīty-uktvā mahar̥ṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ
stuvanti tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ (BG: XI-21)

<i>amī</i>	<i>hi</i>	<i>tvām</i>	<i>sura-saṅghā</i>	<i>viśanti</i>
these.DEM	indeed.PTCL	U-	deity-	enter.3PL.PRS
		you.ACC.SG	group.NOM.PL.M	
<i>kecid</i>	<i>bhītāḥ</i>	<i>prāñjalayo</i>	<i>gr̥ṇanti</i>	
A-	afraid.NOM.PL.M	handfold.NOM.PL.M	offer prayers.3PL.PRS	
some				
<i>svasti-iti-uktvā</i>			<i>mahar̥ṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ</i>	
welfare.ACC-thus.ADV-having said.GER			great sage-perfect being-group.NOM.PL.M	
<i>stuvanti</i>	<i>choice</i>	<i>tvām</i>	<i>stutibhiḥ</i>	<i>puṣkalābhiḥ</i>
offer		you.ACC.SG	hymn.INS.PL.F	abundant.INS.PL.F
prayers.3PL.PRS				

“The demigods enter into You and fearfully **offer prayers** to You with folded hands. The assembly of great sages and perfected beings offer choice prayers unto You exclaiming, “May there be auspiciousness!” (BG: XI-21)

Data 5

*amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti
kecid bhūtāḥ prāñjalayo gr̥ṇanti
svastīty-uktvā mahar̥ṣisiddhasaṅghāḥ
stuvanti tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ* (BG: XI-21)

<i>amī</i> these.DEM	<i>hi</i> indeed.PTCL	<i>tvām</i> you.ACC.SG	<i>sura-saṅghā</i> deity- group.NOM.PL.M	<i>viśanti</i> enter.3PL.PRS
<i>kecid</i> some	<i>bhūtāḥ</i> afraid.NOM.PL.M	<i>prāñjalayo</i> handfold.NOM.PL.M	<i>gr̥ṇanti</i> offer prayers.3PL.PRS	
<i>svasti-iti-uktvā</i> welfare.ACC-thus.ADV-having said.GER			<i>mahar̥ṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ</i> A-great sage-perfect being-group.NOM.PL.M	
<i>stuvanti</i> offer prayers.3PL.PRS	choice	<i>tvām</i> U- you.ACC.SG	<i>stutibhiḥ</i> hymn.INS.PL.F	<i>puṣkalābhiḥ</i> abundant.INS.PL.F

“The demigods enter into You and fearfully offer prayers to You with folded hands. The assembly of great sages and perfected beings **offer choice prayers** unto You exclaiming, “May there be auspiciousness!” (BG: XI-21)

Discussion

Sanskrit action verbs were identified and analyzed using the NSM approach supported by the semantic macroroles theory to determine the structure and semantic roles of each verb related to the activity of ‘worship’. The data from the *Bhagavad Gītā* reveal that several verbs share the same verbal root yet differ in the affixes attached to them. One such pair is *upāsate* and *pariyupāsate*, both derived from the root *ās*, where the addition of the prefix *pari-* in *pariyupāsate* functions to intensify the meaning of the base form of the verb. Moreover, a parallel pattern is observed in Sanskrit action verbs *bhājanti* and *bhājante*, which share the same root *bhaj*, but are distinguished by their personal suffix: *-anti* marks the third-person plural *parasmaipadī* (the active verbal class whose forms end in *-ti*); while *-ante* marks the third-person plural *ātmanepadī* (characteristically end in *-te*). Therefore, verbs sharing the same verbal root are analyzed collectively under a single representative entry since those verbs belong to the same semantic field.

Generally, the above data indicate that Sanskrit action verbs of worship in the *Bhagavad Gītā* encode semantically distinct acts. Specifically, *upāsate* encodes worship as an effort or devotional attendance, *bhājante* encodes worshipping oneself to the divine, which is done repeatedly. In contrast, *praṇamya* encodes worship as a physical act of submission; *gr̥ṇanti* encodes praising or worshipping something; and *stuvanti* involves worshipping through a hymn. A more in-depth explanation of those Sanskrit action verbs related to the ‘worship’ act can be described as follows.

Action Verb Upāsate ‘worshipping, drawing closer to Divine entities’

The action verb *upāsate* originates from the Sanskrit root word *ās*, that can be defined as sit (Surada, 2007:59). That root word is prefixed with *upa-*, which means close, and suffixed with *-te*, which indicates that the subject is third person singular; together, these morphemes form a word that refers to the act of worship intended as an effort to get closer to a particular person or entity. In Sanskrit, this type of verb can be classified as an action verb with the type DO. Specifically, in Data 1, the verb *upāsate* refers to the effort to draw near to Sri Kṛṣṇa, an action that seeks to bring the devotee closer to the Divine through spiritual awareness. The semantic explication of the verb *upāsate* can be explained as follows

Semantic Explication:

At that time, X does something
X thinks about Y
X wants to be near Y
Therefore, X does something good for Y

X thinks:
 I think that is good
 X wants that to happen
 X does something like that

From the above analysis, the semantic explication of *upāsate* reveals that X is an initiating and volitional entity, as evidenced by the components ‘X does something’, ‘X thinks about Y’, and ‘X wants that to happen’. Here, X belongs to the word *anye* ‘those who worship’ and has the semantic macrorole that collectively satisfies the criteria for the actor, which is indicated as AGENT. The AGENT role is given because the entity consciously performs the act of worship directed at the entity Y. Based on the above semantic explication, Y is consistently positioned as the entity of X’s directed action, as indicated by the component ‘X does something good towards Y’. Here, Y belongs to the entity *mām*, which refers to the first-person singular object, namely Sri Kṛṣṇa. This entity has the semantic macrorole of undergoer, indicated as RECIPIENT, because it receives a non-material action, namely, worship and prayer performed by the ACTOR.

Bhajante ‘worship/serving’

This type of verb originates from the Sanskrit root word *bhaj*, which means to divide or to attach oneself to (Surada, 2007:241). The action verb *bhajante* can be interpreted as worshiping or devoting oneself to the divine, which is done repeatedly. In Sanskrit, this type of verb can be classified as an action verb with the type DO. The use of the verb *bhajante* has a positive connection (*sambandha*) between devotees and objects of worship. This verb form is generally associated with chanting (devotional songs), worship, or acts of service to teachers, Gods, or ancestors. In Data 2, this verb is used in reference to Sri Kṛṣṇa as an entity representing God. The semantic explication of the verb *bhajante* can be explained as follows.

Semantic Explication:

At that time, X does something
 X thinks about Y
 Therefore, X does something to please Y repeatedly
 X thinks:
 I think that is good
 I feel happy
 X wants that to happen
 X does something like that

The semantic explication of *bhajante* encodes worship as a repeated and volitionally sustained action. From that explication, the use of the Sanskrit action verb *bhajante* shows the semantic macroroles assigned to its arguments, the actor and the undergoer. The components ‘X does something’, ‘X thinks about Y’, and ‘X wants that to happen’ collectively demonstrate the argument *budhā* ‘wise people’, which has the semantic macrorole of actor, indicated as AGENT. The AGENT role is given because the entity consciously performs the act of worship repeatedly directed at the entity Y. Meanwhile, Y is consistently positioned as the entity of X’s directed action, as indicated by the component ‘X does something to please Y repeatedly’. Here, Y belongs to the entity *mām*, which refers to the first-person singular object, namely Sri Kṛṣṇa. This entity has the semantic macrorole of undergoer, indicated as RECIPIENT, because it receives non-material acts of devotion, including chanting, worship, and religious prayers performed by the ACTOR.

Praṇamya ‘having bowed’

The Sanskrit verb *praṇamya* can be defined as the act of worshiping or honoring someone by bowing or lowering one’s head. This type of verb involves solemn worship performed by someone to honor another person who is highly regarded. The verb *praṇamya* can be classified as an action verb with the types DO and MOVE. The act of *praṇamya* is not merely a physical ‘bow,’ but signifies inner humility and respect in the social and spiritual order, and, in the context of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, is

performed by Arjuna to show his devotion to the deity. The explication of the meaning of this verb through the NSM approach can be seen as follows.

Semantic Explication:

At that moment, X does something
 X moves X's head downwards
 X does that near Y
 X thinks:
 I think that is good
 X wants that to happen
 X does something like that

Moreover, from the above analysis, the semantic explication of *pranāmya* reveals a physical act involving bodily movement directed towards a Divine entity, which shows the use of two arguments. The components 'X does something', 'X thinks: I think that is good', and 'X wants that to happen' establish that *dhanañjayah* (another name for the character Arjuna), who intentionally performs the act of bowing, thereby satisfying the criteria for the semantic roles actor, which is indicated as AGENT. Regarding the entity *devam* 'deity', which refers to Kṛṣṇa, the component 'X does that near Y' establishes Y as the devotional target and spatially as the object of worship of the bowing actions. At the same time, the entity *devam* receives the devotional action performed by the ACTOR, thereby identifying it as the undergoer and indicating it as the GOAL. The GOAL role is assigned because the bowing action performed by the actor involves a movement of the body towards the undergoer, thus involving a change in body position in a certain direction.

***Gṛṇanti* 'offer prayer'**

The verb *gṛṇanti* originates from the root verb *gṛ* that refers to 'talk' or 'praise' (Surada, 2007:114). Generally, this verb can be defined as the act of praising or worshiping something as a form of respect for something or someone. In Sanskrit, this type of verb is classified as an action verb with the type DO and SAY. The action verb *gṛṇanti* describes sacred praise and acknowledgment of divine glory. The use of this verb also shows the vertical relationship between the praiser and the praised, as in Data 4, which refers to the relationship between humans and Sri Kṛṣṇa. The semantic explication of the meaning of this verb can be explained as follows.

Semantic Explication:

At that time, X does something
 X does something to Y
 X says something about Y being a good person
 X thinks:
 I think that is good
 X wants that to happen
 X does something like that

The semantic explication of *gṛṇanti* encodes worship as a verbal act of acknowledging the deity, which is reflected in the semantic macroroles of actor and undergoer. From the above explication, the use of the Sanskrit action verb *gṛṇanti* shows the components 'X does something', 'X thinks: I think that is good', and 'X wants that to happen' that collectively demonstrate the argument *kecid* 'some', which refers to part of the *sura-saṅghā* 'deity group', thereby satisfying the criteria for the AGENT role within the semantic macrorole of actor. Meanwhile, Y is consistently positioned as the entity of X's directed action, as indicated by the component 'X says something about Y being a good person'. Here, Y belongs to the entity *tvām* that refers to the second-person-singular object, which in the context of the verse belongs to Sri Kṛṣṇa. This entity has the semantic macrorole of undergoer, indicated as RECIPIENT, because it receives non-material acts (sacred praise) performed by the ACTOR.

***Stuvanti* ‘offer choice prayer’**

The Sanskrit action verb *stuvanti* originates from the root verb *stu* (Surada, 2007:302), which can be interpreted as the act of praising and worshiping someone by chanting sacred religious hymns. This type of verb can be classified as an action verb with the type DO and SAY. The action verb *stuvanti* specifically refers to the activity of chanting praises to Deity or God in beautiful, rhythmic language, not merely “praising” in the ordinary sense. This activity is intended to harmonize the relationship between humans and the cosmos. The semantic explication of the action verb *stuvanti* can be explained as follows.

Semantic Explication:

At that time, X does something

X does something to Y

X says kind words to Y

X wants to please Y

X thinks:

I think that is good

X wants that to happen

X does something like that

From the above analysis, the semantic explication of *stuvanti* reveals the worship act of acknowledging the deity, as evidenced by the components ‘X does something’, ‘X thinks about Y’, and ‘X wants that to happen’. Here, X belongs to *maharṣī-siddha-saṅghāḥ* ‘the group of maharṣis and siddhas’ and has the semantic macrorole that collectively satisfies the criteria for the actor, which is indicated as AGENT. The AGENT role is given because the entity acts chanting sacred religious hymns as a form of worship addressed to the entity Y. Moreover, based on the above semantic explication, Y is consistently positioned as the entity of X’s directed action, as indicated by the component ‘X does something to Y’ and ‘X says something about Y being a good person’. Here, Y belongs to the entity *tvām*, which refers to the second-person singular object, namely Sri Kṛṣṇa. This entity has the semantic macrorole of undergoer, indicated as RECIPIENT, because it receives the action toward which the actor directs the hymns.

The findings of this research collectively demonstrate that NSM explication, which is semantically integrated with the semantic macroroles, provides a principled and cross-culturally applicable framework for analyzing Classical Sanskrit action verbs. The analysis shows that verbs related to ‘worship’ in the *Bhagavad Gītā* encode different semantic conceptualisations of worship acts, each involving different semantic macrorole configurations. These findings not only contribute to the semantic description of Sanskrit verb meanings but also validate the application of NSM to classical religious texts. Therefore, this research demonstrates that both NSM and semantic macroroles can be theoretically extended and applied across various languages.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Sanskrit action verbs of worship reveals fundamental differences in meaning and nuance compared to the verbs used in Hindu religious activities, particularly those listed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Through the NSM approach, these five Sanskrit verbs: *upāsate*, *bhajante*, *praṇamya*, *grṇanti*, and *stuvanti* are classified as the action verbs that contain three semantic prime configurations, namely DO, DO and MOVE, also DO and SAY. Moreover, the existence of actor and undergoer was also found in the semantic roles of each Sanskrit verb related to the activity of ‘worship’. The semantic role of actor is consistently realised as AGENT, while the undergoer is realised diversely as RECIPIENT and GOAL.

The current research presents new insights into the linguistic understanding of Sanskrit action verbs related to the ‘worship’ act found in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, aiming to enhance people's comprehension when using these verbs. However, this research is limited to the number of Sanskrit action verbs of ‘worship’ found exclusively from three chapters of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and restricted to the NSM framework, which may not represent the full semantic range of this verb class in Classical Sanskrit. Regardless, future research needs to develop more in-depth studies on the use of lexical units in Sanskrit. It could include not only Classical Sanskrit works such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, but also other literature to obtain diverse perspectives on the use of verbs in the language and the application of various

approaches to analyze them. Thus, subsequent research can contribute more deeply to understanding the complexity of the language's use across languages and cultures.

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