SanGPT: Where AI meets Advaita Vedānta

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Language provides humans with the remarkable capacity to express their thoughts through a physical medium to share with others.[1]

Language is the medium of thought, and cannot be separated from it.[2]

Abstract

SanGPT is a specialized Sanskrit→English translation LLM built on OpenAI's GPT-5 (Thinking) architecture. A domain-specific corpus—integrating the entirety of *Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī*, substantial materials, and nearly two dozen curated datasets of aligned sentences, lexical mappings, and semantic annotations—supports model selection, evaluation, and iterative fine-tuning. Eight case studies drawn from essential *Advaita Vedānta* sources benchmark SanGPT against representative English translations using a rubric covering wording/terminology, structure, logic, technical conventions, flow, and clarity. SanGPT is positioned as an assistive tool—expert validation remains critical—and its limitations reflect both architectural constraints and corpus coverage.

I. Introduction

Translation is a practice of longstanding significance, traditionally understood along two aspects: the subjective or mental, and the objective or intersubjective. As a means of transmitting meaning across individuals, communities, and cultures, translation [etym. lat. *translatio, "a carrying across (of meaning)"*] has become indispensable to the circulation of knowledge and thus constitutes a foundational pillar of education. As Ludwig Wittgenstein famously observed, "*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.*"[3]

In recent years, the development of neural network architectures—most notably Large Language Models (LLMs), commonly referred to under the broader category of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly facilitated translation across a wide range of languages, albeit with limitations in accuracy. A particularly compelling area of scholarly attention concerns the efficacy of AI-based translation in rendering ancient languages, such as Sanskrit. Vast bodies of literature in these languages remain untranslated and thus inaccessible to wider scholarly and general audiences. The application of AI to this corpus offers the potential not only to render these texts more widely available but also to contribute to their renewed scholarly engagement and cultural dissemination.

II. The Idea behind SanGPT

The idea of developing a specialized LLM for Sanskrit-to-English translation emerged from years of study combined with a sustained research interest in *Advaita Vedānta* philosophy. A systematic comparison of existing publications has yielded the following insights:

(a) A considerable number of texts have not been translated into English. This is especially true of critical Advaita Vedāntic works from the post-Śaṅkara (PSA) period, including *Advaita Siddhi* by *Madhusūdana Sarasvatī*, *Iṣṭasiddhi* by *Vimuktātman*, *Tattvapradīpikā* by *Citsukhācārya*, as well as the influential *Ṭīkās* of *Ānandagiri Ācārya* (also known as *Janārdanācārya*).

(b) Existing translations of the commentaries (*bhāṣya*) of *Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* produced by authors such as Svāmi Gambhīrānanda, Svāmi Madhavānanda, Svāmi Nikhilānanda, as well as scholars including Vidyavachaspati V. Panoli, V. M. Apte, Alladi Mahadeva Sastri, and George Thibaut, among others—exhibit significant variation.

In certain cases, these translations not only diverge from one another but also depart from the semantic and philosophical nuances of the original Sanskrit, at times resulting in interpretations that appear uncharacteristically idiosyncratic.

Recent advances in Large Language Models (LLMs) offer the potential to accelerate the translation of previously inaccessible texts, particularly by supporting philologists and computational linguists in producing more systematic and scalable outputs. While proficient scholars of Sanskrit do not face barriers of understanding per se, the sheer volume of untranslated material, combined with the labor-intensive nature of manual translation, creates practical constraints that LLMs are uniquely positioned to mitigate.

Over the past two years, several hundred hours have been devoted to the selection, evaluation, and iterative fine-tuning of diverse LLM architectures. The release of OpenAI's GPT-5 models provided the impetus to develop SanGPT, an early-stage implementation now being prepared for public availability through the GPT Store **. SanGPT v3 (08-25), is trained on nearly two dozen custom-curated datasets consisting of thousands of aligned sentences, word mappings, and semantic notes.

The corpus integrates the entirety of *Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī* together with substantial portions of key *Advaita Vedānta* texts. The model employs OpenAI's GPT-5 (Thinking) architecture as its default base, while remaining adaptable to alternative model backbones depending on task requirements.

III. Case Studies

The following transliterated passages (IAST) were carefully selected in order to evaluate the performance of **SanGPT** (v3-0825) in comparison with existing translations.

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* Available in the OpenAI GPT Store

Case 1

nārāyaṇaḥ paro'vyaktādaṇḍamavyaktasambhavam . aṇḍasyāntastvime lokāḥ saptadvīpā ca medinī | [BGHU]

[AMSY]: Nārāyaṇa is beyond the Avyakta; From the Avyakta the Mundane Egg is born; Within the Mundane Egg, verily, are these worlds and the Earth made up of the seven Dvīpas.

[GMBH]: Om! Nārāyaṇa is higher than the Unmanifest. The (Cosmic) Egg comes out of the Unmanifest. All these worlds, including the earth with its seven islands, are in the Egg.

[PANO]: The primordial Egg has from Maya sprung and beyond Maya is Narayana. In the Primordial Egg these worlds are strung. The Dvipas seven and the earth.

SanGPT: Nārāyaṇa is beyond the unmanifest (avyakta); the egg (aṇḍa) is born from the unmanifest (avyakta). Within the egg (aṇḍa), indeed, are these worlds (lokāḥ) and the earth (medinī) with seven islands (sapta-dvīpa).

Case 2

yuktaḥ karmaphalaṃ tyaktvā śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm ǀ ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate | [BG] 5.12

[AMSY]: The steady-minded one, abandoning the fruit of action, attains the peace born of devotion. The unsteady one, attached to the fruit through the action of desire, is firmly bound.

[GMBH]: Giving up the result of work by becoming resolute in faith, one attains Peace arising from steadfastness. One who is lacking in resolute faith, being attached to the result under the impulsion of desire, becomes bound.

[PANO]: The one who is yoked to yoga, having abandoned the fruit of action, attains to the final peace. The one not thus yoked, impelled by desire, concentrates on the fruit (of action) and becomes bound.

SanGPT: The disciplined (yuktaḥ), having renounced the fruit of action (karma-phala), attains steadfast (naiṣṭhikī) peace (śānti). The undisciplined (ayuktaḥ), through desire-driven doing (kāma-kāra), attached (saktaḥ) to the result (phala), is bound (nibadhyate).

Case 3

yuṣmadasmatpratyayagocarayorviṣayaviṣayiṇostamaḥprakāśavadviruddhasvabhāvayor itaretarabhāvānupapattau siddhāyām, taddharmāṇāmapi sutarāmitaretarabhāvānupapattiḥ — ityataḥ asmatpratyayagocare viṣayiṇi cidātmake yuṣmatpratyayagocarasya viṣayasya taddharmāṇāṃ cādhyāsaḥ tadviparyayeṇa viṣayiṇastaddharmāṇāṃ ca viṣaye'dhyāso mithyeti bhavituṃ yuktam ǀ tathāpyanyonyasminnanyonyātmakatāmanyonyadharmāṃścādhyasyetaretarāvivekena atyantaviviktayordharmadharmiṇoḥ mithyājñānanimittaḥ satyānṛte mithunīkṛtya 'ahamidam' 'mamedam' iti naisargiko'yaṃ lokavyavahāraḥ | [AdhyBH]

[APTE]: That the sense-object (Vishaya) and the subject of sense-objects (Vishayin) which are within the range of the denotative power of the words 'Yushmat' and 'Asmat' respectively, and have natures as opposed to each other as darkness and light, cannot transform themselves into each other, being (a matter) firmly established, the attributes of these two also, with a greater reason therefore, cannot transform themselves into the nature of each other. And therefore, the superimposition of the sense-objects which are within the range of the denotative power of the word 'Yushmat' and its attributes, on the subject of sense-objects which is within the range of the denotative power of the word 'Asmat' and has pure intelligence as its self, and its attributes, is necessarily unreal (Mithya). All the same, it is a natural course of worldly conduct resulting from false-ignorance (Mithyajnana) (in a person), to superimpose the sense-objects and the subject of sense-objects which are absolutely different from each other, and their respective attributes, mutually on each other, through failure to discriminate or distinguish either of them from each other, and by coupling truth and untruth together and to imagine thus—'I am this', 'This is mine'.

[GMBH]: It being an established fact that the object and the subject, that are fit to be the contents of the concepts "you" and "we" (respectively), and are by nature as contradictory as light and darkness, cannot logically have any identity, it follows that their attributes can have it still less. Accordingly, the superimposition of the object, referable through the concept "you", and its attributes on the subject that is conscious by nature and is referable through the concept "we" (should be impossible), and contrariwise the superimposition of the subject and its attributes on the object should be impossible. Nevertheless, owing to an absence of discrimination between these attributes, as also between substances, which are absolutely disparate, there continues a natural human behaviour based on self-identification in the form of "I am this" or "This is mine".

[GRTB]: It is a matter not requiring any proof that the object and the subject whose respective spheres are the notion of the 'Thou' (the Non-Ego) and the 'Ego,' and which are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, cannot be identified. All the less can their respective attributes be identified. Hence it follows that it is wrong to superimpose upon the subject whose Self is intelligence, and which has for its sphere the notion of the Ego--the object whose sphere is the notion of the Non-Ego, and the attributes of the object, and vice versa to superimpose the subject and the attributes of the subject on the object. In spite of this it is on the part of man a natural procedure which which has its cause in wrong knowledge not to distinguish the two entities (object and subject) and their respective attributes, although they are absolutely distinct, but to superimpose upon each the characteristic nature and the attributes of the other, and thus, coupling the Real and the Unreal, to make use of expressions such as 'That am I,' 'That is mine'.

[PANO]: It is an established fact that the object and the subject which are represented by the notions 'you' and 'I' respectively and which by nature are opposed to each other like darkness and light, cannot be identical. As such, even in the case of their attributes identity is quite illogical. Hence, the superimposition of the object which is represented by the notion 'you' and its attributes on the subject which is represented by the notion 'I' and which is consciousness in essence, and the superimposition in the reverse order, i.e. of the subject and its attributes on the subject, shall equally be illogical. Still, on account of the superimposition upon each the inherent nature and attributes of the other, owing to the erroneous knowledge about the entities and their attributes which are ever absolutely distinct, by mixing the Real and the Unreal, man naturally assumes the attitude, 'This am I', 'This is mine', in his dealings.

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SanGPT: Of the two—the object (viṣaya) and the subject (viṣayin), the scopes (gocara) of the "you"-cognition (yuṣmad-pratyaya) and the "I"-cognition (asmat-pratyaya)—whose natures are opposed (viruddha-svabhāva) like darkness (tamas) and light (prakāśa), when the impossibility of mutual identity (itaretara-bhāva-anupapatti) is established (siddhā), then, all the more, the impossibility of mutual identity of their attributes (tad-dharmāṇāṃ itaretara-bhāva-anupapatti) follows—therefore, the superimposition (adhyāsa) of the object that is the scope of the "you"-cognition and its attributes upon the subject, which is the scope of the "I"-cognition and is of the nature of consciousness (cid-ātmaka), and conversely the superimposition of the subject and its attributes upon the object, is false (mithyā). Nevertheless, through non-discrimination (aviveka) between one another, each other's nature (ātmakatā) and attributes (dharma) are superimposed (adhyāsa) in each other; and, in the pair utterly distinct (atyanta-vivikta) as attribute (dharma) and possessor of attributes (dharmin), owing to erroneous knowledge (mithyā-jñāna), the real and the unreal (satya-anṛta) are coupled (mithunī-kṛtya), and this innate (naisargika) worldly practice (loka-vyavahāra)—"I am this," "this is mine"—arises.

Case 4

manaso nigrahāyattamabhayaṃ sarvayogiṇām . duḥkhakṣayaḥ prabodhaścāpyakṣayā śāntireva ca | [MaUPKA] 3.40

[GMBH]: For all these Yogis, fearlessness, the removal of misery, knowledge (of the Self), and everlasting peace are dependent on the control of the mind.

[NIKH]: Yogis [who are ignorant of Non-duality] depend on the control of the mind for attaining fearlessness, the destruction of misery, Self-Knowledge, and imperishable peace.

[PANO]: For all the Yogis, fearlessness, cessation of misery, awareness and everlasting peace, depend upon the control of their mind.

SanGPT: The fearlessness (abhaya) of all yogins (yogin) is dependent on the restraint (nigraha) of the mind (manas). The cessation (kṣaya) of suffering (duḥkha), awakening (prabodha) also, and indeed imperishable (akṣayā) peace (śānti) are likewise dependent on it.

Case 5

kiṃ śūnyameva babhūva? śūnyameva syāt; 'naiveha kiñcana' iti śruteḥ, na kāryaṃ kāraṇaṃ vāsīt; utpatteśca; utpadyate hi ghaṭaḥ; ataḥ prāgutpatterghaṭasya nāstitvam | [BUBH] 1.2.1

[MADH] Question: Was it altogether void? Nihilistic view: It must be so, for the Śruti says, 'There was nothing whatsoever here.' There was neither cause nor effect. Another reason for this conclusion is the fact of origin. A jar, for instance, is produced. Hence before its origin it must have been non-existent.

[PANO] (Nihilist): Then, it would have been a void, as evidenced by the sruti-text, 'There was nothing here whatsoever'. There was neither effect nor cause. Besides, the very creation leads to this view. To cite, for example, a jar is produced: Hence, prior to its; creation, it should have been non-existent.

SanGPT: Was it mere void (śūnya)? It would indeed be mere void (śūnya), because of the śruti (śruti) "Here, indeed, there was nothing" (naiva iha kiñcana); neither effect (kārya) nor cause (kāraṇa) existed; and because of origination (utpatti); a pot (ghaṭa) indeed is produced; therefore, prior to its production (prāg-utpatti), there is non-existence (nāstitva) of the pot (ghaṭa).

Case 6

nāvidyā'syetyavidyāyāmevā''sitvā prakalpyate . brahmatṛṣṭyā tvavidyeyaṃ na kathaṃcana yujyate | [SMBHVA] 176

[TMPM]: No; nescience is predicated (of Brahman) (by the jiva which is) in the state of nescience. From the standpoint of Brahman, however, this nescience is by no means intelligible.

SanGPT: Not "ignorance (avidyā) belongs to it," rather only within ignorance (avidyā) is its existence (āstitva) posited. But from the standpoint (dṛṣṭi) of Brahman (brahman), this ignorance (avidyā) is in no way tenable.

Case 7

agnihotrādyanuṣṭhānaṃ dharmamāhurvipaścitaḥ ꠰ pramādaṃ mā kṛthāstadvatsvādhyāyaṃ prati sarvadā | [TUBHVA] 1.168

[BALA]: The wise say that dharma consists in the practice of agnihotra, etc. In the same way, do not be indifferent towards the study of the Veda at any time.

[JMVB]: The wise call dharma the performance of the agnihotram, etc. Likewise, you may never be negligent of (the daily) study (of the Veda).

SanGPT: The wise (vipaścitaḥ) say that the performance (anuṣṭhāna) of Agnihotra (agnihotra) and the like is duty (dharma). Do not be negligent (pramāda) in that; likewise, at all times, with respect to recitation-study (svādhyāya).

Case 8

samāpayya kriyāḥ sarvā dārāgnyādhānapūrvikāḥ ꠰ brahmavidyāmathedānīṃ vaktuṃ vedaḥ pracakrame | UPSP 1.2

[ALST]: The Veda, having finished dealing with all (ritualistic and other) enjoined actions from marriage and the installation of the household fire onwards, begins now to expound the science of the Absolute (brahma-vidyā).

[JAGA]: Now then the Vedas begin to describe the knowledge of Brahman after dealing with all actions preceded by marriage and the installation of sacred fire.

[MAYE]: Having completed all the rituals, preceded by the marriage ceremony and the ceremony of installing the sacred fire, the Veda has now begun to utter knowledge of Brahman.

SanGPT: Having completed all the rites (kriyā) that have as preliminaries taking a wife (dāra) and the laying of the sacred fires (agny-ādhāna), then, now, Veda began to expound the knowledge of Brahman (brahma-vidyā).

Conclusion

While the translations produced by SanGPT demonstrate a degree of sophistication (Table 1), the system remains prone to errors and should not be regarded as a replacement for a proficient Sanskrit translator. In cases of ambiguity, manual validation is indispensable. The present limitations stem both from the constraints of the underlying LLM architecture and from the scope of the training corpus. With the anticipated development of future GPT models and the gradual expansion of domain-specific datasets, incremental improvements in subsequent versions of SanGPT may reasonably be expected.

Category Metrics (best non-SanGPT = 100)

Category	Best non-SanGPT	SanGPT	APTE	GMBH	GRTB	PANO
Wording / Terminology	APTE	**111%**	100%	69%	61%	76%
Sentence Structure	APTE	**109%**	100%	92%	95%	91%
Phrase/Logic Matches	APTE	**106%**	100%	96%	94%	97%
Technical (Parentheses)	APTE	**111%**	100%	44%	28%	39%
Language Flow	APTE	**118%**	100%	87%	82%	92%
Clarity	GMBH	**122%**	98%	100%	93%	98%
Overall	APTE	**112%**	100%	81%	75%	82%

Table 1: Category Metrics based on the longest Sanskrit segment

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3. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus 5.6

Abbreviations:

[AMSY] Alladi Mahadeva Sastry
[ALST] AJ Alston
[APTE] V. M. Apte
[BALA] R. Balasubramanian
[GMBH] Svāmi Gambhirananda
[GRTB] George Thibaut
[JAGA] Svāmi Jagadananda
[JMVB] J.M van Boetzelaer

[MADH] Svāmi Madhavananda
[MAYE] Sengaku Mayeda
[NIKH] Svāmi Nikhilananda
[PANO] Vidyavachaspati V. Panoli
[TMPM] T.M.P. Mahadevan

Works:

[AdhyBH] Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya [Adhyāsa Bhāṣya] of Adi Shankaracharya
[AitUPBh] Aitareyopaniṣad Bhāṣya of Adi Shankaracharya
[BG] Bhagavad Gītā
[BGHU] Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya Upodghāta of Adi Shankaracharya
[BUBH] Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya of Adi Shankaracharya
[MaUPKA] Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad Kārikā of Sri Gaudapadacharya
[SMBHVA] Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Saṃbandhavārttika of Sri Suresvaracharya
[TUBHVA] Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya Vārttika
[UPSP] Upadeśasāhasrī (Padyabandha) of Adi Shankaracharya

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