

Significatio generalis and *significatio specialis*:
Notes on Nicholas of Paris' Contribution
to Early Thirteenth-Century
Linguistic Thought

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Summary: The concepts of *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* were extensively used by several authors in the 1230s, but primarily in works of logic. In spite of some attempts to introduce them into grammar, they never became a standard tool of that discipline. The functions they might have fulfilled were taken over by the notions of essential, special, and accidental modes of signifying, and of *primus* and *secundus intellectus*.

1. Introduction

In his seminal *Die Entwicklung der Sprachtheorie im Mittelalter* of 1967, Jan Pinborg¹ describes in broad outline the six stages which he distinguishes in the development of grammatical thought from the logical grammar of the twelfth century to the modistic grammar of the last decades of the thirteenth century. The fourth stage coincides with the earliest period of the University of Paris and is associated by Pinborg with Jordanus of Saxony and a Parisian “*quaestiones* collection”, now known as the “Guide de l’étudiant”, which has been preserved in ms. Ripoll 109. The linguistic thinking of this stage is characterised by the introduction of the Aristotelian requirements for the construction of a scientific theory. Consequently, being a real Aristotelian speculative science, grammar needed to have a general, necessary, and immutable object, its *principia essentialia*; it was not allowed to be concerned with the superficial, corruptible, or mutable surface structures of the several languages. In the fifth stage, according to Pinborg, these *principia essentialia* were established in more detail: grammar is concerned with the general meanings of words, the *significata generalia*,² which are based on the common properties of things. Logic

¹ Pinborg 1967, 55-56.

² See also Pinborg 1982: 256.

is concerned with the *significata specialia*, the lexical meanings of words, which incidentally are universal as well, since they signify concepts and things which are the same for everybody at any time. The masters whose names are associated by Pinborg with this stage are Nicholas of Paris, Lambert de Lagny (formerly known as Lambert d'Auxerre), and Robert Kilwardby, all of whom flourished in the middle of the thirteenth century.

Recently, Irène Rosier-Catach has discussed at length the notions of '*significatum generale*', '*significatum speciale*', and their relationship of mutual opposition.³ She emphasizes that the notion of '*significatum generale*' is the forerunner of the *modus significandi essentialis*, whereas the *modi significandi* or *consignificata* which we meet in the grammatical treatises of the early thirteenth century, are succeeded by the *modi significandi accidentales*.⁴ Braakhuis⁵ has called our attention to the fact that the notions of *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* and their corollaries, the *significata generalia* and *specialia*, play an important role in the semantic theories of John Pagus, Nicholas of Paris, and Peter of Spain, dealt with by these masters mainly in their treatises on the syncategorematic terms. This is a partial recapitulation and elaboration of a view which Braakhuis had already advanced in his pioneering study of 1979 on this subject.⁶

The surveys of the use of the *modus significandi* terminology given by Thurot,⁷ Pinborg,⁸ and Rosier-Catach⁹ show that in the first half of the twelfth century the term *modus significandi* was used sometimes to indicate that notion which in the thirteenth century would at first be called *significatio generalis* and later *modus significandi essentialis*. However, we should bear in mind the cautionary observation made by Karin Margareta Fredborg in her 1973 study on William of Conches and Peter Helias that the grammarians of the twelfth century were more interested in the *causa inventionis*

3 Rosier-Catach 1995.

4 Rosier-Catach 1995: 137.

5 Braakhuis 1997.

6 Braakhuis 1979: 110, 174-177, 251-252, 333-335.

7 Thurot 1869: 153 sqq.; cf. Petrus Helias, *Summa super Priscianum*, ed. L. Reilly, Vol. 1, p. 182, 40 sqq.

8 Pinborg 1967: 34.

9 Rosier-Catach 1995: 138.

terminology, and generally used the term *significatio* where their thirteenth-century colleagues would use *modus significandi* or the set *significatio generalis / specialis*.¹⁰ Furthermore, we must take into consideration that 1) the twelfth-century grammarians used the term *modus significandi*, 2) we do not come across the notion of *significatio generalis* as an equivalent of *modus significandi* in their writings, and finally 3) we do find, in Nicholas of Paris' *Synkategoreumata*, the term *modus significandi substantialis* used to indicate the semantic feature which mutually separates the parts of speech and is the essential, constitutive element of each part of speech, and the term *modus significandi accidentalis*,¹¹ on which the well-formed construction is founded.¹² So one may well ask, where does this special interest in the early thirteenth century in the *significatio generalis* and *specialis* come from, or rather, from where do these notions stem?

In this article I intend to discuss in more detail the occurrence of these notions, i.e. *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis*, and their mutual opposition, in order to contribute to our insight into the development of linguistic thought, or rather, thought on language in the first half of the thirteenth century. Why did the early thirteenth-century linguistic thinkers advance these notions?

¹⁰ See Fredborg 1973: 28. It has to be stressed that the set of *significatio secundaria* and *communis proprietas* is not at question here; these notions concern a distinction in the accidents of the words; cf. Fredborg 1973: 32.

¹¹ It must be emphasized that this distinction is entirely different from the use of the term *modus significandi* that we find in Garlandus Compotista's *Dialectica*, where *modus significandi* is used in the general semantic way to make the logical distinction between those nouns which signify a subject and those which signify an accident. *Pace* Pinborg (1967: 34), one does not find the terms *modus significandi substantialis* and *accidental* in Garlandus' work; he only speaks about "in modo significandi, quia non significat substantialiter" (Garlandus Compotista, *Dialectica*, 10, 28).

¹² Nicholas of Paris, *Synkategoreumata*, ed. Braakhuis, 16, 9: "Et loquor de modo significandi substantiali. Quia duplex est modus significandi: alter substantialis, alter accidentalis. Substantialis est per quem partes orationis discernuntur a se invicem et a quo habent esse in specie, sicut significare substantiam cum qualitate est id quod efficit nomen esse nomen. Accidental

2. The Early Thirteenth Century: The Grammatical Texts

In 1982 Gauthier¹³ showed that the commentary on the *Priscianus minor*, which in modern literature has traditionally been attributed to Jordanus of Saxony¹⁴ and was consequently dated to the second decade of the thirteenth century, could not have been composed before the 1240s. In itself this does not detract, from a scholarly point of view, from the observations made by Pinborg. On the other hand, Gauthier's finding has made the relative dating of the university grammar texts of the first part of the thirteenth century fairly insecure. Moreover, it confronts us with the fact that to date we have no text at our disposal about which it can be said with any certainty that it was part of the teaching of grammar in the first decades of the University of Paris. Therefore, Robert Kilwardby's commentary on the two books of the *Priscianus minor* and Nicholas of Paris' short *quaestiones* on the first book of the *Priscianus minor* are the oldest known witnesses of university grammar instruction; their teaching of the *artes* is traditionally dated to the 1240s at Paris. A first comparison of these texts with the Priscian commentaries dating from the twelfth century show that these thirteenth-century university commentaries have been composed in an entirely new style and format, in all probability the first obvious results of the standardisation of university teaching in the domain of grammar.

2.1 Robert Kilwardby

An inquiry into the occurrence of the terms *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* in Kilwardby's commentary on the *Priscianus minor* shows that the future Archbishop of Canterbury hardly ever used these terms.¹⁵ Yet he does speak of the *significatio*

¹³ Gauthier 1982: 367-73.

¹⁴ Cf. Grabmann 1926: 115 and Grabmann 1956: 232-42; Pinborg 1967: 25-26: "Die erste Schrift, in der dieses neue Wissenschaftsideal mit aller Strenge auf die Grammatik angewandt wird, scheint der Kommentar zu Priscianus Minor des Jordanus von Sachsen (um 1220) zu sein."

¹⁵ My observations are based on a complete transcription of the first quarter of the text in MS Vat., BAV, Chigi L. V. 159, corrected with the help of MS Merton College 301, and of comprehensive extracts from other manuscripts.

generalis as opposed to the *significatio specialis* in his discussion of the relative, interrogative and infinite nouns. In the first book of the *Minor* (bk 17, ch. 29) Priscian stresses that the relative, the interrogative, and the infinite nouns, which we meet under the forms of ‘*qui*’ and ‘*quis*’ are not three different parts of speech because of their different endings, but one part of speech. He adduces the nouns ‘*qualis*’ and ‘*quantus*’ to prove his position: these nouns can be interrogative, infinite, or relative, and they change their accent accordingly, but notwithstanding this change of accidents they remain one part of speech. Peter Helias summarizes Priscian’s treatment of this subject by emphasizing that a difference in part of speech does not depend upon a difference caused by the accent.¹⁶

Discussing this topic, Kilwardby introduces the distinction between *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis*, and the distinction between *significatio* and *modus significandi*. According to Kilwardby, these nouns, i.e. the relative, the interrogative, and the infinite nouns, are one part of speech if one considers their vocal matter (*vox*), and if one considers their *significatio generalis*; they are separate parts of speech, if one considers their *significatio specialis*. The *modi significandi generales* and *speciales*, which also contribute to the unification and the diversification of these words, are only referred to; but it turns out that there exists a *modus significandi* on the level of the *significatio generalis*, which is called by Kilwardby a *modus generalis significandi*, and a *modus significandi* on the level of the *significatio specialis*, which is called accordingly a *modus significandi specialis*:

Deinde queritur de hoc quod iam ostenderat Priscianus, scilicet *quis* et *qui* esse eadem partem orationis. Contra. Relatiuum, infinitum et interrogatiuum sunt diuerse species nominum numerate a Prisciano in Magno [*Inst. gram.* II, 27] inter alias species. Cum igitur diuersitas secundum speciem sit uere diuersitas, et hec erunt diuerse species secundum istas diuersas differentias sub quibus cadunt. Idem etiam opponi potest de eo quod est *qualis*, et de eo quod est *quantus* et huiusmodi.

Et dicendum quod nomen interrogatiuum, relatiuum et infinitum conueniunt in significatione generali, sed differunt in speciali. Conueniunt etiam in uocum inflexionibus secundum quod cadunt sub eodem, ut patet in hac dictione *qui* et *qualis* et huiusmodi. Priscianus autem in Magno respiciens ad speciales significationes et ad speciales modos significandi, que differunt specie in interrogatiuis, re-

16 Peter Helias, *Summa super Priscianum*, ed. L. Reilly, vol. II, 906, 20-24.

latius et infinitis, posuit in Magno species diuersas esse nominis. Idem autem Priscianus respiciens hic modos generales significandi et significationem que reducuntur ad idem sub eodem nomine, respiciens etiam ad idempnitatem inflexionum, posuit ipsam esse partem eandem. Et quod hoc sit uerum, patet hoc per signa que ponit in litera ad hoc ostendendum.

Quomodo autem significatio generalis nominis secundum quod est infinitum, interrogatiuum et relatiuum sit eadem, patet, et quomodo significationes speciales diuerse sunt, sicut hoc nomen *qui* cum possit esse interrogatiuum, relatiuum et infinitum, omnibus modis habet significationem infinitam substantie et qualitatis indigens specificatione. Et hoc est significatio una generalis et modus significandi unus. Sed hec significatio infinita est: secundum quod respicit antecedens per quod finitatur, est relatiuum; secundum quod respicit subsequens in oratione per quod finitatur, sic est interrogatiuum; secundum quod respicit id quod simul cum ipso sumi potest siue sub ipso ut per aliquod suppositum infinite quod nec precedit in oratione nec subsequitur ipsum, sed sub eo sumi potest, sic est infinitum. Et sic sunt significationes speciales et modi significandi diuersi istius nominis secundum quod est infinitum et relatiuum et interrogatiuum. Eodem modo dicendum de hac dictione *qualis* et de huiusmodi. Ex hiis manifestum est quomodo idem nomen manens sub eadem uoce interrogatiuum et relatiuum et infinitum debet esse pars una et quomodo non, quia secundum uocem est pars una, secundum significationem est una pars in generali, sed diuerse in speciali. Patet etiam acceptio istarum trium differentiarum circa eandem significationem, scilicet interrogatiui, relatiui et infiniti.¹⁷

In the passage on the difference between the adverb and the interjection, Kilwardby expresses himself more clearly. Traditionally, the medieval grammarians had to explain why the Latin grammarians used to consider these two words as separate parts of speech, whereas their Greek colleagues did not. Kilwardby brings to the fore the usual view that the distinction between the parts of speech is based on the difference between their *modi significandi*. Some lines later he introduces the notions *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* into the discussion. Since the *significatio generalis* is the same for both adverb and interjection, i.e. signifying the disposition of the act expressed by the verb, the Greek grammarians, Kilwardby argues, considered them to be one part of speech. The Latin grammarians, on the other hand, paid more attention to the *significatio specialis*; since these parts differed in their *significatio specialis*, the Latins treated them as two separate parts:

Dubitari potest hic an interiectio sit pars separata ab aduerbio, si ipsa pars sit. ...

Dicendum etiam ad secundum obiectum quod interiectio uno modo significat

17 MS Vat., BAV, Chigi, L. V. 159, f. 13^{ra-b}.

mentis conceptum, scilicet quantum ad audientem; quantum autem ad proferentem, mentis affectum. Et ideo potest esse pars orationis. Vel dicendum quod omnis pars et interiectio et alie significant mentis conceptum, sed alie partes expriment ipsum per modum conceptus, sola autem interiectio per modum affectus. Et ideo dicitur affectum significare et alie partes conceptum. Per modum enim significandi distinguuntur partes.

Deinde queritur utrum interiectio sit pars separata ab aduerbio. Et uidetur quod sic, quia separatim posuit eam Donatus et quia interiectio dat intelligere actum finitum et determinatum; de natura aduerbii est determinare actum et non dare intelligere actum determinatum, sicut patet discurrendo per singula. Ideo interiectio non erit de numero aduerbiorum.

Sed contra. Sicut adiectiuum nominis se habet ad suum substantiuum, sic adiectiuum uerbi ad suum; sed adiectiuum nominis aliquando dat intelligere subiectum determinatum ut curuum et rectum et par et impar et huiusmodi, aliquando non, sicut adiectiua que significant accidens per accidens, cuiusmodi sunt album et nigrum; tamen hec diuersitas non facit adiectiua nominis esse sub diuersis partibus; ergo similiter cum adiectiuum uerbi aliquando dat intelligere actum determinatum sicut interiectio et aliquando non dat sic intelligere determinatum actum sicut aduerbium, non fiet diuersa pars orationis propter diuersitatem. Et ita uidetur quod interiectio sub aduerbio collocetur.

Et dicendum quod est pars separata secundum Latinos. Hoc tamen sciendum quod in generali significatione conueniunt aduerbium et interiectio, scilicet in hoc quod est significare dispositionem actus. Secundum quam considerantes Greci posuerunt interiectionem sub aduerbio et non dixerunt eas esse partes separatas. In speciali autem discoherent, quia aduerbium significat dispositionem actus, communiter et non diffinitè intelligitur per ipsum. Interiectio autem significat dispositionem actus determinati et finiti et illum actum dat intelligere finite, ut *pape* determinat actum admirandi, *heu* actum dolendi et sic de aliis. Et sic considerantes Latini dicunt eas esse partes diuersas.¹⁸

These texts demonstrate that Kilwardby still uses the term *modus significandi* in a rather confused way.¹⁹ In the section on the difference between the adverb and the interjection, *modus significandi* is used to indicate what is constitutive of a part of speech as that part of speech, the *modus significandi essentialis*: “per modum enim significandi distinguuntur partes”. Furthermore, the term *modus significandi* is also used in opposition to the terms *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* to indicate such accidents or secondary grammatical categories as accent, inflexion etc. The difference between Kilwardby’s use of *modus significandi generalis* and of *modus significandi specialis* must be sought on the level of the corresponding *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis*.

¹⁸ MS Vat., BAV, Chigi L. V. 159, f. 8^b.

¹⁹ Cf. Rosier 1995: 137.

The *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* also are constitutive of a part of speech as that part of speech, but at the level of lexical meaning. The difference between them is a hierarchical one. They relate to each other as genus and species.²⁰ It must be stressed here that they are not responsible, in Kilwardby's theory, for the difference between Priscian's *nomen generale*, e.g. *animal*, versus *nomen speciale*, e.g. *homo*.²¹ The set of *modus significandi generalis* and *modus significandi specialis* corresponds to the notions *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis*, respectively, on the level of the secondary grammatical categories. The *accidentia* that are common to the "genus" are the *modi significandi generales* as, e.g., case, gender etc. The *accidentia* that are connected to one species only as, e.g., the accent of the relative,²² are the *modi significandi speciales*.

Moreover, we also find the term *consignificatio* and the corresponding *consignificatum* used by Kilwardby to indicate the secondary grammatical categories, e.g. in his treatment of the functions of the article:

ipsa res accipit diuersas consignificationes, scilicet diuersa genera, diuersos numeros et casus et huiusmodi.²³

2.2 Nicholas of Paris

We encounter a completely different use of the terms *significatum generale* and *speciale* in the writings of Nicholas of Paris. Pinborg has referred to a section of Nicholas' commentary on the *Barbarismus*, in which he discusses the three sermocinal levels, logic, grammar, and rhetoric.²⁴ This discussion shows that for Nicholas

²⁰ It is interesting to note that in the *Glose 'Admirantes'*, a commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* dating to the middle of the thirteenth century, we find the term *significatio generalis* to indicate Kilwardby's *significatio generalis* and *specialis*: "[Thurot 1869: p. 353] Duplex namque est significatio generalis: una est que conuenit omni nomini, sicut significare substantiam cum qualitate; ... Est et alia significatio generalis, sicut illa que est alicuius speciei nominis, et hec non dicitur omni nomini conuenire, sicut nomen proprium et appellativum habent quodammodo significationem generalem diuersam ...". For some reason the anonymous commentator avoided using the term *significatio specialis* in this context.

²¹ Cf. Prisc., *Inst. gram.* II, 31, ed. Hertz, vol. I, 61, 28 sqq.

²² Cf. Prisc., *Inst. gram.* XIII, 13, ed. Hertz, vol. II, p. 9, 20-21.

²³ *ad* Prisc., *IG*, XVII, 26; MS Vat., BAV, Chigi L. V. 159, f. 10^{va}.

²⁴ Cf. Pinborg 1967: 27, n. 27; Nicholas of Paris, *In Barbarismus* (CLM 14460): "[f. 203^{va}] Ad aliud. Triplex est contextus: quantum significata specialia, et contra

well-formedness and ill-formedness (congruity and incongruity) were linked with the *significata generalia*; that is why they are said to be the *chasse gardée* of the grammarian; the logician, on the other hand, had the *significata specialia* as his area of special attention, for the truth or the falsity of a proposition is based on the *significata specialia*. We meet the same view in Nicholas' collection of *Questions on Priscian minor*. Immediately at the beginning of this collection it is said that the congruity and incongruity of a sentence are rooted in the *significata generalia*, its truth and falsity in the *significata specialia*.²⁵ However, it is not only the *significatum generale* which is responsible for the congruity of a sentence. Congruity is the result of the agreement of the *significata generalia* and of the *consignificata*, incongruity on the other hand is the result of their disagreement. Figurative speech is the result of the agreement of the *significata generalia* and the disagreement of the *consignificata* or vice versa:

Sed congruitas causatur ex conueniencia consignificatorum et significatorum generalium, incongruitas uero ex repugnancia eorundem. Potest ergo esse conueniencia significatorum et repugnancia consignificatorum uel econuerso.²⁶

Nicholas comes back to this subject in his discussion of figurative speech:

Sed congruum et incongruum causantur ex idemptitate accidencium et significatorum generalium, incongruum uero ex repugnancia eorundem. Potest ergo esse conueniencia accidencium et repugnancia significatorum generalium uel econuerso. Et sic est figuratiuum.²⁷

So for Nicholas four combinations are operational:

hunc [hoc MS] peccatur in falsitate; de quo [qua MS] uidet loycus. Alius est contextus quantum ad significata generalia, et contra hunc peccatur in <in>congruitate; de quo uidet gramaticus. Alius est quantum ad expressionem sententiae pulchre, et contra hunc peccatur in inconcinnitate uel in inornatu; de quo uidet rethoricus."

²⁵ Nicholas of Paris [henceforth NP], *Quaestiones super Primum Priscianum* (MS Oxford, Bodl., Lat. misc. f. 34): "[f. 1^{ra}] Dicendum quod a parte significati generalis causatur congruitas, a parte significati specialis causatur ueritas, a parte utriusque ornatus."

²⁶ NP, *Quaestiones super Priscianum*, Oxford, Bodl. Lat. misc. f. 34, f. 1^{ra}.

²⁷ NP, *Quaestiones super Priscianum*, Oxford, Bodl. Lat. misc. f. 34, f. 23^{va}.

	SIGN GEN	CONSIG	e.g.(not in NP)
congruity	+	+	homo currit
figura ¹	+	-	turba ruunt
figura ²	-	+	sublime volat
incongruity	-	-	post currunt

Furthermore, we find the term *significatum generale* in Nicholas' treatment about the order of the parts of speech, when he deals with the traditional question of whether the preposition has priority over the adverb or vice versa. This discussion has its origin in a difference in the order of the parts of speech in the works of Donatus and Priscian. Donatus allotted the place immediately after the verb to the adverb and put the preposition in the seventh and penultimate place just before the interjection. Priscian, on the other hand, put the preposition in the fifth place before the adverb and the conjunction. Nicholas tries to explain this difference by saying that Donatus mainly looked at the syntactic behaviour of these parts, whereas Priscian paid attention to their *significata generalia*:

Ad hoc dicendum quod prepositio et aduerbium dupliciter possunt considerari: Vel ratione constructionis. Et sic considerat Donatus. Dicens quod aduerbium intransitiue construitur, prepositio uero transitiue, preordinauit prepositioni aduerbium. Vel possunt considerari ratione [f. 7ra] significatorum suorum generalium. Et sic considerans Priscianus preordinauit prepositionem aduerbio, quia significatum generale ipsius prepositionis a nomine dependet, significatum uero generale ipsius aduerbii dependet a uerbo. Et sic patet quomodo diuersimode ordinantur a Donato et a Prisciano.²⁸

Kilwardby also paid attention to this question, but he solved it without an appeal to the *significata generalia*:

ADVERBIVM quoque [Prisc. *Inst. gram.* XVII, 21, p. 121, 3]. Hic ordinat aduerbium sic. Sicut prepositio est nominis determinatio – preponitur enim nominibus et aliis casualibus per appositionem et tunc defendit sibi uim dictionis, sed in compositione non defendit sibi uim diuisionis, sed cedit in partem cum qua componitur,

28 NP, *Qua super Prisc.*, Oxford, Bodl. Lat.misc. f. 34, f. 6^{vb}.

sic aduerbium est adiectiuum et determinatio uerbi, sicut patet ex nominatione eius. Quare sicut post nomen immediate ponitur uerbum, sic competenter post prepositionem immediate ponitur aduerbium. Et hoc est *Aduerbium quoque*.²⁹

In this context it is important to mention that Robertus Anglicus whose *Lectura super Priscianum minorem* has been preserved in the MS Firenze, BNC, Conv. soppr. D.2.45, f. 1^r-24^v,³⁰ also refers to the *significata generalia* and the syntactic behaviour of the preposition and of the adverb. Although at first glance he seems to be close to Nicholas of Paris, his position is closer to that of Kilwardby. In Nicholas' view it is Donatus who took the syntactic aspects, i.e. the transitive or the intransitive construction, into account, whereas Priscian paid attention to the *significata generalia*. It is the position of Kilwardby and of Robertus Anglicus that Priscian looked at the syntactic relationship of these parts of speech with other parts of speech. Robertus Anglicus explicitly says that Priscianus did not pay attention to the *significata generalia*:

[f. 4^v] Ad ista duo argumenta respondetur simul, et dicitur quod Priscianus non respexit ad generalia significata, secundum quod probauit ista duo argumenta, sed magis respexit ad habitudines istarum partium adiciendas aliis partibus.³¹

²⁹ MS Vat., BAV, Chigi L. V. 159, f. 8^{ra}.

³⁰ Cf. Kneepkens 1995: 250.

³¹ Notwithstanding this agreement it is not certain whether Kilwardby's position is the same as that of Robert the Englishman (Robertus Anglicus). We do not know Robertus Anglicus' interpretation of the term *significatum generale*, that is, whether he follows Kilwardby's semantic genus / species model, or Nicholas' grammatical versus lexical meaning model. Robertus' work dates, in all probability, to the same period as Kilwardby's and Nicholas of Paris' works. We do not encounter the notion of the *significatum generale* in the discussion on the interrogative, relative, and infinite nouns.

It appears that Robert is acquainted with and uses the terms *modus significandi essentialis* and *modus significandi accidentalis*: “[f. 1^v] Item queritur utrum constructio possit fieri sub diuersitate accidentium. Et uidetur quod sic, quia testante Philosopho in secundo *Perierminias* ‘omnis generatio habet fieri ex oppositis’. Sed constructio est quedam generatio. Ergo habet fieri ex oppositis, ut ‘post currunt et stannum alba’. Solutio. Dico quod generatio non habet fieri ex quibuscumque oppositis. Non habet fieri ex illis que sunt omnino opposita, sed partim diuersa et partim conuenientia, debent esse, ut dicciones que differunt inter se quantum ad modum significandi essentialem, conueniunt quantum ad modum significandi accidentalem. Et sic patet solutio.”

This master Robertus Anglicus might be the master Robertus Anglicus who authored a commentary on Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, and who used the terms *signifi-*

So it appears from the grammatical texts that we have at our disposal that within the domain of grammar two different sets of concepts of *significatio generalis* / *significatum generale* and *specialis* / *speciale* and their mutual opposition were operational, and that they acquired, albeit for a short time, a fundamental position in linguistic theory. For Kilwardby and Robert the Englishman, the *significatio generalis* / *significatum generale* functions in an operational way only in the discussions on the arrangement of the parts of speech and on questions on the subclassification of a part of speech. Incidentally, there is a complete silence about congruity and incongruity. According to Kilwardby, the adverb and the interjection share a common *significatio generalis*, that is, signifying the disposition of an act (*significare dispositionem actus*). The adverb, however, signifies the disposition in an indefinite way, the interjection on the other hand in a finite and determined way. So, says Kilwardby, they differ on the level of the *significatio specialis*. Whether Robertus Anglicus follows Kilwardby in this respect is not clear. We do not find the term *significatum speciale* in his *Lectura*.

It turns out that Kilwardby's notion of *significatio generalis* shows a partial agreement with Nicholas' *significatum generale*, but that their respective notions of *significatio specialis* / *significatum speciale* disagree fundamentally, and so the mutual opposition of these terms and their function in the respective semantic theories also disagree. Kilwardby's *significatio specialis* belongs to the grammarian's area of interest. In his view it is a grammatico-semantic concept. The sub-categorisation of a part of speech, constituted by its *significatio generalis*, not its lexical meaning, is based on it; it is the (future) *modus significandi specialis*. Factually, it is part of what is called the *significatum generale* by Nicholas.

Kilwardby's introduction of the opposition between *significatio generalis* and *specialis* in his discussion on the interrogative, infinite, and relative nouns stems from the same concept of *significatio specialis*. Here, too, we are confronted with the subclassification

catum generale and *speciale* in the same way that Nicholas of Paris did (cf. de Rijk 1969, 40-41). Further research is needed on the matter, however. [Editor's note: the possibility that the two Roberts were one and the same person was discussed and rejected in a joint paper by Irène Rosier-Catach and S. Ebbesen, presented at the 12th European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics in Pamplona, 1997].

of a particular set of nouns, which was treated by Priscian in his *Maior* in a different way than in his *Minor*. Priscian, the grammarian par excellence, focused almost exclusively on the *significationes speciales* and the *modi significandi speciales* in his *Maior*, whereas in his *Minor* the *significatio generalis* and the *modi significandi generales* prevailed.

3. The Early Thirteenth Century: The Logical Texts

3.1 *Nicholas of Paris*

Pinborg (1967) and Braakhuis (1979) have pointed out that Nicholas of Paris, who was active in the 1240s in the Faculty of Arts at Paris,³² makes use of the notions of *significatio generalis* and of *significatio specialis* in his logical writings. Pinborg (1967: 27, n. 27) refers to the commentary on the *Peri hermeneias* in the manuscript München, CLM 14460 (f. 65^{ra}), commonly attributed to Nicholas.³³ In this text we find the very position that we have met in the *Questiones* on Priscian and in the *Barbarismus* commentary. The semantic stratification of a part of speech is twofold: it consists of the *significatio generalis*, which is constitutive of the part of speech and which is the *principium construendi* as well, the grammarian's special area of interest; and of the *significatio specialis*, on which the truth and falsity of a proposition is based, the domain of the logician:

Ad aliud dicendum quod logicus aliter considerat nomen quam gramaticus, quia loicus ratione specialis significati, gramaticus ratione generalis ut in lectione sequenti apparebit. Et etiam strictius quam gramaticus, quia aliquid est nomen apud gramaticum quod non est nomen apud logicum.³⁴

The discussion of these notions is the result of an examination of the task of the grammarian and of the logician which was caused by the confrontation of the diverse definitions of the noun and of the verb given by Priscian and Aristotle in the *Institutiones gram-*

³² See Braakhuis 1997: n. 17.

³³ See, however, Lohr 1972: 299.

³⁴ MS München, CLM 14460, f. 63^{ra}.

*maticae*³⁵ and the *Peri hermeneias*³⁶ respectively. Since the general signification of a part of speech is its *principium construendi* and the concern for congruity is the special task of the grammarian, it is obvious according to the author that if a grammarian has to define a noun, he will concentrate on the general signification and bring this general signification into his definition of a part of speech. The grammarian as a grammarian is not interested in the lexical meaning of a word, but in its position within the set of the parts of speech; for him the general signification is the foundation of construction. The logician on the other hand pays special attention to the lexical meaning, since the truth or falsity of a proposition depends on it. The lexical meaning in itself is *ad placitum*, the general signification is not. Furthermore, he is interested in the “tense” / “time” signification of the verb, since this aspect is also responsible for the truth or falsity of a proposition. That is why the logician puts the *significativa ad placitum* aspect and the time signification aspect in his definition of the noun and of the verb:

Ad aliud dicendum quod duplex est significatio nominis, scilicet generalis, quo nomen omne dicitur esse nomen, scilicet quia significat substantiam cum qualitate. Et hec significatio generalis est principium construendi. Ideo hanc ponit grammaticus in diffinitione nominis. Est etiam significatio specialis ad quam impositum est nomen ad placitum. Et hanc considerat logicus, quia penes hanc consistit ueritas et falsitas. Sed hanc non potuit ponere in diffinitione nominis, quia non est una sed diuersa in diuersis nominibus.

Per hoc patet responsio ad aliud, quod placitum non cadit supra generale significatum quod considerat grammaticus, sed supra specialia significata, que considerat logicus. Et per hoc patet solutio ad aliud, quia casus est principium ordinationis quam considerat grammaticus; propter hoc ponit casum in diffinitione nominis. Tempus uero non est principium ordinandi uerbum ad nomen, sed penes [presens MS] tempus inmutatur ueritas uel falsitas, que considerat logicus. Ideo ponit tempus in ratione uerbi.³⁷

35 Cf. Prisc., *Inst.gram.*, II, 18, ed. Hertz, vol. I, 55, 6-7: “Proprium est nominis substantiam et qualitatem significare” or in the medieval version “substantiam cum qualitate significare”.

36 Arist. Lat., transl. Boethii, *De interpret.*, c. 2, ed. Minio-Paluello, 6, 4-6: “Nomen ergo est vox significativa secundum placitum sine tempore, cuius nulla pars est significativa separata”.

37 MS München, CLM 14460, f. 65^{ra}.

In Nicholas' commentary on the *Peri hermeneias* (MS. Vat. lat. 3011),³⁸ we find nearly the same views. In the beginning of this work Nicholas argues that the grammarian and the logician do not take the noun and the verb in the same way. The grammarian considers them from the point of view of *modus significandi* and *consignificandi*,³⁹ which are the cause of congruity and incongruity; the logician on the other hand considers them insofar as they are the principles of truth and falsity:

Sed gramaticus et loycus non eodem modo accipiunt nomen et uerbum, quia gramaticus accipit nomen et uerbum pro modo significandi et consignificandi, que sunt causa congruitatis et incongruitatis. Loycus autem non sic, sed accipit ea prout sunt principia ueritatis et falsitatis.⁴⁰

Nicholas comes back to this subject in his discussion of the definition of the noun. Here we meet the notions of *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* used the same way as in the Munich commentary, the *Questiones* on Priscian and the *Barbarismus* commentary:

Hic solet queri quare gramaticus et loycus diuersimode diffiniunt nomen, quia cum unius rei unicum sit esse, uidetur quod istius uel illius diffinitio superfluat. Si ad hoc dicatur quod bene posuerint diuersas diffinitiones, ideo quod non eodem modo accipiant, tunc queritur quomodo.

38 Cf. Lohr 1972: 299.

39 We also meet the distinction between *significatum* and *consignificatum* in the CLM 14460 commentary in the section where the order of treatment of the infinite noun and the noun in the oblique case is discussed, that is, why Aristotle first speaks about the infinite noun, and then about the noun in the oblique case and not vice versa. In this context the term *significatum* indicates the "*substantia cum qualitate*", the term *consignificatum* the "*casus*": "[CLM 14460, f. 64^{va}] Prius est sumere diffinitionem nominis separando ipsum a uerbo quam diffinitionem uerbi, quia nomen et secundum logicum et secundum gramaticum prius est uerbo, sicut subiectum ante actum uel passionem et suppositum ante appositum. [f. 64^{vb}] Prius est etiam separare nomen a uerbo et ita preparare materiam enuntiationis in primo libro quam separare nomen simpliciter a nomine secundum quid, et ita preparare materiam enuntiationis in secundo libro.

Adhuc prius est diffinitionem proponere quam propositam explanare et quam condiciones per quas separaret nomen simpliciter a nomine secundum quid, prius finitum quam rectum, quia finitum a parte significati, rectum a parte consignificati.

In this context the author takes *significatum* as indicating the "*substantia cum qualitate*": "[CLM 14460, f. 64^{vb}] Gramaticus in diffinitione nominis ponit significatum, scilicet substantiam cum qualitate, logicus uero dicit nomen esse uocem significatiuam, sed non dicit quid significet, sicut gramaticus."

40 MS Vat. lat. 3011, f. 22^b.

Item. Queritur cum nomen sit pars enunciationis sicut est pars orationis, quare non posuerit loycus sic diffinitionem eius: "Nomen est pars enunciationis", sicut posuerit gramaticus quod nomen est pars orationis.

Preterea. Gramaticus cum gramaticus accipiat nomen pro significatione generali, diffinit etiam per generale significatum, quia dicit: nomen est quod significat substantiam etc. Et queritur quare loycus cum consideret nomen penes speciale significatum, quare etiam non diffiniat illud per [penes *MS*] speciale significatum.⁴¹

The answer to the first question is that the grammarian is interested in congruity. The correct order is a "*passio*" of the parts of speech, and the *totum*, i.e. the *oratio*, consists of the parts only. That is why the grammarian defines the noun on the level of the parts of speech. The logician is interested in the noun as the principle of a true or false proposition.

In his answer to the second question Nicholas stresses that Aristotle started from a well-formed sentence. The truth or falsity of a proposition does not originate from the order of the parts of speech in a proposition, but from the meaning of the words: that is why the logician put the term "*uox significatiua*" in his definition of the noun. Since, however, the *significata specialia*, i.e. the lexical meanings, are infinite, he brought in the "*modus significandi ad placitum*" as an all-embracing term:

Ad primum dicendum. Verum est quod speculantur diuersimode nomen gramaticus et loycus. Gramaticus enim prout est principium congrue ordinationis, et ordinatio est passio partium. Partes enim sunt ordinate adinuicem et non totum nisi per partes, ideo diffinit per partem. Loycus uero prout est principium ueritatis et falsitatis. Item. Gramaticus pro generali significatione, iste pro speciali.

Ad hoc quod obicitur quare iste auctor non diffiniuit: Nomen est pars enunciationis, dicendum quod gramaticus propterea dixit: "Nomen est pars orationis", quia ipse considerat nomen prout potest ordinari congrue uel incongrue in oratione. Sed iste auctor supposuit eundem ordinem congruum, et tantum accipit nomen prout potest generare uerum uel falsum. Sed uerum uel falsum non fit ex ordine. Diffinit ergo per ea que faciunt ad ueritatem uel falsitatem. Hoc autem est significatio. Vnde diffinit per significationem, quia dicit "*uox significatiua*".

Ad aliud quod queritur quare non diffiniuit per speciale significatum, dicendum quod hoc non potuit facere, quia specialia significata nominis infinita sunt. Posuit quoddam quod est tanquam omnia comprehendens, uidelicet modum significandi ad placitum. Sic patet responsio ad hoc.⁴²

41 MS Vat. lat. 3011, f. 23^{ra}.

42 MS Vat. lat. 3011, f. 23^{ra}.

The texts which we have seen thus far show that Nicholas of Paris and the author of the CLM 14460 commentary used the distinction between *significatio generalis* and *specialis* to explain the dissimilarity in scope of the grammarian and of the logician within the whole of the sermocinal disciplines. Both deal with the signification of words, but the *significatio generalis* is constitutive of the grammarian's domain, the *significatio specialis* of that of the logician. However, it appears that besides this general aspect of the distinction between grammar and logic, Nicholas had important semantic reasons for introducing this distinction into his doctrine of signification.

Braakhuis has shown that the notions of *significatio generalis* and *specialis* played an important role in Nicholas' doctrine of the syncategorematic words.⁴³ In his introduction on the semantics of the syncategorematic words Nicholas says that there is a double signification in the parts of speech. First, there is a general signification which is responsible for the fact that every individual part of speech belongs to one of the main categories of parts of speech, like an individual to a species. Besides the general signification, every part of speech has a special signification: the cause through which this part has this – lexical – meaning. For example, the noun *homo* has to signify substance and quality as its general signification, but also an individual in a common way under the property of humanity as its special signification:

Dicendum quod duplex est significatio in partibus orationis: generalis and specialis. Generalis est a qua imponitur quelibet pars in specie partis, sicut significare substantiam cum qualitate est illud a quo nomen est nomen. Et specialis a qua vox specialiter imponitur, sicut nomen ad significandum hanc substantiam vel illam, idest communem vel propriam, sub qualitate hac vel illa, idest communi vel propria.⁴⁴

According to Nicholas the indeclinable parts of speech do not have a special signification of their own, but only *in potentia*. It can be actualized by the adjuncts, which determine and make perfect the special signification of the indeclinable part:

⁴³ Braakhuis 1979 and Braakhuis 1997.

⁴⁴ Braakhuis 1979: II, 4, 5-11; see also Braakhuis 1979: II, 58, 16-18: "Dicendum quod, quia per prepositionem vel coniunctionem non significatur nisi pure habitudo, que non trahitur in specialem significationem nisi per adiunctum ...".

Dico igitur quod partes indeclinabiles generalem habent significationem a qua et ad quam impositae sunt et inter se distinguuntur; et de hac est verum quod concludunt rationes affirmative. Sed specialem significationem non habent nisi possibiliter, et possibilitatem in actum reducunt per adiuncta, in quibus terminant et perficiunt suas significationes ...⁴⁵

However, the fullest account of the distinction between *significatio generalis* and *specialis* is found in Nicholas' section on negation, where he discusses the semantics of the infinite noun. Nicholas starts with his usual account about the distinction between the two levels of signification:

Dicendum quod duplex est significatio in partibus orationis, scilicet: generalis et specialis. Generalis est ad quam pars ipsa instituitur et per quam differt ab aliis, que est principium congruitatis in constructione ex convenientia, et incongruitatis ex inconvenientia. Est alia significatio que est specialis, ad quam partes specialiter instituitur, per quam differt una species partis ab alia specie eiusdem, que est principium in oratione veritatis <ex> convenientia intellectuum et falsitatis ex inconvenientia.⁴⁶

The *accidentia*, i.e. the secondary grammatical categories, are situated on the level of the general signification:

Significationem ergo generalem sequuntur accidentia que sunt genus, numerus etc. in parte casuali, tempus, modus, et persona, in verbo.⁴⁷

A negation does not remove the general signification, but the special signification:

Quia ergo negatio non amovet generalem significationem partis, – ut patet: cum dicitur: “non-homo”, nichilominus est nomen quam prius nec nominativi casus etc., – sed amovet specialem, – ut patet, quia idem est ‘non homo’ quam *aliud quam homo*, – ita similiter facit in verbo negatio amovere rem verbi, que est principium veritatis vel falsitatis, ab ipso verbo.⁴⁸

45 Braakhuis 1979: II, 4, 11-16.

46 Braakhuis 1979: II, 66, 19-67, 2.

47 Braakhuis 1979: II, 67, 3-4. It must be noted that Nicholas also uses the *modus significandi* terminology to indicate *significatio generalis* and the *accidentia*: “[ed. Braakhuis 1979: II, 16, 10-18] quia duplex est modus significandi: alter substantialis, alter accidentalis. Substantialis est per quem partes orationis discernuntur a se invicem et a quo habent esse in specie, sicut significare substantiam cum qualitate est id quod efficit nomen esse nomen. Accidentalibus est qui sequitur substantialem, a quo causatur constructio inter partes orationis secundum convenientiam ut est genus, numerus, persona, casus etc. Illius ergo modi qui est secundum substantiam convenientia causat esse partium, illius vero qui est secundum accidentia non.”

48 Braakhuis 1979: II, p. 67, 5-10.

But what does this mean? As we have seen above in his treatment of the syncategorematic words, according to Nicholas, the special signification consists in signifying not only the quality ‘*humanitas*’, but also – in the case of *homo* – this substance in a common way. We find an important refinement in Nicholas’ discussion on the infinite noun and verb in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Peri hermeneias*. Here it is said that in the case of an infinite noun the negation only deprives the noun of its special quality; its general quality is left untouched. That is why for a logician an infinite noun is not a noun any longer, whereas for a grammarian, who is interested in the *significatio generalis*, it remains a noun.⁴⁹

Item. Queritur de nomine infinito si dicatur infinitum a priuatione substantie uel qualitatis uel utriusque. Si dicatur quod a priuatione substantie, tunc nomen adiectiuum potest dici infinitum. Si dicatur quod ratione qualitatis, tunc pronomen potest dici nomen infinitum. Si a priuatione utriusque, tunc hoc nomen *quis* erit nomen infinitum.

Preterea queritur que sit differentia inter nomen infinitum apud gramaticum et apud loycum.

Item. Queritur quare gramaticus accipiat nomen infinitum, loycus autem refutet.

Ad primum dicendum quod dicitur infinitum a priuatione specialis qualitatis. Specialis dico qualitatis, quia cum dico ‘*non-homo*’, ibi priuatur illa specialis qualitas, scilicet *humanitas*, sed remanet adhuc *generalis*. Et per hoc patet quod loycus non recipit, gramaticus autem recipit.

Si tu obicias: “Si a priuatione qualitatis, ergo pronomen potest dici infinitum nomen”, non sequitur, quia pronomen a sua primaria inuentione est priuatum qualitate, illud autem a uiolentia, quia uirtute negationis. Per hoc patet differentia inter nomen infinitum apud gramaticum et loycum, quia illud infinitatur [infinitant *MS*], aliud uero infinitum a sui impositione.⁵⁰

These texts show that it is Nicholas of Paris who most intensively and fundamentally uses the doctrine of the *significatio generalis* and *specialis* in his semantics of term negation or infinitation. On both levels, i.e. those of the general signification and of the special signification, he discerns the significative functions, e.g. in the case of the noun to signify substance and quality generally and specially. Term negation is restricted to the level of the special signification. This enables Nicholas to make congruent sentences or

49 It is remarkable that in the *Peri hermeneias* commentary which has been preserved in CLM 14460 we do not find the notions of *significatio generalis* or *specialis* in the section on the infinite noun.

50 MS Vat. lat. 3011, f. 23^b.

propositions in which infinite terms occur. On the level of the special signification, for Nicholas, the negation only removes the quality signification, for if it were to remove the substance signification as well, the infinite term would mean “*non-ens*”.⁵¹

3.2 Johannes Pagus

Braakhuis⁵² has pointed out that the distinction between *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* also occurs in John Pagus’ treatise on syncategorematic terms. Pagus’ treatise, and his teaching activities in the Parisian Faculty of Arts are commonly located in the beginning of the third decade of the thirteenth century.⁵³ In the first volume of his thesis, Braakhuis published large parts of Pagus’ treatise. Among these we find a long section in which the distinction between the *significatio generalis* and *specialis* plays a central role. Pagus states that a word, a *dictio*, has a double signification: the *significatio generalis* and the *significatio specialis*. The *significatio generalis* consists in signifying substance with quality: the *substantia generalis* and the *qualitas generalis*; the special signification is, e.g. in the case of the noun *homo*, the *significatio humanitatis*:

Duplex est significatio dictionum: generalis et specialis; sicut patet in hoc nomine ‘*homo*’; hoc enim nomen ‘*homo*’ significat substantiam cum qualitate, et hec est

51 Cf. MS Vat. lat. 3011, f. 23^{rb}: “Item. Queritur si nomen infinitum denotet ens uel non-ens uel utrumque. Et quod denotet ens, patet per Aristotilem, qui dicit quod huic quod est non-eguale subiacet aliquid, uidelicet inequale. Videtur ergo uelle quod infinitum denotet ens. Sed quod denotet non-ens, patet, quia dicit Boetius ‘*Cesar qui non est, est non-homo*’; uidetur ergo quod denotet non-ens.

Solutio. Nomen infinitum inuentum est ad significandum principia motus et mutacionis. Et dico de mutacione que est creatio. Si ergo significat principium mutacionis que est creatio, tunc dico quod denotat non-ens actu uel potentia, quia Deus creauit omnia ex nichilo, et huiusmodi nomina infinita sunt *nichil* et *non-ens*. Si autem significant principia motus, hoc dupliciter: aut motus substantie aut accidentis. Si substantie, tunc denotat ens in potentia et non in actu, ut ex non-homine fit homo, idest ex eo quod non est homo in actu, sed in potentia, fit homo. Si denotet motum accidentis, tunc ponit ens substantie actu et potentia, sed ponit priuacionem qualitatatis, ut ex non-albo fit albus. Ad hoc autem quod dicitur ‘*Cesar qui non est, <est> non-homo*’, hoc est: Cesar qui non est homo, est tamen aliquid quod aliquid est non-homo.”

52 In his introduction to his edition of Nicholas of Paris’ *Syncategoremata* and in Braakhuis 1997.

53 Braakhuis 1979: I, 168.

generalis significatio, specialis est significatio humanitatis. Similiter patet in uerbo [alio MS]: significare agere vel pati est significatio generalis, cursus vero est specialis significatio.⁵⁴

We meet a similar view in Pagus' discussion of the question of whether it is possible to infinitate the universal quantifier '*omnis*'. Pagus points out that '*omnis*' as a noun signifies substance with quality. But we must, Pagus argues, make a distinction between general quality and special quality. For example, the noun '*homo*' signifies substance with quality and it signifies a special quality with regard to the substance. The negation of the infinite noun removes the special quality, but the general quality remains. Since, according to Pagus, '*omnis*' signifies a general quality as its quality, the negation leaves the *significatio qualitatis generalis* untouched.⁵⁵ The reason for this is, says Pagus, that this, i.e. the *significatio qualitatis generalis*, is the principle of the *oratio* as far as the *oratio* provides us with a congruent and perfect *sententia*, and the negation does not influence the congruity of a sentence:

Ad hoc dicendum quoniam hoc signum '*omnis*' non potest infinitari. Et ratio huius est quoniam significat substantiam cum qualitate generali. Dicimus ergo quod duplex est qualitas: generalis et specialis. Hoc enim nomen '*homo*' significat substantiam cum qualitate et significat specialem qualitatem circa substantiam; et hec specialis qualitas potest removeri et privari per nomen infinitum. Sed generalis qualitas non potest privari; cum enim dicitur "non homo", privatur qualitas specialis sed non privatur qualitas generalis, sed remanet significatio qualitatis generalis. Et hoc est quoniam hoc est principium orationis prout oratio demonstrat sententiam congruam et perfectam⁵⁶, sed negatio non removet ibi congruitatem^{57,58}

In his answer to the question in which way the negation can cause a contradiction, Pagus comprehensively appeals to the notions of *significatio generalis* and *specialis* again.⁵⁹ In this context, he also argues that the secondary grammatical categories, the *accidentia*, are closely connected with the *significatio generalis*, and therefore im-

54 Braakhuis 1979: I, 189.

55 Incidentally, here Pagus intermingles two separate semantical levels, the level of the constitution of the part of speech and the level of the – lexical – meaning of a specific part of speech, which, e.g. in the case of the universal quantifier, can have a "general" range.

56 Cf. Prisc., *Inst. gram.*, II, 15, ed. Hertz, vol. I, 53, 28-29.

57 ibi congruitatem] *scr.* incongruitatem MS.

58 Braakhuis 1979: I, p. 225.

59 See Braakhuis 1979: I, 228-229, and Braakhuis 1997: n. 31.

mune to the violent influence of the negation.⁶⁰ The general signification is the semantic component of a word which causes a word to belong to that specific part of speech, e.g. for the noun ‘*homo*’, to signify substance and quality because of which it is a noun. It is also responsible for the well-formedness of a sentence. In the special signification we meet these components again, but this time on the level of the lexical meaning: ‘*homo*’ signifies substance presented under the quality of humanity.⁶¹ This happens not only to the noun, but also to the verb used in a sentence as a finite verb. The negation added removes the *compositio specialis*, but leaves the *compositio generalis* untouched.

The same notions are found in Pagus’ *Appellationes*, in the section in which he discusses the syntactic and the semantic relationship between an adjective noun and its substantive in a sentence.⁶²

3.3 *The Peri hermeneias Commentary in MS Padova, Bibl. Univ., 1589, ff. 69r-93v*

It has been suggested that a commentary on the *Peri hermeneias* preserved on folia 69^r-93^v of MS Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, 1589, was possibly written by Johannes Pagus.⁶³ In his “Introduction” to the edition of Thomas Aquinas’ *Expositio libri peryermenias*, Gauthier⁶⁴ has argued in favour of Pagus’ authorship, but recently this attribution has been seriously contested. In any case, if Pagus were the author of the commentary, the date of its composition must be put later than the 1220s, since in this commentary a reference to Peter of Spain’s *Tractatus* is found.⁶⁵

In this context, it is remarkable that the way in which the author of the Padova commentary uses the notions of the *significatio generalis* and *specialis* deviates from what we find in the other writings

60 Braakhuis 1979: I, 229: “Secundum hoc ergo patet solutio prius quesitorum, quoniam modus et tempus non accidunt compositioni speciali sed generali; con-significationes enim partium orationis sequuntur significationem generalem partium orationis et non specialem.”

61 Cf. Braakhuis 1979: I, 228: “iterum significat substantiam que est sub qualitate que est humanitas”.

62 Cf. de Libera 1985: 217-218.

63 Cf. Lohr 1972: 124; Braakhuis 1979: I, 169, n. 14.

64 Gauthier 1989: 65*-66*.

65 Cf. Braakhuis 1997: n. 19; Tabarroni 1988: 404, n. 46; and Lafleur 1994: 196, n. 97.

of Pagus. As we have seen above, Pagus makes extensive use of these notions in his *Synkategoreumata* and in his *Appellationes*. In this *Peri hermeneias* commentary, however, we do not come across the terms *significatio generalis* and *specialis*, but only *significatum generale* and *speciale*. This would not be so important (we also find Nicholas of Paris using only the set *significatum generale / speciale* in his *Questiones* on Priscian) if it were not the case that the notions are absent in the section on the infinite noun and on the infinite verb, whereas Pagus uses them extensively when he deals with the infinite noun in his *Synkategoreumata*. In the Padova commentary they are only found in the discussion on the oblique noun. Here the author distinguishes not only between the *significatum generale* and the *significatum speciale*, but also between the *modus significandi generalis*, which embraces the secondary grammatical categories *per se*, and the *modus significandi specialis*, which depends on the *modus significandi generalis*, but in some particular form and function. For example, the noun ‘*homo*’ in the nominative case has the general signification to signify substance and quality, and the special signification to signify substance under the quality of humanity; it has the general mode of signifying a case, since it is a noun, and it has the special mode of signifying the nominative case, by which it can function in a proposition as the subject term or to signify a thing as the subject of the action expressed by the predicate:

Tertio notandum quare nomen obliquum non est nomen quoad logicum. Et debes notare quod nomen obliquum est nomen sicut rectum quoad significatum generale, quoniam sicut rectum significat substantiam cum qualitate, et obliquum; similiter quoad significatum speciale, quoniam idem est significatum speciale in recto et obliquo; similiter et quoad modum significandi generalem, quoniam sicut rectum habet casum, numerum et personam et alia accidentia, ita et obliquum. Sed differunt quantum ad modum significandi specialem, quoniam significat rectum rem in ratione principii et in ratione materiali respectu actus, ratione cuius potest reddere suppositum uerbo; obliquum uero non significat rem isto modo. Vnde cum loycus consideret nomen in quantum reddit suppositum uerbo, quoniam tunc causatur ueritas uel falsitas in oratione, cum igitur obliquum non possit reddere suppositum uerbo et per consequens non causare ueritatem uel falsitatem in oratione, ideo loycus non dicit obliquum esse nomen, quoniam loycus considerat partes orationis solum que possunt causare ueritatem uel falsitatem in oratione.⁶⁶

66 MS Padova, UL, 1589, f. 70^b.

The discussion of the infinite noun focuses on the *privatio qualitatis* and the *impositio*:

et dico quod licet in nominibus infinitis priuetur qualitas seu forma, tamen priuatio qualitatis est eis pro forma, ut in hoc quod dico *nichil* secundum Petrum Elye priuatio qualitatis est ei [eis ? MS] pro qualitate. Vnde quidam dicebant quod nomini infinito non erat nomen impositum, quia omnis impositio a forma seu a qualitate.⁶⁷

It is noteworthy that in this commentary we do not encounter the notions *modus significandi substantialis* or *accidentalis* either, as we did in the writings of Nicholas of Paris. To my mind, the absence of the terms *significatio generalis* and *specialis* in the discussion of the infinite terms and the way in which the concepts of *modus significandi generalis* and *modus significandi specialis* are used in this commentary could be arguments for reconsidering Pagus' authorship, since in his *Synkategoremata* he explicitly argued that the *consignificationes* of the parts of speech followed the *significatio generalis* and not the *significatio specialis*:

Secundum hoc ergo patet solutio prius quesitorum, quoniam modus et tempus non accidunt compositioni speciali sed generali; consignificationes enim partium orationis sequuntur significationem generalem partium orationis et non specialem.⁶⁸

4. Final Remarks

We have seen that Robert Kilwardby only uses the terms *significatio generalis* and *specialis* on the level of the constitution of the parts of speech. He does not make any appeal to them in his discussion of congruity, incongruity, and figurative speech. In his commentary on the *Peri hermeneias* these terms are also lacking.⁶⁹

67 MS Padova, UL, 1589, f. 71^{ra}.

68 Braakhuis 1979: I, 229.

69 See Lewry 1981: 381: "Kilwardby lacks the distinction of a *significatio generalis* and *specialis nominis*, found in Nicholas of Paris and the *Summa Lamberti* around 1250". I will not discuss the occurrence of the distinction between *significatio generalis* and *specialis* in the *Synkategoremata* of Peter of Spain; he uses it only once, but he does so without any hesitation: obviously, it is a traditional part of his semantics; cf. Peter of Spain (Petrus Hispanus Portugalsensis), *Synkategoremata*, II, 22: "Sicut hoc nomen 'homo' duplicem habet significationem, scilicet generalem et specialem (generalis significatio est significare substantiam cum qualitate, specialis vero significare hanc substantiam que est homo) ...".

On the other hand, John Pagus and Nicholas of Paris frequently use these terms, but to indicate different concepts, at least where the term *significatio specialis* is concerned. In my opinion, the concepts of *significatio generalis* and *significatio specialis* and especially their mutual opposition and the connected terminology are not primarily the result of reflections on the part of masters teaching grammar in the Faculty of Arts, nor do they have their roots in grammar. On the contrary, as far as the texts which we have at our disposal allow us to conjecture, these notions were highly operational in the logical texts dating from the 1230s, especially in the doctrine of the infinite noun and the infinite verb, as the *Synkategoremata* treatises by Pagus and Nicholas, Nicholas' commentary on Aristotle's *Peri hermeneias*, and the commentary in MS München, CLM 14460 testify. Although these notions seem to have gained a fundamental position in grammatical contexts, their influence, or rather their operational force, was very restricted in that field; there, the basic notions remained the *modi significandi*. But further research in the *Peri hermeneias* commentaries from the first part of the thirteenth century is needed for a more definitive answer to the question about their operational force in early thirteenth-century semantics in general.

Nicholas of Paris, at least, tried to introduce the opposition *significatio generalis* versus *specialis* into grammatical discourse. This had the advantage of a uniform approach to semantics starting from one concept, *significatio*, while still allowing him to maintain the fundamental difference in fields of interest between the two sermocinal disciplines, grammar and logic, which was based on congruity versus truth. But his appeal to them even for the explanation of figurative speech was granted a short life. Robert Kilwardby, Master Jordan, Roger Bacon, Master Arnoldus, and the greater part of the grammarians after them do not appeal to these notions and their opposition in their discussions of figurative speech. So it appears that the *modi significandi essentialis, speciales*, and *accidentales*, and the doctrine of the *primus* and *secundus intellectus*⁷⁰ removed the *significatio generalis* and *specialis* from the core of grammar.⁷¹

70 Cf. Kneepkens 1985 and Rosier 1994, *passim*.

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