

1

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

INDIAN THEORIES OF MEANING  
IN THE SANSKRIT GRAMMARIANS AND THE PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOLS

By

KUMARAPURAM KUNJUNNI RAJA, M.A., Ph.D.(Madras)

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES, LONDON.

JULY, 1954



ProQuest Number: 10731179

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10731179

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346



INDIAN THEORIES OF MEANING  
in the Sanskrit Grammarians and the Philosophic Schools.

---

( A short abstract )

In Indian thought we find two main approaches to the study of the problem of meaning.

The Mimamsakas and the Naiyayikas consider the word as an autonomous unit of sense, and take the sentence as a collection of words. They face many problems that arise in such a naive attitude: what is the exact primary meaning of a word, how can words convey a syntactically related unified sense, what are the conditions of mutual relation of words in a sentence and what exactly is the nature of verbal comprehension. Different theories are enunciated to explain the problems.

Mutual expectancy (ākāṅkṣā), consistency (yogyatā) and proximity (sannidhi) are considered as the conditions for syntactic relation. The importance of contextual factors and the speaker's intention is also fully appreciated.



According to the abhihitānvaya theory, first we remember the isolated word-meanings, and then a simultaneous collective memory gives us the same as mutually related. The anvitābhidhāna theory makes the words themselves convey the connected sentence-meaning gradually. The problem of the change of meaning is also studied and the conditions for a metaphorical transfer (lakṣaṇā) discussed - mainly from a synchronistic point of view.

Bhartrhari's theory of sphoṭa asserts that the fundamental linguistic fact is the sentence considered as a single integral language-symbol. Words are mere abstractions made from the sentence by linguistic analysis, and have only a pragmatic value. The apoha theory of the Buddhists also considers the words to have no real substance. Ānandavardhana includes in meaning the emotive elements and the 'social-cultural' significance of utterances which are suggested with the help of contextual factors, and advocates their importance in literature. The sphoṭa theory gives a welcome corrective to the prevailing tendency of laying undue stress on words.

-----



## C O N T E N T S

## PAGE

## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

1

## CHAPTER II

## ABHIDHĀ - THE PRIMARY MEANING OF A WORD 18

1. Relation between word and sense 19

2. Multiple meaning 27

3. How do we learn the meanings of words 31

4. Contextual factors 38

5. Four classes of words: Yaugika, Rūḍha,  
Yaugikarūḍha and Yogarūḍha 49

6. Etymology verses Popular usage 54

7. The Primary Meaning of a word 60

8. The Buddhist Doctrine of Apoha 71

## CHAPTER III

## SPHOTA - THE THEORY OF LINGUISTIC SYMBOLS 92

1. The Doctrine of Sphoṭa 93

2. Patañjali's view on the sphoṭa 96

3. Other earlier views 107



	PAGE
4. Bhartṛhari's discussion about the nature of the sphoṭa	118
5. How the sphoṭa is comprehended	129
6. Classification of the sphoṭa	144
7. Misconceptions about the sphoṭa	149
8. Bhartṛhari's philosophy of language	156

#### CHAPTER IV

CONDITIONS OF KNOWING THE MEANING OF A SENTENCE - ĀKĀṆKṢĀ, YOGYATĀ, SANNIDHI AND TĀTPARYAJNĀNA	158
1. The Mīmāṃsā definition of a sentence	159
2. Ākāṅkṣā	165
3. Yogyatā	174
4. Sannidhi	177
5. Elliptical Sentences	181
6. Tātparyajñāna - Intention	189

#### CHAPTER V

THE MEANING OF A SENTENCE - ANVITĀBHIDHĀNA, ABHIHITĀNVAYA AND VĀKYASPHOṬA THEORIES	204
1. Relation between words: Bheda or samsarga	205



	PAGE
2. Anvitābhīdhāna theory of verbal comprehension	208
3. Abhihitānvaya theory of verbal comprehension	220
4. Bhartṛhari's theory of akhaṇḍa-vākya-sphoṭa	231

## CHAPTER VI

LAKṢAṆĀ - METAPHOR	235
1. Conditions for a metaphor	236
2. Relation between the normal and the actual meanings in a transfer	239
3. Gaupī vṛtti - Qualitative metaphor	250
4. Jahallakṣaṇā, Ajahallakṣaṇā and Jahadajahallakṣaṇā	257
5. Śuddhā, Sāropā and Sādhyavasānā	265
6. Incompatibility of the primary sense	267
7. Nirūḍha-lakṣaṇā or Faded Metaphor	273
8. Motive element in Lakṣaṇā	278
9. Compound words	281
10. Bhartṛhari's views on Lakṣaṇā	283



	PAGES
CHAPTER VII	
VYANJANĀ - SUGGESTION	289
( AND THE DOCTRINE OF DHVANI )	
1. Vyanjanā	290
2. Criticisms against the Dhvani theory	304
(a) Dhvani and anumāna	305
(b) Dhvani and Arthāpatti	309
(c) Dhvani and Lakṣaṇā	311
(d) Dhvani and Abhidhā	315
(e) Dhvani and Tātparya	318
(f) Dhvani and Vakrokti	319
3. Classification of Dhvani	320
4. Intonation	330
BIBLIOGRAPHY	334

---



## ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	..... Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
An.S.S.	..... Anandasramam Sanskrit Series, Poona.
BSOAS	.... Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
Ch.S.S.	.... Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Benaras.
Cour	.... Cours de linguistique Generale, by De Saussure.
G.O.S.	... Gaskwad Sanskrit Series, Baroda.
IHQ	.... Indian Historical Quarterly.
JBRAS	... Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JGRI	... Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute, Allahabad
JRAS	... Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
K.S.S.	... Kashi Sanskrit Series, Benaras.
Mbh	... Mahabhāṣya of Patañjali
NVTT	.... Nyāyavārttikatātparyatīkā by Vācaspatimiśra
POC	... Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference.
TPS	... Transactions of the Philological Society, London.
Viz.S.S.	.. Vizianagram Sanskrit Series.
VP.	... Vākyapadīya by Bhartṛhari
WZKM	... Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunde des Morgenlandes Wien.
ZDMG	... Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

-----



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

I wish to express my most grateful thanks to Professor J.Brough for the encouragement, help and guidance he has given me throughout in the preparation of this Thesis. I am also greatly obliged to Dr.Friedman for his constant encouragement and help in clarifying many a problem in Indian philosophy and Buddhism. I must also express my sincere thanks to Professor Firth and Mr. Robins of the Linguistics Department in the School for helping me to understand the main currents of modern linguistic thought. My sincere thanks are also due to Dr.Betty Heimann for valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to the British Council for the very generous scholarship they have given me, and to the University of Madras for granting me leave for higher studies in the U.K. I must also thank the staff of the S.O.A.S.Library, the India Office Library, the British Museum Library and the Senate Library ~~for~~ for the facilities they have given me. I have also to thank Mr.N.P.Pillai and other friends for general encouragement and my wife for constant inspiration.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



The meaning of 'Meaning' is an unsolved problem both in linguistics and in philosophy. It has attracted the attention of philosophers throughout the ages; reflections on the epistemological problem as to 'what is the relation subsisting between thoughts, words or sentences, and that which they refer to or mean' have occupied the human mind in the east as well as in the west. Though the theory of meaning is the youngest branch of modern linguistics, it is one of its most vigorous branches. In recent years the problem of meaning has been studied in its manifold aspects by philosophers like Bertrand Russell, Urban, Ayer, Wittgenstein and Cassirer, by logicians like Carnap, by psychologists like Paul, Wundt, Pillsbury and Kohler, by anthropologists like Malinowski and Sapir, by rhetoricians like Richards and Empson and by linguists like Breal, Erdmann, Jespersen, De Saussure, Ogden, Stern, Gardiner, Firth and Ullmann. There is such an abundance of material for a study of the problem of meaning that one is often left perplexed. The lack of a uniform metalanguage has added to the difficulties.



The fundamental problems that face the student of semantics are so vast that certain leading linguists, especially in America, try to exclude it from scientific linguistics. Thus, Bloomfield says, "The situations which prompt people to utter speech include every object and happening in the universe. In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of a language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speaker's world. The actual extent of human knowledge is very small, compared to this." He comes to the conclusion that "the statement of meaning is, therefore, the weak point in language study, and will remain so until human knowledge advances very far beyond its present state."<sup>1</sup> This defeatist attitude is, perhaps, based on a wrong approach to the problem of meaning, assuming that every word in language must have a ~~strict~~ definite and precise meaning and that we cannot talk sensibly about meaning until we are able to define everything that is meant by word scientifically. But language is being used by ordinary people without any such knowledge, and it works quite well.

---

1. Bloomfield, Language, p.140



In India the various schools of philosophy, including those of the Sanskrit Grammarians and the Rhetoricians, devoted much thought to the problems of linguistic philosophy and general linguistics and evolved different theories to explain the manifold aspects of language behaviour. Writers in the west, while recognizing the importance of Pāṇini's method in the formal analysis of Sanskrit language into a system of roots, stems and suffixes, and acknowledging their indebtedness to Pāṇini in the matter of formal analysis, have not paid any serious attention to the Indian theories about the various aspects of meaning. The discussions on the problem of meaning by the great Indian thinkers like Bhartṛhari, Kumārilabhaṭṭa and Anandavardhana show extraordinary linguistic and philosophic acumen and are full of valuable observation which can be of considerable help in clarifying complicated issues in modern discussions of the subject.

Some work has already been done towards modern expositions of the Indian theories on general linguistics. The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus and The Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar<sup>1</sup> showed to the modern world a glimpse

---

1.P.C.Chakravarti.



into the vast treasures of Indian contribution on the problem. Various aspects of the problem of meaning are discussed in many of the modern expositions of Indian philosophical systems such as The Six Ways of Knowing by D.M.Datta, Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources by Ganganatha Jha, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge by S.C.Chatterjee, A Primer of Indian Logic, by Kuppasvami Sastri, and the Introduction to the Tattvabindu by V.A.Ramasvami Sastri. Substantial contributions have been made recently on different problems connected with the Indian theory of meaning by scholars like Edgerton, Siddhesvara Varma, K.A.Subrahmanya Iyer, Hiriyanna, P.T.Raju and Brough.<sup>1</sup> Much more remains to be done in the same field. An attempt is made in the following pages to give a brief survey of the various theories of meaning held by the different schools of Indian thought and to bring out their significance in modern linguistic discussions on meaning.

In Indian thought we find two main approaches to the study of the problem of meaning: khaṇḍapakṣa and the akhaṇḍapakṣa, which roughly correspond to the Association theory and the Gestalt theory in psychology.

---

1. See Bibliography for details.



According to the khaṇḍapakṣa or the analytical method, a word is considered as an autonomous unit of thought and sense and the language studies are made on the basis of words, and the sentence is taken to be a concatenation of words. In the early stages of linguistic studies in India, as elsewhere, attention is found focussed on individual words and their isolated meanings; the idea that an individual word possesses an individual word-meaning is generally current in all schools of Indian philosophy in ancient times, and in the case of nouns the word is taken as the name of the thing. Thus, the regular philosophic term for a thing, namely padārtha, is literally "the meaning of a word, that which a word means".<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit term nāmarūpa for a thing also suggests the view that objects can be comprehended by means of their names or their visible shapes, and that the name and the shape constitute the essence of a thing. The Nyāyasūtras discuss the nature of the individual words only; the discussions about the factors necessary for the understanding of a sentence are found only in later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika works. Grammarians like Pāṇini

---

1. J. Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, TPS, 1953, p. 163.



Kātyāyana and Patañjali are mainly concerned with the derivation of the correct forms of words; and Yāska and his followers deal with the etymological study of word-meanings. It is the Mīmāṃsā school that started a detailed study of sentences and developed elaborate canons of interpretation; but even this study was mainly on the basis of words and word-meanings, and consequently, the relationship between word and sentence, between word-meaning and sentence-meaning, remained a central problem to this school.

But even in ancient India there were some scholars who emphasized the unreal nature of words. Yāska refers<sup>1</sup> to the view of Audumbarāyaṇa that it is the statement as a whole which is regularly present in the perceptive faculty of the hearer<sup>2</sup>, and that the four-fold classification of words into noun, verb, upasarga and nipāta does not hold good. Words are

---

1. Nirukta, 1.1: indriyanityam vacanam audumbarāyaṇaḥ. tatra catuṣṭvam nopapadyate.

2. For a discussion of this theory, see J. Brough, Audumbarāyaṇa's Theory of Language, BSOAS, vol. XIV, part I. Also K. M. Sarma, Vak before Bhartṛhari, Poona Orientalist, volume VIII.



used for naming, even in everyday life, because of their universal applicability and their convenience.<sup>1</sup> Bhartṛhari refers to this view and says that Vārtakṣa also held the ~~same~~ theory that it is only the sentence that is regularly present in the mind of the hearer.<sup>2</sup>

Even among those who accepted the autonomy of words there are two different views regarding the nature of verbal comprehension arising from a sentence. The Naiyāyikas and the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsakas take the naive abhihitānvaya theory, according to which first we remember the isolated word-meanings and then a simultaneous collective memory gives us the same as mutually connected. Syntactically related word-meanings constitute sentence-meaning. In a sentence each word performs the task of conveying its own isolated meaning, and stops with that; the syntactic relation is conveyed not by the words, but by the word-meanings. The Mīmāṃsakas of the Prābhākara school accept the anvitābhidhāna theory which is an advance on the previous one. According to this

---

1. Nirukta, 1.1: vyāptimatvāc ca śabdasyānīyastvāc ca samjñākaraṇam vyavahārārtham loke.

2. VP.ii.345-349



the words themselves convey the connected sentence-meaning gradually, step by step. The individual words do not convey ~~every~~ any meaning except in the context of a sentence. Only the sentence is the unit of speech, though the word which is the product of analysis from the sentences can be considered as the unit of language. Both these theories accepted that the conditions for syntactic relation between words in a sentence are mutual expectancy (ākāṅkṣā), consistency (yogyatā) and proximity (sannidhi) and also recognized the importance of contextual factors and the intention of the speaker as determining the meaning of words.

According to the akhaṇḍapakṣa advocated by Bhartṛhari the fundamental linguistic fact is the sentence. It takes the sentence as a Gestalt whose parts are not relevant to it. The theory owes its inspiration from the theory of Audumbarāyana; but Bhartṛhari developed it as a perfect theory which can explain all the anomalies in language behaviour. He defines the sentence as 'a single integral symbol' (eko 'navayavaś śabda)



which is revealed by the individual letters and the words that comprise it. The meaning is conveyed by this vākya-sphoṭa, the sentence considered as an indivisible and integral linguistic symbol. And the meaning conveyed by it is an 'instantaneous flash of insight or intuition' (pratibhā). The meaning is also partless. The words have no reality of their own; they are only hints that help the listener to arrive at the meaning. Many of the problems in the study of meaning in linguistics are based on the primary assumption that words are the counters of thought; but when once that assumption is set aside and words given their proper place in the language system as unreal abstractions just like roots and suffixes, many of these problems fade away. The words have a reality only at the pragmatic level. This theory of Bhartrhari will be a welcome corrective to the prevailing tendency among modern linguists to lay undue stress on words.

Anandavardhana took the cue from Bhartrhari and developed his theory of Vyañjanā or suggestion. Under the term artha or meaning he included not only



the cognitive, logical meaning, but also the emotive elements and the 'social-cultural' significance of utterances which are suggested with the help of contextual factors. The logicians and the philosophers may be satisfied with that portion of the total meaning of an utterance which is precise and accurate and <sup>which</sup> can be objectively studied; but the poets - and also the linguists - cannot neglect vast areas of language behaviour as unreal or indescribable. Ānandavardhana lays great stress on the suggestive element in poetry, and advocates the Dhvani theory, which is vyanjanā or suggestion applied to poetry.

The problem of change of meaning is also studied by the different schools of thought in India. But the conditions for a metaphorical transfer of meaning are discussed there mainly from a synchronistic point of view, unlike the study of the change of meaning in the west. It is only in the discussion of faded metaphors (nirūḍhalakṣaṇās) that a historical approach can be seen. Even etymology is not studied from a diachronistic point of view. The aim of etymology



is not to find out the origin or the history of a word, but to understand the real significance of the word. It is not a subject of antiquarian interest, but is of great importance to the study of meaning.

The fundamental problem regarding the inter-relation of facts, speech and thought has not yet been solved. Although we can perceive facts, we cannot handle them directly in speech or in thought. Language is indispensable for communication. In the Yogasūtra of Patañjali it is said that ~~the~~ "word, idea and object are really distinct entities and that though in ordinary experience they are found interrelated, they may be separated from one another by a process of abstraction."<sup>1</sup> "The very nature of discursive thought is based on the non-recognition of this distinctin(between these three factors) and on the consequent assumption of a real identity among all the three things."<sup>2</sup>.

In India all the schools of thought have assumed a permanent relation between śabda and artha which correspond to the signifiant and signifié of

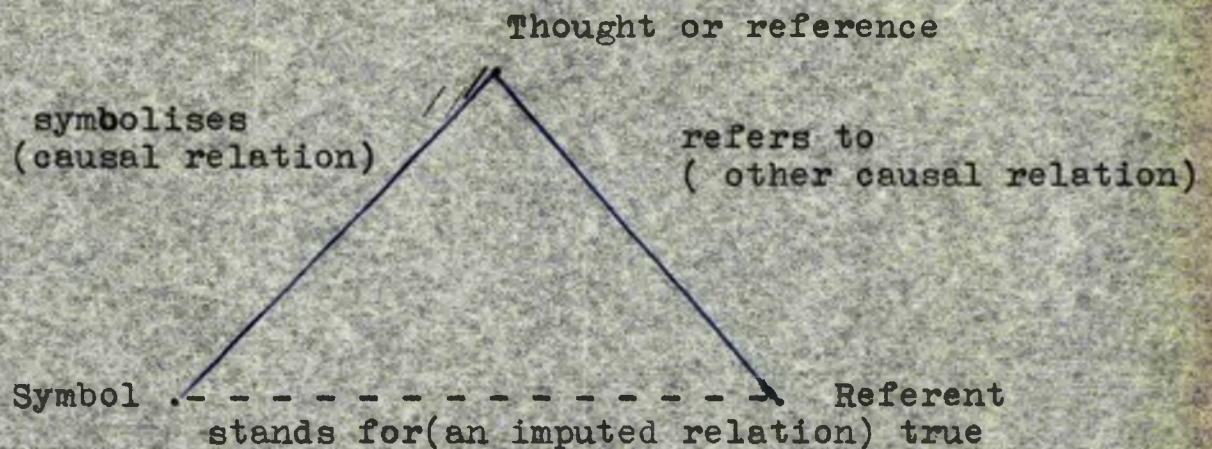
---

1. Gopinatha Kaviraja, The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian philosophy, ABORI, 1924, p.7

2. Ibid.



De Saussure. Severe attack is made on De Saussure in the first chapter of The Meaning of Meaning<sup>1</sup> by Ogden and Richards for emphasizing the relation between signifiant and signifié; they point out that there is no direct relation between the word and the referent and that the relation is only imputed. Ogden - Richards' basic triangle has the following shape:-



<sup>2</sup>  
Sir A. Gardiner, while emphasizing the distinction between meaning and the thing-meant, criticises De Saussure for the omission of any clear reference to the things. His analysis is similar to that of Ogden - Richards, though he uses different terms. He uses the terms word, meaning and thing-meant respectively for symbol, reference and referent of Ogden - Richards' triangle.

---

1. Meaning of Meaning, p. 11

2. Theory of Speech and Language, pp. 29ff, 58ff.



It must be noticed that De Saussure's analysis of signifiant-signifié relation, as well as the Indian conception about the permanent nature of the śabda-artha relation, confines itself to the left hand side of the triangle, as the only one where linguistic elements are directly involved. It is admitted that the relation between words and the external objects is indirect and imputed. There is no contradiction between the two schools. The symbol is directly related only to the <sup>1</sup> thought or meaning, and not to the thing meant.

When the meaning and the thing-meant are distinguished, it is also necessary to distinguish between the permanent word, the word-engram of la langue or the 'word universal', on the one hand and the ephemeral actualized word as it is uttered in la parole. The essential word is not 'the somewhat shifty hummock on the contour of a breath-group' <sup>2</sup> which vanishes as soon as it is being uttered, but something permanent in the minds of the people belonging to the linguistic community. Gardiner himself is conscious of the logical necessity of accepting this distinction. He says, <sup>3</sup> "a word can be used and reused

---

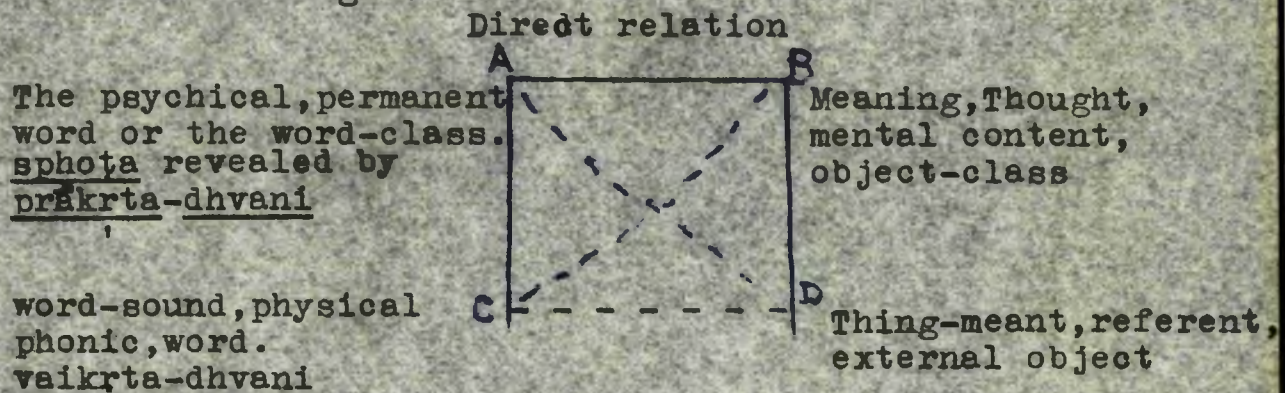
1. Ullmann, The Principles of Semantics, p.72

2. William J. Entwistle, Aspects of Language, p.226

3. op.cit., pp.69f.



on many different occasions, and ... the same word can be employed by all the different members of a linguistic community.... It is in fact something relatively permanent, widespread and capable of being possessed in common by a multitude of individuals. All these considerations prove, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that words transcend, and are altogether less evanescent entities than the sounds which issue from the speaker's mouth and vanish into nothingness soon after they have reached the listener's ear." According to the Indian grammarians, the former is the prākṛta-dhvani and the latter the vaikṛta-dhvani. The Mīmāṃsakas call the former a pattern of the permanent varṇas (analogous to the modern phoneme) and the latter is called dhvani. The Naiyāyikas consider the former as a class (jāti) of which the latter is an instance. Thus, the speech situation can be represented in a rectangle rather than the usual triangle.



Direct relation is only between A and B in the diagram. Relations between C and D, C and B, and A and D are all indirect and imputed.



In this diagram the upper portion gives De Saussure's analysis, and the portion ABD refers to the Ogden - Richards' triangle.

In the sphoṭa doctrine, Bhartṛhari gives a more penetrating and minute analysis of the speech situation. First, we have the actual sounds of the words uttered; this is the vaikṛta-dhvani. These sounds reveal the permanent prākṛta-dhvani which is an abstraction from the various vaikṛta-dhvanis, or which may be considered as the linguistically normal form devoid of the personal variations which are linguistically irrelevant. The third stage is the sphoṭa which is the whole utterance considered as an integral whole, as an indivisible language-symbol. It is this sphoṭa that reveals the meaning which is in the form of an intuition. Strictly both the sphoṭa and the meaning are different aspects of the same speech-principle. Bhartṛhari seems to synthesize these various aspects of speech with the four-fold nature of the revelation of speech: parā, paśyanti, madhyamā and vaikhari stages corresponding respectively to śabda-tattva (The Great Sphoṭa), sphoṭa, prākṛta-dhvani and vaikṛta-dhvani.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. See the chapter on sphoṭa.



Divested of all the metaphysical elements, the sphoṭa doctrine advocated by Bhartṛhari emphasizes the importance of considering the sentence ( which is only any complete utterance) as an indivisible, integral language-symbol. The division into words and their classification as verbs, nouns and so on, as well as the subdivisions into roots and suffixes are all means for the study of ~~the~~ language without any absolute reality in themselves. But they cannot be neglected by the grammarian, since they are of great help in language study.

Various aspects of the Indian theories of meaning are still of vital importance to the students of modern linguistics. Bhartṛhari's ~~an~~ theory of sphoṭa, the Mīmāṃsaka's discussions about ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and sannidhi as the factors deciding syntactic relation in a sentence, Ānandavardhana's theory of poetic suggestion and the general discussions about the importance of contextual factors and the speaker's intention may be pointed out as of special interest for modern linguistic theory.

---



CHAPTER II

ABHIDHĀ

THE PRIMARY MEANING OF A WORD



The essential nature of a word lies in its significative power.<sup>1</sup> This significative power or śakti is defined as the relation that exists between the word and its meaning, by which the meaning is cognized whenever the word is heard.<sup>2</sup> Speculations about the nature of this relation of meaning with words are found in India, as in ancient Greece; the two main schools, Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya, support respectively theories of a 'natural' and of a 'conventional' origin of this relation.

According to the Mīmāṃsakas the significative power is inherent in the words themselves. They were not concerned with the ultimate origin of the relation between words and meanings. To them it was impossible to conceive of a society without language. We learn our language from our parents and elders; they, in their turn, learned it from their forefathers; thus, it could be traced back to any conceivable period of

- 
1. Tarkasaṅgraha, śabda: śaktam padam; Siddhāntamuktavali, p.282. Formally, a word is also defined as a group of letters in a fixed order, ending in nominal or verbal inflection; Nyāyasūtra, II.2.60: te vibhaktyantaḥ padam. Pāṇini, 1.4.14: sūptiḥantam padam.
  2. Siddhāntamuktavali: śaktis ca padena saha padārthasya sambandhaḥ; Laghumañjusa, p.26: padapadārthayos sambandhāntaram eva śaktiḥ, vācyavācakabhāva-paraparyayaḥ.
  3. Mīmāṃsasūtra, 1.1.5: utpattikas tu śabdasyārthena sambandhaḥ. See also W.S.Allen, The origin and development of language, TPS, 1948.



human society. What they meant by the eternality of the words and meaning was that it is not possible to trace the origin of the relationship to any person.<sup>1</sup> The grammarians also agree with the Mīmāṃsakas that the permanent nature of the relation between words and meaning is to be understood from popular usage itself.<sup>2</sup>

This natural connection between words and ~~the~~ meaning has also been explained in terms of the innate capacity or yogyatā of the words. Just as the indriyas or the organs of perception have a natural power to perceive what comes into their purview, so also words have a natural capacity for conveying ideas.<sup>3</sup> Speech is the natural means of communication. Thus, any word has the natural capacity to express anything; this power is restricted by convention.<sup>4</sup> The permanent relation between a proper noun and its bearer is to be explained in this way.

---

1. Cf. Allen, loc. cit. This is different from the natural theory of the Greek scholars which believed that "in giving names to objects the primitive man was inspired by some innate quality or psychological effect of the thing itself."

2. Kātyāyana's Vārttika begins: siddhe śabdārthasambandhe lokatah..; see also Patañjali's bhāṣya on that. Bhartṛhari too says (VP.1.23): nityas śabdārthasambandha

3. VP.iii.3.1: indriyāṇāṃ svaviśayeṣv anādir yogyatā yathā anadir arthais śabdāṇāṃ sambandhe yogyatā tathā.

4. Sloka-vārttika, sambandha section, verse 228; sarvākāra-paricchedyaśakte 'rthe vācāke 'pi vā sarvākārārtha-vijñānasamarthe niyamah kṛtaḥ; see Kāśika on that. See also Prameyakamalamārttanda, III-100.



Yāska refers to śabdānukṛti or onomatopoeia as a factor in the naming of birds.<sup>1</sup> He says that a few words like 'kāka' (crow) could be traced to the sound produced by the birds; but Aupamanyava denies the existence of onomatopoeia as a linguistic factor.

This theory of natural relation between words and meanings is rejected by the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas who advocate the conventional origin of relationship. Gautama says that it is by the conventional significance that the meaning of a word is understood.<sup>2</sup> The Vaiśeṣikas also take the same view; they assert that there is no direct natural relation between śabda and artha, between words and the objects denoted.

They argue that if there were any natural relation between a word and its meaning, as between fire and burning, then the word should have already coexisted with the object signified; but we do not perceive any such relation. A word does not coexist

---

1. Nirukta, III.18: kāka iti śabdānukṛtiḥ. tad idam śakuniṣu bahulam.

2. Nyāyasūtra, II.55: sāmayikāo śabdārthasampratyayaḥ.

3. Vaiśeṣikasūtra, VII.2.20: sāmayikas śabdād arthapratyayaḥ.

4. Ibid. VII.2.14 - VII.2.20



with the object it denotes. The word 'fire' does not burn the mouth, and the word 'razor' does not cut it; nor does the word 'honey' sweeten the mouth.<sup>1</sup>

Another substantial argument brought against the natural relationship between words and their meanings is that if words had a natural relation with the objects, the same words should have meant the same thing everywhere. The variation in the meanings of words cannot be explained satisfactorily on such a hypothesis. The use of different words for the same object is also against the theory of natural connection between words and their meanings.<sup>2</sup>

According to the ancient Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas the connection between words and objects is not natural, but it is conventional, being established by the will of God.<sup>3</sup> In the Tarkasaṅgraha also śakti

- 
1. Sābarabhāṣya, under sūtra 1.1.5: syāc ced arthena sambandhaḥ ksauramodakocoṣarane mukhasya pātanapurāṇe syātām. See also Slokavārttika, sambandha section, verse 8; Nyāyabhāṣya on sūtras II.1.54&55.
  2. Nyāyasūtra, II.1.56: jātiviśeṣe cānīyamāt. See also the bhāṣya; samāyikā śabdād arthasampratyayo na svābhāvikaḥ; rasyāryamleccānām yathākāmam śabda-prayogo 'rthapratyāyanāya pravartate.
  3. Nyāyasūtra, II.1.55: samāyikāc chabdarthasampratyayasya.



is defined as the convention made by God that such and such a meaning should be understood from such and such a word.<sup>1</sup> According to the later Naiyāyikas, however, this relation need not always be established by the will of God; it can also be by the will of man.<sup>2</sup> When the sāṅketa or the conventional relation is established by the will of God, it is permanent and is called abhidhā or śakti. When the relation is not permanent, but established by the will of a man, it is called paribhāṣā.<sup>3</sup> Bhartṛhari also refers to these two types of relations. He says, "Sāṅketa is of two kinds, ājānika or permanent and ādhunika or modern; the former is the permanent primary relation, while the latter refers to the technical terms with their specialized and well-defined meanings, coined by writers of various scientific works."<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Tarkasaṅgraha, śabda; asmāt padāt ayam artho boddhavya itīśvarasāṅketas śaktiḥ.

2. According to the ancient Naiyāyikas, śakti exists only when it is based on the will of God, and the meaning is permanent, and not in the case of proper nouns and technical terms. But later Naiyāyikas accept śakti in all such cases. See Siddhāntamuktāvalī, śabda section; ādhunike tu sāṅketite na śaktir iti sampradāyah. navyās tu īśvareochaiva na śaktiḥ. kin tu lochaiva. tenādhunika. sāṅketite'pi śāstīti vadanti.

3. Śabdasākti prakāśikā, pp. 54f; Vidyābhūṣaṇa, op.cit., p. 449

4. Vakya padīya, quoted in Śabdasākti prakāśikā, loc.cit., ājānikas cādhunikas sāṅketo dvīvidho mataḥ nitya ājānikas tatra yā śaktiḥ iti gīyate kādācitkas tvādhunikas sātrakarādibhiḥ kṛtaḥ.



In both these cases the relation between the word and the meaning is direct. When the relation is only indirect, being based on the similarity or contiguity of the actual intended sense with the original primary sense, the relation is called lakṣanā or gaunī. It has no direct power to convey the sense intended; its power is derived from the primary sense.

Thus, in India, we find that all the schools of thought accept a functional definition of meaning. Vṛtti or the function of a word is its relation to the sense. This relation is also considered as a power residing in the word, which enables it to denote the sense. Even the Buddhists accept the relation between the śabda and the vikalpa or the mental construct of the image, and recognize a reciprocal relation between the two.<sup>1</sup> The Naiyāyikas' objection against a permanent relation between the word and the object denoted is only against an assumed relation between the words uttered and the external objects symbolized by them.

The Indian conception of the relation between śabda and artha (word and sense) is quite analogous

---

1. See the section on Apoha. Prof. Siddhesvara Varma's distinction of the Hindu view of meaning as a relation and the Buddhist view of meaning as a negation (JRAS, 1925) is due to a confusion between the function and the sense.



to De Saussure's definition of a linguistic sign as a relation between the signifiant and the signifié. He says, "Le signe linguistique unit non une chose et un nom, mais un concept et une image acoustique."

Here it must be noted that both the signifiant and the signifié are psychical entities and the relation is subjective. The word is not the actual sounds uttered in actual speech(la parole), but the abstracted phonological pattern, or the 'engram' of the word in la langue, or the class of which the individual utterances are instances. Similarly the signifié or the artha is also different from the external particular object, <sup>ज्ञान</sup> but the concept of the object, or vikalpa, the mental construct produced by the object, or the universal of which the particular things in the external world are related through inherence. A fundamental identity of opinion is often concealed by divergent and overlapping terminologies. Thus the artha or sense appears as signifié in De Saussure, thought or reference in Ogden-Richards, mental content in Stern, sense in Gomboz, idea in Roudet, concept in Weisberger and meaning in Gardiner. It is the jāti or universal of the

---

1. Coury, p.100

2. Ullmann, op.cit., p.6



Naiyāyikas

~~Mīmāṃsikas~~, the vikalpa in the form of apoha or negation of the Buddhists, the permanent ~~may~~ vyakti or dravya as a mental image etc.<sup>1</sup>

2

P.C.Chakravarti says that the theory of Signs or Symbolism as worked out by Ogden and Richards in The Meaning of Meaning "has maintained a peculiar position that goes directly against the view of Indian grammarians. It does not recognize any necessary or permanent relation between a thing and the symbol which stands for it."<sup>3</sup> Here it must be pointed out that there is no fundamental difference in the views of the Indian philosophers and that of Ogden and Richards. That there is no direct relation between the symbol and the external object, or the thing-meant in Gardiner's terminology;<sup>4</sup> ~~the relation~~ is acceptable to all.<sup>5</sup> For as the Indian scholars say, the word 'fire' does not burn in the mouth, or the word 'razor' cut it; nor does the word 'honey' sweeten the mouth.<sup>6</sup> As Wittgenstein says, the relation of a word must be to something that is permanent, "What the names in language signify must be indestructible."

- 
1. See the section on 'The primary sense of words' (pp. 60-68)
  2. Linguistic Speculation of the Hindus, p. 342, 392.
  3. The Meaning of Meaning, p. 11
  4. Speech and Language, passim.
  5. Śloka-vārttika, sambandhākṣepa, verse 8.
  6. Philosophical Investigations, p. 55.



Multiple Meaning.

"Multiple meaning is one of the chief symptoms of a wider feature of speech and language: discrepancy between the signifiant and the signifié of linguistic symbols... All complications of the simple 'one name - one sense' situation are ~~xxxxxx~~ accommodated under this heading".<sup>1</sup> The Indian scholars were also confronted with the problem: how far does multiple meaning affect the permanent relation between words and their meanings?<sup>2</sup> There are two main categories of multiple meaning: (i) pariyāyasabda or several names with one sense, and (ii) nanārthasabdas or the same word with several senses. The binary semantic relationship requires a word to have only one sense, and a sense to have only one word to denote it. But almost every language contains elements running counter to this 'monosemy' in the language system. Sanskrit is full of synonyms and homonyms, and the various lexicons in Sanskrit are ~~arranged~~ dealing with words arranged in synonyms and homonyms (pariyāya and nanārtha). Patañjali has drawn attention to this feature in language.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ullmann, op.cit., p.107

2. Vide supra.

3. Mbh. on Pāṇini, 1.3.1; bahavo hi śabdā ekārthā bhavanti. tad yatha indras, sakrah, puruhūtah, purandarah. ekaś ca śabdo bahvyarthah. tad yatha aksah, padah, māśa iti.



The occurrence of plurivalence( one name with several senses) in a language may give rise to ambiguities; but,as Bhartrhari points out, the meaning of a word is decided not merely by its form,but also by various other factors such as the sentence-context and the situational context.<sup>1</sup> In the Vākyapadīya,Bhartrhari gives a long list<sup>2</sup> of the contextual factors that determine the meanings of words in ambiguous cases.

An interesting problem about the exact nature of homonyms is discussed by the Indian grammarians: are we to consider them as the same word having different senses,or as different words having<sup>3</sup>the same sound? In India the former view is generally prevalent,as is clear from the term nānāarthasabda applied to homonyms. But Bhartrhari and his followers,to whom the semantic aspect of a word is more important than the phonological aspect, take the latter view. According to Bhartrhari "it is necessary to recognize that when we talk of 'the word x with meaning A','the word x with meaning B',

---

1.VP.ii.316: śabdārtthāḥ pravibhijyante na rūpād eva kevalāt. See the section on 'Contextual factors'.

2.See section on 'Contextual factors'

3.See Panyarāja's commentary on VP.ii.317



the identification of the two 'x's as 'one word' is a mere practical convenience for lexicography and exegesis, something which belongs not to the material but to one method of describing the material, and that this method is not necessarily the best approach to a satisfactory description of language in operation."<sup>1</sup>

Here it must be noted that the Indian scholars were mainly concerned with the synchronistic study of language, with ~~describing~~ describing the language as it exists, and therefore, they failed to distinguish the two types of such occurrences from each other: homonymy through divergent sense-development and homonymy through convergent sound-development (the former may be called homonyms and the latter homophones).<sup>2</sup> Such a distinction will be possible only by a historical, diachronistic study of the problem. The Indians studied the problem of shifts in application under lakṣanā or metaphor, and discussed the problem of nirūḍhalakṣanās, where the acquired sense becomes the normal sense.<sup>3</sup> But they did not

---

1. J. Brough, op.cit., p. 169

2. Ullmann, op.cit., pp. 125-138

3. See the chapter on Lakṣanā.



observe that polysemy, which in synchronistic terms means that one word can have more than one sense, implies from a diachronistic point of view that a word may retain its previous sense or senses and at the same time acquire one or several ones. The homophones are, on the other hand, different words which in the course of historical development accidentally converge in shape. It is true that this distinction between homonyms and homophones does not exist synchronistically. As Jespersen says, "The psychological ~~aspect~~ effect of these cases of polysemy, where 'one and the same word' has many meanings, is exactly the same as that of those cases where two or three words of different origins have accidentally become homophones."<sup>1</sup> It is to the great credit of the Indian writers that they were able to study the nānārthas from two points of view: as homonyms and as homophones.

The problem of synonyms is not so great, for according to the Indian writers, exact synonyms are rare, as there will be shades of difference in the meanings of the so-called synonyms. Popular new forms of old words were taken to be their corruptions (apabhramśa). Still they had to accept some well-known synonyms; even these show different aspects of the same thing-meant.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Jespersen, Linguistica, p. 405 (Quoted by Ullmann, op. cit. p. 130)  
2. See the section on 'Etymology verses Popular usage'.



How do we learn the meanings of words?

There are different ways by which we may learn the meanings of words. In the Tattvacintāmaṇi, Gaṅgeśopādhyāya refers to eight such methods used for learning the relation between words and the objects meant by them.<sup>1</sup>

The most important among them all is the natural method of observing the usage of ~~words~~ the words by elders in actual life (vrddhavyavahāra). According to the Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsā, this is the only method of learning a language; it is only from sentences in the imperative mood that we can observe some kind of visible activity on the part of the listener, and therefore, such sentences are of great importance in the natural method of learning a language.<sup>2</sup> As Wittgenstein says, "One cannot guess how a word functions, one has to look at its use and learn from that."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Tattvacintāmaṇi, Śabdakhaṇḍa:

Śaktigrahaṇam vyākaraṇopamaṁ kośāptavākyaḍ vyavahāra-  
taś ca vākyaśya śeṣād vivṛter vadanti sānnidhyataś  
siddhapadaśya vrddhāh. See Vidyabhūṣaṇa, History of  
Indian Logic, p. 450f. Also Siddhāntamuktāvali, p. 266.

2. See the section on Anvitaḥhidhana theory.

3. Philosophical Investigations, p. 499.



Hearing the utterance of a sentence by A to B and observing the consequent activity on the part of the listener B, an onlooker C gets the idea that the activity of B is based on his understanding the meaning of the sentence. At this time the whole action of B is understood as the meaning of the whole utterance of A. From several such observations of various utterances and their meanings, C is able to understand the meaning of single words, through a process of assimilation and elimination (avapodvāpa). Kumārilabhaṭṭa says<sup>1</sup> that in this method there are three definite stages:-(a) Pratyakṣa or perception. The child hears the utterance of the speaker and sees the activity on the part of the listener. (b) Anumāna or inference. The child infers from the listener's action that he has understood the meaning of the utterance. (c) Arthāpatti. The child knows that the activity of the listener is inexplicable except on the assumption of a relation existing between the utterance and the meaning.

- 
1. Sloka-vārttika, Sambandhākṣepa, verses 140-143; see also S. Varma, op. cit., p. 5
  2. Wittgenstein (op. cit., p. 498) says, "Bring me a sugar, bring me milk, make sense, but not the combination 'milk me sugar'. But the utterance has effect, though it is not its meaning (stare and gape)".



Nāgesa, the grammarian, considers this as the best method of learning the meanings of words.<sup>1</sup> Jagadīśa, the great Naiyāyika, also says that the first and the foremost method of learning the meanings of words is that of observing the use of language in actual life.<sup>2</sup> It is in this way that children generally pick up the use of language. It is a natural and subconscious method of learning language. "When a context has affected us in the past, the recurrence of merely a part of the context will cause us to react in the way we reacted before."<sup>3</sup>

(b) Āptavākya or the direct statement of a trustworthy authority is another way by which children generally understand the meanings of words. In this case the learning is conscious and deliberate. When the parents or other relations directly point out with the finger the various persons and objects, and say to the child, "This is your father", "This is your

---

1. Paramalghumanjūṣā (p.1) refers to vr̥ddhavyahāra as śaktigrāhakaśiromaṇi.

2. Śabdāśaktiprakāśikā, p.64f: saṅketasya grāhaṇaṁ pūrvam vr̥ddhasya vyavahārataḥ.

3. Urban, Language and Reality, p.102. This is according to the behaviouristic theory, according to which meaning is the evocation of a total response by a partial stimulus.



mother", "This is your brother eating the banana ~~fruit~~", etc., the child can understand the relation between the words and the persons or objects denoted by them.<sup>1</sup> We ~~may~~ may also know the meanings of certain words when an 'authority' tells us that such and such words denote such and such objects. St. Augustine gives a clear description of this method of learning a language; in his Confessions, he says:<sup>2</sup>

"When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that ~~that~~ the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shown by their bodily movements, as it were, the natural language of all people: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learned to understand what objects they signified, and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires."

(c) Vyākaraṇa or grammar. We learn the meanings of the roots, suffixes and derivatives from grammar. In fact, the most important use of grammar is

- 
1. Nyāyakośa, p. 860: angulīprasāraṇādīpūrvakam nirdeśena śaktigrahaḥ bhavati. yathā, bala, taveyam mātā, tavāyam pitā, ayam te bhrātā kandalīphalam abhyavaharatīti nirdeśena bālasya mātṛāḍau śaktigrahaḥ.
  2. Confessions, 1.8 (quoted by Wittgenstein, op.cit., p.1). Strictly speaking, this method described here involves both vrddhavyahāra and āptavākya.



to help people to learn the language quickly and correctly. All the normal derivative words and their meanings can be understood from grammar on knowing the root-meanings and the significance of the suffixes.

(d) Upamāna or identification. A man, who does not know what a gavaya (the Gayal or a kind of wild ox) is, can identify it through perception aided by the description of the animal heard previously. He is told that a gavaya is like a cow, and then, ~~when~~ he actually meets ~~with~~ a real gavaya in the forest, he is able to identify it at once. This method of knowing is considered by the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas as a pramāna or means of knowledge different from perception and inference. It is one of the means of our knowledge about the relation between words and their meanings. The identification of herbs and plants from known descriptions comes under upamāna.

- 
1. Patañjali gives (Mbh., first Āhnikā) laghu as an important use of grammar.
  2. This term is generally translated as 'analogy'; but A. Foucher, Le Compendium des Topique - Tarkasaṅgraha-d'Annambhatta, pp. 148ff. has given sufficient reason to show that the term is better explained as identification. D. H. H. Ingalls also prefers the term 'identification' to the usual 'analogy' (Materials for the study of Navya Nyāya Logic).



sentence yavamayas carur bhavati is known to be ~~the~~  
the long-bearded barley from the rest of the passage,  
yatranya oṣadhayo mlayante athaite modamānā ivottisthanti  
(when the other plants droop down, these stand up as  
if they are happy).<sup>1</sup>

(g) Vivrti or explanation. We may know the  
meaning of any word from a commentary giving the  
synonyms of the word, or describing the meaning.  
Patañjali says<sup>2</sup> that the meaning of a word is to be  
determined by the commentator's explanation, especially  
in cases of doubt.

(h) Siddhapadasānnidhya or the syntactic  
connection with words already known. e.g., in the  
sentence<sup>3</sup> "The pika sings beautifully on this mango tree"  
the meaning of the word pika is known to be 'a cuckoo'  
from the presence of the other well known words.

---

1. Nyāyakośa, p. 859; Siddhāntamuktāvali, p. 275.

2. Mbh., 1st āhnika: vyākhyānato viśeṣapratipattir  
na hi sandehād alakṣaṇam.

3. Nyāyakośa, p. 859: iha sahakāratarau madhuraṁ piko  
rautī.



(e) Kośa or lexicon. The meaning of a word may be understood from a lexicon also. The lexicon may even give the metaphorical senses sanctioned by usage; but the primary significative power should not be assumed in such cases.<sup>1</sup>

(f) Vākyasēsa or the rest of the passage in the context. Jaimini says<sup>2</sup> that when there is a doubt about the meaning of a ~~part~~ word, the rest of the passage should be taken into account. Thus, in the Vedic sentence aktā śarkarā upadadhāti (The wet pebbles are placed nearby), the meaning of the term akta (wet) is to be understood from the rest of the passage tejo vai ghrtam (clarified butter is the brilliance); from this it is known that the pebbles are to be soaked in clarified butter. This method may be used in getting the correct meaning of a word; thus, the meaning of the word yava (generally used by the Āryas in the sense of the long-bearded barley, and by the Mlecchās in the sense of the Panic seed) in the

---

1. Siddhāntamuktāvali, p. 272. Thus, the term nīla refers primarily to the colour only, the reference to the thing having the colour is through lakṣaṇā.

2. Mīmāṃsāsūtra, 1.4.29; sandigdhesu vākyasēsāt.



## CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The importance of contextual factors in determining the exact meaning of an expression is emphasized by writers even from very early times. In the Brhaddevatā<sup>1</sup> it is said that the established rule regarding the meaning of a Vedic passage, as well as that of an ordinary sentence, is that the meaning is to be determined from considerations of the purpose to be served (artha)<sup>2</sup>, the subject matter under discussion (prakarana), evidence from another place (liṅga)<sup>3</sup>, propriety (aucitya), the place (deśa) and the time (kāla). Bhartṛhari agrees with this view and says that the meaning of an expression is decided not only by its form, but also by the contextual factors.<sup>4</sup> He quotes the

- 
1. Brhaddevatā, II.118; arthāt prakaraṇāl liṅgād aucityād deśakālataḥ mantreṣv arthāvabodhas syād itareṣv iti ca sthitiḥ.
  2. Macdonnell's translation of artha as 'the sense (of the word)' does not seem to be correct here.
  3. Macdonnell's translation of the term as 'gender' is not acceptable here in this context; the exact meaning of the term is discussed later.
  4. VP.ii.316; vākyāt prakaraṇād arthād aucityād deśakālataḥ śabdārthāḥ pravibhajyante na rūpād eva kevalāt.

Clearly it is a quotation from the Brhaddevatā, in spite of Puṇyarāja's statement that the list embodies Bhartṛhari's own views (see commentary).



same list with a slight modification, substituting vākya or syntactic relation for liṅga.<sup>1</sup> Bhartrhari then gives a longer list of such contextual factors<sup>2</sup> that determine the exact meaning of a word in the case of ambiguous and equivocal expressions. This list is taken up for detailed discussion by the later grammarians like Nāgeśa and Ālankārikas like Mammata, Viśvanātha, Hemacandra, Appayadīkṣita and Jagannātha.<sup>3</sup> It may be noted here that the list is concerned with homophones having different meanings. Whether we take

---

1. Of these terms vākya, prakaraṇa, liṅga and artha are known to the Mīmāṃsakas also. The process of subordinating the details of a sacrifice to the main sacrifice is done through six means of proof; śruti or direct statement, liṅga or the implication from another word, vākya or syntactic connection, prakaraṇa or context, sthāna or position, and saṁākhyā or the etymological meaning. Of these each preceding one is stronger than each succeeding one.

Vākya is the connected utterance of words indicating the relation of an adjective and a substantive; the meaning of the substantive is restricted by that of the adjective.

2. VP. ii. 317f:

samsargo viprayogaś ca sāhacaryam virodhitā  
arthah prakaraṇam liṅgam śabdasyānyasya sannidhiḥ  
sāmarthyam aucitī deśaḥ kālo vyaktiḥ svarādayaḥ  
śabdārtthasyānavacohede viśeṣasmṛtihetavaḥ.

The reading found in all the quotations is samyoga for samsarga (except in Hemacandra's Kavyānusāsana). The meaning is not affected by the difference in reading.

3. Laghumañjūsā, p. 110f; Kavyāprakāśa, ii; Sahityadarpana, ii; Kavyānusāsana, p. 39; Vṛttivarttika, p. 6; Rasagāṅgādhara, pp. 118 - 126.



the homophones as the same word having different meanings or as different words having the same sound,<sup>1</sup> there is the possibility of doubt as to the exact meaning intended in a given sentence, because of the ambiguity; and hence the contextual factors are necessary to ascertain the primary meaning of the word in the context. These contextual factors mentioned by Bhartrhari<sup>2</sup> are the following:-

(a) Samsarga or samyoga is a connection that is generally known to exist between two things; e.g. the term dhenu which normally means a cow or 'a mare' is restricted to the cow in the expression savatsā dhenuh (dhenu with the calf) and to the mare in sakīśorā dhenuh (dhenu with the colt). Similarly, in the phrase śaśāṅkhaśakro hariḥ (Hari with a conch and a discus), the meaning of the word Hari (which normally means Viṣṇu, a monkey etc.) is restricted to the sense of Viṣṇu alone, since the association with the conch and the discus is applicable only to him.

---

1. This problem is expounded fully in the section on Abhidhā. p. 27.

2. Puṇyarāja, in his commentary, says that the list gives earlier views; but the list is quoted everywhere as embodying the views of Bhartrhari.



(b) Viprayoga is the disappearance of the connection that is known to exist between two things; e.g. dhenu refers to the cow in the phrase avatsā dhenuh (dhenu without the calf). Similarly, the word hari refers to Visnu in the expression 'visāṅkhaśakro hariḥ' (Hari without the conch and the discus), for the possibility association with the conch and the discus is found only in him.

(c) Sāhacarya is companionship or mutual association; e.g. in the expression 'Rama and Lakṣmana' 'Rama' refers to the brother of Lakṣmana, and not to Balarama or Paraśurama. Jagannātha distinguishes<sup>1</sup> this from samyoga thus: when the connection (or the separation from that well known connection) restricting the denotation of a word is expressed by a distinct word (such as 'with' or 'without'), it is samyoga (or viprayoga); but when the two ~~are~~ related things are stated together, as in a dvandva compound, it is sāhacarya.

---

1. Rasagāṅgādhara, p. 124.



(d) Virodhita is well known hostility as in "Karna and Arjuna" where 'Arjuna' refers to the enemy of Karna and not to Arjuna, son of Krtavirya. Virodhita may also be explained as 'opposition' as in "chaya and light", where chaya means 'shade' and not 'lustre'.

All these four factors could be brought under association. The meaning of a word is to be determined by the collocation of the words it keeps; in certain collocations a word may have one meaning and in certain other collocations it has a different meaning.<sup>1</sup>

(e) Arthah or the purpose served; e.g., sthānuṃ bhaja bhavacchide (Worship sthānu for removing the shackles of worldly existence). Here sthānu refers to the god Śiva, and not to a pillar, since the intended object could be obtained only by worshipping the god. Nāgeśa<sup>2</sup> explains artha as 'the meaning of another word' and gives the examples

---

1. Prof. Firth has developed a theory of meaning on the basis of collocation. See his article on 'The Modes of Meaning' in Essays and Studies, 1951.



"Añjalina juhōti" (He offers a handful of oblation) and "Añjalina sūryam upatisthate" (He worships the sun with folded hands). Here in the former case the word añjali is to be taken in the sense of 'hands placed side by side slightly hollowed so as to hold the oblation' and in the latter case it refers to the hands fully folded as a mark of salutation.

(f) Prakarana or context; e.g., devo jānāti sarvam (My lord knows everything). Here 'deva' refers to the king and not to god. Another example is 'saindhavam anaya' (Bring saindhava). The word saindhava means 'salt' as well as 'a horse'. If the sentence is uttered when a man is taking his meal, the word denotes 'salt'; but if it is uttered when he about to go out, the sense is to be taken as 'a horse' .

(g) Linga is an ambiguous term which has been explained by writers in different ways. To the Mimamsakas it is the sense-potentiality or the implicit factor in the expressing of the sense. (arthaprakāśanasāmarthyam). This is the same as

---

1. Laghumañjusa, p. 110.

2. Appayadīkṣita (Vṛttivarttika, p. 6) defines prakarana as vaktrōtrotrbuddhisthata.

3. Nyāyakōśa, p. 712



artha,<sup>1</sup> as explained by Nāgeśa.<sup>2</sup> But the literary critics generally take līṅga to be evidence from another word, such as an attribute, to restrict the meaning of the word, e.g., kupito makaradhvajah. Here the meaning of the word 'makaradhvaja' is restricted to that of Kāma, the god of love, who alone can be connected with the characteristic 'anger' (and not to the 'ocean' which is also meant by the word). Here the association need not be a well-known one as in the case of samyoga, the attribute used here is only for rejecting the other meaning.<sup>3</sup>

(h) Śabdasyānyasya sannidhiḥ, the presence of another word. It is the use of a word having a meaning logically connected with only one of the possible meanings of another word, e.g., devasya purārāteḥ (of the god, the enemy of the Puras).

- 
1. Vide supra.
  2. Thus, dividing with a spoon (sruvenāvadyati) is different from dividing with a knife (churikayāvadyati)
  3. Pradīpa commentary on Kāvyaaprakāśa: līṅgam samyogātiriktasambandhena parapakṣavyāvartako dharmah.



Here the adjective 'god' restricts the meaning of 'purārāti' to the god Śiva ( Otherwise, the word could have meant a king who destroyed cities). Jagannatha gives<sup>1</sup> the example 'kareṇa rājate nāgaḥ' (The elephant shines because of his trunk). Here both the words kara and naga are ambiguous (kara meaning 'hand' and 'trunk', and nāga meaning 'an elephant' and 'a snake'), but in this sentence each word restricts the meaning of the other.

(1) Sāmarthyam is the capacity that is known from the result. In the example 'madhumattah kokilah' ( The cuckoo is intoxicated by madhu ), the word 'madhu' means spring-time and not honey, since only the spring-time has the power to intoxicate the cuckoo.

(2) Aucitī is propriety or congruity. In the example 'pātu vo dayitāmukham' ( May the favourableness of your beloved preserve you ), the word 'mukha' means 'favourableness' and not 'face',

---

1. Rasagāṅādhara, p.124



since only the former sense has propriety in helping the lover<sup>1</sup>. According to some other commentators<sup>2</sup> it is the meaning of the word 'pātu' that is restricted here to the sense of 'turning agreeably'. But in either case it seems we have to get the sense through lakṣaṇā, since 'favourableness' is not one of the primary senses of 'mukha', or 'turning agreeably' that of the root 'pā'. Perhaps, what is meant by taking this sentence as an example of aucitī is that there is no necessity of resorting to lakṣaṇā in understanding the meaning of the expression "May the face of your beloved preserve you", but the meaning is got from the direct sense of the words themselves.

(k) Deśa or place, e.g., 'bhātiha parameśvarah' (Here shines Parameśvara). In this case the reference to the place ('here') shows that by 'parameśvara' is meant 'the king' and not the god.

---

1. Rasagaṅgādhara, p.124

2. See Jha's translation of Kāvyaaprakāśa (chapter 11).



(1) Kāla or time, e.g., citrabhanur vibhāty asau (Citrabhānu is now shining). If it is day time, the word 'citrabhānu' in the sentence means 'the sun', and if it is during night, it means 'the light of fire'.

(m) Vyakti or the grammatical gender,<sup>1</sup> e.g., mitro bhāti means 'the sun shines', but mitram bhāti means 'the friend shines'.

(n) Svara or accent. The meaning of a Vedic passage depends on the proper accent used. Thus 'Indrasatrūh' means the killer of Indra, but Indrasatruh means one whose killer is Indra.<sup>2</sup> The Satapathabrāhmaṇa refers to the story about Vṛtra who lost his life, because of the wrong use of accent in the chanting of mantras.<sup>3</sup> Accents are employed only in the Vedic language; they are not considered as restricting the meaning of a word

---

1. For the use of the term in this sense, see Pāṇini, 1.2.51.

2. Cf. Pāṇinīyasūtra, verse 52: mantro hīnas svarato varnato vā mithyāprayukto na tam artham āha; sa vāgvajro yajamānam hinasti yathendrasatrus svarato 'parādhāt.

3. Satapathabrāhmaṇa, 1.6.3.1: atha yad abravīd indrasatrur vardhasveti tasmād u hainam indra eva jaghāna.



in Classical Sanskrit. The svara or accent must be distinguished clearly from kāku or intonation which plays an important role in bringings out the nuances in most of the languages; the former is capable of objective analysis, and belongs to the primary meaning of words, whereas the latter can only suggest the subtle variations of meaning<sup>1</sup>. The accent restricts the primary meaning of a word in Vedic Sanskrit, but not in Classical Sanskrit. The intonation cannot restrict the primary meaning of a word, but can only suggest new and subtle ideas and emotions. The accent refers mainly to the word, while the intonation refers to the expression as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The list is not exhaustive<sup>3</sup>; thus abhinaya or gesture, apadeśa or pointing out directly etc. are also to be taken as restricting the meaning of a word in ambiguous cases.

---

1. See the section on Kāku. (p. 330)

2. Sāhityadarpaṇa, ii

3. This is indicated by the term ādi in the list.



Four classes of words: Yaugika, Rūḍha, Yogarūḍha and Yaugikarūḍha.

Words are divided into four classes according to the different ways in which their meaning is determined: yaugika or etymological, rūḍha or conventional, yogarūḍha or partly etymological and partly conventional, and yaugikarūḍha or that which could be taken either as etymological or as conventional. Corresponding to these, the expressive powers of the words are called yoga, rūḍhi, yogarūḍhi and yaugikarūḍhi.

(a) Yaugika. When a word retains that signification which belongs to it according to its etymology, it is called yaugika. Its meaning is determined by those of its component parts, as it does not signify anything more or less than the meanings of its parts. e.g. pācaka (a cook); here the meaning of the word is known from the verbal root pac ( to cook) and the suffix aka signifying the agent of action. The meanings of such words can easily be understood from grammar and etymology.

- 
1. Siddhāntamuktāvali, p. 282 f; śaktam padam ~~śaktam~~.  
 tac caturvidham kvacid yaugikam, kvacid rūḍham  
 kvacid yogarūḍham, kvacid yaugikarūḍham.



In the Brhaddevata it is said that "a word can be explained in five ways, viz., as derived from a root, as derived from the derivative of a root, as derived from a compound meaning, as derived from a sentence and as of confused derivation." 1

(b) Rūḍha. When a word has a meaning which is not directly connected with its etymology, it is called rūḍha. In this case the meaning of the word is determined by the whole word independently of the part meanings. e.g., gauh (a cow), ghatah (a pot) . Even rūḍha words can be derived from verbal roots, but the meaning will not depend on the etymological sense.

---

1. Brhaddevata, II- 104:

dhātujaṃ dhātujāḥ jātam samastārthajam eva vā  
vākyaḥ vyatikīrṇam ca nirvācya pañcadhā padam  
See Macdonnell's translation also.

Word derived from a sentence, e.g., itihasa is derived from the sentence 'iti ha asa' (It happened thus). For examples of words derived from confusion of letters etc., see Nirukta, II-i. Thus, simha (a lion) is derived from hims (to kill) by hapology.

2. Sometimes the word mandapa is given as an example of a rūḍha word. It normally means a hall, but the etymological meaning of 'one who drinks the scum of rice' is also possible in this case, and hence the word belongs to the yaugikarūḍha class. In Dinakariya it is said that mandapa is a corrupt reading for mandala. (See Siddhāntamuktavali, p.283 and Dinakari thereon.



(c) Yogarūḍha. When the meaning determined by the whole of the word (samudāyaśakti) agrees with that determined by the parts, it is called yogarūḍha. Here the derivative meaning and the conventional meaning coincide and refer to the same object. Thus, it is partly etymological and partly conventional. e.g., pañkaja which means a lotus by convention; the etymological sense 'what grows in the mud' is also applicable to it. Even though both the meanings are applicable to the word, it is the conventional meaning that comes to the mind immediately on hearing the word. The well-known rule accepted by all Indian writers is that the conventional meaning is more powerful than the etymological meaning, since the former occurs to the mind immediately whereas the latter has to be known through analysis.<sup>1</sup> Another example generally given for this class of words is kṛṣṇasarpa, which etymologically means 'black snake', but which is restricted by convention to the poisonous cobra.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Yogād rūḍhir baliyasi, śiḡhravṛttitvat.

2. Śabdasaṅkṛti-prakāśikā, 26 : yan nāma svāvayavavṛtti-labhyārthena samam svārthasyānvayakṛt tan nāma yogarūḍham, yathā pañkaja-kṛṣṇasarpa-'dharmādi.



It is interesting to compare the yogarūdhā words with the nirūdhā lakṣanās<sup>1</sup>. The former is an example of the 'law of specialization' in meaning, whereas the latter is an example of the 'law of generalization'. The original etymological sense is discernable in both cases; but it has slightly changed in popular usage; thus, pankaja (mud-born) is not applied to all things that grow in the mud, but is restricted to the lotus. So also the word kuśala (one who cuts grass~~es~~) is used not only to <sup>denote</sup> one who is good at cutting grass, but in the sense of an expert. According to some scholars nirūdhā lakṣanā should be taken as the primary meaning itself.

(d) Yaugikarūdhā. It is also referred to as rūdhayaugika. When the meaning of the word can be ascertained either etymologically from the meanings of its component parts, or conventionally by the power of the whole word, it is called yaugikarūdhā. Both the meanings are determined independently of each other, and understood separately. The same word

---

1. Discussed in the chapter on Lakṣanā. p. 273



gives one meaning when taken in its conventional sense and quite another if viewed as a derivative. e.g. the word udbhid means a tree, when taken in its etymological sense, while conventionally it is also used as the name of a sacrifice. Similarly aśvagandhā can be used ~~mix~~ in its etymological sense of 'having the smell of horses', it is also used conventionally as the name of a particular plant. It is quite possible to consider that it is an instance of two words with two different meanings having the same form, one being yaugika and the other rūḍha.

It may be noted that this classification is mainly applicable to ~~the~~ nouns. Jagadīśa includes words with secondary signification (lakṣaka) as another group in this classification.<sup>1</sup> Words like kuśala (grass-cutter, expert), pravīṇa (good at playing on the veena instrument, expert), dvirepha (having two 'r's, the bhramara or the bee) ~~name~~ etc., come under this group.

---

1. Sabdasaṅkṛti-prakāśikā, 16:

rūḍham ca lakṣakam caiva yogarūḍham ca yaugikam  
taś caturdhā parai rūḍhayaugikam manyate 'dhikam.



Etymology versus Popular usage.

Etymology was a popular subject in ancient India. Even the Vedic sages were very much interested in the derivation of popular words. Thus, sarpih (clarified butter) is derived from srp(to spread) and means 'that which spreads', and navanīta (butter) is sox called because 'it is taken when it is fresh'.<sup>1</sup> The principle of 'etymology by contraction' - each word being derived from two or more component words- was also resorted to by them. In the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa<sup>2</sup> the word hrdaya ( heart) is derived from three different roots, hr, dā and i. Śakaṭayana<sup>3</sup> derived the word satya (truth) from the two roots as and i. Yāska objects to this kind of derivation.<sup>4</sup>

"In india the concept of verbal rather than nominal roots is strongly embedded in grammatical thought."<sup>5</sup> The etymologists as well as the grammarian

- 
1. Durga's commentary on Nirukta, 1.14: yad asarpat tat sarpir iti mantro, yan navam eva nītam abhavad iti mantrah.
  2. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, 14.8.4.1: tad ~~ak~~ etad tryakṣaram hrdayam iti. hr ity ekam akṣaram abhiharaty asmai. dā ity ekam akṣaram dadāty asmai. ya ity ekam akṣaram eti svargam lokam ya evam veda iti.
  3. Nirukta, 1.13
  4. Ibid.
  5. W.S.Allen, The Origin and Development of Language, TPS, 1948.



Śakāṭāyana held that all nouns are derived from verbs.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Gārgya, who was ~~an~~ <sup>some</sup> an etymologist, and ~~the~~ grammarians considered this view to be too sweeping and admitted the possibility of some original nouns which cannot be traced to a verb.<sup>2</sup> Yāska supports Gārgya and says that if all nouns are derived from verbs which denote action, every one will have as many names as the actions with which one is concerned.<sup>3</sup> But generally he subscribes to the verbal derivation of nouns. Patañjali also refers to this controversy.<sup>4</sup> Pāṇini seems to have considered the upādi words as avyutpanna prātipadikas (underivable stems). Nouns which can be regularly derived from verbal roots by the addition of suffixes form the subject matter of the krdanta section; others which do not admit of such regular analysis are taken under the upādi class.

---

1. Nirukta, 1.12: nāmāny ākhyātajānīti śakāṭāyano nairuktasamajas' ca; Mbh., ii, p.138: nāma ca dhātujam āha nirukte vyākaraṇe śakāṭāsyā ca tokam.

2. Nirukta, 1.12: na sarvānīti gārgyo vaiyakaraṇānām caike.

3. Ibid: yāvadbhir bhāvais samprayujyeta tāvadbhya nāmadheyapratilambhas syāt.

4. Mbh., ii, p.138

5. Mbh., iii, p.241: prātipadikavijñānāc ca pāṇines siddham; upādayo 'vyutpannāni prātipadikāni.



It is accepted by all schools of thought in India that the meaning current in popular usage is more authoritative than the etymological meaning. Pāṇini says that the authority of the saṃjñā or the <sup>popular</sup> usage of words must always supersede the authority of the meaning dependent on derivation.<sup>1</sup> Kātyāyana says that the application of a word to an object rests mainly on the popular usage.<sup>2</sup> Patañjali maintains that the usage of śiṣṭas or the <sup>educated</sup> people who actually speak the language is the final authority on the application of words.<sup>3</sup> Both Kātyāyana and Patañjali frequently appeal to current usage as the final authority on the gender and meaning of words.<sup>4</sup> The relation between words and their meanings is also established by the popular usage.<sup>5</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas have also laid down the principle that the meaning established by usage (rūḍhi) is more powerful than the etymological interpretation (samākhyā).<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Pāṇini, 1.2.53: tad aśiṣyam saṃjñāpramānatvāt.

2. Vārttika on Pāṇini, 1.2.68: darśanam hetuḥ. He ~~says~~ says that the application of a word to an object can also rest on the root-meaning underlying it.

3. Mbh. on Pāṇini, 6.3.109: śiṣṭas śabdeṣu pramānam.

4. Mbh. on 1.1.21, 1.1.65 : lokaviññānāt siddham.

5. Mbh. first āhnika; siddhe śabdārthasambandhe lokataḥ ...

6. This is discussed in the chapter on Lakṣaṇā.



In interpreting ancient texts like the Vedas, what should be done in the case of words that are not in use among the people of the land? Are we to depend on etymological interpretation, or should we take into consideration the meaning of such words in other languages? This problem has been discussed by Kumārila bhaṭṭa in the Tantravārttika. He says that the well-established usage is more authoritative than that meaning which is newly assumed.<sup>1</sup> In the case of loan words we have to accept the meaning assigned to them in the foreign language itself, as that is also based on long usage. He criticizes the method, adopted by some scholars, of trying to derive such foreign words from Sanskrit roots;<sup>2</sup> in the case of the Dravidian words ending in consonants, some Āryans consider them as Sanskrit words by adding the necessary vowel affixes: cor (rice), atar (road), pāp (snake), māl (woman) and vair (stomach) are considered and taken to be the equivalents respectively of the Sanskrit words coraḥ (thief), atarah (difficult to cross), pāpaḥ (evil), mālā (garland), and vairiḥ (enemy). <sup>They</sup> ~~and~~ try to explain them with reference to

---

1. Tantravārttika, p. 227: *kālpanikyāt prasiddhe ca yā kṛtā sā baliyasī*.

2. Ibid., p. 225f.



the meanings attached to the Sanskrit words. He attacks such ridiculous attempts at arbitrary derivation of foreign words from Sanskrit roots. Kumārīlabhaṭṭa says that the usage of the foreigners is as authoritative as that of the Āryans in all worldly affairs. In cases like patroṇa (a silk garment) and varavāṇa (an armour) where the articles are brought from the foreign country, how can we know<sup>1</sup> the meaning, if the Mlecchas do not point them out? When the same word-form is used by the Āryans and the Mlecchas (foreigners) in different meanings, both are equally authoritative. Thus, yava, vetasa and varāṇa are used in the sense of barley, cane and boar respectively by the Āryans, and long pepper, black berry and crow by the Mlecchas.<sup>2</sup> Majority of usage is no criterion for determining the primary meaning of a word; for in the case of well-known homonyms like akṣa, all the meanings are accepted as primary. The word pīlu means a kind of tree in Sanskrit, but it means an elephant ~~in~~ to the Mlecchas. While interpreting ancient texts, the use<sup>of</sup> the word in other contexts in the text has to be taken into account.

---

1. Tantravārttika, p. 228.

2. This is following Sabara. Kumārīlabhaṭṭa says that the second set of meanings are no longer known.



In the case of the corrupt forms(apabhraṃśas), however, the Mīmāṃsakas do not consider them to be independent words acceptable as synonyms of the original words. The apabhraṃśas originate due to the discrepancy of the speaker,<sup>1</sup> but owing to long usage people may mistake them as correct words. The significance of such words is derived indirectly through ~~it~~ their association with the correct forms. It is only in the case of universally accepted synonyms like hasta and kara (for hand) that we need assume both as correct words; in other cases it is better to take one word as the correct one and the others as the corrupt forms of it. The invariable connection of words with meanings shows that an object should not have many words to express it; it is not quite reasonable to have many synonymous words.<sup>2</sup> Kumārilabhaṭṭa says that the corrupt forms of words become capable of expressing the meaning only by manifesting the potentiality of the original word, through their similarity with it.<sup>3</sup>

---

1.VP.1.149;Punyarāja thereon:śabdaprakṛtir apabhraṃśa  
iti saṅgrakrokteh.

2.Mīmāṃsāsūtra, 1.3.26: anyāyaś cānekaśabdātvaṃ

3.Tantravārttika on sūtra 1.3.28.



THE PRIMARY MEANING OF A WORD.

The exact nature of the primary meaning of a word has been discussed almost by every school of Indian philosophy and there are different theories about the primary signification of a word.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Naiyāyikas of the old school a word means the vyakti or the particular, the akrti or the generic shape or form and the jati or the universal.<sup>2</sup> It denotes the particular, connotes the universal and also stands for the shape distinguishing the particular from dissimilar things. All these three factors are present in the sense of a word; in a given context, one factor is predominant and the others are subordinate. If in actual usage only one of the factors seems evident, it is not because the other two factors are absent, but because they are not useful in the context.

---

1. On this problem see:- D.M.Datta, Six Ways of Knowing; pp.259-72; Huparikar, The Problem of Sanskrit Teaching, pp.410-427; P.C.Chakravarti, Linguistic Speculation of the Hindus, p.185-205; Ganganatha Jha, Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, pp.145-48; Hiriyanna, Vyādi and Vāṇīpyāyana, IHQ, XIV, pp.261ff; Tantravārttika, Translation, pp.363ff; Vākyapadīya, iii, Jāṭisamuddēśa and Vyaktisamuddēśa; Nyāyamañjarī, pp.177ff.

2. Nyāyasūtra, 2.2.65: vyaktyākrtijāṭayas tu padārthah. See also Vātsyāyana's Bhāṣya on that.



Among modern Naiyāyikas some hold that the primary meaning of a word is a particular<sup>1</sup> as characterized by both the universal and the form. This is a development of the old view. According to some others the primary meaning is the particular as characterized by the universal only;<sup>2</sup> the generic shape is part of the universal and need not be included separately.

According to the Sāṅkhyas and some of the modern Naiyāyikas the primary meaning of a word is the percept of the particular;<sup>3</sup> the meaning of a word is cognized only through its connection with a particular act, and each sentence would refer to some particular act. As Vātsyāyana says,<sup>4</sup> an attribute can be predicated of an object alone, not of a universal.

- 
1. Śabdasaktiprakāśikā, under verse 19.
  2. Siddhāntamuktāvalī, under verse 81: jātimān śabdārthap. śaktir jātyākṛtivyakṛtavyaktau viśrāmyati. See Dinakarī on that, holding jātyivyakṛtavyakṛti as the meaning. Jayantabhaṭṭa (Nyāyasiddhāntamañjarī, pp. 177f) also takes jātyivyakṛtavyakṛti as the meaning of a word.
  3. Nyāyasūtra, 2.2.57 and the Bhāṣya thereon; Vivaraṇa-prameyasāṅgraha, p. 181; Nyāyakōśa, p. 855: vyaktaḥ eva śaktiḥ, na tu gotvādi jātaḥ apīti navya ahuh; Nyāyasiddhāntamañjarī, p. 178.
  4. Nyāyabhāṣya on Nyāyasūtra 2.2.57.



It is only the particulars that become the objects of sense perception and of practical activity (arthakriyā-kāritva). Moreover, there are unique things like the sun and the moon and proper names which cannot have<sup>1</sup> a universal.

The Jaina philosophers hold<sup>2</sup> that a word like 'cow' does not mean a particular cow; the word applies to all animals having the general shape of a cow. So the primary meaning of a word is the ākṛti or the shape. This explains the case of the proper names also. This view is criticized<sup>3</sup> on the ground that there are cases where, in spite of the similarity of shape, there is no identity of meaning, as in the case of a clay cow. Moreover substances like gold remain the same in spite of any change in the shape it may assume.

According to the Mimāṃsakas the primary meaning of a word is the universal concept which is

- 
1. According to the Nyāya theory of samūhālakṣaṇa pratyāsatti, the cognition of plurality is simply by extension of the particular, and not by an abstraction of the particulars; after seeing a single instance of a thing, we come to know the plurality of it through the form of the knowledge it assumes. (See P.T. Raju, Idealistic Thought of India, p. 421)
  2. Vivaraṇaprameyasāṅgraha, p. 181; Nyāyasūtra, 2.2.60.
  3. Nyāyabhāṣya on 2.2.61.



the essential quality common to the particular instances of the class.<sup>1</sup> It is admitted that while cognition of the meaning brought about by the word pertains to the universal,<sup>2</sup> all practical activity that follows the word pertains to the particular. But the primary relation of the word must be to the universal, for it would be impossible to understand the meaning of a word, say, 'cow' if it has to be understood with respect to all the particular cows. Moreover, there will be confusion if the primary meaning of the word is taken to be the particular, for if the meaning of the word 'cow' is known with respect to a white cow, it will be difficult to understand that the word has reference to a black cow also. Kumārilabhaṭṭa argues that when he hear a word like 'cow', before we can have the idea of any particular cow, it is the universal common attribute

---

1. The early Mīmāṃsakas, Jaimini, Śabara, Kumārilabhaṭṭa, Prabhākara and Murāri, as well as the Vedāntins like

Śaṅkara, use the term akṛti in the sense of jāti or the universal. Kumārilabhaṭṭa says (Ślokaṽarttika, Ākṛti section, verse 3): jātim evākṛtim prāhuḥ. Later writers use the term jāti itself.

2. The universal is the essential quality common to two or more instances of the class; to the Naiyāyikas it is real and eternal (nityatve saty anekasamavetai-  
tvam jātitvam), but to the Mīmāṃsakas it is only the common essential characteristics existing in a group of particulars (dravyagunakarmavṛttis sāmānya-  
dharmah). To the former it is objectively real, but to the latter it is only an abstraction.



of 'cowness' that we comprehend. If the word meant the particulars, there would not be any uniform concept, since the particulars are found to have various qualities.

Besides, the problem is what is the primary meaning of a word. When it is held that primarily a word means the universal, it is also admitted that the particular is implied when the word is used in a sentence. According to the Bhatta school of Mīmāṃsā, the particular meaning is known through lakṣaṇā or the secondary significative power of the word, based on the incompatibility of the isolated primary meanings with the intention of the speaker to give a unified sense. According to Prabhākara and Mūrārinisra, the particular is known from the universal because of the invariable connection between the two, and since the same cognition comprehends both the universal and the particular.

---

1. Tantravārttika on sūtra 1.3.33:

anantyavyabhicarābhyām śaktyanekatvadoṣataḥ  
na vyaktāv ākṛtau tu syāt sarvam etat samāñjasam  
anvayavyatirekābhyām ekarūpapratītitāḥ  
ākṛteh prathamam jñane tasyā evābhidheyatā  
vyaktyākṛtyor abhedāo ca vyavahāropayogitā  
līngasaṅkhyādisambandhas sāmānādhikaranyadhīh  
sarvopapannā ca yataḥ tasmāt tatraiva kalpayet.

See also the translation, pp. 363ff.



According to the Advaita Vedāntins, though there is no absolute reality for the distinction between vyakti (particular) and jāti (universal), which are simply the concepts of the mind, from the point of view of phenomenal reality (vyāvahārikasattā) the Mīmāṃsā view, that the primary relation of the word is with the universal and not with the particular, is acceptable. The particular is also understood from the word, because the same cognition cognizes both the attribute and the substantive, the universal and the particular. Or we may take the view that the word primarily signifies the universal and secondarily (through lakṣaṇā) the particular.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins, even proper nouns are connotative; the knowledge of the identity of the same person from birth to death through all the changing stages is

---

1. Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV: *katham tarhi gavādipadād vyakter bhānam iti ced, jāter vyaktisamānasamvit-samvedyatvād iti brūmah; athavā vyakter lakṣaṇaya 'vagamah.*

The universal 'cowness' is the upādhi or substratum for all the particular cows, but it cannot exist without its āśraya or the thing which inheres in it; an attribute cannot exist without a substance; hence the particular object is implied by the universal. This is Prabhākara's view;

The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā view, that the particular is got from the universal through lakṣaṇā, is generally attributed to Maṇḍanamiśra. (Nyayakośa, p. 857 ).



explained on the basis of the common attribute.<sup>1</sup>

Modern logicians in the west like Bradley<sup>2</sup> and Bosanquet<sup>3</sup> agree that a proper name has a universal meaning

as its connotation. As Wittgenstein says,<sup>4</sup> a name

"signifies only what is an element of reality, what cannot be destroyed, what remains the same in all changes."<sup>5</sup>

Among the grammarians, Vyāḍi held that the meaning of a word is the particular which is the substantive, and ~~the~~ not the universal which is the attribute. It is dravya, which stands for any particular of the class. Vājapyāyana, on the other hand,<sup>7</sup> held the Mīmāṃsaka view that it is the jāti, the universal essential attribute, that is connoted

---

1. Sarvadarśanasamgraha, section on Pāṇinīyadarśana.

2. Logic, p. 59

3. Essentials of Logic, pp. 91ff.

4. Philosophical Investigations, p. 59. (para)

5. Both the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins believe that the significative power of the word resides in the particular and in the universal, though in different degrees; in the particular its existence is only latent (svarūpasatī), whereas in the universal it is express or known (jñatā satī). See Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV: "yadvā gavādipadānām vyaktav śaktis svarūpasatī, na tu jñatā; jatau tu jñatā satī hetuh.

6. Kātyāyana's Vārttika on Pāṇini, 1.2.64: dravyābhīdhānam Vyāḍih; Helārāja on VP. iii.3.2: Vyāḍimate tu sarvasabdānām dravyam arthah, tasyaiva sāksātkriyāsamānvayopapatti

7. Helārāja, loc. cit.: Vājapyāyanācāryamatena sāvatriki jātipadārthavyavasthāpadyate; Hiriyanna, loc. cit.



by a word. Patañjali says<sup>1</sup> that, according to Pāṇini, the meaning of a word is both the universal and the particular, since the sūtra 1.2.58 is based on the view that the word means the universal, while the sūtra 1.2.64 is on the assumption that a word means a particular. Helārāja also says<sup>2</sup> that according to the school of Pāṇini, a word means both the universal and the particular.

Bhartrhari discusses elaborately the various problems involved in these two views.<sup>3</sup> Those who hold that the word meaning is the universal have to explain how in a sentence the universal can have any connection with the action which is the main constituent of the sentence. According to some the concrete particular is known through its invariable association (sāhacarya) with the universal, even though it is not actually denoted by the word;<sup>4</sup> thus the universal is only an upalakṣaṇa or the means for understanding the power

- 
1. MBH. i. p. 6: kim punar ākṛtiḥ padārthah, āhośvid dravyam? ubhayam ity āha. Katham jñāyate? ubhayam āha hy ācāryeṇa sūtrāṇi paṭhitāni.
  2. Helārāja, loc. cit.: pāṇinidarsāne jātīdravye śabdenābhidhīyate.
  3. VP. iii. Jāṭisamuddeśa and Dravyasamuddeśa.
  4. VP. iii. 3.6: keṣāñcit sāhacaryeṇa jāṭīś śaktyupalakṣaṇam.



of denotation; according to some others the particular is known on the basis of the intention of the speaker, through lakṣanā<sup>1</sup>. Bhartṛhari says that every word, first of all, means the class of that word; thus 'cow' means the universal of the words having the form 'cow'; it is the universal of the 'form-meant'. Later it is superimposed on the universal of the 'thing-meant'<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the word first gives the idea of its form and then ~~then~~ that of its referent. The upholders of this view believe that even in the case of proper ~~nouns~~ nouns it is the jāti that is meant by the word; they also accept a universal within another.<sup>3</sup>

Bhartṛhari says that in all phenomenal entities there are two ~~entities~~ elements; jāti refers to the real element and vyakti to the unreal.<sup>4</sup> The particulars suffer changes whereas jāti remains constant. The jāti is the essence of things. It is the sattā or existence that is in things that is denoted by jāti; all activity exhibited in the world

- 
1. Helārāja on VP.iii.3.3.: anyeṣāṃ punas tātparyeṇa.
  2. VP.iii.3.6: svā jātiḥ prathamam śabdais sarvair evābhidhiyate tato 'rthajātirūpeṣu tadadhyāroḥkalpanā.
  3. Thus, there is no non-connotative word to them. See Helārāja, loc.cit.: vaiyākaraṇāṇāṃ ... jātiṣv api jātir aviruddhā; tathā cānvayirūpenābhidhiyamāno guṇo jātir eva, evaṃ kriyāpṛ abhedenābhidhiyamānā jātiḥ.
  4. VP.iii.3.32: satyam yat tatra sā jātir asatyā vyaktayas smṛtāḥ.



can be considered as its manifestation.

According to those who hold that the meaning of a word is dravya or substance, it is not necessarily any external concrete object that is to be meant, but the mental image produced in us of the object.<sup>1</sup> The meaning is mental rather than physical. It is not even necessary that the mental picture should have a corresponding physical object in the world. This view is almost in keeping with that of the Vijñānavāda school of Buddhism.

The grammarians~~who~~ who held dravya or substance to be the ultimate meaning of words also explained it as a reality which is the essence, the soul and the real nature of the thing. Thus, whether the meaning of the word is the universal or the substance, it is something real and permanent.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the word must be something permanent and real.

1. VP.iii.3.19: anupravṛttirūpām yām prakhyātām ākṛtim viduḥ kecid vyāvṛttirūpām tu dravyatvena pracakṣate. Helārāja says, : vyāvṛttākārabuddhi-sanniveśitvād ākāro 'tra darśane dravyam iti prasaṅgād uktaṁ.

2. Patañjali (MBH. on sūtra V.1.119) defines dravya as that which does not lose its essence when different qualities come to inhere in it: yasya guṇāntareṣv api prādurbhavatsy tattvam na vihanyate, tad dravyam.



Patañjali says that the import of words is to be understood with regard to either jāti (universal), guṇa (quality), kriyā (action) or yadrochāśabdā or proper nouns.<sup>1</sup> The Ālāṅkārikas generally follow this view of the grammarians.<sup>2</sup> All common nouns are indicative of the jāti; thus, the cowness(gotva) in cow is the very essence which resides in all cows and which distinguishes cows from other animals. Guṇa or quality is the attribute which distinguishes one thing from others of the same class; thus, the quality of whiteness serves to distinguish a white cow from a black one. Guṇa is always an accomplished fact(siddha). Kriyā or action is something to be accomplished(sāddhya), and is a process consisting of a series of successive actions. Yāska also refers to the verb(ākhyāta) as denoting an action occupying successive periods of time.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the proper nouns, the words refer directly to the things named.

---

1. Mbh. 1, p. 11; catuṣṭayī śabdānām pravṛttiḥ; jātiśabdān  
~~Kriyāśabdā~~ guṇaśabdān kriyāśabdā yadrochāśabdā  
caturthaḥ.

2. Sāhityadarpaṇa, ii: sāṅketo grhyate jātau guṇadravya-  
kriyāsu ca; Kāvya-prakāśa, ii: tatra mukhyaś catur-  
bhedo; jātyadibhedataḥ.

3. Nirukta, 1.1: pūrvāparibhūtam bhāvam ākhyātenācaṣṭe.

4. The Mīmāṃsakas take only jāti as the import, but they accept a jāti for guṇa, kriyā and proper nouns.



## The Buddhist Doctrine of APOHA

Whereas the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas believe that words have direct reference to objective realities, the Buddhist philosophers maintain that the essence of meaning is negative in character and that words have no direct reference to objective realities. According to the Buddhists words deal directly with conceptual images which are purely subjective constructions of the mind (vikalpas), and therefore, there can be no real connection between words and the external objects. The meaning of a word is a conceptual image (vikalpa whose essence is the negation of all its counter-correlates (Anyāpoha); the word 'cow' does not actually mean the animal with dewlap, horns etc., it means only the exclusion of all objects that are not the cow.

The Buddhists do not accept the view of the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas about the existence of a positive entity called the universal (sāmānya or jāti).

---

1. Dignāga: vikalpayonayaś sabdā vikalpā sabdayonayaḥ (quoted in Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic, II, p. 405n)



To them only the particular at a time-point (svalaksana) is ultimately real. The so-called objective world is made up of a succession of such momentary particulars like the still pictures of a cinema.<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, these momentary particulars produce mutually different results, but since they produce the same sensation, they all appear as identical. Dharmakīrti says ~~sikṣit~~ that the sensation of sameness is produced by a repeated series of the same perception, and that the sameness of the particulars is the consequence of the fact that they produce the same sensation.<sup>2</sup> The mutual differences of these particulars is not grasped, and hence, man imputes sameness to them, by the common exclusion of all the others. The efficiency of the particulars is the basis of differentiation: all things which produce certain results are different from those that do not produce them.

---

1. Bergson (Creative Evolution, London, 1928, p. 322) compares our cognitive apparatus with a cinematograph which reconstitutes a movement out of momentary stabilized snapshots.

2. Dharmakīrti, quoted by Vācaspatimīśra in NVTT:  
ekapratyavamarśasya hetutvād dhīr abhedini  
ekadhihetubhāvena vyaktiṇam apy abhinnaṭā.



to the Buddhists pratyaksa or real perception is the unerring knowledge of the unique particular that is given directly by the senses; the name and the concept through which we generally interpret the particular <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ not to be included in perception, since it is the mind that supplies them. Indeterminate perception is the only pratyaksa according to them. The Vaiyākaraṇas, on the other hand, consider that there is no knowledge without language and concepts; knowledge must always be determinate. The Naiyāyikas distinguish between indeterminate perception (nirvikalpa pratyaksa) and determinate perception (savikalpa ~~perception~~ pratyaksa); but they say that the indeterminate stage is not actually experienced, but is to be inferred. The Mīmāṃsakas, however, accept both the stages of perception as valid means of knowledge; but to them indeterminate perception is only that ~~a~~ unattended by verbal images, as in the case of children or the dumb. The Vedāntins also believe that it is possible to have different stages of perception before the fully developed perceptual judgement.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. See D.M. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, pp. 31-94.



According to the Buddhists the conceptual image of a thing has no direct correspondence with the real external things which are mutually different; the apparent identity of the image is produced by the identical efficiency of the things. Just as different medicinal plants have the same febrifuge influence, even though they do not have the same form, so also the different things like the black and the white cow become the cause of the same ~~repeated~~ repeated uniform image, without the presence in them of any real universal.<sup>1</sup> These conceptual images which are actually unreal can, however, bring about purposeful action in daily life. Every one experiences his own images, but the imaginative operations of different individuals agree with one another. It is like the visual experience of two persons suffering from the same eye-disease, both seeing the moon double. Like the Vedāntins<sup>2</sup>, the Buddhists also believed<sup>3</sup> that there are two kinds of truths, the practical or empirical truth and the supreme truth.

---

1. For a detailed discussion of the problem see Frauwellner's article in WZKM. vol. iii 39-42

2. parā and aparā vidyā, in Mundakopaniṣad, 1.1.4

3. saṃvrtisatya and paramarthaśatya. See Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamikakārikā, XXIV, 8: dve satye samupāsritya buddhanam dharmadeśanā lokasaṃvrtisatyam ca satyam ca paramarthatah.



A word cannot signify a unique particular, since the particulars are momentary entities and do not continue up to the time that conventional relation is apprehended. Even if verbal relation is supposed to exist in one particular at an instant, it cannot serve any other particulars, and the word 'cow' would mean only one cow at a particular time, and not others. Moreover, it is impossible for one to know the conventional relation of the word with all the particulars, past, present and future. Thus, there can be no comprehension of a verbal connection with regard to particulars either individually or collectively.<sup>1</sup> As for the universal, it is only an intellectual fiction without any reality.

A word cannot denote any positive real thing, because only the momentary particular thing-in-itself (svalakṣaṇa) is ultimately real. The meaning of a word is primarily and naturally a conceptual construction (vikappa) and not an objective fact. The relation between the two is one of cause and effect<sup>2</sup>; the word produces

---

1. Tattvasaṅgrahapañjika, p. 278: na hy adṛṣṭesv atītānāgata-bhedabhinneṣu samayas sambhavaty atiprasaṅgāt.

2. Prameyakamalamārttāṇḍa, p. 441: tatpratibimbakam ca śabdena janyamānatvāt kāryam eveti kāryakāraṇabhāva eva vācya-vācakaḥ.



the purely subjective concept, which is negative in nature, consisting as it does in the exclusion of other concepts to make it distinct. Hence, the meaning of a word has to be considered as the negation of the concept's counter-correlates, as the exclusion of everything other than the concept.

When Dignāga first promulgated this theory of Apoha establishing the negative essence of meaning in the fifth chapter of his Pramāṇasamuccaya, he seems to have explained it in terms of pure negation without any positive reference. Many works on the subject are available in Tibetan translation;<sup>1</sup> but it is mainly from its representation by the opponents of Buddhism like Kumārilabhaṭṭa, Udyotakara and Bhāmaha that we get some clear ideas about the original form of the theory of ~~Apoha~~ Apoha. They all criticize the ~~theory~~ theory on the assumption that it is a purely negative approach. In the Tattvasaṅgraha,<sup>2</sup> Śāntirakṣita suggests that when Dignāga denied the positive import of words, it was on the ground that from the logical point of view, words did not have any reference to a positive reality.

---

1. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic, II, p. 404.

2. Verse 1097: asambhavo vidher uktas sāmānyāder asambhavaṭ śahdānām ca vikalpānām vastuto'viśayatvataḥ.



Some of the main arguments adduced by the Buddhists for assuming that the meaning of a word is essentially negative in nature are the following:-

(a) Similarity between things absolutely dissimilar can be established only by the common exclusion of their counter-correlates. Different animals such as the cow, the horse, the buffalo and the elephant can be classed together as similar, only by taking them as 'non-lions'<sup>1</sup>. If the word 'cow' is to be used to mean different kinds of cows, the red, the black and the brown, it can be only by the negation of the non-cow. There can be no positive similarity between such different objects as the red and the black. The word 'cow', therefore, does not denote a positive object cow, but means only the negation of the non-cow.

(b) Anything that can be alternately affirmed and denied is necessarily of the nature of exclusion

---

1. NVTT, p. 486: *atyantavilakṣaṇānām sālakṣaṇyam anyavyāvṛttikṛtam eva. yathā gavāśvamahiṣamatāṅgānām atyantavilakṣaṇānām api simhavyāvṛtyā sālakṣaṇyam.*

See also Parthasārathimīśra's commentary on the Slokavarttika, p. 566.



of its counter-correlate<sup>1</sup>. In the case of every word we find an element common to both existence and nonexistence; for a word like 'cow' can be connected either with 'is' or with 'is not'. If the meaning of the word were exclusively positive, it could not be connected with 'is not', as that would be a contradiction. Neither could it be connected with 'is', since that would be superfluous. Hence, the cognition of the common element must be attributed to some cause which is negative in nature; it must lie in the exclusion of all other things.

(c) The meaning of a word is directly experienced as something distinct, something whose essence consists in the negation of its counter-correlates. If the objects of determinate perception were not cognized directly as an exclusion of their counter-correlates, a man ordered to tie up a cow might proceed to tie up a horse, as he would not recognize the difference.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. NVTT, p.486: yad bhāvābhāvasāmānyam tad anyavyāvṛttirūpam eva.

2. NVTT, p.487: anubhūyata eva vikalpaviśayo vyāvṛttirūpaḥ. tathā hi tadapratibhāsane gam badhāneti deśito 'ēvam badhniyāt.



Dignāga seems to have carried out this negative approach to meaning even in the case of expressions like 'blue lotus'; here the term 'blue' is used to exclude all lotuses that are not blue, and the term 'lotus' to exclude all blue things that are not lotuses.<sup>1</sup> Thus the expression signifies the negation of the relation 'non-blue non-lotus'. This view is quite similar to the theory of Vyādi that the meaning of a sentence is not samsarga or the mutual association of the word meanings, but the mutual exclusion (bheda) of these.<sup>2</sup> Ratnakīrti says that in a sentence ~~that in a sentence~~ every word denotes a negation. Thus, in the sentence "This road leads to Srughna", the word 'this' excludes all roads other than the one indicated, 'road' excludes footpaths etc. 'leads to' shows that it is not a blind path, and 'Srughna' excludes all the other places.<sup>3</sup>

In recent times De Saussure has advanced a similar theory in his Cours de Linguistique Generale.

- 
1. Prameyakamalamārttanda, p.436: dignāgena viśeṣaṇa-  
viśeṣyabhāvasamarthanārtham "nilotpālādīśabdā  
arthāntaranivṛttivisiṣṭan arthan āhuḥ" ity uktam.  
See also Tattvasaṅgraha, p.301.
  2. This is discussed in detail in the section on  
'The Relation of words in a sentence'. (p.205)
  3. Apohasiddhi, p.16.



He says that in language there are only differences without positive terms (Dans la langue il ny a que des differences ...sans termes positifs)<sup>1</sup>. Though we say that meanings correspond to concepts, we have to understand that these concepts are not positive in their content, but only differential. The function of a word is contextual elimination. Thus, the meaning of a word in a sentence will be modified, if a neighbouring term undergoes modification.

After establishing the negative essence of meaning in the case of words, De Saussure says that the sign and the thing signified are negative only when taken separately, but their combination is a positive fact. This idea is also similar to the Buddhistic theory according to which the import of a sentence is positive,<sup>2</sup> even though the meanings of the individual words, taken separately, <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ negative.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Cour., pp.167-175; See also S.Varma, Indian Semantics, Journal of the Dept. of Letters, Calcutta University, 1926, p.24; Firth, Technique of Semantics, p.63
  2. Tattvasaṅgraha, verse 923; 'vākyaṛthah pratibhālakṣaṇo'. Also Kamalaśīla's commentary on verse 922: vākyaṛthah pratibhākyo 'yam.
  3. Prof. Firth suggests (loc.cit.) that "it is just possible that he had learned something of Indian philosophy."



This Apoha theory of negative approach towards meaning has been vehemently criticized by scholars like U<sup>dy</sup>otakara, Kumārilabhaṭṭa, Bhāmaha and Udayana<sup>1</sup>. The arguments adduced in favour of the theory are set aside as weak and unconvincing. Their reply to the Buddhist's arguments are the following:-

(a) The sameness of reference in the cognition of different objects like the black cow and the red cow is to be explained by the assumption of a positive entity, the universal. Unless we assume such a universal, it is not possible to explain expressions like "The black cow", for if 'cow' negates all non-cows, it will include all cows, black and white, and the term 'black cow' would be a contradiction. With the conception of a positive universal, cowness embracing all the cows, black and white, there will be no difficulty in such cases.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Udyotakara, Nyāyavārttika, pp. 320-331; Kumārilabhaṭṭa, Slokavārttika, Apoha section; Bhāmaha, Bhāmahalanakara; Udayana, Ātmatattvaviveka, chapter-1; Jayantabhaṭṭa, Nyāyamañjarī, pp. 302-317; Prabhācandra, Prameyakamalamārttandā, pp. 437ff.

2. Slokavārttika, p. 567



(b) If we assume the existence of a positive universal, there is no logical contradiction involved in connecting 'is' or 'is not' with a word. "A universal is an eternal entity, but residing in an infinite number of particulars scattered in time and space, it can be alternately affirmed or denied; affirmation means the universal's connection with the particular in the present time, while negation means its connection with the individual in the past or future."<sup>1</sup>

(c) It is contrary to experience to suggest that the word denotes only the negation of the counter-correlate, and not any positive entity. When we hear a word, it is the positive idea that comes to our mind.<sup>2</sup>

Kumārīlabhaṭṭa says that the negation of a thing positively unknown is impossible; so the meaning of the term 'non-cow' can be understood only if we know

---

Vol II.  
1. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic, p. 404. See also NVTT, p. 487:  
yā hi svarūpato nityāpi deśakālavikīrṇānāntavyaktyā-  
śrayatayā bhāvābhāvasādhāraṇī bhavaty astināstisamban-  
dhayogyā. vartamānavyaktisambandhitā hi jāter astitā,  
atītanāgatavyaktisambandhitā ca nāstitā iti.

2. Tattvasaṅgraha, verse 911:  
vidhirūpavasāyena matīś śābdī pravartate



what 'cow' means. If the meaning of 'cow' depends on that of 'non-cow' and the meaning of 'non-cow' depends ~~on~~ on that of 'cow', there will be a vicious circle. And if the meaning of the term 'cow' is already known, it is unnecessary to search for the meaning of 'non-cow'.<sup>1</sup>

Bhāmaha criticizes the Aphha theory on the ground that a word can express only one meaning at one time. If the meaning of the word 'cow' is the negation of the non-cow, then it will be necessary to search for another word which gives the positive idea of the animal. The same word cannot give simultaneously two meanings, one positive and the other negative.<sup>2</sup>

Kumārīlabhaṭṭa says<sup>3</sup> that even negative expressions like 'non-brahmin' signify a positive entity.

---

1. Slokavārttika, Apoha section, verses 83-84:

siddhaś cāgor apohyeta gonīṣedhātmakaś ca saḥ  
tatra gaur eva vaktavyo nañā yaḥ pratiśidhyate  
sa ced agonivṛtyatmā bhaved anyonyasamsrayaḥ  
siddhaś ced gaur apohartham vṛthāpohaprakalpanam

2. Bhāmahālaṅkāra, vi, verses 17-18:

yadi gaur ity ayam śabdāś samartho 'nyanivartane  
janako gavi gobuddher mṛgyatām aparo dhvaniḥ  
nanu jñānaphalāś śabdā na caikasya phaladvayam  
apevādaavidhijñānam phalam ekasya vaḥ katham?

3. Slokavārttika, Apoha section, verse 35.



Negation can be of two kinds: absolute negation (prasajya pratishedha) and specific negation (pariyudāsa). Absolute negation would mean the negation of all reality and existence; if that were the meaning of speech, then speech would be impossible, since all words would mean the same uniform absolute non-existence. If the negation is merely specific negation, it means that the Buddhists are indirectly accepting a positive entity as the meaning of words; for specific negation is a positive entity; the word 'cow' will then mean something general and positive, which negates the non-cow. It is the same as the universal 'cowness' of the Mīmāṃsakas.<sup>1</sup>

Again, if negation were the import of words, expressions like "blue lotus" bearing the relation of attribute and substance will be impossible. The co-existence of blue and lotus will be impossible, if the words 'blue' and 'lotus' do not denote positive entities.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Slokavārttika, Apoha section, verses 2 and 10:  
bhāvāntarātmako 'bhava yena sarvo vyavasthitah  
tatrāśvādinivṛttyātma bhavaḥ ka iti kathyatam  
tasmāt sarveṣu yaś rūpam pratyekam pariniṣṭhitam  
gobuddhis tannimittā syād gotvād anyao ca nāsti tad.
  2. Prameyakamalamārttāṇḍa, p. 437: viśeṣanatvam apohasya  
ayuktam. See also Slokavārttika, p. 596f.
  3. Nyāyavārttika, p. 334: yasya cānyapohas śabdārthaḥ  
tenānilānutpalavyudāsau katham sāmānādhikaranau iti  
vaktavyam.



An attribute must always be a real, positive, entity.

Even if the theory of Apoha could explain some of the words referring to substantives, this theory will fail to explain the meaning of words like 'and' or 'thus'. Udyotakara says that in the case of the word 'all' the negative explanation of the meaning fails completely, since nothing could possibly be excluded from 'all'.<sup>1</sup>

With such criticisms from the realistic Hindu philosophers, the later Buddhistic scholars found it necessary to modify their conception of Apoha. Thus, in the Tattvasaṅgraha of Śāntirakṣita we find a slightly different approach to the problem. He admits that mere negation is not what is apprehended from a word. In fact, there is no affirmation without negation;<sup>2</sup> the affirmation of something is always concomitant with the exclusion

---

1. Nyāyavārttika, p. 332: na hy asarvam nāma kiñcid asti, ~~yam~~ yat sarvapaḍena nivartyate.

Udyotakara gives many subtle arguments against the Apoha theory. He asks, "How can we understand the meaning of 'two', if it excludes 'one', since 'two' is made up of adding 'one' to another 'one'?" (dvyādi-śabdānāṃ samuccaya viśayatvād ekadipratīṣedhe...)

2. Tattvasaṅgraha, verse 1020: nānvayo vyatirekavān.

See also Kamalaśīla thereon: na hi vijāṅk tiyāvyāvṛttasya kasyacit sambhavo 'sti; tena ekasya śabdasya phaladvayam aviruddham eva.



of everything else. Śāntiraksita says that Kumārila-bhaṭṭa and Uḍyotakara did not understand the real significance of the Apoha theory.

There is nothing incongruous in a single word bringing about two notions, one positive and the other negative. The two notions are not brought about simultaneously; the positive meaning is known directly, and the negation or the exclusion of everything else is known through implication. From a negative statement like "The fat boy does not eat by day" we understand the positive idea about his eating during night; similarly both the meanings are known from the word.<sup>1</sup> Śāntiraksita is laying stress on the fact that the words of our speech, although directly meaning a concept which is only a subjective construct without any objective reality, indirectly refer to, the particular real thing also. This particular thing is also called a negation, since it is something unique in itself.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Tattvasaṅgraha, verse 102B: divābhojanavākyaḍer  
ivasyāpi phaladvayam.

For Jinendrabuddhi's arguments in favour of the  
Apoha doctrine, see Steinhartsky, Buddhist Logic, I, pp. 461ff.

2. The meaning of the word is the image which seems  
identified with the object.



A slightly different interpretation of the Apoha theory is found in the Apohasiddhi of Ratnakīrti. He says that a word has both a positive and a negative signification<sup>1</sup>. He rejects Śāntirakṣita's view that a word conveyed<sup>2</sup> a positive meaning first, and a negative meaning later by logical implication<sup>2</sup>. He also rejects the view that negation is the direct meaning and that the positive notion comes later<sup>3</sup>. According to Ratnakīrti, the essence of meaning consists in affirmation qualified by the negation of all other things<sup>4</sup>. This simultaneous cognition of the positive and negative elements of meaning is a matter of experience. Just as in the term 'indīvara' (blue lotus) the element of 'blue' and the element of 'lotus' are cognized simultaneously, so also in every word the two elements of the ~~word~~ meaning are grasped simultaneously<sup>5</sup>.

- 
1. For a detailed exposition of Ratnakīrti's views on Apoha, see Satkari Mookerjee, Buddhist doctrine of Flux, pp.130ff.; S. Varma, Analysis of Meaning in Indian Semantics, pp.25ff.
  2. Apohasiddhi, p.3: nahi vidhim pratipādyā kaścid arthā-pattitaḥ paścād apoham avagacchati.
  3. Ibid. apoham vā pratipādyānyapodham.
  4. Ibid., p.17: anyāpohaviśiṣṭo vijātivyaṁvṛtttyartho viśiṣṭa eva cāpohaśabdavācyaś sabdānām arthaḥ.
  5. Ibid., p.4: yathā nīlotpale nivesītād indīvaraśabdān nīlotpalapratītau tatkāla eva nīlimasphuraṇam, tathā gośabdād api.



This interpretation of the Apoha theory is generally attributed to Ratnakīrti,<sup>1</sup> but it seems to have been put forward first by the Buddhist writer Jñānaśrī. Udayana says<sup>2</sup> in his Ātmatattvaviveka that in order to explain the difficulty of mutual dependence of the arguments in favour of the Apoha theory resulting in a vicious circle,- the concept of 'cow' depending on that of 'non-cow' and the concept of 'non-cow' depending on that of 'cow' -Jñānaśrī put forward the view that both the positive and the negative concepts associated with the meaning of a word are felt simultaneously.

The great importance of this Apoha theory "lies in the fact that it radically eliminates every attempt to maintain the reality of universals, whether as real entities, external and ubiquitous, residing in all attaining particulars, or as meanings having whatsoever objective reality."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S. Varma, op.cit., p.25; S. Mookerjee, op.cit., pp.132f.

2. Ātmatattvaviveka, pp.118f: "tatah, pratītav itaretarāśrayatvam uktam saṅkete saṅcārya yat parihṛtam jñānaśrīyā ..."

3. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic II, p.404.



An indirect influence of the Apoha theory may be found in the negative definitions adopted by the later Naiyāyikas for logical precision. Thus, vyāpti or concomitance is ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> defined as a necessary connection of the cause with effect, but as the connection of the cause with the counter-correlate of the absolute non-existence of result.<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Siddhesvara Varma says<sup>2</sup> that "while the Hindu and Jain writers on philosophy and semantics define meaning in terms of a relation, Buddhist philosophy defines meaning as negation." It must be stated here that the Buddhist also considered the significative power of words as being based on the reciprocal relation of the word and the mental image produced.<sup>3</sup> This mental image or vikalpa connoted by the word is, according to the Buddhists, not grounded in an objective reality. As Mookerjee says,<sup>4</sup> "There is no difference (in opinion) whatsoever about the fact that the connotation of a word is a concept, subjective

---

1. Hetusāmenādhikaraṇātyantābhāva-pratīyogisādhya-sāmānādhikaranyam

2. loc. cit., p. 20

3. Dignāga, :vikalpayonayaś śabdā vikalpā śabdayonayah.

(Quoted by Stcherbatsky, II, 405n)

4. op. cit., p. 137



in fact though objective in reference". The difference of opinion among the various schools of thought is mainly about the nature of this conceptual image. According to the Buddhists, the external reality is not presented in the conceptual knowledge; but a ~~volitional~~ volitional urge towards the real things can be created by the conceptual images because of the simalakrity of the mental make<sup>up</sup> of the human beings. Both the speaker and the listener have similar illusions; what they see and hear are really their own mental concepts, but both think that they are referring to the objective reality. Hence language is a convenient means of communication. Santiraksita says that linguistic discourse is in fact similar to the conversation between two people, both suffering from the same ophthalmic disease and both seeing the moon double, about the nature of the moon.<sup>1</sup> Pillsbury says, "We come then to the conclusion that meaning is practically everything. We always see the meaning as we look, think in meaning as we think, act in terms of meaning when we act. Apparently we are never conscious of anything but meaning".<sup>2</sup> According to the Buddhists

---

1. Tattvasaṅgraha, verse 1211: timiropahatākṣo hi yathā prāha śasidvayam svasamāya tathā sarvā śabdā vyavahṛtir matā.

2. W.B. Pillsbury, Meaning and Image, Psychological Review, ~~xi~~ 1908, p. 156.



this conceptual image has no real stuff in it, and is negative in content. They accept reality only to the simple, non-conceptual cognition which is absolutely free from all verbal association; this kind of indeterminate knowledge may be experienced, but cannot be directly communicated by words, since it is beyond the reach of words or concepts.

Bhartrhari holds a very similar view about the whole discourse <sup>happening</sup> ~~being done~~ in terms of our conceptual images and the words which symbolize them. But ~~he~~ he denies emphatically the possibility of an indeterminate knowledge beyond the reach of words. He says<sup>1</sup> that all knowledge is interpenetrated<sup>2</sup> with words and that it is impossible to have a cognition which is free from word association. The critics like Jayantabhatta who find fault<sup>2</sup> with Bhartrhari's philosophy take 'word' literally in the sense of the spoken word; but to Bhartrhari śabda or the word is much more than this. To him it is ultimately identical with the conceptual image ~~itself~~ itself.

- 
1. VP.1.124: na so 'sti pratyayo loke yaś śabdanugamad  
rte anuviddham iva jñānam sarvam śabdena bhāṣate.
  2. Nyayamañjari (Viz. Sakt. Series), p.99



CHAPTER III

S P H O T A

THE THEORY OF LINGUISTIC SYMBOLS



### The Doctrine of Sphota

The doctrine of sphota is one of the most important contributions of India to the central problem of semantics in general linguistics. It maintains that the word or the sentence is to be considered not as a pattern made up of different sound units arranged in a particular order, but mainly as a single meaningful symbol<sup>1</sup> whose parts are not relevant to it qua symbol. The word or the sentence thus considered as a single meaningful symbol is called the sphota. The articulated sounds used in linguistic discourse are merely the means by which the symbol is revealed; it is this symbol which is the meaning-bearer. It may also be called the word or the sentence considered from the sematic aspect. It is indivisible and has no time-order; the articulated sounds with the time-order are resorted to only as a means of revealing this symbol.

---

1. "Symbol" is an ambiguous term used by different scholars in different senses. (See W. Urban, Language and Reality, pp. 407, 411-14). Here the term is used in the sense of a linguistic sign and not in the senses in which it is employed by Urban (loc. cit.) and Sir A.G. Gardiner (The Theory of Speech and Language, p. 101 n.) For a detailed study on symbolism see E. Cassirer, Philosophie der symbolischen Formen (3 vols., Berlin, 1923-29).



This sphoṭa theory was fully developed and systematized by the great grammarian-philosopher Bhartrhari in his Vākya-padīya; but some of the ideas underlying this theory can be found even in earlier grammatical and philosophical literature. There is no evidence, however, to show that Pāṇini knew anything similar to the sphoṭa theory, in spite of the fact that Haradatta<sup>1</sup> and Nāgeśabhaṭṭa<sup>2</sup> refer to the tradition ascribing this theory to sage Sphoṭāyana, mentioned as an authority by Pāṇini himself.<sup>3</sup>

According to Bhartrhari, speech and thought are only two aspects of the same speech-principle.<sup>4</sup> A sentence is to be considered as 'a single undivided utterance'<sup>5</sup> and its meaning is 'an instantaneous flash of insight'(pratibhā).<sup>6</sup> Thought has no structure; so also an utterance. The central idea underlying Bhartrhari's linguistic theory is the view ~~that is~~ that the sentence

---

1. Padamañjarī under Pāṇini, VI.1.123: sphoṭāyanas sphoṭa-pratipādanaparo vaiyākaraṇācāryaḥ.

2. Sphoṭavāda, p.102: vaiyākaraṇanāgeśas sphoṭāyanarṣer matam pariśkrtyoktavāmstatra priyatām jagadīśvaraḥ.

3. Pāṇini, VI.1.123: evaṃ sphoṭāyanasya

4. VP.11.31: ekasyaivātmano bhedaḥ śabdārthau aprthak sthitau. The interdependence of speech and mind (thought) is given in the Aitareyopaniṣad: vāṃ me manasi prati-  
sthitā, mano me vāci pratiṣṭhitam. See also Raghuvamśa, 1.1: vāgarthāv iṣṭva samprktau.

5. VP.11.2: eko 'navayavaś śabdah.

6. VP.11.119, 145.



is the fundamental linguistic fact, and that words are unreal abstractions from the sentence. The sentence-meaning is also to be grasped as a unity. The divisions into words and word-meanings are only useful means in the study of language, and have no reality in themselves.

According to Yaska, Audumbarāyana held the view that only the sentence is really found in the minds of the speaker and the listener.<sup>1</sup> Bhartrhari says<sup>2</sup> that Vartakṣa also held the same view. This school of thought started by Audumbarāyana may be considered as the forerunner of the Sphota doctrine of Bhartrhari.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Betty Heimann suggests<sup>4</sup> that the view of the early grammarians that a sentence must contain a verb (or that the most important element in a sentence is the verb denoting action) foreshadows the sphota doctrine. She says, "This concept of a predeveloped immanent general potentiality centred in the verb itself gives room for the acceptance of other factors of complex potentialities such as is the sphota."<sup>5</sup> It is in the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali that the first mention of the theory occurs.

---

1. Nirukta, 1.1; indriyanityam vacanam audumbarāyanah.

2. VP. 11. 347

3. See J. Brough, Audumbarāyana's Theory of Language, BSOAS.

4. Betty Heimann, Sphota and Artha, XIV, part 1.

'A Volume of Studies presented to Prof. P.V. Kane, pp. 221ff

5. Ibid, p. 222.

6. Mbh, 1, p. 181.



Patanjali's view of the sphota

Patanjali distinguishes between two aspects of words, the Sphota and the Dhvani; the former is the permanent element in the word and may be considered as the essential word, whereas the latter is the actualised and ephemeral element and is an attribute of the former.<sup>2</sup> The Sphota may be a single letter (varna) or a fixed pattern of letters and is the norm; it remains constant and is not affected by the peculiarities of the individual speakers. Even when pronounced by different speakers with different tempos, its linguistic value is the same. The absolute vowel-length and the individual peculiarities of the particular instances are of the Dhvanis and depend on the individuality of the speaker and the effort with which the words are uttered. The Sphota is permanent and unchanging and is manifested by the ephemeral Dhvanis uttered by the speaker and heard by the listener. These are ~~the~~ respectively the Prakrtadhvani and the Vaikrtadhvani of the later grammarians.<sup>3</sup> This

---

1. Mbh, i. p. 181:

Dhvanis sphotas ca sabdānām dhvanis tu khalu  
laksyate; alpo mahims ca sabdānām ubhayam tat  
svabhāvatah.

2. Sphotas sabdah, dhvanis sabdagunah. (ibid)

See also: Dvau sabdātmanau, nityah kāryas ca. (ibid)

3. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~; K.A. Subrahmanya Iyer, The Doctrine of Sphota, JGRI, v, pp. 121-122. J. Brough, Theories of General Linguistics in the Sanskrit Grammarians,

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

TPS, 1951, pp. 32-37



distinction is supposed to have been made by the great grammarian Vyādi who is earlier than Kātyāyana. The well-known verse in the Vākyapadīya defining the two types of Dhvanis is considered by some commentators to be a quotation from Vyādi's famous work, the Saṅgraha. According to this verse the 'primary sound' or Prakṛtadhvani is defined as the cause of the perception of the letters and the 'modified sound' or the Vaikṛtadhvani is considered as the cause for the differences in speed of utterance (vṛtti).

This distinction between the virtual and permanent element in language and the ephemeral elements at the various instances of its actualization is known even to Kātyāyana, though he does not apply the terms Sphoṭa and Dhvani to them.

---

1. Vyādi is the author of the Saṅgraha which is devoted to the philosophy of grammar and which is known only from quotations.

2. VP.1.77:

Varnasya grahane hetuḥ prakṛto dhvanir  
igayate. Vṛttibhede nimittatvam vaikṛtaḥ prati-  
padyate.



In the discussion of <sup>the</sup> Pāṇini Sūtra "Taparas tat-  
kālasya", he says that the vowels are fixed and  
 that the styles of diction (vṛtti) depend upon  
 the speech habits of the speaker. It is while  
 explaining this portion that Patañjali gives the  
 term Sphoṭa to the word considered as a time-  
 series pattern of letters and the ~~mk~~ term Dhvani  
 to the actualized sound. This is illustrated  
 with the analogy of a drum-beat. "When a drum  
 is struck, one drum-beat may travel twenty feet,  
 another thirty, another forty; but the Sphoṭa is  
 precisely such and such a size, the increase in  
 length is caused by the sound." <sup>3</sup>

Thus it is clear that for Patañjali a  
 word as a Sphoṭa is a fixed pattern which can be  
 analysed as a succession of sound-units; it has a

---

1. Pāṇini, 1.1.70.

2. Avasthitā varṇā, vaktuś cīrācīravacanād vṛttayo  
visisyante. Mbh. 1. p. 181. Cf. also p. 355.

3. Bherīm āhatya kaścid vimsati padāni gacchati,  
kaścit trimsat kaścio catvarimsat. Sphoṭaś ca  
tāvān eva bhavati, dhvanikṛtā vṛdāhih. Mbh. 1. p. 181.



normal and fixed size, and is entirely different from the Sphota of the later grammarians which has no size or parts. Patanjali also speaks of the Sphota of a single letter (varṇa). In discussing <sup>the</sup> Pāṇini Sūtra "Kṛpo ro lah" (In the root kṛp-, r is replaced by l) he says <sup>2</sup> that "in both cases (r and l) it is only the Sphota that is taught in the Sūtra." <sup>3</sup> In other words, an r-sound is replaced by an l-sound.

It is true that later commentators like Nagoji Bhaṭṭa try to read the fully developed Sphota theory into these statements of Patanjali, but a careful study of these passages shows that Patanjali's conception of <sup>the</sup> Sphota was entirely different from that of the later grammarians. To him the Sphota is not a single indivisible symbol considered as the meaning-bearer, but only a time-series pattern of unchanging sound-units.

---

1. Pāṇini, VIII.11.18

2. Ubhayatas sphoṭamātram nirdiśyate, ra-sruter la-srutir bhavatīti. Mbh.1.p.181.

3. J.Brough. op.cit. p.37.



Patanjali seems to have been influenced very much by the theory of the Mīmāṃsakas about the permanent nature of the letters or varṇas. They distinguished between the virtual and permanent sound-units and the sounds produced and heard at the actual instances of their utterance. The latter are only the manifestations of the former. The rapid<sup>1</sup>, medium and slow styles of diction<sup>1</sup> are only for the manifesting agents and do not touch the nature of the letters. Sāṅkara says<sup>2</sup> that when we hear the speech of some one known to us, we recognize not only what he says, but also who he is; but the latter information is conveyed only by the voice and not by the words and cannot, therefore, be considered as part of the meaning of the speech. Even though the absolute speed of utterance and other peculiarities of speech are of the sound and not of the words, the difference between short and long vowels has to be taken as linguistically significant. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa refers

---

1. druta, madhyama and vilambita.

2. Commentary on the Brahmasūtra 1.3.28.



to the view that the long vowels should not be considered as modifications of the short ones, but should be treated as different letters.<sup>1</sup>

The Mīmāṃsā doctrine about the permanence of the letters is analogous to the modern theory of phonemes,<sup>3</sup> even though the full significance of the modern linguistic theory was not known to the ancient Indians. The distinction between the "phonematic pattern" of the word, termed <sup>the</sup> Sphoṭa by Patañjali, and the actual sounds or Dhvanis produced at the instances of their utterance may be compared to De Saussure's duality of langue and parole.<sup>2</sup> The latter is the individual speech-activity and is ephemeral and contingent. The langue, on the contrary, is the social product of the faculty of speech and is relatively constant. The smallest acoustic units of la parole are the sounds, whereas

---

1. Sloka-vārttika, Sphoṭa-vāda:

Varnāntaratvam evāhuḥ kecid dīrghapluṭādīṣu.

2. F. De Saussure, Cours de linguistique générale.

See also Ullmann: The Principle of Semantics, p. 27f.

3. On the modern theory of phonemes see W. F. Twaddell, On defining the phoneme; Firth, Technique of Semantics, pp. 54ff; D. Jones, The Phoneme: its nature and use.



the engrams, in la langue (the residual traces left in the minds of members of the speech community) are the phonemes. The phoneme in a language remains the same even when uttered by different people at different speeds and intonations. The phonemes or the phonematic pattern with the normal time sequel is analogous to the Sphota of Patañjali and the sounds of la parole to his Dhvanis.

Even though Patañjali's conception of the Sphota is different from that developed by Bhartrhari in the Vakya-padiya, some of the fundamental problems in language perception that led to the assumption of that doctrine were not unknown to him. He was fully conscious of the importance of the semantic aspect of language. When the Mimāṃsā scholar<sup>1</sup> defines a word as the aggregate of the letters into which it could be analysed, Patañjali defines it as that which when uttered brings about the notion of the 'thing-meant'. In the beginning of

---

1. Śabarabhāṣya, vol. 1, p. 8: Gaur ityatra kaś śabdah? Gaṅgāraṅgāraṇīya itī bhagavan Upavarṣah. Cf. Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on Brahmasūtra 1.iii.28: Varna eva śabda itī bhagavan Upavarṣah.



the Mahābhāṣya he raises the question, what is the word 'śow'? The final answer he gives is this. "It is that by means of which, when uttered, there arises an understanding of creatures with dewlap, tail, hump, hooves and horns". The commentators have made it clear that here the term "uttered" (uccārita) is used in the sense of "revealed" or "brought to light" (abhiṣyakta). Thus Patañjali lays special emphasis on the fact that a word is a word only when it has a meaning. This is something against the orthodox Mīmāṃsā view<sup>2</sup> that an aggregate of letters, when manifested, is a linguistic utterance, even when there is no meaning, or when the meaning is not understood. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa<sup>3</sup> says that even the individual letters should be considered as a 'linguistic piece' (śabda) though they do not convey any meaning, and that in the case of words

---

1. Mbh.1.p.1: Gaur ity atra kaś śabdah? ... Yeno-  
uccāritena sāmānāṅgulakakudakhuraviśāninam  
sampratyayo bhavati sa śabdah.  
 Cf. Mandana, Sphoṭasiddhi, verse 3: Arthāvaseya-  
prasavanimitam śabda isyate.

2. Slokaṽarttika, Sphoṭavāda, verse 5:  
Tasmāc chrotrāparicchinne vady artham gamayen  
na vā, sarvathā tasya śabdatvam lokasiddham na  
hiyate.

3. Na vā 'pratyāyakatvāt syād ekavarṇesv aśabdatā.  
 (ibid, verse 7)



also the idea of the śabda occurs to the hearer even before the meaning is understood.

The problem of the perception of a temporal series is also discussed by Patañjali and Kātyāyana. When a word is uttered, the different sounds come one after another in the exact order in which they are uttered. There is not a single moment when all the sounds are perceived together. Then how is it possible that the word is grasped as a whole? In the discussion of <sup>1</sup>Paṇini Sūtra <sup>2</sup>Paras sannikarṣaṣa saṁhitā, Kātyāyana raises the objection that it is impossible for the letters, that are destroyed as soon as they are produced, to be together and to have a sequence. <sup>3</sup>Taking the example of the word gauh, Patañjali says that the word cannot exist as a whole, since the letters come one after another. "When the speech is in g, it cannot be in au and h; when it is in au, it cannot be in g and h; and when it is in h, it cannot

---

1. Na ca prāg arthaviññānaś cārotragrahye na śabdadhīh. (ibid., verse 8).

2. 1. iv. 109.

3. Mbh. i. p. 356: "Paurvāparyam akālavapyapetaṁ saṁhitā cet purvāparābhāvād aṣaṁhitam." "Ekaikavarṇa-vartitvād vāca uccarita-praddhvamsitvād ca śabdāḥ." "



be in g and au.<sup>1</sup> Each letter requires a special effort to produce it, and it disappears as the effort is changed to produce the next letter."<sup>2</sup>

The solution to the problem is not given with the help of the Sphota theory. Patanjali says that even though the letters cannot coexist at the time of utterance, they can do so in the mind of the speaker as well as the listeners, and that the order of sequence of the letters is also to be grasped in the mind on the basis of the meaning.<sup>3</sup> Thus it seems that according to Patanjali the unity of the word is partly due to the unity of meaning; the simultaneous grasping of the word is somehow effected in the mind, even though the letters that make it up are pronounced separately; the knowledge of the sequence of the order of the letters is

---

1. Gaur iti yavād gākāre vāg vartate naukāre na visarjanīye, yāvād aukāre na gākāre na visarjanīye yavād visarjanīye na gākāre naukāre. (ibid. p. 356)

2. Yenaiva yatnenaiko varṇa uccāryate vicchinne varṇa upasamhṛtya tam anyam upādāya dvitīyaḥ prayujyate tathā dvitīyas tathā caturthaḥ.

(ibid. p. 355)

3. Buddhau kṛtvā sarvāś ceṣṭāḥ kartā dhīras tanvannītiḥ. Śabdān arthān vācyaṁ dr̥ṣtvā buddhau kuryat paurvāparyam. (ibid. p. 356)



also there. Patañjali does not discuss the problem as to how this is done.

The question as to whether or not the individual letters in a word have meaning is also discussed by Patañjali<sup>1</sup>, though he does not give any final answer, since according to him the answer depends on the point of view taken. On the one hand it may be said that letters are meaningful, since meaning can be understood from verbal roots, stems, suffixes and particles which consist of a single letter and also since the substitution of a different letter can produce a difference to the meaning, while the absence of a letter may make it impossible to understand the meaning of a word. On the other hand it may also be said that letters are meaningless in themselves, since a meaning is not understood by the hearer from each letter separately. Here we find that Patañjali

---

1. Mbh.i.p.220. Arthavanto varṇā dhātu-prātipadika-  
pratyayanipātānām ekavarṇānām arthadarsanād,  
varṇavyatyaye cārthāntaragamanād, varṇānupala-  
bdhau cānarthagateḥ. Anarthakās tu prativarṇam  
arthānupalabdheḥ.



was vaguely conscious of the role of letters in building up the higher units which are full symbols with a meaning of their own; but it was left to Bhartrhari to develop the theory of symbols in his Sphota doctrine. Patanjali did not consider the word as an indivisible and time-less symbol, apart from the letters that are revealed when the word is uttered. Of course, unlike the Mimāṃsakas, he knew the importance of the meaning-bearing aspect of words; but he could not explain it fully. According to him the intelligent man could, somehow, grasp all the letters of the word together in the mind, along with the knowledge of their order of sequence. The Unity of the word is based mainly on the unity of the meaning.

Very little is known about the linguistic discussions in India during the period after Patanjali and before Bhartrhari. From the many

- 
1. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa has also stated that it is accepted by all the different schools of thought that along with the knowledge of sequence, the letters constituting the word must be comprehended in the mind as a whole;

Sarveṣu caivam artheṣu mānasam sarvavādinām  
Iṣṭam samuccaya-jñānam kramajñāneṣu satsv api

(Sloka-vārtika, Sphoṭa-vāda,  
verse 113).



references to the various theories in many a linguistic problem mentioned in the Vākyapadiya it is certain that the period was one of active speculation. The Sphota theory of Bhartrhari is the culmination of many such attempts in the solution of the linguistic problems that were worrying scholars in the various philosophical schools. Sabara's Bhāṣya on the Mīmāṃsā Sūtras, Vatsyāyana's Bhāṣya on the Nyāya Sūtras, Vyāsa's Bhāṣya on the Yoga Sūtras<sup>1</sup> and the discussions of the early Buddhist philosophers must have greatly influenced Bhartrhari in moulding his views about the real nature of language.

2

The Nyāya philosophers held that Sabda is linguistic utterance and is only a collection of sounds which are produced by the movements of the vocal organs of the speaker. The sounds vanish as soon as they are produced and are,

---

1. There is difference of opinion about the identity of the author of the Yoga Sūtras with the grammarian Patañjali. Though the Yoga school has accepted the Sphota theory, there is no direct reference to it in the Yoga Sūtras.

2. Nyāya Sūtras: II.11.13 - II.11.38.



therefore, ephemeral. The Naiyāyikas do not accept permanent letters as the Mīmāṃsakas do; instead, they explain the recognition of the letters, when uttered by different persons at different times, as due to the fact that they are particular instances of the same Universal; the idea of identity is only due to their similarity. According to them the meaning of a word is presented to the mind of the listener by the last sound aided by the memory impressions of the preceding sounds. Since the isolated sounds of a word cannot individually present its meaning, they must do so jointly. Since they come one after another into the mind, they are not perceived together as a whole. Each sound perceived leaves its impression behind, and the apprehension of the last sound, aided by the accumulated impressions of the preceding sounds, presents the meaning of the word.

This view is linguistically quite unsatisfactory. Even if we admit that the sense data are



received as a series of atomic perceptions, we have again to assume that we remember, through the impressions, not only the various sounds, but also their order. If the sounds are also remembered in the same order in which they are uttered, how could they be simultaneously grasped? And how could these sounds be a meaning-bearing word? The sounds by themselves have no capacity to attach themselves directly to a meaning; so it is necessary to postulate a single entity as the meaning-bearer. To explain how ~~an~~ meaning is understood from a word or a sentence, it is necessary to assume that the word or the sentence is a single meaning-bearing unit. This is what the Sphota doctrine really does.

The Mīmāṃsakas who defined a word as the aggregate of the letters which make it up were also forced to accept a theory similar to that of the Naiyāyikas. <sup>2</sup> Śabara says that the meaning is

---

1. Cf. J. Brough, op.cit. p. 38.

2. Pūrvapūrvavarṇajanitasamskārasahito'ntyo varṇah pratyāyakah. Śabara Bhāṣya



18

conveyed by the last letter aided by the impressions produced in the mind by the preceding letters. The main difference between the views held by the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas is that the former considered the letters to be ephemeral whereas the latter believed that the letters are permanent. The impressions or Samskāras are the "traces" left on the mind by experience and can produce the recollection, when needed, of what has been experienced. They are analogous to the "engrams" in modern psychology. The Samskāras of the individual letters in a word can produce only the recollection of the letters heard; they ~~have~~ have no power to convey the meaning. So the Mīmāṃsakas have to assume a special power for these Samskāras to convey the meaning also. Again, the order in which the letters are uttered is only for the act of utterance and not for the letters themselves, which, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, are permanent. But unless we assume the

- 
1. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa says that there is no harm in assuming such an additional function to the Samskāras: Slokavārtika, Sphoṭavāda, verse 103: Yadyvāpi smṛtihetutvam samskārasya vyavasthitam Arthāntaresu sāmāthyam na tasya pratisidhyate.



order of sequence to these impressions, the process of understanding <sup>K<sub>2</sub></sup> of meaning cannot be explained.

The Yoga Sūtra speaks about the confusion among ordinary people of the spoken word, the "thing-meant" and the concept formed in the mind, and explains it as due to the erroneous mutual superimposition of these: Śabdāarthapratyayānam itaretarādhyāsāt sankarah. While explaining this passage, Vyāsa discusses the problem connected with the auditory perception of speech. His explanation is almost on the lines of the Sphota theory, though Vyāsa does not use the term Sphota at all. He says that when a series of letters is uttered in the conventional order, the mind of the hearer grasps it as an indivisible unit having no time sequence. This unity, termed a word, is, in every case, brought to light by a single effort of the mind. It is the knowledge of the last letter

---

1. Bhāṣya on Yoga Sūtra III.17:

Tad eteṣāṃ arthasaṅketāvacchinnānāṃ upasaṃhṛta-  
dhvanīkramanāṃ ya eko buddhinirbhāsaḥ tad padam

(Contd.)



that operates on the mind and makes it grasp the whole word as a single unit. It is indivisible, having no time sequence, and not made up of separate letters. The minds of the members of the speech community are permeated by the use of speech to which no beginning can be assigned; hence the word is understood by people as something real in itself. Thus arises the common understanding of the word. Really this is due to an erroneous superimposition of the word, the object and the concept, and is based on memory.

Even among <sup>the</sup> ancient Indian grammarians who accepted the Sphota as the essential element in speech there was difference of opinion about the real nature of the Sphota. In the Vākyapadīya Bhartrhari himself mentions many of these earlier

(Contd)

ekabuddhivisayam ekaprayatnākṣiptam abhāgam  
akramam avarṇam baudham antyavarṇaprayatna-  
tyavavyāpāropasthāpitam paratra pratipipāda-  
viśayā varṇair eāvahidhīyamānair uccāryamānaiś  
śrūyamānaiś ca vśrotṛbhir anādivāgyavahāra-  
vāsanānuviddhayā lokabuddhyā siddhavat sam-  
pratipatyā pratiyate.



theories. According to one school of thought<sup>1</sup> the Sphota consisted of the original articulated sounds produced by the contact of the different vocal organs with the various places of articulation. These sounds disappear as soon as they are produced, but they are the cause of producing other sounds which spread in all directions like the reflections of the original sounds. These subsequent sounds produced by the Sphota are called the Dhvanis. These move like water-waves,<sup>2</sup> becoming weaker and weaker as ~~they~~ they go farther and farther from the Sphota.<sup>3</sup> The absolute length and other individual peculiarities are only for the Dhvanis, though they seem to be for the Sphota itself. This is similar to the view held by Patañjali himself.<sup>4</sup> In fact the commentator of the

- 
1. VP.1.verse 103; Yas samyogavibhāgābhyām karanair upajanyate. Sa sphoṭas śabdajāś śabdā dhvanato 'nyair udāhrtāh.
  2. Viśīśantānavac ca śrotram dāśadigavasthitānām upagacchanti. Commentary on VP.1.verse 103.
  3. Cf. K.A.Subrahmanya Iyer, Who are the Anitya-sphoṭavādins?, POC.1935, pp.258ff.
  4. Patañjali is generally considered to have held the view that the Sphota is permanent; but the Mahābhāṣya passage could be explained as supporting this theory also.



Vākyapadīya, while explaining this view, gives the illustration of the drum and the stick found in the Mahābhāṣya itself.

Another theory, slightly different from the previous one, is that both the Dhvanis and the Sphoṭa are produced simultaneously. According to the previous theory the Sphoṭa is produced first; but according to this theory there is no interval<sup>a</sup> between the production of the Sphoṭa and the Dhvanis. The Sphoṭa is the central sound and may be compared to a flame; the Dhvanis are like the light spreading in all directions. Sometimes we hear the Dhvanis without recognizing the Sphoṭa, just as we perceive the light even without seeing the flame. These two theories hold that the Sphoṭa is produced by human effort and is ephemeral.

According to the third view mentioned in the Vākyapadīya regarding the nature of the Sphoṭa and the Dhvanis, the former is the class and the latter are its members. He says that according to

- 
1. Commentary on VP.1.104: Yathā bherīdandābhghāta-  
jasya kāryaparamparā dūram anupatati.
  2. VP.1.105: Durāt prabheva dīpasya dhvanimātram  
tu lakṣyate.



some the Sphoṭa is the class revealed by the various individual instances and the Dhvanis are the members of this class. Many scholars have taken this theory as that of Bhartrhari himself. Even Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita quotes this verse in support of the view that Bhartrhari accepted the Class-Sphoṭa theory. Here it is important to note that for Bhartrhari the Sphoṭa is the word or the sentence taken as a single meaningful unit; if he accepts the concept of the class, it will be a class whose members ~~themselves~~ are themselves Sphoṭas. The identification of Sphoṭa with the class of Dhvanis without any reference to the meaning-bearing aspect is entirely against ~~the~~ Bhartrhari's conception of Sphoṭa.

---

1. VP.1.94:

Anekavyaktyabhivyaṅgyā jātis sphoṭa iti smṛtā  
Kaiścid vyaktaya evāsyā dhvanitvena prakalpita.

Cf. J.Brough, op.cit., p.44f.

2. Śabdakaustubha, p.9. Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita took the first line of the verse as a complete statement; but, as Nagoji Bhaṭṭa has shown (Sphoṭavāda, p.99), the word kaiścit is to be taken with the first line.

3. Similarly Patañjali's statement (Mbh.1.p.26) "ubhayatas sphoṭamātram nirdiśyate, ra-śruter la-śrutir bhavatīti" is also taken to be in support of this theory of Class-Sphoṭa.

4. J.Brough. loc.cit.



This third view about the Sphoṭa, mentioned by Bhartṛhari, is analogous to the view expressed by Bertrand Russell. He says:- "The spoken word "dog" is not a single entity; it is a class of similar movements of the tongue, throat and larynx. Just as jumping is one class of bodily movements, and walking another, so the uttered word "dog" is a third class of bodily movements. The word "dog" is a universal, just as dog is a universal. We say, loosely, that we can utter the same word "dog" on two occasions, but in fact we utter two examples of the same species. There is thus no difference of logical status between dog and the word "dog"; each is general, and exists only in instances. The word "dog" is a certain class of verbal utterances, just as dog is a certain class of quadrupeds. Exactly similar remarks apply to the heard word and to the written word."

Referring to the Sphoṭa theory of the Indian grammarians Prof. P.T. Raju says:- "This school believes in a sort of universal called Sphoṭa for every word also like 'cow', 'house' and

- 
1. An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, p. 24.
  2. The Universal in the Western and the Indian Philosophy, Radhakrishna Volume, p. 394.



'man'. For though these words are uttered by different persons at different times with different intonation, pitch etc., they are recognized to be the same, and though the syllables of the word are uttered in succession, they are comprehended together; and both facts can be explained by postulating a unitary word-universal called sphota." This is only the third view about the nature of the sphota referred to by Bhartrhari, and should not be taken to be the final view accepted by Bhartrhari and the later grammarians.

Bhartrhari's discussion about the nature of the sphota

Bhartrhari begins the discussion on the sphota theory with the observation that words or sentences can be considered under two aspects, as sound-patterns or as meaning-bearing symbols. He says that in meaningful language linguists recognize two entities, both of which may be called words; one is the underlying cause of the articulated sounds, while the other is attached to the meaning;<sup>1</sup>

Dvāv upādānaśabdeṣu śabdau śabdavidō viduḥ

Eko nimittam śabdānām aparō 'rthe prayujyate.

---

1. VP.1.44.



The former is the sound-pattern<sup>a</sup> which is the external facet of the language symbol, while the latter is the semantic facet which expresses the meaning. Janus-like, words have two faces: the external face looks at the sounds(dhvani), while the internal face looks at the meaning(artha). The underlying cause of the articulated sounds(śabdānām nimittam) is the sound-pattern which underlies instances of the utterance of the word; this abstract sound-pattern with the time-sequence still attached to it is called prākṛta-dhvanī and is the external aspect of the language. The internal aspect, which is directly attached to the meaning is the sphoṭa which is the partless, integral linguistic symbol.

---

1. The meaning of the verse is rather difficult to understand. (Note that the definition of dhvani by Anandavardhana in Dhvanyāloka, i.13 is also given in an equally clumsy way, though there too the idea is of great linguistic importance.)

By the term upādānaśabda is meant the speech-unit in language as is normally understood. No distinction is made between dhvani and sphoṭa in this. It is only the linguist who can recognize these two aspects in it. One aspect is the underlying cause of the articulated sounds produced: this is the prākṛta-dhvanī which is the cause of sounds vaikṛta-dhvanī. Bhartrhari himself defines prākṛtadhvanī as the cause of perception of the letters (varṇasya grahaṇe hetuḥ prākṛto dhvanir iṣyate, VP.i.77). The internal aspect is the linguistic sign which is called sphoṭa; it is this which conveys the meaning. Some explain the former as the sphoṭa and the latter as the dhvani (G.N. Bhattacharyya, A Study in the dialectics of Sphoṭa, p.13; Ravisankar Sukla's commentary on the verse; but the explanation given above seems to be the correct one.



This fundamental dichotomy between form and content in language is mentioned by Pāṇini himself in the sūtra<sup>1</sup>: svam rūpam śabdasyāśabdasaṁjñā, "A word (in a grammatical rule) which is not a technical term denotes its own form". On this sūtra Kātyāyana says,<sup>2</sup> śabdapūrvako hy arthe sampratyaayas, tasmād arthanivṛtṭih. "The understanding of the thing-meant is preceded by that of the word; hence in a grammatical context, the question of the thing-meant does not arise". A word can signify its own form, as well as the thing meant by it. One is the name and the other is the thing-named. Bhartṛhari says<sup>3</sup> that every word, first of all, expresses its own class, thereafter it is fictionally superimposed on the form of the class of things. In grammatical discussions where the thing-meant is irrelevant, it is only the form that is signified by a word (which is not a technical term). Thus, in a rule<sup>4</sup> "Agni(fire) has the suffix eya", it is only to the form of the word that the suffix is added, and not to the fire or even to words synonymous to it.

---

1. Pāṇini, I.1.68

2. Mbh.1, p.176

3. VP.iii.1.6: sva jātiḥ prathamam śabdais sarvair evabhidhiyate tato 'rthajātirūpeṣu tadadhyāropakalpanā.

For a discussion of the problem see Brough, op.cit.

4. Pāṇini, IV.ii.33: agner dhak



Bhartrhari says," Just as a technical term like vrddhi, while linked to its own form, is also attached to what is named by it, viz., the speech-entities symbolized by ādaic (i.e., ā.ai, &au) , so likewise this word agni (in the sūtra), while linked to the word agni (in everyday use, i.e., the meaning 'fire') is also attached to the sound agni, which in this context has the word agni as the thing-expressed. The word which is uttered in ordinary usage must certainly not be the one which partakes of the operation (of adding the suffix). But in conveying this other sense, its power (to convey the normal sense) is not impeded." Bhartrhari emphasizes again and again the fact that a word has a double power; it can convey an idea of the form of an expression as well as its content. The problem of how a word can mean not only the thing symbolized by it, but also its own identity, is explained by him with various illustrations. Language is similar to light and consciousness in so far as it can reveal itself, ~~while it is also conscious of itself~~ and also reveal other things. Just as consciousness can be conscious of itself,

---

1.VP.i.59-61. See the translation by J.Brough, op.cit., p.29



while being conscious of other things,<sup>1</sup> and just as a light can reveal itself while revealing other objects,<sup>2</sup> so also every word has the power of referring to itself as well as to the external things symbolized by it.

The Buddhists also accept this two-fold power<sup>3</sup> of words to express their own identity as well as the things symbolized by them; but this character is cognized only when they become the subject of conventional relation, and not at the time of perception. It is only in the determinate knowledge that follows a perception that the relation between word and meaning is understood. At the time of perception of the sounds of the words, it is only the sound that is known; the expressive power does not belong to the sound at that time.

The grammarians too accept that words will have to be taken as 'autonomous' until the relation between the word and the meaning is known. Thus, Patañjali says that when we do not hear a word properly, we ask, "What

---

1.VP.i.50: Ātmarūpam yathā jñāne jñeyarūpam ca dr̥syate  
Artharūpam tathā śabde svarūpam ca prakāśate.

2.VP.i.55: Grāhyatvam grāhakatvam ca dve śakti tejaso yathā  
Tathaiva sarvaśabdānām ete pr̥thad iva sthite.

3.Satkari Mookerjee, Buddhist Doctrine of Flux, pp.296ff.



did you say?", thereby indicating that we have not understood the form of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Bhartrhari's analysis envisages three aspects<sup>2</sup> of the language situation: (1) the vaikṛta-dhvani, the individual instance of the utterance in purely phonetic terms. It is the actual sounds spoken by the speaker and heard by the listener. It includes all the various differences in intonation, tempo, pitch etc., depending on the individuals. (2) The prākṛta-dhvani, the phonological structure, the sound-pattern of the norm; or from another point of view, the name of the class of which the various instances are members. This is indicated by the vaikṛta-dhvani. All the non-linguistic personal variations are eliminated at this ~~st~~ stage. Both the speaker and the listener are conscious of the normal phonological pattern alone. The time-sequence is still present in this. It may be considered as the acoustic image of the normal word, or the word in the mind, keeping the time-order with it. (3) The sphoṭa, the integral linguistic symbol, which is the unit of meaning, but which cannot be pronounced or written. This is manifested by the prākṛta-dhvani. In fact it is the prākṛta-dhvani considered as an integral, meaning-bearing, linguistic sign.

---

1. Mbh. i. p. 176; VP. i. 57; J. Brough, op. cit., p. 31  
2. J. Brough, op. cit., p. 40



The sphota as explained by Bhartrhari is something analogous to the linguistic sign, which in the terminology of De Saussure has two facets: the signifiant and the signifié, that which means and that which is meant. In Indian philosophy these two are called, respectively, śabda and artha. W.M. Urban has shown<sup>2</sup> beyond any shadow of doubt the existence of a bipolar relation between the signifiant and the signifié. In India this relation is taken to be permanent and natural by the Mīmāṃsakas and the grammarians, and to be conventional by the Naiyāyikas. The glossematic school of linguistics under Prof. Hjelmslev also accepts this parallelism between the plane of content and that of expression in language. He says,<sup>3</sup> "The sign is a two-sided entity, with a Janus-like perspective in two directions, and with effect in two respects: "outwards" toward the expression-substance and "inwards" toward the content-substance." "The sign is, then - paradoxical as it may seem - a sign for content-substance and a sign for an expression-substance." Explaining this view, Andre<sup>4</sup> Martinet says, "According to the glossematicians language

---

1. Cour, pp. 98f.

2. Language and Reality, pp. 66, 115

3. Prolegomena to a Theory of Meaning, p. 36

4. Structural Linguistics, 'Anthropology Today', edited by A.L. Kroeber, Chicago, 1953, p. 582



has recourse to two different types of substances for its two planes. On the plane of expression the substance may be phonic and therefore perceptible to the auditory organ; (but it is also commonly graphic and therefore usually perceptible and any other perceptible object could be used, although may not be quite so conveniently, for the same purpose). On the plane of content the substance is of a mental, semantic nature."

The modern linguists consider the symbol or the linguistic sign as a functional term, based on the relation between the signifiant and the signifié, the śabda and artha. But to Bhartṛhari this sphoṭa is an independent entity which is revealed by the signifiant or the prākṛta-dhvani. And it is this sphoṭa or the linguistic sign (le signe of De Saussure) which conveys the sense.

The distinction between the actual sounds of speech uttered during each occurrence of the speech (vaikṛtadhvani) and the engrams left by them behind by them in la langue or the phonematic pattern or the acoustic images (images acoustiques) (prākṛtadhvani) is accepted by the modern linguists also.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Coury, pp. 97-103, 141-169



Bhartṛhari is here emphasizing the fundamental truth that, strictly speaking, words are psychical entities (śabda buddhisthaḥ)<sup>1</sup> which reveal themselves through their articulate sounds. As Gardiner says,<sup>2</sup> "it is only inaccurately, though by a sort of necessary inaccuracy, that the name of 'words' is given to the articulate sounds which pass between speaker and listener". "As words exist in the possession of every individual ( of a linguistic community), they are psychical entities, comprising on the one hand an area of meaning, and on the other hand the image of a particular sound susceptible of being physically reproduced whenever ~~we~~ wanted."<sup>3</sup> Even earlier thinkers in India had recognized the fact that the word is something more than the audible sounds uttered by the speaker and heard by the listener; Vyāsa, in the Yogasūtrabhāṣya states clearly that the word is to be grasped in the mind, though it is brought together by the sounds.<sup>4</sup> Even the Mīmāṃsakas who considered the word as an aggregate of the permanent letters (varṇas) in a fixed order recognized that it is much more than the articulate sounds.

---

1. VP.1.46 : śabda 'pi buddhisthaḥ śrutīnām kāraṇam  
prthak.

2. Gardiner, Speech and Language p.69

3. Ibid, p.70

4. Yogasūtrabhāṣya, under sūtra III.17: padam punar  
nādanusamhārabuddhinirgrāhyam.



De Saussure also emphasized<sup>1</sup> the fact that both the aspects of the sign, the signifiant and the signifié, are mental; the former is the acoustic sign or the psychical entity which belongs to la langue, and the latter is the idea (idée). The Indian grammarians too maintain the subjectivity of both the word and the meaning (śabda and artha). Nāgasabhaṭṭa says<sup>2</sup> in the Laghumañjūsā that in reality the meaning is only subjective and the word is also subjective.

The concept of sphota is something more than what is generally implied by the term linguistic sign. The relation between the word and the meaning is an essential for sphota concept as for the sign. There is no sphota without meaning; it is the meaning-bearing nature of an expression that makes it (when considered as a whole apart from its parts which are irrelevant) a sphota. In fact the sphota is the signifiant taken as a timeless and indivisible symbol denoting a meaning. The time-order of the signifiant is merely a means for revealing the timeless and partless sphota.

---

1. Cour, pp. 98f

2. Laghumañjūsā, p. 45; S. Varma, Analysis of Meaning in Indian Semantics, p. 14. See also Kaiyaṭa on Pāṇini, V. 2.94



The term sphota is derived from the root sphut which means 'to burst', and it is defined in two ways. In its linguistic sense it is normally defined as " that from which the meaning bursts forth, i.e. shines forth, in other words the word-as-expressing-a-meaning(vācaka)"<sup>1</sup> "The sphota is simply the linguistic sign in its aspect of meaning-bearer(Bedeutungsträger)."<sup>2</sup> Secondly it is defined as an entity which is manifested by the letters.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the sphota is an integral symbol which is indivisible and timeless, it can be revealed only by means of the sound in a time-series pattern. The fact that the sound is produced serially is no argument for considering the sphota to have a time sequence. The individual sounds of the letters, that we hear in the course of revealing the sphota, seem to be present in the sphota itself only because of ~~the~~ our incapacity <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ hearing the symbol apart from the sounds.

---

1. Nagesabhatta, Sphotavāda, p.5: sphuṭati prakāśate 'rtho 'smād iti sphoṭo vācaka iti ~~xxxx~~ yavat; Mādhava, Sarvadarsanasangraha (ed. Abhyankar), p.300: sphuṭyate vyajyate varṇair iti sphoṭo varṇābhivyāṅgyaḥ, sphuṭati sphuṭibhavaty ~~xxxx~~ asmād artha iti sphoṭo 'rthapratyāyakaḥ.

2. J. Brough, op.cit., pp.33f.



### How the Sphota is comprehended

The sphota, the word located in the mind and taken as an integral symbol, is revealed by the sounds produced in a fixed order. The sounds are only the manifesting agencies and have no function other than that of revealing the word-symbol. Each sound helps in manifesting this sphota, the first one vaguely, the next one more clearly and so on, until the last one, aided by the impressions of the preceding perceptions, reveals it clearly and distinctly. It is one and the same sphota that is revealed by each one of these letters. Bhartrhari says<sup>1</sup> that "with the last sound, the word is grasped in the mind (of the hearer) where the seed has been sown by the sounds, and which has been brought to ripeness by the telling over in order (avrtti) of the sounds".<sup>2</sup> This sphota is one and indivisible; the sounds uttered to reveal this sphota or the essential word cannot be considered as parts of the word, but only as discritical marks to reveal the identity of the whole word. The process

---

1. VP.1.85: nāḍair aḥitabījāyāṃ antyena dhvaninā saha  
avrttiparipākāyāṃ buddhau sabdo 'vadhāryate.

2. J.Brough, Linguistics in Sanskrit Grammarians,  
TPS, 1951, p. 39



of revelation of the word by the sounds is from the indeterminate stage to the determinate; it begins from complete ignorance, passes through partial knowledge and ends in complete knowledge.

The process of comprehension of the sphota is illustrated by the grammarians by means of various analogies. It is like a jeweller examining a precious stone by looking at it steadily for some time to enable him to determine its real value. He has a series of perceptions; the first one gives him a general knowledge of the gem; each subsequent perception helps in revealing the real nature of the gem, until the last perception, aided by the impressions of the previous ones, helps him to grasp the real value of the gem completely and clearly. Bhartrhari has given another analogy; it is that of a student trying to learn a verse by heart by reading it repeatedly. It is the last reading, aided by the impressions left behind

---

1. Sphotasiddhi, p.131; yathā ratnaparīkṣiṇaḥ parīkṣamānasya prathamasaṁādḥigamānupākhyātam anupākhyāyarūpa-pratyayopāhitasamskārarūpāhitaviśeṣāyām buddhau krameṇa carame cetasi cakāsti ratnatattvam.

2. VP.1.84; yathānuvākaś śloko vā soḍhatvam adhigacchati āvṛtṭyā na tu sa granthaḥ pratyāvṛtṭi nirūpyate.

The analogy of the jeweller is given by Vācaspati Miśra in the Tattvabindu also (p.20 f)



by the previous readings that helps the student to know the verse fully.

Even though each letter causes a vague cognition of the indivisible sphota, the letter also figures in the cognition. It is the cognition of the whole that is significant and therefore important. The whole taken as an integral symbol is something different from the parts that constitute it, and <sup>the parts</sup> may be considered as irrelevant and illus<sup>o</sup>ary. It is not the existence of the cognition of the parts that is denied, for we do undoubtedly cognize the individual letters; it is their significance that is in question.<sup>1</sup> The sphota is the object of cognition; but it is in the form of the letters that this cognition takes place. This is an instance of a series of errors leading finally to the truth. Even invalid cognitions can sometimes lead one to a valid knowledge; a false hypothesis can be of help in getting at the truth. Bhartrhari explains it by means of some illustrations.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes a tree may appear as an elephant when seen from a long distance,

- 
1. S.S.Suryanarayana Sastri, Vācaspati's criticism of the sphota theory, Journal of Oriental Research, Madras, 1932, pp. 311-314
  2. VP.1.90-91 and the commentary thereon. See also K.A.Subrahmanya Iyer, The Doctrine of Sphota, JGRI, vol.V, part 1, pp.121ff.



or a rope ~~is~~ mistaken for a snake in a place without sufficient light; but close and careful observation will ultimately reveal ~~the~~ real identity. In the final cognition the object and the form become one. This ~~correct~~ cognition can take place without any change in the circumstances. Standing in the same place and looking steadily at the object we get the correct cognition of the tree or the rope. So also in language the real object of utterance is the sphota, though the form is that of the letters themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Even though each letter in the word or sentence has the capacity of revealing the same indivisible sphota, every one of them is necessary, since the complete and distinct manifestation of the word is effected only with the perception of the last letter. Hence the subsequent letters in the word are not at all superfluous. According to the ~~Mimamsakas~~ Mimāṃsakas, when a word is uttered, the individual ~~letters~~ sounds reveal only the permanent letters or the sound-units (which are analogous to the phonemes of modern linguists), and nothing more than these. But according to the grammarians it is the whole indivisible word that is revealed by the sounds, or by the letters indicated by the sounds. The function of the letters in revealing

---

1. See also Tattvabindu, p. 21, for a similar analogy.



the integral sphoṭa is based on their 'value' in differentiating one word from another. Thus, while uttering the word 'gauh', the function of the letter g is to distinguish the word from all other words that do not begin with g. This essential nature of the function of letters in the building up of a word is noticed by Vyāsa in his Yogasūtrabhāṣya. He says: "The power of speech has its function in the utterance of the various sounds and the ear has for its object only the series of sounds. It is the mind of the listener that grasps the sounds as a significant unit at the end of the final sound. As the individual sounds cannot co-exist, they do not naturally aid one another. One by one they come into being, and vanish without touching the word; so none of them can be considered to have attained the form of a unit-

---

1. Yogabhāṣya on sūtra III-17:

tatra vāg varṇeṣv ~~xxx~~ evārthavatī. śrotram ca dhvani-pariṇāmamātraviṣayam. padam punar nādānusaṃhārabuddhinirgrāhyam iti. varṇa ekasamayāsaṃbhavitvāt parāniranugrahātmanas te padam asaṃsprāyanupasthāpyāvīrbhūtās tirobhūtās ceti pratyekam apada-svarūpa ucyante.



word. On the other hand, each one of these letters may be said to have the essence of the word and the potential capacity to express almost everything, in so far as, by association with other letters, in various combinations, it can form different words. Though a universe of meanings can thus be attached to a single letter, this potential capacity is limited by the convention of meaning on account of the order of sequence in which the letters are uttered. Thus, the potential capacity of the letters g, au and h is restricted to the ~~farm~~ object having dewlap, horn etc., when they follow one another in the particular sequence, gauh." Of course, Vyasa was not fully conscious of the Sphota doctrine as developed by Bhartrhari and Mandanamisra; that is why he is trying to explain the function of the letters in conveying the meaning of the word. But <sup>a</sup><sub>L</sub> similar argument will explain how the individual letters reveal the word-symbol or sphota.

---

1. Ibid; varṇāḥ punar ekaikaḥ padātma sarvābhidhāna-śaktipracitas sahakāri varṇāntarapratyogitvād vaiśvarūpyam ivāpannaḥ. purvaś cottareṇa, uttaras ca purveṇa viśeṣe 'vasthāpita itṭṭṭ evaṃ bahavo varṇāḥ kramānurodhino 'rthasāṅketenāvacchinṇā iyaṃ ta ete sarvābhidhānaśakti parivṛttā gakaraukaravisarjanīyās sāṃśnādimantam artham dyotayatīti.



This is what we find in the Sphoṭatattvanirūpaṇa of Śeṣakṛṣṇa<sup>1</sup>, where a reasonable explanation, on the basis of Vyāsa's remarks, is given about the function of the individual letters in revealing the integral word. He says that when a man utters the sound ka with the intention of saying kamalam (a lotus), we know that he is trying to utter a word beginning with ka. Thus, the whole word is vaguely suggested by the first syllable itself, for it gives a clue to the identity of the word. When he utters the next syllable ma, we get another clue and the word can more clearly be guessed, since it narrows the field. All the words that do not begin with kama are now excluded. Still the word is not quite clear, for we do not know whether he is going to say kamalam or kamanam. When the last sound lam is also uttered, the word is known fully and clearly. Thus, the function of <sup>the</sup> letters in a word is to build up the higher unit; they have no meaning of their own; their value consists in differentiating one word from another.

---

1. Sphoṭatattvanirūpaṇa, p. 10; tathā hi kamalam ity ukte kakāramakārānubhavepi kim kamaliyas sphoṭah kamanīyo veti sandeho nāpagacchati tāvad yāvan na cāramo lo no vānubhūyate. tasmād īśattvam sandigdhatvam niścitatvam eva sphoṭatataratvam.



This conception of the function of the letters in the manifestation of the sphota is analogous to the ~~Apk~~ Apoha theory of the Buddhists;<sup>1</sup> for the value of each letter in the word is its being different from all the other possible letters. It may also be compared to the view of some modern linguists that the significance of the phonemes - the smallest significant units in a language - lies in their differentiation-value.<sup>2</sup> Bhartrhari's statement, that the individual letters in a word or sentence have no direct connection with the meaning, but are merely concerned with the manifestation of the linguistic sign or the sphota which is the real meaning-bearer,<sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ quite in keeping with the claim of modern linguists that the basic assumptions that underlie phonemics can be stated without any mention of mind and meaning, and that the structural analysis of a language need not necessarily involve considerations of meaning.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. The Apoha doctrine is discussed in a separate section. (p. 71)
  2. On the modern theory of phonemes, see D. Jones, The Phoneme, its nature and use, Cambridge, 1950; W. F. Twaddell, On defining the phoneme, Baltimore, 1935; E. Sapir, The sound patterns of language (Collected writings); A. Cohen, The phonemes of English, The Hague, 1952; B. Bloch, A set of Postulates for phonemic analysis, 'Language', vol. 24, 1948.
  3. See Bloch, loc. cit.; Zellig Harris, Methods in Structural Linguistics, 1951



The sphota is not an imperceptible entity<sup>1</sup> assumed by the grammarian to explain how a temporal series of sound-pattern can express a unitary sense; it is something which is actually perceived in speech situations. The very fact, that a word or sentence is cognized gradually from the vague indeterminate stage to the clear determinate stage, shows that it is through perception that this cognition takes place; for, as Maṇḍanaśrī points out,<sup>2</sup> it is only in perceptive cognition that a gradual process from the indistinct to the distinct, through increasing degrees of clarity, is possible; in the case of other means of cognition we have either a clear knowledge, or no knowledge at all.

In fact one of the arguments adduced by the grammarians in favour of the sphota theory is the experience that people have in actual speech situations about the word or the sentence as a single entity.

- 
1. D.M.Datta (Six ways of knowing, p.252) says, "In reality, corresponding to every word perceived, there is an unperceived, partless symbol which directly presents the meaning". But the sphota is the perceived word itself, taken as a partless symbol.
  2. Sphoṭasiddhi, verse 23: pratyakṣajñānaniyatā vyaktā-vyaktāvabhāsitā mānāntareṣu grahaṇam athavā naiva hi grahaṇ. (There is no vagueness in non-perceptual knowledge)



Nagesabhatta says<sup>1</sup> that the justification for the existence of the sphota and for its unity is the realization "This is one word, one sentence". In the Sarvadarsanasangraha also it is stated that the acceptance of the sphota is based on direct perception itself, since it is a common experience that a word like 'oow' is a unique entity, apart from the different letters we seem to hear in it. The same idea is stressed in the Sphotasiddhi<sup>3</sup> and the Tattvabindu<sup>4</sup> also. Jayantabhatta also mentions<sup>5</sup> the grammarians' view that the sphota is cognized through direct auditory perception.<sup>6</sup> In the discussion of the sphota doctrine, Sankara presents<sup>7</sup> the grammarian as saying,

---

1. Mahābhāṣyapradīpodyota, vol.1, p.11: idam ekam padam ekam vākyam iti pratyayas sphoṭasatve tadekatve ca pramāṇam.

2. Sarvadarsanasangraha, p.299: pratyakṣam evātra pramāṇam gaur ity ekam padam iti nanavarnātirikṭaikapadāvagates sārva-janīnatvāt.

3. Sphotasiddhi, p.171: sphoṭātma tu pratyakṣavedaniyah

4. Tattvabindu, p.23: sārva-janīnam api padam iti vākyam iti caikaviśayanubhavam.

5. Nyāyamañjarī (Viz.S.S.), p.371: śrautṛe pratyaye pratibhasamāṇaḥ.

6. G.N.Bhattacharyya (A Study in the Dialectics of sphota, pp.44,68) criticizes Jayantabhatta for misinterpreting the grammarian's view. He says, "We do not subscribe to Jayanta's views when he says that sphota is perceived by the auditory organ"; his argument that the sphota is known through mental perception (manasa pratyakṣa) is based on a passage in the Tattvabindu (Ch.S.S, p.3); but the reading he has taken is a wrong one; from the later edition in the Annamali University Series (p.16 f) and its commentary by Paramesvara, it is clear that the term mānasapratyakṣa in the passage refers to prayatnabheda and not to sphota.



"I do not postulate a new entity called sphoṭa; I know it through perception"<sup>1</sup>. Even the critics of the sphoṭa doctrine do not deny the common experience of the word or the sentence as a unique entity; they only try to explain it in a different way.

Thus, it is argued by Vācaspatiśrī in the Tattvabindu<sup>2</sup> that the unitariness that is commonly experienced regarding the word or the sentence is based on some limitation (UPĀDHI) like that of the experiences of an 'army' or a 'forest', and that it need not be real. Two such extraneous adjuncts which produce the notion of unitariness are given: ~~(a)~~ being the content of a single cognition, and being the cause of the cognition of one idea.<sup>3</sup> The critics of the sphoṭa doctrine base their arguments mainly on these two points.

Śāṅkara criticizes the sphoṭa doctrine on the ground that the apprehension of a temporal or spacial series can be explained as due to the synthetic activity

---

1. Brahmasūtrabhāṣya on 1.3.28; na kalpayāmy aham sphoṭam pratyakṣam eva tv enam avagacchāmi.

2. Tattvabindu, pp. 50ff.

3. ekaviññānaviśayatā and ekābhidheyapratyayahetutā.

4. Śāṅkara calls it samastapratyavamarśinī buddhi or the intellect having the power of holding together the separate memories into one whole. This is the same as the ekaviññānaviśayatā mentioned by Vācaspatiśrī.



of the mind. He holds that "though a series cannot be apprehended as a whole through perception, we have, after all the members of a series have been perceived one by one, a memory of all the members combined together. We have in experience in all cases of temporal and spacial series the knowledge of wholes which preserve the integral relation obtaining among their component members. We have to accept it on the basis of such an experience."<sup>1</sup> Sankara says, "The one comprehensive cognition which follows upon the apprehension of the successive letters of a word has for its object the entire aggregate of the letters constituting the word, and not anything else."<sup>2</sup> He illustrates this point with various analogies. "The ideas which we have of a row, for instance, or a wood or an army or of the numbers ten, hundred, thousand and so on, show that also such things as comprise several unities can become the objects of one and the same cognitional act."<sup>3</sup> The particular order of sequence determines the nature of the word; just as ants

---

1. D. M. Datta, op.cit., p. 253; see also Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, on sūtra 1.3.28.

2. Thibaut's translation of the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, p. 208.

3. Ibid, p. 209.



produce the idea of a row only when they march one after the other, so the letters also constitute the idea of a certain word only if they follow one another in a certain order.

The sphoṭa theory itself presupposes something like this as the means of revealing the sphoṭa, viz., a comprehensive cognition of the letters in their proper order. <sup>theory has</sup> They ~~too have~~ to accept that the intellect has the power to interpret a series of sense-data as a finished Gestalt. Sankara and the Mīmāṃsakas do not explain how simultaneity and succession are compatible in the same act of the mind; the Naiyāyikas who consider that the synthesis of the letters is based on memory (saṃhālambanasṃrti) are also at a loss to explain this problem. Their difficulty was mainly due to the fact that to them the present was an instant. The modern psychologists have shown that even the present has a duration of its own and extends both ~~far~~ backward into the past and forward into the future. Thus, there is a simultaneous perception of all the letters of

- 
1. S.C.Chatterjee, The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge, p.365; James, Principles of Psychology, vol.1, pp.608-610.

*This is only another way of describing the problem, and does not explain it fully.*



a word, though these are successively heard by us. So also in visual perception, things are cognized as wholes. The sphoṭa theory is quite in keeping with the modern Gestalt psychology which believes in the primacy of Gestalten. The earlier methods proceeded from the elements to the whole, from the sounds to the words, from words to sentences and finally to the meaning of discourse as a whole; but the present tendency among psychologists is the exact opposite, namely, from meaning as Gestalt to the sentence and words as elements.<sup>1</sup> The sphoṭa is the sentence or word considered as a linguistic sign, and perceived as a Gestalt ab initio.

The second argument brought by the Mīmāṃsakas against the sphoṭa theory is that the unity of the word or sentence is based on the unity of the meaning, and that therefore, no new sphoṭa need be assumed to explain that. (ekābhidheyapratyayaśhetutā). The<sup>2</sup> grammarians reply that this objection involves the fallacy of interdependence, since the conception of the word

---

1. Urban, W.M., Language and Reality, p.63.

2. Tattvabindu, p.51



as a unitary entity depends on its conveying a single<sup>1</sup> idea and the meaning depends on the word. The Mīmāṃsakas argue that there is no interdependence since since the conception of the word is based on that of the meaning, but not vice versa.<sup>2</sup> We learn the meaning of words and sentences from their use in actual speech contexts; and so much of the sound-pattern in a fixed order which is found applied to a particular sense is taken to be a word having that meaning. Kumārilabhaṭṭa says<sup>3</sup> that the meaning of a word is determined by usage and as such, those letters uttered in a particular order of sequence by one individual, which has expressed their sense to us when we have first learned the word from our elders will express the same sense at all future times. Hence, it is argued that there is no necessity for postulating the sphoṭa. The grammarian's point of view is that even though the meaning is learned from their function in actual usage, we do experience the word or the sentence as a unitary entity, as a whole, and not as an aggregate of the various letters comprising it.<sup>4</sup>

1. Tattvaśūtra, p. 51 : parasparāśrayaprasaktir durvārā. na khalu aviditapadarūpavādhir artham avaiti.
2. Ibid, p. 53: na hi padāvadhārapādhīnas sambandhabodhaḥ; kim tu tadādhīnam padajñānam.
3. Ślokovārttika, sphoṭa section, verse 69: yāvanto yādṛśā ye ca yadarthapratipāḍane varṇaḥ prajñātasamarthyas te tathaiivābodhakāḥ.
4. And there is no reason to consider this experience as false, being based on upādhis.



### Classification of the sphota

The later grammarians like Bhattoji Dīkṣita<sup>1</sup> and Nagesa Bhaṭṭa enumerate eight different varieties of the sphota. The fundamental argument in all these cases is meaningfulness (vācakatva). Thus, we may consider either the letter or the word or the sentence as the meaning-bearing unit, and we get respectively the varṇa-sphota, the padasphota or the vākyasphota. Here we again come across the philosophical controversy as to whether śabda is permanent or transient (nitya or kārya).

If we take the Naiyāyika view that śabda is transient being produced each time of its utterance, we have to assume the concept of the class to explain language behaviour. The letter, the word or the sentence has to be considered as a class denoting the class of objects meant. Both Bhattojīdīkṣita and Koṇḍabhaṭṭa say that according to Bopadeva, the denoter (vācaka) should be of the nature of a universal, just like the denoted (vācya).<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Śabdakaustubha, pp. 7ff;

2. Sphotavāda, passim.; Laghumañjūsā, sphota section.

3. G.N. Bhattacharyya, op.cit., p. 107



Every word or sentence uttered in actual speech is an instance of the class of such words or sentences. This is similar to the mode of view put forward by Kaplan and Copilowish who define a sign (including a linguistic sign) as "a class of sign vehicles all having one and the same law of interpretation".<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell also<sup>2</sup> says, "The word 'dog' is a universal, just as dog is a universal. We say, loosely, that we can utter the same word "dog" on two occasions, but in fact we utter two examples of the same species. There is thus no difference of status between dog and the word "dog"; each is general and exists only in instances." By synthesizing the sphota theory with this Naiyāyika view, we get the three kinds of sphotas: varṇajātisphota, padajātisphota and the vākya-jātisphota.

If, on the other hand, we take the Mīmāṃsaka view that śabda is permanent, the word or sentence will have to be considered as a permanent pattern of the letters in a fixed order. Each instance of its occurrence is only a case of revealing or manifesting the permanent

---

1. Mind, Oct. 1939; discussed by Russell, Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, p. 184 and by J. Brough, op.cit., p. 45

2. op.cit., p. 24



sound-pattern. The semantic unit is taken to be one and the same in all cases of its occurrence. If the sphota theory is synthesized with the Mīmāṃsaka view, we get the three set of sphotas; varṇavyaktisphoṭa, padavyaktisphoṭa and vākyavyaktisphoṭa.

Again, the padasphoṭa and the vākyasphoṭa, taken as semantic units built of smaller such units which are themselves meaningful, are different from padasphoṭa and vākyasphoṭa considered as indivisible symbols denoting the meaning of the whole without any reference to the parts. The former are the sakhaṇḍa-sphoṭas and the latter are akhaṇḍa-sphoṭas. This division does not apply to the varṇasphoṭa, as it cannot be further divided. Thus, the eight subdivisions of sphota are:-

1. varṇasphoṭa
2. padasphoṭa
3. vākyasphoṭa
4. akhaṇḍapadasphoṭa
5. akhaṇḍavākyasphoṭa
6. varṇajātisphoṭa
7. padajātisphoṭa
8. vākyajātisphoṭa.

Bhartrhari seems to have held the akhaṇḍavākyasphoṭa, the indivisible sentence sphota of the vyakti type as the real sphota.



According to the later grammarians, varnasphota is justified on the grounds that a meaning is understood from roots and suffixes having one letter only. Patañjali himself has stated that from one point of view the ~~in~~ individual letters may be considered to have meaning, since roots, suffixes and particles of a single letter are meaningful.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes it is impossible to discriminate how much of the word refer to the thing-meant, and how much the case relationship. (e.g. rāmena, by Rāma). The Naiyāyikas explain this difficulty by saying that that it is the sthānin or the original permanent suffix that should be considered as the meaning-bearer. But the grammarians assert that it is not the sthānin, but the substitute or ādeśa that carries the meaning. They rightly point out the fact that the sthānin is an artificial entity invented by the grammarians to explain the formation of the various words in a simple way, and that they have no reality of their own, since they could be different in different systems of grammar. The people who speak the language are concerned only with the ādeśa, and the meaning is understood from that.

---

1. MBH.i.220.

2. G.N. Bhattacharyya, op.cit, pp.91ff; Valyākaranabhūsanāsāre, pp.418ff.



Hence the meaning has to be ascribed to the word as a whole, and therefore the padasphoṭa has to be assumed.

Similar consideration of the sandhi-forms such as dadhīdam (dadhi idam = this is curds) make it necessary to postulate the vākyasphoṭa.<sup>1</sup> All these various considerations are based on the conception of the sentence being made up of smaller meaning-bearing units, the words, the roots and the suffixes.

Strictly speaking the linguist can accept only the undivided sentence as the unit of meaning. As Bhartṛhari<sup>2</sup> says, in actual speech situations, there are no letters in the word, and no words in the sentence. "The analysis into letters and the distribution of meanings between stem and suffix, or between the words in the sentence - these proceedings, as Nāgeśa<sup>3</sup> says, are the occupation of grammarians."<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Kondaḥḥatta gives the example hāreva 'Hareva' for Hare ava (Hari, protect!). Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra, 66, "Harevetyādi dr̥ṣtvā tu vākyasphoṭam viniścīnu." The special power found in compound words to convey a unified sense is also explained by vākyasphoṭa. (See the section on compound words in the chapter on Lakṣaṇā)

2. VP.1.73: pade na varṇā vidyante varṇeṣv avayavā na ca vākyāt padānām atyantam praviveko na kaścana.

3. Laghumanjusa, p.5: tat tad arthavibhāgam śāstrametrayiṣa-  
yam.

4. J. Brough, op.cit., pp.43f.



The great importance of the sphota doctrine for the theory of language-symbolism is not fully appreciated by modern linguists mainly because of the fact that it has been subjected to a great deal of unnecessary mystification. Bhartṛhari himself developed a monistic doctrine of philosophy taking the transcendental Speech-essence as the first principle of the universe . This metaphysical doctrine of the evolution of the empirical world of names and things from the transcendental Speech-essence, erected on the basis of the sphota theory, was confused by later writers with the main linguistic theory itself, as a result of which it was generally assumed that the sphota is something mystical. Even many of the modern writers on the subject have not distinguished the purely linguistic theory from the metaphysical superstructure erected on its basis.

Keith describes<sup>1</sup> the sphota as a "mysterious entity, a sort of hypostatization of ~~the~~ sound, of which action sounds are manifestations." Similarly, Dr. S.K.De considers<sup>2</sup> the sphota as a somewhat mystical

---

1. A History of Sanskrit Literature, p.387

2. Studies in the History of Sanskrit Poetics, ii, p.180



conception" and explains it as the "sound of a ~~wh~~ word as a whole", "the sounds or something corresponding to them ... blended indistinguishably into a uniform whole." O. Strauss<sup>1</sup> takes the sphota as the transcendental word. A. Foucher<sup>2</sup> takes it as "La mystérieuse et fulgurante relation<sup>3</sup> qui eclate entre le son et le sens, entre le mot et l'idée." This mystical element brought in the discussion of the sphota is responsible for the neglect of the theory by modern linguists.

Another reason for the confusion about the real nature of the sphota is the mistranslation of the Sanskrit word 'śabda' as sound'. Even in India the term śabda was interpreted differently by different schools of philosophy. Many of the heated discussions about the essential nature of the śabda, found in the various philosophical works are mainly due to the equivocal nature of the term itself. To the Naiyāyika śabda is the ~~artikam~~ physical sound, articulate (varṇa) or inarticulate (dhvani) and is a product of the conjunction or disjunction of two bodies; it can also

- 
1. Altindische Spekulationen über die Sprache und ihre Probleme, ZDMG, 1927.
  2. Le Compendium des Topique-<sup>ar</sup> Trakasaṅgraha- d'Annam-bhatta, Introduction, p. xix.
  3. The sphota is not a relation, but the word itself. See Brough, Linguistics in Sanskrit Grammarians, TPS, 1951, p. 42



be produced from another sound, like one wave from another. They consider śabda to be ephemeral, since the sound is destroyed as soon as it is produced. The recognition of the articulate sound is based on the knowledge of the class. To the Mīmāṃsakas on the other hand śabda is the unit of speech, eternal and ubiquitous, which is only revealed or manifested by the spoken articulate sounds; it is not produced, it is only revealed. The Mīmāṃsakas' conception of the varṇa is something analagous to the modern linguist's conception of the phoneme. The ready recognition we have of the letters as the same cannot be due to similarity or even due to their being instances of the same class.<sup>1</sup> To Bhartṛhari and the Vaiyākaranas it is not the letter(varṇa) that is to be taken as the unit of language, but the expression with the meaning attached to it should be taken as a single indivisible unit of speech; this unit of speech is the śabda. The sounds produced at the time of utterance as well as the permanent letters(varṇas) revealed by the utterance, are only the means of revealing the śabda.

---

1. Stcherbatsky(Buddhist Logic, I, p.23) refers to this view of the Mīmāṃsakas as an 'absurd idea'. He seems to overlook the fact that the unit of speech is necessarily something permanent and ubiquitous, and is not identical with the sounds used to reveal it.



This essential ~~ma~~ sabda is the sphota, according to Bhartṛhari.

To translate sabda as sound in the discussions of the grammarians a theory of the sphota is highly misleading. Thus, for example, Mādhava's definition of the sphota in the Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha, (varṇātirikṭe varṇābhivyaṅgyo 'rthapratyāyako nityaś śabdas sphota iti tadvido vadanti) will be quite clear, if translated as "The abiding speech-unit which is the conveyor of meaning, distinct from the letters and revealed by them, is called the sphota by the grammarians". But it is quite confusing in Cowell's translation, "And..(say the wise in these matters)... this sphota is an eternal sound distinct from the letters and revealed by them, which causes <sup>the</sup> cognition of the meaning." Monier Williams defines the sphota as "sound(considered as eternal, ~~and imperceptible~~ indivisible and creative);" "the eternal and imperceptible element of sounds and words and the real vehicle of ~~the~~ the idea which

- 
1. Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha, translated by E.B.Cowell and A.E.Gough, p.211. See also J.Brough, op.cit., p.41
  2. Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p.1270



bursts or flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered". It must be noted that the sphoṭa is not a hypostatization of sound; the Indian grammarians use the term in the sense of the essential word or expression and attach more importance to its meaning-bearing aspect than to its phonetic aspect.

George Thibaut says that the sphoṭa is a "grammatical fiction in so far as it is apprehended by us as a whole." Bhartrhari's reply to this criticism would be that only the sphoṭa is real; the separate sounds uttered by the speaker and heard by the listener ( or the various letters of the alphabet written by the writer and seen by the reader) are only the means by which the linguistic symbol is revealed, and are irrelevant if taken by themselves. The criticism that the sphoṭa is an imperceptible entity is rejected by the grammarian; in fact, one of the main arguments in favour of the sphoṭa theory itself is the direct perception of the unity of the word or the sentence.

---

1. Vedantasūtras, with Sankara's bhāṣya, English Translation, SBE, XXXIV, p.204 n.



Many modern scholars have tried to identify the sphota with the 'idea' or 'notion' expressed by the combination of the ~~initial~~ letters. Thus, Garbe writes<sup>1</sup>, "It will be seen that a true thought is here presented, though obscurely expressed. This obscurity, however, will not appear strange to any one who considers that here for the first time a difficult problem is touched, which since has occupied many minds; for that supersensible word is, of course, no other than the idea which is expressed by the combination of the letters." P.V. Pathak<sup>2</sup>, in the Heyapakṣa of Yoga, gives the same view that "one can go to the length of identifying the sphota with the meaning of the word", and says that "the sphota theory, at its worst, is only a hypostatization of a psychological process of perception." Deussen is also inclined to identify the sphota with 'notion'.<sup>3</sup>

This view does not seem to give full credit to the symbolic nature of the sphota, for the discussions of the grammarians on the sphota theory make it clear that the sphota is not the idea or the meaning, but

---

1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, article on Yoga.

2. Heyapakṣa of Yoga, p. 84

3. See George Thibaut, Vedāntasūtras, SBE, xxxiv, p. 204 n. Thibaut criticizes this view strongly.



it is that indivisible symbol which brings to light the idea of the thing-meant. The sphoṭa is generally referred to as the vācaka or the abhidhāyaka, indicating that it is that which expresses the meaning.

S.Radhakrishnan says<sup>1</sup> that "the sphoṭa is the indivisible idea with its dual form of śabda, word and artha, meaning." It is true that Bhartrhari is a pure monist who believed that, when looked from the philosophical point of view, both the word and the meaning are only the different aspects of one and the same indivisible essence of thought<sup>2</sup>; but from the empirical point of view they have to be distinguished and then sphoṭa in its linguistic sense has to be taken as the indivisible symbol expressing the meaning. The word or sentence is really a psychic entity which is an indivisible unit, the symbol which carries the meaning, but which can be revealed or physically reproduced whenever wanted.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. The Principal Upaniṣads, 1953, p. 674

2. VP.ii.31: ekasyaivātmano bhedaḥ śabdārthav aprthak sthitau.

3. Gardiner, op.cit., p. 69 f.



Bhartrhari's Philosophy of language

On the basis of the sphota theory Bhartrhari erected a metaphysical superstructure, in which the transcendental Speech-essence(śabdatattva) is considered as the first principle of the universe. The whole world of things, whose individuality consists only in names and forms, have their source in this LOGOS. The Philosophers have accepted four different stages for this Speech-essence(Vāk) in its manifestation: parā, paśyanti, madhamā and vaikhari. At the parā stage Speech is identical with Brahman, and may be taken as the source of the whole universe. The paśyanti stage may be identified with instinct or pratibhā or the instantaneous flash of insight. It is thought in its undifferentiated form, and it is the meaning of language. According to Bhartrhari the sphota indicates this paśyanti stage of speech. Of course, it is very difficult to distinguish between <sup>h</sup>thought and speech at this stage. There is no language difference here. Every language reveals the same sphota which, in a flash, conveys the idea.

---

1.VP.i.1:anādinidhanam brahma śabdatattvam yad akṣaram  
vivartate 'rthabhāvena prakriyā jagato yataḥ

2.Vṛṣabhadeva's commentary on VP.i.14: pratibhām iti.  
yemam samastāśabdāṛthakāraṇabhūtā buddhiḥ, yām paśyanti-  
tyāhuḥ, yataś śabdāḥ prānavṛttim anupatanti, tām anu-  
paraiti pranugacchati.

BRITISH LIBRARY



The language difference is only the difference in the means of revealing the same sphota. The next stage of speech is the madhyamā; this corresponds to the vaikṛta dhvani in Bhartrhari's system of analysis (and to <sup>1</sup> sphota according to the analysis of Patañjali ). This is the sentence with its phonological structure, the sound-pattern of the norm. It is psychical in <sup>it</sup> nature and can be comprehended by the intellect. Some have called it the unstruck sound, since it is the acoustic image taken as the signifiant. The last stage in the manifestation of speech is the vaikhari or the actual utterance <sup>as</sup> spoken by the speaker and heard by the listener; this corresponds to the ~~vak~~ vaikṛta-dhvani of Bhartrhari. <sup>2</sup> Thus, by synthesizing the sphota doctrine with the ancient philosophical ideas, Bhartrhari gave his theory an added significance. The parā <sup>3</sup> stage of speech may be called the Great Sphoṭa in which case it can be identified with Brahman.

- 
1. Mahābhāṣyapradīpodyota, p. 11: dhvanipadenātra vaikhari, sphoṭapadenābhivyaktakatvādiko madhyamāvastha antara-śabda ucyate.
  2. Paramalakṣṇamanjūṣā, p. 4: "madhyamānādo 'rthavācaka-sphoṭatmakasabdavyaṅjakah", "Parā vānmūlacakrasthā paśyanti nābhisaṁsthita hṛdisthā madhyamā jñeya vaikhari kanthadesagā. vaikhariya hi kṛto nādaḥ paraśravaṇagocarah madhyamaya kṛto nādas sphoṭavyaṅjaka ucyate." (The reference to the mūlacakra, naval, chest and throat should not be taken literally, but is symbolic in nature).
  3. It has also resulted in the neglect of the linguistic principles underlying the sphota theory, as a metaphysical hypothesis.



C H A P T E R   I V

CONDITIONS OF KNOWING THE MEANING OF A SENTENCE:

ĀKĀṆKṢĀ, YOGYATĀ, SANNIDHI AND TĀTPARYAJNĀNA



The naive definition of a sentence as a collection of words is found as early as in the Brhaddevatā<sup>1</sup>; but it is in the Mīmāṃsāsūtras of Jaimini that we first come across the real definition of a sentence<sup>2</sup>; a sentence is a group of words serving a single purpose, if on analysis the separate words are found to have ākāṅkṣā<sup>3</sup> or mutual expectancy. (arthaikatvād ekam vākyaṃ śakāṅkṣam ced vibhāge syāt). This principle was enunciated by the Mīmāṃsakas in dealing with the prose passages of the Yajurveda, where it was sometimes found difficult to ascertain how far a certain sentence extends. This principle of syntactic unit says that so long as a single purpose is served by a number of words, which on being separated are found to be deficient and incapable of effecting the said purpose, they form a syntactic unit - one complete Yajus mantra<sup>4</sup>. Śabara also explains this sūtra<sup>5</sup> as referring to the Vedic mantras only, and the term arthaikatva is interpreted in the sense of serving a single purpose.

---

1. Brhaddevatā, ii.117: padasaṅghātajam vākyaṃ.

2. Mīmāṃsāsūtras, 2.1.47

3. The term ākāṅkṣā is not used as a technical ~~is~~ word here as in later Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya works.

4. Ganganatha Jha, Purvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, p.189.

5. Śabarabhāṣya, vol.1, p.443; Translation, p.313f.



It was felt that this principle was capable of a much more extended application, and in the Vākya-pādiya we find Bhartṛhari referring to this as one of the well-known definitions of a sentence<sup>1</sup>. Kumārilabhaṭṭa, who follows Śābara in the interpretation of the passage, was also conscious that it could be applied to ordinary sentences as well. He says,<sup>2</sup> "It must be concluded that those words on hearing which we are cognizant of a single idea must be regarded as one sentence - either ordinary or of a mantra and brāhmaṇa". This explanation is by taking arthaikatva in the sūtra in the sense of a single idea. Among the followers of Kumāriḷa bhaṭṭa, Pārthasārathimīśra favours the Bhāṣya view and takes artha in the sense of purpose<sup>3</sup>, whereas Someśvarabhaṭṭa in the Nyāyasūdhā takes the word in the sense of<sup>4</sup> meaning to admit a wider scope of the principle.

---

1.VP.ii.4: sākāṅkṣāvayavam bhedē parānākāṅkṣasābdakam  
karmapradhānam guṇavad ekārtham vākya iṣyate.

2.Tantravārttika, translation, p.586f.; Ganganatha Jha,  
op.cit., p.190.

3.Ganganatha Jha, op.cit., p.190f.

4.Ibid. p.191; Nyāyasūdhā, p.381ff.



Prabhākara says<sup>1</sup> that artha in the sūtra stands for prayojana or purpose, and that the words of a sentence must be related to the purpose which is the most important factor in a sentence; later he says<sup>2</sup> that artha in the sūtra<sup>stands</sup> for meaning as well as for purpose, both being interrelated; the Bhāṣya emphasizes the unity of purpose, as that is more important. Prabhākara lays stress on the purposive nature of sentences.

<sup>3</sup>  
The next sūtra of Jaimini lays down the principle of vākyabheda or 'syntactic split' which says that "when the sentences are independent of one another (each sentence having no requirement or expectation of words outside itself to complete its meaning), they should be treated as distinct sentences." Thus ākāṅkṣā or syntactic expectancy among the words is accepted as an essential condition for a sentence.

This Mīmāṃsā type of definition laying stress on the necessity of ākāṅkṣā or mutual expectancy of

- 
1. Brhatī, Ms. p. 51 ( See Purvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, p. 190 )
  2. Ibid, Ms. p. 52A ( See Purvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, p. 191 )
  3. Mīmāṃsāsūtras, 2.1.47: sameṣu vākyabhedah.



among words in a sentence in order to have syntactic relation to bring about a unity of idea or of purpose, appears in the Kātyāyanaśrautasūtra also.<sup>1</sup> There a sentence is described as that which is nirākāṅkṣa, that is to say, something which has no requirement or expectation of words outside itself to complete its meaning. The condition about the unity of purpose or of idea is not mentioned there. A similar definition is found in the Satyāsādharaśrautasūtra also.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested recently that the śrautasūtra definitions are based on the Mīmāṃsā definition.<sup>3</sup>

It is generally believed that the condition about ākāṅkṣā or the mutual expectancy among words in a sentence was first promulgated by the Mīmāṃsakas; but the necessity for interdependence of words when they have to give a unified sense as in a compound <sup>word</sup> or a sentence was recognized even earlier by the grammarians.

- 
1. Kātyāyanaśrautasūtra, 1.3.2; J. Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, SPT., 1953, p. 162.
  2. Satyāsādharaśrautasūtra, p. 36. (Quoted by D.V. Garge, see below)
  3. D.V. Garge, Citations in Sabarabhāṣya, p. 51



Pāṇini himself says<sup>1</sup> that words can form a compound word only if they have sāmarthyā; this term has been differently interpreted by commentators; according to some it is vyapeksā or mutual connection pertaining to the meaning<sup>2</sup>, in which sense it is similar to the condition of ākāṅkṣā given by the Mīmāṃsakas; according to some others sāmarthyā is to be explained as ekārthībhāva or unification of meaning<sup>3</sup>; that is to say, the different words with different meanings are made to signify a unified sense. This latter view may be compared to the condition of arthaikatva given by Jaimini (when explained as unity of sense). Pāṇini is discussing compound words, whereas Jaimini is dealing with the sentence, but the conditions seem to be similar<sup>4</sup>. Patañjali explains these two views as mutually exclusive, and accepts the ekārthībhāva point of view as the correct one; according to this the members of a compound word

- 
1. Pāṇini, 1.1.1: samarthaḥ padavidhiḥ.
  2. MBh. 1, p. 365: parasparavyapekṣām sāmarthyam eke. kṛtā punaś śabdāy vyapekṣā? na brūmaś śabdāy iti. kim tarhi? arthayoḥ.
  3. Vārttika under Pāṇini, 1.1.1: prthagarthānām ekārthībhāvas samarthavacanam. See also the Bhāṣya on it.
  4. Strictly speaking, sāmarthyā is the capacity of the words for mutual association, vyapeksā is their interdependence, and ākāṅkṣā is the need one had for the other for completing the sense.



give up their individual meanings and acquire a special signification; but according to the other view, the individual members retain their own meanings, but they are mutually related. According to Haradatta both vyapekṣā and ekārthibhava are necessary in a compound word, since in the absence of mutual connection of meanings, words are not allowed to form a compound. But others like Kaiyata give these two as the conditions for a sentence and a compound respectively.

The knowledge of the syntactic unity of a sentence is mainly on the basis of the ākāṅkṣā or the mutual expectancy of the words. To this primary condition were later added two more, yogyatā or consistency of sense, and āsatti or sannidhi which stands for the contiguity of the words. These three conditions for the understanding of the correlation of the words in a sentence were first promulgated by the Mīmāṃsakas,

- 
1. See P.C. Chakravartī, Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar, p. 293
  2. Mahābhāṣya pradīpa, under Pāṇini 1.1.1. iha vyapekṣayām samaso na bhavati, ekārthibhave vakyam neti.
  3. Kumarilabhaṭṭa, Tantravārttika, vol. 1, p. 455:  
ākāṅkṣā sannidhānam ca yogyatā ceti ca trayam sambandhakāraṇatvena kṛtam nanantarasrutih.  
(Mutual expectancy, proximity and congruity constitute the grounds of relationship; mere immediate sequence is not a ground of relationship).



and later taken up by all the other systems of thought with slight changes; and, the normal statement of the conditions for sābdabodha or the understanding of the meaning of a sentence is that it must possess ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and asatti. To these some have later added a fourth condition, viz. the knowledge of tatparya, the intention of the speaker or the purport of the sentence. Of these the greatest linguistic importance has to be given to ākāṅkṣā.

2  
Ākāṅkṣā consists in a word not being able to convey a complete sense in the absence of another word; literally it is the desire on the part of the listeners to know the other word to complete the sense. A word is said to have ākāṅkṣā for another if it cannot, without the latter, produce knowledge of its inter-connection in a speech. In every language certain words necessarily require certain other words to complete the

---

1. Faddegon refers (The Vaiśeṣika System, pp. 61ff.) to the use of the terms ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and sannidhi by Kumārila-bhaṭṭa in the Slokavārttika, and says that the terms are not used there in the exact sense in which they are used by later writers. He seems to have missed the reference to the terms in the Tantravārttika. The term ākāṅkṣā is used even by Pāṇini, though not in a technical sense. (VIII.11.96 & 104 ).

2. Derived from ~~xxx~~ the root kāṅks to desire.



sense. Thus a noun in the nominative case requires a verb to convey a complete meaning; a verb like 'bring' has expectancy for a word denoting some object. A string of words such as "cow, horse, man, elephant" (gaur asvaḥ puruṣo hastī) does not convey a complete sense, ~~since~~ as there is no connection between them owing to lack of ākāṅkṣā.<sup>1</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas were not quite clear in distinguishing between syntactic expectancy and psychological expectancy, and Bhartṛhari actually criticises their definition of a sentence on the grounds that its ākāṅkṣā would imply that a passage of several grammatical "sentences" would have to be considered as one sentence.<sup>2</sup> Salikanātha, the follower of Prabhākara, says that ākāṅkṣā, being the curiosity on the part of the listeners has been explained by some on the basis of invariable

---

1. Tarkasaṅgraha, p. 30 : padasya padāntaravyatirekaprayuktānvayanānubhāvakatvam ākāṅkṣā; Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV: tatra padārthānām parasparajijñāsāviśayatvayogyatvam ākāṅkṣā, kriyāśravane kāraṇasya, kāraṇaśravane kriyāyah, kāraṇaśravane itikartavyatāyāś ca jijñāsāviśayatvat.

2. VP. ii. 3. See J. Brough, op. cit., p. 163.



association; thus an action implies an agent, a place, an instrument and so on, and similarly, an agent or an instrument naturally implies an action to complete its sense. This view is criticized on the ground that there is no end to the curiosities aroused in the minds of the listeners through such associations. Only those that are essential for the accomplishment of the intended purpose need be taken as the requirement; the omission by the speaker ~~about~~<sup>of</sup> the particular nature of the instrument, place etc. for the action recommended shows that he is indifferent about it. Thus, "Bring the cow" is a complete sentence, even though the instrument is not mentioned; "with a stick" is added, if that is intended, otherwise it is implied that the listener is to bring the cow by some means or other. Thus the scope of ākāṅkṣā depends on the intention of the speaker. Even though the sentence "Bring the cow" is complete and has no ākāṅkṣā outside itself, if we add the phrase "with a stick", that new phrase is in need of the verb for syntactic completeness, and hence "Bring the cow with

---

1. Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p. 5: kā punar iyaṁ ākāṅkṣā?  
pratipattur jijñāsā. Kinnibandhanā punar asau? avinā-  
 bhavanibandhaneti kecit. kriyā hi kārakāvinābhavinīti  
 tām pratītya kārakam jijñāsate. evaṁ kārakam api buddhva  
 kriyām iti. Tad ayuktam iti manyante. jijñāsā tathā  
 tadyajanakatatkriyātatkāraṁterādijijñāsāpyāpadyate.



a stick" becomes a single sentence. In the case of elliptical sentences like "-the door", that word itself requires some verb for syntactic completeness.

According to the Vedāntins, however, there is ākāṅkṣā between words, not only when one actually implies the other, but also when it may possibly imply it.<sup>1</sup> Thus there are two kinds of ākāṅkṣā: utthitākāṅkṣā or actual and natural expectancy of one word for the other to make a complete sense, and utthāpyākāṅkṣā or potential expectancy which could be roused if necessary. For example in the sentence "Bring the cow", one may ask the question "What kind of cow?", and hence the word 'cow' may possibly imply adjectives like 'white' or 'old'; there is no limit to the possibilities of such potential expectancy. According to this view the ākāṅkṣā that exists between words in a sentence must be mutual and not one-sided; in some cases the expectancy in one direction may be direct and natural, while in the other direction it is only potential; thus in the sentence "Bring the white cow" the word 'cow' has only

---

1. Nyāyakośa, p. 113; S.C. Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge, p. 367; Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV.



a potential expectancy towards the adjective 'white', whereas the adjective has a direct and natural expectancy for the substantive 'cow'.

The Mīmāṃsakas explain ākāṅkṣā not only on the basis of the syntactic incompleteness of the sentence, but also on the basis of the psychological incompleteness of the idea. They are concerned with the interpretation of the Vedic injunctions; but the two schools of Mīmāṃsā, the Prabhākara and the Bhaṭṭa, differ in their view as to what an injunction really means. According to the Prabhākara school, every Vedic injunction is to be considered as a command (niyoga); the person who is enjoined to do something has to do it, not because it will bring about some beneficial result, but simply because it is the command. The law is to be obeyed because it is the law, not because of the fear of punishment or the expectation of reward. The action may bring about some fruit, but the action has no expectancy for it. A command is not a tempting offer. Hence according

---

1. Vakyārthamātrkāvali, p. 7: "anvitasyābhidhānārtham uktārthaghatanāya vā pratiyogini jijñāsā yā sākāṅkṣeti glīyate"; "abhidhānāparyavasānam abhidheyāparyavasānam ca jijñāsodayanibandhanam."

2. C. Kunhan Raja, In Defence of Mīmāṃsā, Adyar Library Bulletin, 1952, p. 178f; Introduction to Bṛhātī (Madras University Series, 3), p. 24; Nyāyaratnamālā, chapter III.



to the Prābhākara school the three essential psychological ākāṅkṣās are for viśaya or the act enjoined, for niyojya or the person who is enjoined to do it and for karana or the means of doing it. Thus in the passage viśvajitā yajeta (The Viśvajit sacrifice is to be performed) there is no mention of the niyojya or the functionary; therefore to complete the meaning we take the word svargakāma (one who desires heaven) as understood.<sup>1</sup>

But according to the Bhāṭṭa school the content of an injunction is the realization that the action enjoined is productive of some beneficial result. Kumārila takes the utilitarian view of morality; he says that not even a fool will act without expecting some reward.<sup>2</sup> The ākāṅkṣā of the Vedic injunction is ~~therefore~~ for the itikartavyatā or the act enjoined, the sādhana or karana or the means and for the phala or the fruit of the action. There is no special ākāṅkṣā for the person who is to do it; anyone interested in the fruit will do it.

---

1. The well-known line in the Bhagavadgītā denouncing the expectation of the ~~reward~~ results while doing one's duties (karmany evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana) seems to imply this view of Prabhākara. Kumārila bhaṭṭa rejects this theory of action without the expectation of any result.

2. Slokovārttika: prayojanam anuddiśya na mando'pi pravarttate.



Thus in the sentence visvajitā vajeta the additional word svargakamah is to satisfy the akāṅkṣā regarding the fruit of action. In this way the two schools of Mīmāṃsā give two different sets of akāṅkṣā according to the difference in the interpretation of the psychological factors involved in an injunction.

An extension of this psychological expectancy is found in the Mīmāṃsā definition of a Mahāvākya (compound sentence) on the basis of the mutual expectancy of the sentences or clauses that comprise it. It is this interdependence of sentences that make up a prakaraṇa or context. Among the sentences in a particular context one is the principal (aṅgin) and the others are aṅgas subordinate to it. The general rule is that the principal clause and the subordinate clauses which are mutually connected together by expectancy, consistency and proximity form one large sentence, when they serve a single purpose. Thus there is sentence unity in the following: "He shall sacrifice; heaven is the reward; a goat is the oblation; Agni is the deity." Here all the sentences have the same purpose, viz., the performance of

---

1. Śaṣṭradīpikā, p. 442; Mīmāṃsāsūtras, III.viii.4: --tad vākyam hi tadarthatvāt.



the sacrifice. This syntactic unity or ekavākyatā is based on a two-fold relation: that of a word to a sentence (padaikavākyatā) and that of a sentence to another sentence (vākyaikavākyatā). According to the Mīmāṃsakas only injunctive sentences have direct significance; the others are arthavādas, i.e. corroborative and eulogistic sentences and are subordinate. These arthavādas can indicate their meaning only as syntactically connected with the injunctive sentences. The relation of an arthavāda to an injunction is that of a word to a sentence to which it forms a part. This is called padaikavākyatā. But when sentences which are complete in respect of their own meanings again combine because of their relation of ~~relation~~ principal and subordinate, they form a syntactic unity; this is called vākyaika-vākyatā.<sup>2</sup>

1. arthavāda is of three kinds: (i) gunavāda or figurative statement, (ii) anuvāda reiterates what is already existing or what is known by other means of cognition. e.g. agnir himasya bheṣajam (fire is an antidote against cold) states a fact that is already known, and is to be taken as a praise of Agni, (iii) bhūtārthavāda or the statement or description of some past action.

2. Kumārilabhaṭṭa quoted in Vedāntaparibhāṣā IV; Tāntravārttika, p. 339  
svarthabodhe samāptānam aṅgāṅgitvādyapeksayā  
vākyaṇām ekavākyatvam punas samhatya jāyate.  
 The Vedantins also accept this view. See Vedāntaparibhāṣā Chapter IV; Huparīkar, The Problem of Sanskrit Teaching, pp. 443ff. Among literary critics Viśvanātha defines a Mahāvākya as collection of connected sentences. (Sāhitya-darpana, 11.1: vākyaoccayo mahāvākyaṃ.)



It is to be realized that the ākāṅkṣā or the expectancy that holds between words in a sentence is a grammatical one and not merely psychological. It is only the need for the syntactic completeness of the sentence. The Naiyāyikas have clearly defined ākāṅkṣā as a kind of syntactic need which one word has for another in a sentence in order to convey the interrelation of the words. It is the ākāṅkṣā that leads to the knowledge of the syntactic relation of words in a sentence.

Nagesa, the great grammarian, says that ākāṅkṣā is the desire on the part of the listeners on hearing a word in a sentence to know the idea which can be related to its meaning in order to get a complete sense; thus the expectancy is for the listeners and not for the words or their meanings; it is only in a figurative sense that this expectancy is attributed to the words and their meanings.

- 
1. Tarkasaṅgraha, p. 30; Kusumāñjali defines it as padārthasamsargāvagamaprāgabhāvaḥ. (Nyāyakośa, p. 113).
  2. Paramalaghumañjūsā, ākāṅkṣā section, p. 1. "sa caikapadārthajñāne tadārthanvayayogyasya yaj jñānam tadviśayecca; asyanvayy arthaḥ ka ity evamrupā puruṣanisthaiva, tathāpi svaviśaye 'rthe aropah."



YOGYATĀ

Yogyatā is the logical compatibility or consistency of the words in a sentence for mutual association.<sup>1</sup> Really it involves a judgement on the sense or nonsense of a sentence. When the meaning of a sentence is not contradicted by experience, there is yogyatā or consistency between its constituent words. Śālikanātha says<sup>2</sup> that yogyatā demands the words in a sentence to have competence for mutual connection, and that this competence is to be known from experience. In the sentence "He wets it with water" (agninā payasā siñcati) there is yogyatā or consistency of meaning, since wetting is generally done with a liquid like water and there is nothing incompatible between the idea of wetting and that of water. But a sentence like "He wets it with fire" (agninā siñcati) has no yogyatā or compatibility, since the idea of wetting is something incongruous with that of fire.

---

1. Tarkasaṅgraha, p. 30: arthābādho yogyatā; Parama-laghumañjūsā, p. 13: parasparānvaya prayojakadharmavatvam; Tattvacintamani: bādhakapramāviraṇaḥ (Nyāyakosa, p. 675)

2. Vākyaarthamātrkāvalī, p. 9: kim punar idam yogyatvam nāma? yat sambandhārhatvam. sambandhārham iti katham jñāyate? sambandhitvena dr̥ṣṭatvāt.



There is difference of opinion about the exact function of yogyatā in the comprehension of meaning from a sentence<sup>1</sup>. Some Naiyāyikas hold that a decisive knowledge of yogyatā is a pre-requisite of verbal cognition; others argue that since a decisive knowledge of incompatibility prevents verbal cognition, what is required is only the absence of such a counteracting agent<sup>2</sup>. According to the former view it is a positive condition, whereas according to the latter it is only the absence of an impediment in verbal cognition.

It is necessary to distinguish between inconceivable combinations like 'the circular square' and the conceivable combinations which are against our experience such as 'the rabbit's horn'. Kumarila<sup>3</sup> bhaṭṭa says that incompatibility with the actual facts does not prevent verbal comprehension, but only the validity of the knowledge. Wittgenstein<sup>4</sup> also says that what is conceivable is also possible.

---

1. Kuppasvami Sastri, A Primer of Indian Logic, p. 334f.

2. Nyāyakosā, p. 676; bādhaniścayābhāvo yogyatā iti navya āhuḥ.

3. Slokavarttika, p. 46 (on sūtra 1.1.2): atyantāsatyapi hy arthe jñānam śabdah karoti hi bādhāt tu na pramā tatra tataḥ prāmānyaniścayaḥ.

4. Philosophical Investigations, p. 282: "The fairy tale only invents what is not the case; it does not talk nonsense."



Strictly speaking it is the inconceivability of the ~~the~~ mutual association of the word-meanings that renders the whole sentence nonsensical; it is not the lack of correlation with the actual facts, but the impossibility of connecting the word-meanings that stands in the way of verbal comprehension. The other condition is not for mere verbal knowledge, but only for a valid judgement.

Sometimes the lack of yogyatā ~~or~~ may be only apparent and could be explained away by resorting to the metaphorical meaning of a word in the sentence; if the incompatibility is thus removed and yogyatā is understood, there is no difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the sentence. The apparent incompatibility of the expressed sense is an essential condition for lakṣaṇā or transfer.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. This is discussed in the chapter on Lakṣaṇā.



## SANNIDHI

Sannidhi or āsatti is generally explained as the condition that the words in a sentence should be contiguous in time<sup>1</sup>. This contiguity or proximity is the uninterrupted utterance or unbroken apprehension of words when they are in juxtaposition. Words uttered with a long interval intervening between each word cannot produce the knowledge of any interrelation among them, even if there be ākāṅksā and yogyatā. If the words are separated by the intervention of irrelevant words, then also the connection of the meaning cannot be understood.

2

Kumārīlabhaṭṭa distinguishes between sannidhi and mere immediate sequence of utterance (anantarasruti). He explains sannidhi as the continuous moving about of the words or their meanings in the mind (buddhau vipariivrttiḥ<sup>3</sup>). Śālikanātha also explains it in the same way.<sup>4</sup> According to the Bhaṭṭa school the lack of sannidhi is of two kinds: not being uttered together and not being signified by words. No syntactic relation is possible

- 
1. Tarkasaṅgraha, p. 30; padānam avilambenoccāraṇam sannidhiḥ; Vedāntaparibhāṣa, IV; āsattis cāvyaavadhānena padajanya-padārthopasthitiḥ.
  2. Tantravārttika, p. 445; ākāṅksā sannidhānam ca yogyatā, ceti ca trayam sambandhakāraṇatvena kṛptam nānantarasruti.
  3. Ibid., p. 455.
  4. Vākyarthamātrkāvali, p. 3.
  5. Mānameyodaya, p. 99f.: sannihitatvābhāvāt ~~sannidhi~~ sabda-bodhitatvābhāvaḥ ca dvedhā sannidhyābhāvo bhavati.



in the case of the words "bring ...the cow" uttered at different times. And a sentence such as "Tie up the cow" cannot have syntactic affinity with the word 'horse', even when the horse is seen in front as requiring to be tied up.<sup>1</sup> Thus they hold that syntactic relation is possible only for what have been comprehended through words.<sup>2</sup>

3

The Prābhākara school, on the other hand, believes that sannidhi is only the contiguity of cognition of the sense and not necessarily of words actually uttered. Thus in the case of elliptical sentences the syntactic relation is known by supplying the necessary meaning; the Bhāṭṭa school rejects this view and insists that even in elliptical sentences the syntactic relation is known only by supplying the missing ~~the~~ words themselves.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Prābhākara school, again, sannidhi does not mean the simultaneous mental comprehension of

- 
1. Mānameyodaya, p.100: 'gām badhāna' ity atra bandhanāpekṣasya dr̥ṣyamānasyāśvasya śabdābodhitatvād evānanvayaḥ.
  2. Ibid: śabdapratipannānam evānvaya iti niyamah siddhah.
  3. Vākyaarthamātrkāvali, p.9: sannidhiś śabdajanmaiva vyutpattau nopalakṣaṇam adhyāhr̥tenāpyarthena lōke sambandhadarsanāt.
  4. Mānameyodaya, p.101: "śabdādhyāhara eva syād ity evam māḍṣam matam." This point is explained in detail in the section on elliptical sentences.



the words; as in the case of ākāṅksā it works step by step in the order of sequence in which they are cognized.<sup>1</sup> The mutual connection of the meanings of words is comprehended step by step along with the knowledge of ākāṅksā, yogyatā and sannidhi. Thus in the sentence "Bring the cow, which is white, with a stick" (gām ānaya suklām dandena), first the word 'cow' is known as related to the verb 'bring'; then this connected sense is related to the meaning of the next word 'white' and later with that of the next. This is on the basis of the anvitābhidhāna theory. Some of the Naiyāyikas also seem to favour this view.<sup>2</sup>

According to the early Naiyāyikas, however, the recollection of the meanings of words is simultaneous. Like perception, recollection is also transient and, therefore, it is impossible to recollect the meanings of individual words one by one and then have a collective cognition. The method of simultaneous comprehension is

- 
1. Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p. 9: ākāṅksā vac ca sannidhāv api sannidhāpakakrameṇaiva kramo veditavyaḥ.
  2. Siddhāntamuktāvali, under verse 83 : yad yad ākāṅkṣitam yogyam sannidhānam prapadyate tena tenānvitas svārthah padair evāvagamyaate. (Also in Vākyārthamātrkāvali).



explained on the analogy of 'the pigeons on the threshing floor'; just as pigeons, young and old, come down together to pick up grains, so also in a sentence the meanings of words become interrelated simultaneously.

The Navya-Nyāya school defines āsatti or sannidhi as an immediate recollection of the meanings of words through their expressive power or lakṣanā<sup>2</sup>; even if the words are separated, as it sometimes happens in a verse, there is āsatti, if the meanings of the words are recollected without any interruption. This āsatti itself is the cause of verbal comprehension, not the knowledge of āsatti as the early Naiyāyikas believed.<sup>3</sup> This recollection is explained as a collective cognition (samūhālambana-jñāna). The perception of each word leaves its impression on the mind, and when the last word is uttered, its last letter acts as a stimulus, and a collective recollection follows. It is a single cognition arising out of the contact of the senses with a collection of objects.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. It is called khalekapotanyāya. See Siddhāntamuktāvalī under verse 83 : vṛddhā yuvanaś śiśavaḥ kapotāḥ khale yathāmi yugapat patanti, tathaiva sarve yugapat padārthāḥ paraspāreṇanvayino bhavanti.

2. Nyāyamañjari (See Nyāyakosā, p. 135): vṛttyā padajanya-padārthopasthitiḥ.

3. Ibid: sā ca svarūpasatī śābdabodhahetuḥ, na tu jñatā.

4. Huparikar, The Problem of Sanskrit Teaching, pp. 436ff.



ELLIPTICAL SENTENCES

In the case of elliptical sentences where the intended meaning is understood from the context even though some of the words necessary for syntactic completeness are not actually expressed, what is the ~~px~~ process of verbal comprehension? Do we have to supply the omitted words before we can get the meaning of the sentence, or do we supply the general meaning from the context and understand the sentence?

The Mīmāṃsakas of the Prābhākara school hold that it is easier to supply the necessary meaning than to presume the omitted words as understood.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the word can be understood only after understanding the meaning to be supplied in the context; when that meaning is known, it is unnecessary to presume the existence of the words, since we are interested in the meanings and not in the words. Moreover, the presence of a word is not essential for the recollection of the meaning.<sup>2</sup> Therefore they argue that in all such cases

---

1. Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p.8 : sannidhiś śabdajanmaiva vyutpattau nopalakṣaṇam adhyāhrtenāpy arthena loke sambandhadarśanāt. Mānameyodaya, p.100: gurus tū buddhisannidhimātram eva sannidhim manyate, na tu śabdasannidhim.

2. Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p.8: na ca vācyam śabda evādhyāhriyate, sa cārtham upakalpayatīty anupayogād apramāṇakatvāc ca.



it is the omitted meaning, not the actual word, that is to be supplied. (arthādhyaḥāra).

Kumārīlabhaṭṭa rejects this view and maintains that in all such cases it is necessary to supply the omitted words themselves in order that we may have the verbal comprehension of meaning! In ordinary conversation when an incomplete sentence such as "the door" is heard, we take <sup>along with it,</sup> as understood, some word like 'close' or 'open' to form a syntactically complete sentence which can give the meaning. So also in the Vedic injunction visvajitā yajeta (The visvajit sacrifice is to be performed) we have to supply the word svargakāmaḥ (by one who desires heaven) in order to satisfy the expectancy and make it a complete sentence. Syntactic expectancy has to be satisfied by supplying the actual words omitted. Verbal comprehension is possible only from syntactically complete sentences and therefore the view about the supplying of the meaning is not acceptable. There are different means

---

1. Mānameyodaya, p. 101: śabdasyaivānvayārhatvād dvāram avriyatām iti śabdādhyaḥāra eva syād ity evam mādrśam matam.

2. Nyāyakośa, p. 113: śābdi hy ākāṅkṣā śabdenaiva prapūryate.



of cognition such as perception and inference by which meaning may be understood; thus the idea of a pot may be conveyed by just pointing to it!<sup>1</sup> Combinations of more than one way are also possible, as in the sentence "Take this", with pointing to the object intended. Similarly one who sees a white object and hears the neighing and the noise of galloping may understand that a white horse is galloping, even without the cognition of the words expressing the idea;<sup>2</sup> but this knowledge is arrived at either from inference or arthāpatti (postulation or immediate inference from negative concomitance) and is not verbal. The Vedāntins and the Naiyāyikas also agree with the Bhaṭṭa ~~Mīmāṃsaka~~ view of supplying the omitted words (padādhyāhāra) in the case of incomplete sentences in order to have verbal comprehension.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Mīmāṃsakas it is through arthāpatti that we cognize the omitted word or idea in such cases. Etymologically arthāpatti means the postulation (āpatti) of a fact (artha); it is the process by which we get the knowledge of a fact that explains

---

1. Huparikar, op.cit., p. 441

2. Śloka-vārttika: paśyataś śvetimā rūpam heṣāśabdāṃ ca śṛṇvataḥ khuranispeṣāśabdāṃ ca śveto'śvo dhāvatīti dhih.

3. Vedānta-paribhāṣā, IV; Siddhānta-muktāvali, under verse 83.



what is otherwise unaccountable.<sup>1</sup> Sabara says that it is the postulation of some fact, when what is seen or heard is otherwise inexplicable.<sup>2</sup> Thus on seeing that Devadatta who is known to be alive, is not at home, his presence outside is presumed; on hearing that Devadatta who is fat does not eat during day time, it is presumed that he eats during night. In such cases the postulation of a fact is necessary to explain two known facts that are apparently contradictory. Sabara refers to two types of arthāpatti, dr̥ṣṭārthāpatti or postulation from what is seen and śrūtārthāpatti or postulation from what is heard.

3

According to the Prābhākara school, arthāpatti consists in the postulation of a fact and not of a word, and hence even in the case of elliptical sentences it is only the general meaning that can be cognized through it. But Kumārilabhaṭṭa explains dr̥ṣṭārthāpatti as postulation from what is experienced, and gives a

- 
1. Mānameyodaya, p.118: anvayānupapadyā yad upapādaka-kalpanam tad arthāpattiḥ.
  2. Sabarabhāṣya (see Bṛhatī, p.110): arthāpattir api dr̥ṣṭas srūto vā'rtho'nyathā nopapadyata ityarthākalpanā.
  3. Vākyaarthamātrkāvalī, p.8f.: na ca dvāram iti yatrā-dhyāhāras tatrāpy āvriyatām savriyatām iti vā kalpayitum arthāpatteh prabhaviṣṇuta, sāmānyakalpanāmātra-hetutvāt.



new interpretation for śrutārthāpatti<sup>1</sup>: it is the postulation of the omitted words to make out the syntactic relation in the case of elliptical sentences. The Prābhākara school does not accept such an interpretation for śrutārthāpatti.

The Vedāntins also follow the Bhāṭṭa school in their view about elliptical sentences.<sup>2</sup> The Naiyāyikas also agree with them in emphasizing the necessity of supplying the actual words in the case of incomplete sentences in order to have verbal comprehension;<sup>3</sup> but they do not accept arthāpatti as a separate means of cognition; instead they include it under inference based on an invariable concomitance between the absence of the major term and the absence of the middle term (anumāna of the kevalavyatireki type).<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Mānameyodaya, p.129: yatra tv aparipūrṇasya vākyaśyānvayasiddhaye śabdo 'dhyāhriyate tatra śrutārthāpattir iṣyate; see also Śloka-vārttika, arthāpatti section.
  2. Vedānta-paribhāṣā, IV: aśrutasthale tatpadādhyāhāraḥ.
  3. Nyāyakośa, p.16f: naiyāyikaisa śabdādhyāhāra eva svīkriyate, na tv arthādhyāhāraḥ. Also Siddhāntamuktāvalī under verse 83.
  4. Nyāyakośa, p.79: atra naiyāyikāḥ - arthāpattir na pramāṇāntaram kim tu vyatirekavyāptyā anumane 'ntar-  
~~bhavadditi~~ bhāvād iti.



Incomplete sentences are of two kinds: the normal elliptical sentence where the syntactic expectancy is not fully satisfied, and the syntactically complete sentence where the psychological expectancy is not fully satisfied.<sup>1</sup> Bhoja in his Śrngāraprakāśa distinguishes these two types clearly; he calls the former adhyāhāra and the latter vākyasēṣa.<sup>2</sup> Both are incomplete sentences leaving something to be understood; in adhyāhāra the sentence is syntactically incomplete and requires the postulation of the necessary word as understood, whereas in vākyasēṣa it is the idea that is incomplete. Owing to the purposive nature of speech it is held that the ultimate meaning of every sentence is to influence some action. Even in cases where it is not actually expressed, it has to be assumed. Thus the sentence "The road is full of thieves" means "Do not go that way", and the sentence "There are crocodiles in that pond" means that one should not bathe in it. These ideas are got through vākyasēṣa.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Nyāyakosa, p. 79: śrutārthāpattiś ca dvividhā, abhidhānānupāpattir abhihitānupāpattiś ca.

2. V. Raghavan, Śrngāraprakāśa, vol. ii, p. 180. See the quotation there from Bhoja: śabdākāṅkṣānivartaka 'dhyāhāraḥ, arthakāṅkṣānivartako vākyasēṣaḥ.

3. Bhoja's śrngāraprakāśa (quoted by V. Raghavan, loc. cit.): sarvavākyānāṃ vidhiniṣedhaparyavasāyitvāt sāksāt tadaśrutāv api tadupakalpanam vākyasēṣaḥ, sacoraḥ panthā ity ukte na gantavyam, grāhās sarityām ity ukte na śnātavyam iti vākyasēṣo bhavati.



It will be seen that Bhoja is striking a middle path between the two extreme views adopted by the two schools of Mīmāṃsā. In the case of elliptical sentences it is better to supply the actual words to remove the syntactic deficiency; but it is too much to assume that further ideas suggested or implied by the sentence have to be got through the presumption of the actual words expressing them.

Bhartrhari has discussed the problem of the elliptical sentences in the second chapter of the Vākyapadīya<sup>1</sup>. He has no difficulty in explaining them at all; for from his point of view there is no elliptical sentence at all. If what appears to be part of a sentence is capable of conveying a complete sense in the particular context in which it is used, that is also a complete sentence. The sentence is an indivisible unit and the division into words, stems and suffixes is only an artificial means of analysing the language. The meaning of an utterance is that which is conveyed to the listeners by uttering it; there is no other definition of meaning.<sup>2</sup> Even a noun is a sentence, if it

---

1.VP.ii.verses 326ff.

2.VP.ii.328: yasminś tūccarite śabde yadā yo'rthāḥ prā-  
tīyate tam ahur artham tasyaiva nānyad arthesya  
lakṣaṇam.



implies the verb and gives a complete idea; similarly a verb is a sentence if it gives a complete sense. If Devadatta is known by Deva or Batta, all the three should be considered as different names for the same person; so also if the word 'tree' gives the meaning of 'The tree exists', the two are to be considered as two different sentences; the shorter one cannot be taken as part of the longer one.

A similar view about the nature of elliptical sentences is given by Wittgenstein in his Philosophical Investigations. He says, "Is the call 'Slab!' a sentence or a word? It is our elliptical sentence, i.e., a shortened form of the sentence 'Bring me a slab'. Can we say 'Bring me a slab' a lengthening of the sentence 'Slab!'? How do we understand it? Do we say the unshortened sentence to ourselves? And why should I translate the call 'Slab!' into a different expression in order to say what some one means by it?". He seems to echo the views of Bhartṛhari. "The sentence is elliptical, not because it leaves out something that we think, when we utter it, but because it is shortened - in comparison with a particular paradigm of our grammar."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Philosophical Investigations, <sup>Para.</sup> 19.

2. Ibid., 20.



Tatparyajñāna:-

According to some of the later Naiyāyikas a general knowledge of the meaning intended by the speaker is an essential factor in all cases of verbal comprehension. But they did not take the extreme view held by Prof. Schiller<sup>1</sup> that the meaning of any utterance is the notion actually present in the mind of the speaker; but, like Sir A. Gardiner,<sup>2</sup> they considered that "the meaning of any sentence is what the speaker intends to be understood from it by the listener." It is possible for the same sign to belong to different psychological contexts; a word may mean different things in different cases. Even the same thing can be examined from different angles without exhausting its characters; but from the linguistic point of view we are only concerned with so much of the thing as is required to elucidate what the speaker intended the listener to see.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. F.W. Thomas, Parts of Speech, SPT., 1949, p. 130n.

2. A. Gardiner, The definition of the word and the sentence, British Journal of Psychology, vol. XII, p. 361.

3. A. Gardiner, Speech and Language, p. 52. He discusses the problem under the term 'Depth of Intension'.



These Naiyāyikas who give great importance to the speaker's intention in fixing the meaning of an utterance maintain that even in ordinary sentences like "Bring the pot" (ghaṭam ānaya), it is the intention of the speaker that gives the meaning of pot to the word 'pot'; they say that if the intention of the speaker were otherwise, the word could, through lakṣaṇā, or the secondary ~~secondary~~ significative power, indicate even a piece of cloth.<sup>1</sup> They also hold that it is the incompatibility of the expressed sense with the intention of the speaker that prompts the listener to interpret a passage by resorting to ~~kṛim~~ lakṣaṇā; thus, they say that in the sentence "The village is on the Ganges" (gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ) it is the intention of the speaker that gives the meaning 'the bank of the Ganges' to the word 'Ganges', and that if the intention of the speaker had been otherwise, the word 'village' could mean even a fish.<sup>2</sup> This view ignores completely

---

1. Nyāyakośa, p. 327: pare tu ghaṭādisābdasthale 'pi ghaṭapadam kumbhaparam lakṣanayā paṭaparam veti samśaye ghaṭasābdabodhābhāvāt sarvatra tātparyanīśoayah kāraṇam ity āhuḥ.

2. See the chapter on Lakṣaṇā. (p. 249)



the status of language as an objective instrument of communication, for, as Prof. F.W. Thomas rightly points out,<sup>1</sup> the speaker's meaning and the normal signification have to be clearly distinguished. Linguistic discourse is impossible without assuming normal signification for words independently of the intention of the speaker. Humpty Dumpty said,<sup>2</sup> "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more, nor less ." If such a view is accepted, no one can understand what the other means when he says something. "What I intended to refer to may be quite the other than what I did refer to, a fact which it is important to remember, if it is hoped to reach mutual comprehension."<sup>3</sup>

The Vedāntins reject this extreme view of the Naiyāyikas regarding the importance of the speaker's intention in determining the meaning of an utterance. When a parrot or a gramophone repeats human expression, or when an illiterate

---

1. loc. cit.

2. Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass, chapter VI.

3. Ogden and Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, p. 182.



brahmin chants the Vedic hymns without understanding the meaning, the listeners can interpret them, even though there is no real intention on the part of the speaker in such cases.<sup>1</sup> The Naiyāyikas say that the intention need not be that of the actual speaker, but could sometimes be traced to the original author of the statement.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the Vedic sentences the Naiyāyikas assume the intention of God. But according to the Vedāntins and the Mīmāṃsakas the existence of God is not accepted by all people and should not therefore be brought in the explanation of linguistic phenomena. They maintain that every word has an inherent capacity to express its meaning, and even the sentence has a natural capacity to produce the cognition of a unified sense in the form of the mutual association of the word-meanings. The primary meaning of a word is a power innate in the word itself on the basis of the natural and permanent relation that exists

---

1. Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV.

2. Nyāyakośa, p. 326: prayoktā cābhisandhāpayitr mātṛam na tu vaktāiva.

3. Even in the case of the parrot's speech the Naiyāyikas assume the intention of God, and not that of the people whom it imitates : See Nyāyakośa, śukavākye bhagavadīcaiva gatiḥ.

4. Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV.



between the word and the thing meant by it. The Mīmāṃsaka's habit of attending too exclusively to the 'revealed' texts of the Vedas probably encouraged them to formulate a theory of verbal comprehension without any reference to the speaker at all. Even a sentence which is unintelligible to the speaker has an inherent capacity to convey its meaning. Thus the phrase "the pot in the room" conveys the relation of the pot and the room without any help of the speaker's intention.

The Vedāntins admit, however, that the knowledge of the speaker's intention plays an important role in the comprehension of meaning in the case of ambiguous expressions. Thus in the case of equivocal expressions the meaning is restricted to one of the senses, in the absence of the speaker's intention to convey the other sense also.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be remembered that the difference in the views of the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas

---

1. See Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV where in the definition of tatparya the qualification tadanyapratīticchaya 'nucaratatvam' is added to tatpratītijananayogyatvam.



(as well as the Vedāntins who follow them) regarding the part played by the speaker's intention in determining the meaning of a sentence is ultimately due to the difference in their views as to the nature of the knowledge derived from language. According to the Naiyāyikas, sabda, as a means of knowledge, is valid verbal testimony and it consists in the statement of a trustworthy person.<sup>1</sup> This is always based on the words of some trustworthy person, human or divine. But according to the Vedāntins and the Mīmāṃsakas, verbal testimony has self-evident validity (svataḥprāmāṇya); significant combination of words constitutes a sentence which conveys ideas, without any reference to the intention of the speaker.<sup>2</sup> Even in the case of word-meanings, the Mīmāṃsakas believe that the significative power is inherent in the words themselves, while the Naiyāyikas hold that it is imported into the words by the will of God or of the speaker. The Naiyāyikas give the name tātparyā to the meaning intended by the speaker; but the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins use the term to the meaning conveyed by the capacity of the words themselves.

---

1. Nyāyasūtra 1.1.7; apṭopadeśas sabdah.

2. S.C. Chatterjee, Nyāya Theory of knowledge, pp. 345ff, 381ff.



Even among the Naiyāyikas there is much difference of opinion regarding the importance of the speaker's intention as a factor in the understanding of the meaning of a passage.<sup>1</sup> Some of them believe that the speaker's intention need not be treated as a separated condition of verbal comprehension, since it could be included under akāṅkṣā itself, for according to them akāṅkṣā is to be taken as the need one word has for another in order to convey the intended meaning of the speaker.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the statement, " ayam eti putro - rājñah - puruṣo 'pasāryatam " (Here comes the son - of the king - the man should be removed ), it is the knowledge of the speaker's meaning that decides that the word 'rājñah' (of the king) is to be construed with the word 'putra' (son), and not with 'puruṣa' (man), to satisfy its akāṅkṣā.

According to some others the knowledge of the meaning intended by the speaker is essential for verbal comprehension, only in cases of equivocal

- 
1. Nyāyakośa, p. 326 f; Kuppasvami Sastri, op.cit., p. 335.  
2. Tarkadīpa quoted in Nyāyakośa, p. 328: anye tu ...  
akāṅkṣāghaṭakatayaiva tātparyajñānam hetuḥ, na  
tu svātantryeṇa ity āhuh.



terms and ambiguous expressions. Thus, when a man is asked to bring saindhava, he has to infer from contextual factors the meaning intended by the speaker before understanding what he has to do, since the word 'saindhava' means both salt and a horse.<sup>1</sup> Nagesā, the grammarian, also accepts the importance of knowing the speaker's meaning in such equivocal expressions.<sup>2</sup>

Gangesopādhyāya and Viśvanātha hold that a knowledge of the tātparya is the fourth requisite, along with akāṅksā, yogyatā and sannidhi, for verbal comprehension. According to these Naiyāyikas tātparya is the meaning intended by the speaker. Other Naiyāyikas consider that tātparya is an all-embracing factor and that it ~~has~~ has an important part to play in the working of the first three factors, akāṅksā, yogyatā and sannidhi.

- 
1. Nyāyakosa, p.327; *kecit tu saindhavam anayetyādaṁ nānārthasthala eva tātparyasamsayādes sambhavena tatratyasābdabodha eva tātparyaniścayo hetuḥ ... ity āhuh; see also Siddhāntamuktāvali, p.316.*
  2. Laghumanjūṣa, p.524; *nānārthasthale padaviśayo 'pi, tadgrāhakam ca prakaraṇādikam*.
  3. Vidyabhusana, A History of Indian Logic, p.448; Siddhāntamuktāvali, p.315; *vaktur icchā tu tātparyam*.
  4. Siddhāntamuktāvali, p.303; *tātparyagarbhā caṣattih*. See also Y.V.Athelye's notes on Tarkasaṅgraha, p.343: "Perhaps, the speaker's intention may be included in the second requisite, yogyatā".



Even though what is in the mind of the speaker at the time of utterance is something subjective, and not capable of being put to an objective analysis, the idea intended to be conveyed to the listener by the speaker could be determined to a great extent with the help of contextual factors.<sup>1</sup> "It is possible for the same sign to belong to different psychological contexts; but given the psychological context to which a sign belongs, the reference made by the interpretation is fixed also."<sup>2</sup> According to many of the ancient writers on the subject, it is the contextual factors that determine the meaning of an utterance,<sup>3</sup> and, therefore, these should be considered as the causes of verbal comprehension. But the Naiyāyikas reject this view,<sup>4</sup>

---

1. What is in the mind of the speaker at the time of utterance may be different from what is intended to be conveyed to the listener, especially in the case of successful lying. Again, what is intended to be conveyed may be quite different from what is actually conveyed by the utterance. The term tātparyā is used by the Naiyāyikas in the former sense, and by the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins in the latter sense. It is quite possible that what is actually understood by the listener is different from all these.

2. The Meaning of Meaning, p.195.

3. See the section on 'contextual factors' (1.38)

4. Siddhāntamuktāvalī, p.315: na ca tātparyagrāhakaṇām prakaraṇādīnām śābdabodhe karaṇam iti vācyaṃ.



and maintain that the contextual factors are not helping directly in the understanding of speech, but only indirectly by showing the meaning intended by the speaker.

The importance of knowing the speaker's intention in the understanding of speech is recognized by almost all schools of Indian thought. The difference in their views is mainly based on the degree of emphasis laid on it. There is much truth in the view of the Naiyāyikas that the meaning of an utterance is what the speaker intends the listener to understand; speech is mainly purposive in nature and can do its function only if the listener understands what is intended to be conveyed by it. But it is also true that for language to be an objective instrument of communication, it must be independent of the personal whims of the speaker; that is why the crude sentences of ordinary speech, whose nuances are commonly indicated by intonation and emphasis, become unsuitable for impersonal, rational logic.<sup>1</sup> The distinction between the

---

1. F.W.Thomas, loc.cit.



'locutional sentence form' which depends solely on words, and 'elocutional sentence form' which depends on intonation indicating the speaker's intention is also based on the relative strength between the normal meaning and the speaker's intention.<sup>1</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas use the term tatparya to the purport of a passage dealing with a topic, and refer to six lingas or indications by which it could be obtained objectively without any reference to the speaker or the author. These lingas are: (a) the unity of the introduction and the conclusion (upakramopasamhārau), (b) repetition of the main topic (abhyāsa), (c) the novelty of the subject matter (apūrvatā), ~~the result intended (phalam)~~ (d) the result intended (phalam), (e) corroborative and eulogistic remarks as distinguished from the main theme (arthavāda), and arguments in favour of the main topic (upapatti).<sup>2</sup>

---

1. A. Gardiner, Speech and Language, p. 201. Cf. Humpty Dumpty's remark, "The question is which is to be master (words or the speaker) - that is all" (Through Looking Glass, chapter vii).

2. Nyāyakośa, p. 714: upakramopasamhārau abhyāso 'pūrvatā phalam arthavādupapatti ca lingam tatparyanirṇaye. The Vedāntins also accept them.



In the case of the sentence also the Mīmāṃsakas maintain that the tātparya or the real purport meant by it can be studied objectively without any reference to the intention of the speaker. Like the Naiyāyikas, they also analysed a sentence into two parts, uddeśya and vidheya, which correspond roughly to the subject and predicate of Western logic.<sup>1</sup> The first part (subject)<sup>2</sup> contains a sense that is ~~a~~ <sup>from</sup> already existent and is known/other sources (siddha), while the other part consists of the meanings that are to be brought into existence (sādhya). These two parts are also called bhūta and bhavya, as well as anuvādyā and vidheya. The Mīmāṃsakas hold that the tātparya of a sentence is found only in the vidheya portion.<sup>3</sup> The anuvādyā (subject) is that which discloses to the listener what any utterance is about, and is not always indispensable; it is used

- 
1. S.C. Chatterjee, Nyāya Theory of Knowledge, pp. 375ff. In Sanskrit the copula is not considered as an essential part of the sentence. Modern writers in the west have also realized that the copula is only a formal element. (Cf. Bosanquet, Logic, vol. I, pp. 81ff; A. Gardiner, Speech and Language, pp. 218ff.)
  2. Nyāyakosā, p. 34: pramāṇāntarasiddhasya kiñcid dharmāntaravidhānārtham upanyasyatā. Wegner calls it 'exposition' (Gardiner, op.cit., p. 265)
  3. Kāvya-prakāśa, v (p. 226): yad eva vidheyam tatraiva tātparyam.



in a sentence only to help the listener to understand the meaning clearly. From the speaker's standpoint it is enough if the vidheya alone is uttered; it is only that part that expresses something new. Thus, in an exclamatory sentence like "Splendid!" it is only the vidheya that is given; the uddeśya or subject is to be understood by the listener from the context.<sup>1</sup>

Great interest attaches to the question whether the subject should come before the predicate or vice versa. Even though in Sanskrit the order of sequence of the words does not normally affect the literal meaning of the sentence, it is held by writers on Mīmāṃsā and literary criticism that the subject must come before the predicate.<sup>2</sup> The violation of this rule is considered as a defect by the literary critics. This defect is called avimrṣavidheyāṃśa or vidheyāvimarśa.

---

1. A. Gardiner, op.cit., p. 265f

2. This well-known rule is given in the old maxim; "anuvādyam anuktvā ca na vidheyam udīrayet." This line is supposed to be from Kumarila, but is not found in the Śloka-vārttika; Hemacandra quotes it (Kāvya-anuśāsana, p. 172). See also A. Gardiner, op.cit. p. 276f.

3. Sāhitya-darpana, p. 2. Even though it was considered as a defect, the poets were fully conscious that a change in the normal order could heighten the emotional attitude towards the statement.



The Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas, who take the sentence to be a concatenation of the individual words that comprise it, have necessarily to depend on the power of tātparya to explain how a connected meaning is comprehended from a sentence. It is clear that according to this view the sentence expresses something over and above the meanings of the words which compose the sentence. A string of unconnected, isolated, senses given by the words cannot produce a unified meaning. Or in other words we may say that there are two elements in the sentence-meaning: the meaning of the individual words and the mutual connection of these. We know that the words give their own meanings; the problem is to find out where the element of the relation between the word-meanings comes. The whole is always something more than the sum of the parts; and the 'Association' theory cannot satisfactorily explain where the additional element comes from. ~~The~~ Gestalt psychologists refer to the 'Association' theory as a 'brick and mortar psychology', which explains only where the bricks come from, but not where the mortar comes from. The followers of the abhihitāwāya anvitābhidhāna theory of verbal comprehension explain the problem by resorting to the function of tātparya.



Speech is purposive in nature. Learned people use words with the intention of conveying a connected sense. Hence from the use of words in juxtaposition (samabhivyāhāra) it is assumed that the speaker has uttered them with the intention of conveying a connected sense; for the co-utterance would be of no avail, but for such an intention<sup>1</sup>. The anvitābhidhāna theory considers that the intention or tātparya makes the primary significative power (abhidhā) convey the additional significance of the sentence. But according to the abhihitānvaya theory, the power of abhidhā can give only the word-meanings; it is these word-meanings that convey the additional significance on the strength of tātparya, along with the three factors ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and sannidhi. This function of the sentence to convey the sentence-meaning on the basis of the speaker's intention is called tātparya-vṛtti<sup>2</sup>. This is also called samsargamaryādā<sup>3</sup> by the Naiyāyikas.

1. Tattvabindu, p.132: pratipitsitam khalv etad iti prati-pādayiṣyantaḥ padānyuccārayanti; see also Kumārilabhaṭṭa (quoted thereon); viśiṣṭārthaprayuktā hi samabhivyāhṛtir jane.

2. Kumārasvamin's commentary on Pratāparudrīya, p.32: abhihitānām padārthanām arthābhidhāyinām ~~padānām~~ vā padānām viśiṣṭārthapratyāyanasaktis tātparyam iti mīmāṃsakaḥ varṇayanti. See also Kāvyaaprakāśa, II, under verse 6: padārthanām samānvaye tātparyārtho viśeṣavapur apadārthopi vāk्यārthas samullasatītyabhihitānvayavādinām

3. Kuppasvami Sastri, op.cit., p.22

(matam.)



CHAPTER V

THE MEANING OF A SENTENCE

ANVITĀBHIDHĀNA, ABHIHITĀNVAYA & VĀKYASPHOTA THEORIES



Relation of words in a sentence: Bheda or Samsarga.

If every word has its own definite meaning, how is it possible for a sentence which is only a collection of words to have a unified meaning? The same problem arises in the case of compound words also. Two explanation are given to this question.<sup>1</sup>

Vājapyāyana who, like the Mīmāṃsakas, held that the meaning of a word is the universal or the jāti, said that the meaning of a sentence is the samsarga or the mutual association of the word meanings. In the case of a phrase like "the white cow" (gauś śuklaḥ), the word 'cow' connotes 'cowness' merely; the other word which is syntactically connected with it indicates association with the quality of whiteness. Thus, the sentence means the association of cowness and whiteness, and as that is one, the words constitute a syntactic unity.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Regarding the two views about the import of sentences, see M. Hiriyanna, Vyādi and Vājapyāyana, IHQ, XIV, pp. 261 ff; Mbh., i., p. 364; Puṇyārāja on VP. ii. 155; Halārāja on VP. iii, Dravyasamuddesa, verse 5; Sabarabhāṣya on sūtra 2.1.14; Kumārila bhaṭṭa, Tantravārttika, p. 446 f; Pārthasārathimīśra on Ślokavārttika, p. 854.
  2. Halārāja. loc. cit. jātivādino vājapyāyanasya tu mate samsargo vakyarthas sāmānyam samslesasamātrārūpatvād vāk्यarthasya. Kumārila bhaṭṭa, loc. cit., p. 447: samsargo 'pi padārthanām anyonyenānurañjanam, gotve śuklatva-samsargaś, śuklatve vā gotvasamsargaḥ.



Vyādi, on the other hand, held that the meaning of a word is any particular (dravya) of a class. It is a concrete thing rather than a quality. According to him the function of a word in a sentence is to distinguish the thing it means from all similar things.<sup>1</sup> Thus, a 'cow' means not so much 'what is characterized by cowness' as 'what is distinguished from a horse'. In a sentence words signify things not as having certain attributes, but rather as excluding some. Thus, in the case of the phrase "the white cow", the word 'cow' can point to any concrete particular, which includes cows of all colours, white, black and so forth; therefore, the word 'white' does not indicate the connection of whiteness with the cow; it should be explained as negatively qualifying the cow, denying all colours other than whiteness to it. Similarly, the term 'white' can denote anything that is white, including white cows, white horses and so on; hence, the term

---

1. Kumārilabhaṭṭa, loc. cit.: bhedo nāma padārthanām vyavacchedaḥ paraspāram. Vyaktipadārthapakṣe sarva-vyaktinām gāvāḍipadenaivopāttatvā viṣayaśabdais' ſuklāḍibhiḥ kṛṇāḍivyaḍacchedakamātram vaktavyam. Helārāja, loc. cit.: Vyāḍimate bhedo vākýārthah, padavācyānām dravyāṇām dravyāntaranivṛttitātparyeṇā-  
bhidheyatvāt.



'cow' in the phrase means only the exclusion of all white things other than cows. In this view of Vyādi we find the early stages of the Apoha doctrine maintained by the Buddhists.<sup>1</sup> Kumārilabhatta refers to this view, that the import of a sentence is bheda or the mutual exclusion of the word-meanings, as a theory held by the Buddhists.<sup>2</sup>

Kaiyata says<sup>3</sup> that these two views are not mutually exclusive, since each view implies the other. In the discussion of the meaning of the term sāmarthya, that is given by Pāṇini as the condition that should exist between the members of a compound word, Patañjali says<sup>4</sup> that, according to some, sāmarthya means either sāmsarga (mutual association) or bheda (mutual exclusion. Even though Patañjali is discussing compound words, the principle involved is the same.

- 
1. This doctrine is discussed separately in the section on Apoha. Note that Dignāga's theory about the import of sentences is the same. Thus, in the phrase 'the blue lotus' he also maintains that the term 'blue' means the exclusion of all lotuses that are not blue and the term 'lotus' means the exclusion of all blue things that are not lotuses. (p. 79)
  2. Tantravārttika, p. 447.
  3. Pradīpa under vārttika 2 of Pāṇini, 2.1.1: Tatra bhedas sāmsargāvinābhāvitvād anumīyamānasāmsargas sāmarthyam, sāmsargo vā bhedāvinābhāvānumeyasambhedaḥ.
  4. Mbh. under Pāṇini, 2.1.1: bhedasāmsargau vā sāmarthyam ity apara āha.



Anvitābhīdhāna theory of verbal comprehension

Prabhākara and his followers denied that the words conveyed a meaning except in their context of a sentence, even though they regarded words as real and actual constituents of language. Each word has a definite meaning, but it is also clear that the purpose of the word is to serve as part of a sentence. On hearing the words of a sentence, we get a ~~unified~~ unitary sense which is the meaning of the sentence. The problem is whether this unitary sense arises directly from the collection of the words, or indirectly through the recollection of the meanings of the individual words that comprise it. Anvitābhīdhāna theory takes the former view, while the abhihitānvaya theory takes the latter one.

The meaning of a sentence is made up of the the individual word-meanings and their mutual relation. According to the anvitābhīdhāna theory, both the individual word-meanings and their mutual relation are conveyed by the words themselves; but according to the abhihitānvaya theory, the words convey only the



individual word-meanings; the mutual relation is conveyed by the word-meanings, and not by the words. Among modern writers on linguistics, Wundt seems to represent the anvitābhīdhāna theory; for he says that "in determining the nature of a sentence, no addition to what is expressed by the words should be assumed".<sup>1</sup> Polemizing against this view, Paul maintains the abhihitānvaya view that such an assumption is usually necessary.<sup>2</sup> The commonplace statement in modern linguistics, that the sentence is the unit of speech<sup>3</sup> is comparable ~~to~~ with the anvitābhīdhāna theory.

The statement of procedure adopted by the followers of the anvitābhīdhāna theory is quite similar to many modern statements. "Thus a root or suffix is analysed out on the basis of a paradigm, and complete words are recognized on the basis of substitution in sentences."<sup>4</sup> The Prābhākaraś who follow the anvitābhīdhāna theory lay particular stress on the natural method by which children learn the meaning of words. It is by watching the

---

1. Gardiner, Speech and Language, p. 58

2. Ibid. ; see also Paul, Prinzipien, p. 130 n. i. His leanings towards the abhihitānvaya theory ~~in many~~ ~~ways~~ are not quite clear.

3. Gardiner, ~~in~~ op. cit., p. 63

4. J. Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, TPS, 1953, p. 165.



usage and activity of elders in daily life that children come to know the significance of words<sup>1</sup>. One person, addressing another, says, "Bring the cow" (gām ānaya); the latter thus addressed immediately brings the cow. A child, who hears the sentence uttered by the former and observes the action that follows, infers vaguely that the meaning of the sentence is a command to do the act of bringing the cow. At this stage what the child understands is only that the whole of that statement means the whole of what is signified. Later, the child hears one man saying to another, "Bring the horse" (aśvam ānaya), and observes the latter bringing the horse. From this he again infers that the meaning of this sentence is a command to do the act of bringing the horse. By comparing the two sentences he understands that the term 'bring' (ānaya) common to the two sentences must mean the command to bring, and that the terms cow (~~gām~~) (gām) and horse (aśvam) must refer to the two different animals. Thus by comparing the various sentences uttered by people and by observing the action produced, the child is able, by the mental process of exclusion

---

1. Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p. 5; Sloka-vārttika, sambandha verses 140-143; Siddhāntamuktāvali, śabda section; Kāvya-prakāśa, V, etc. See also the section on 'How we learn the meaning of words?'. (pp. 31-36)



and inclusion (āvāpodvāpa or anvayavyatireka) to have a general idea about the meaning of individual words. This process of substitution is natural and subconscious rather than deliberate and conscious. Later, the child is able to understand the meaning of even new sentences<sup>1</sup> containing the words he has already come across.

It is only the injunctive sentences that normally produce a visible reaction on the part of the listeners, and therefore, it is only from such sentences in the imperative mood that the meaning of words can be naturally understood.<sup>2</sup> The Mīmāṃsaka preoccupation with the injunctions of the Vedic texts with regard to religious duties led to the view that a typical sentence should be in the imperative mood, since the whole direct denotation of the Veda must, according to them, lie in the enjoining of something to be done. In cases where such an interpretation is not possible, the comprehension of meaning must depend upon something indirectly connected with the injunction. The Vedāntins, on the other hand, held

---

1. Jha, Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its sources, p.135.

2. Ibid, p.136; Māṇameyodaya, p.92. According to the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas, reaction on the part of the listener is visible even in the case of indicative sentences. Thus, 'putras te jātaḥ' (A son is born to you) may produce joy, and 'kanyā te garbhinī' (Your unmarried daughter is ~~en-ciente~~) a shock of despair to a Brahmin.



that the direct denotation of the important Vedio texts lies not in commanding something, but in pointing out some well-established facts; thus to them the importance lies in indicative sentences. The later Indian logic also deals with such indicative sentences. Prabhākara holds that even in the case of indicative sentences, the comprehension of the denotation of the words can be obtained only by observing the usage of elders, and that this can be known only from imperative sentences.<sup>1</sup>

If the meanings of words can be known only when they occur in injunctive sentences, it follows that every word must express its meaning only as related to the other factors of the injunction. The verb denoting the command to do the act is the principal word in a sentence, and the remaining words possess a meaning only in relation to the action. Thus, the Prābhākaras hold that no word can be comprehended as having an independent meaning, when isolated from a sentence. Prabhākara says<sup>2</sup> that all usage is through the sentence and its meaning.

---

1. Brhatī, p. 47; Jha, loc. cit.

2. Brhatī, p. 188: vākyārthena vyavahārah



According to him what is permanent is the relation that the sentence bears to its meaning<sup>1</sup>. Commenting on that statement, Śalikanātha says, " The word alone by itself, never expresses any meaning; it is only the sentence that does it; as is clear from the fact that we learn the meaning of verbal expressions only from the usage of older people,- and this usage is only in the form of sentences; and every single word is understood only in so far as it is related to the other words in the sentence; hence it is established that what is expressive of the meaning is the sentence only, not any word, alone by itself." <sup>2</sup>

The Prābhākaras do not deny the existence of individual words and their isolated meanings; they only assert that it is impossible to comprehend the isolated meaning of a word apart from its relation in a sentence. Words certainly recall their senses separately; but they do not stop with that. Even though the listener knows the general meaning of the words, his experience tells him that the words are

---

1. Brhatī, p. 135

2. Rjuvimalā on the same, p. 135 . See Jha, Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its sources, p. 137



meaningful, only when they are connected in a sentence and not when isolated. The words themselves convey their meanings only as related to one another on the strength of the three well-known factors ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and sannidhi. The words convey not only their individual meanings, but also their syntactic relation. Thus, the sentence-meaning is directly conveyed by the words themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The ancient Mīmāṃsakas seem to have held the anvitābhīdhāna theory; Mīmāṃsāsūtra 1.1.25 gives tacit support to it; tadbhūtānām kriyārthena samanvayaḥ, arthasya tannimittatvāt.<sup>2</sup> But the śābarabhāṣya passage explaining the comprehension of the sentence-meaning seems to go against this theory, when it says:<sup>3</sup> padāni hi svam svam artham abhīdhāya nivṛttavyāpārāṇi. athedānīm padārthā avagatās santo vākyārtham gamayanti. (The words perform the task of expressing their own individual meanings, and cease functioning when this task is finished; the word-meanings thus conveyed later produce the

1. Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p. 5: ākāṅkṣāsannidhiprāptayogyā-  
'rthāntarasangatān svārthān āhuh padānīti vyūpattis  
samsritā mayā.

2. See also Jha, op.cit., p. 125

3. Śābara~~anuk~~ bhāṣya on sūtra 1.1.7



meaning of the sentence). Prabhākara and his followers explain this passage as supporting their theory; according to them what is brought about by the meaning of a word is the notion of a qualified thing - the meaning of words as qualified by one another.<sup>1</sup>

Abhinavagupta refers to this theory as the dīrghavyāpāravāda, since according to the anvitābhidhāna theory there is no limit to the extent of the meaning that an expression can convey.<sup>2</sup> Just as the range of an arrow is not limited, but varies with the difference in the power with which it is discharged, so also the range of abhidhā or the expressive power can be extended farther and farther. Not only the word-meaning, but also the syntactic relation is conveyed by the function of abhidhā. Bhartṛhari seems to refer to this idea when he says that according to some the meaning of an expression is just what it conveys, neither more nor less.<sup>3</sup> This theory is said to explain even the subtle implications and suggestions in literary language.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. See Brhatī on the passage. See also Prā Vākyārtha-mātrkāvalī, p.21. In the Nyāyaratnamālā (vākya section) this interpretation is criticized as unjust.

2. Locana, p.18f; yo 'py anvitābhidhānavādī yatparaś śabdāś sa śabdārtha itī hrdaye gṛhītvā śaravad abhidhāvyāpāram eva dīrghadīrgham icchanti...

3. VP.11.328.

4. See the chapter on Vyañjanā. (p.315)



According to the anvitābhidhāna theory the sentence has a unitary meaning of its own; the constituent words possess meaning only as they are related to this unitary sentence meaning. Thus, in the sentence "Bring the cow" (gām ānaya), the word 'cow' means not the isolated concept of cowness, but 'cow as related to the action of bringing'; so also the word 'bring' means the 'action of bringing in relation to the cow'. The words give their own meaning and their syntactic relation to the other words in the sentence, so that the sentence meaning is directly conveyed by the words themselves. Though there are many words, and therefore many meanings, the unity of the sentence meaning is achieved through the unity of purpose.<sup>1</sup>

This theory has been strongly criticized by the Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school. They argue<sup>2</sup> that, if it is held that the first word or any one word in its full sense means the unitary sense of the sentence itself, the other words in the sentence will

---

1. Vākyaarthamātrkāvali, p.2: bhūyāṃso yadyapi svārthāḥ padānam te prthak prthak prayojanataya tv ekavākya-  
rtham sampracakṣate.

2. Tattvabindu, p.93: padāntarasya vaiyarthyaṃ  
asrutānvayabodhane.



be superfluous. This argument is similar to the one brought against the Sphoṭa theory also. Two possible explanations are that the subsequent words repeat the same sentence-meaning so as to make it clear, and that the other words are used to restrict the meaning indicated by the first word. Another objection is that this theory involves the fallacy of interdependence<sup>1</sup>. If one of the words, say the first, in a sentence is to convey its own meaning as well as its relation to the other words, the full meaning of the word can be comprehended only after understanding the other words; similarly, the meanings of the other words depend on this word. Thus, in the sentence 'ukhāyām pacet' (cook in the pot), the word ukhāyām (in the pot) can convey its meaning and the relation to the other word only after knowing the meaning of the word pacet (cook); so also the meaning of 'pacet' depends on that of 'ukhāyām'<sup>2</sup>. If it is held that the individual word-meaning and its relation to the other words are not conveyed simultaneously, but gradually, the individual word-meaning being conveyed first, and the relation later, then there will be no ~~fallacy~~ fallacy of interdependence; but then

---

1. Tattvabindu, p.93: śrutānvitānbhidhāne tu vyaktam anyonyasamsrayam

2. Ibid. p.93 f.



this explanation will involve the unwarranted assumption of two separate functions for the primary ~~fu~~ power abhidhā<sup>1</sup>. The anvitābhidhānavādins argue that there is only one potency for words to express the meaning as related to the rest of the words. It is through recollection that we remember the meanings of words, and this is by rousing up the mental impressions of previous experiences of the use of the words. It is a matter of experience that we never come across words except as related in a sentence; isolated words have no existence in everyday speech activity ( one-word sentence is a sentence, not an isolated word). The word-meaning and the relation to the other words are known by abhidhā itself.<sup>2</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school ~~also~~ take<sup>3</sup> objection to this view also. They say that even though we observe words functioning only in different contexts of situations, in all of which they occur as related in a sentence, still we are able to understand the isolated meanings of the words separately also. Otherwise,

---

1. Tattvabindu, p. 94

2. Ibid, p. 94 f; 100f.

3. Ibid, p. 95



a word learned from its use in one context cannot be applied in another context. Moreover, the very principle of recognition is based on our capacity to recognize something isolated out of its context; we are able to recognize a person in a place and time different from these when we met him previously. It may be observed here that even in such cases we recognize him only in some place and time, not as isolated from all situations.

Another objection raised against the anvitabhīdhāna theory is that the meaning of a sentence can be known from the meanings of the words remembered, even though the words might have been forgotten. It is a matter of experience that in long sentences we forget the earlier words, but remember only their meanings, and even then we are able to have the meaning of the sentence. The relation of the words in a sentence is not the same as that of the letters in a word; in the case of a word we do not understand the word, if we forget some of the letters.

---

1. Tattvabindu, p. 116ff.

2. Śāstradīpikā, p. 440: pūrvabhāgeṣu vākyasya viśmrteṣv  
api drśyate vākyārthavagatiḥ puṁsām padārthasmṛti-  
śālinām.



Abhihitānvaya theory of verbal comprehension

According to the abhihitānvaya theory of verbal comprehension upheld by the Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhaṭṭa school and by the Naiyāyikas,<sup>1</sup> the meaning of a sentence is a concatenation of the individual items expressed by the words. The individual words have in themselves meanings which can be ~~separate~~ comprehended separately. On hearing a sentence, we have first an understanding of the separate meanings of the words one after the other; then we put together these meanings according to the three factors ākāṅksā, yogyatā and sannidhi, and we arrive at the meaning of the sentence.

Sabara seems to refer to this theory, when he says: padāni svam svam artham abhidhāya nivṛttavyāpārāni, athedānīm padārthā avagatās santo vākyārtham gamayanti. (In a sentence the words express their own meanings and stop with that; the meanings of the words thus known convey the meaning of the sentence).<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Sāstradīpikā, pp. 440 ff; Nyāyaratnamālā, vākya section; Tattvabindu, pp. 91-161; Manameyodaya, pp. 93 ff; Siddhanta-muktāvali, śabda section.
  2. Sābarabhāṣya on sūtra 1.1.7
  3. The Prābhākaras explain it differently, taking artha in the sense of syntactic relation (anvaya). See Vākyārthamātrkāvali, p. 22; arthasābdena bhāṣyakāro 'nvayam aha.



Kumārīlabhaṭṭa says<sup>1</sup> that the meaning of a sentence is always conveyed by the meanings of words, got from the words themselves. Unlike the words, the sentence does not have a meaning of its own independently. "The meanings of the words are expressed by the words independently of one another; from the connection among these word-meanings, the meaning of the sentence is also understood."<sup>2</sup> The three factors ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and sannidhi constitute the grounds<sup>3</sup> of relationship.<sup>3</sup>

It may be noted here that this theory of abhihitānvaya is based on the theory advocated by the great grammarian Vājapyāyana that the meaning of a sentence is the samsarga or the mutual association of the individual word-meanings expressed by the words.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is one of the earliest theories about the nature of a sentence-meaning. The other theory, of Vyāḍi, that it is the mutual exclusion of the word-meanings was later developed into the Apoha theory.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. Tantravārttika, p.446: padārthaiḥ padavijñātair vākyaṛthaiḥ pratipādyate.

2. Ibid: prthagbhūtair eva padair itaretaranirapekṣaiḥ siveṣu padārthesūkteṣu tatsamsargād eva padavyāpārā-napekṣo vākyaṛthapratyayo bhavati.

3. "ākāṅkṣā sannidhānam ca yogyatā ceti ca trayam sambandhakārapatvena klptam." (Ibid., p.455)

4. See the section on 'The relation of words in a sentence' (p. 205)

5. By the Buddhist logicians. See the section on Apoha.



There are two different views about the nature of cognition produced by a word. It is by observing the use of words in actual contexts of situations that we learn their meanings; therefore, a word can indicate its meaning only by rousing up mental impressions of such contexts, and hence, the knowledge of the meaning of a word is only a kind of recollection. This is the view held by the anvitābhidhāna school of Prabhākara and also by some scholars of the abhihitānvaya school like Cidānanda, author of the Nītitattvāvirbhāva<sup>1</sup>. Kumārilabhaṭṭa himself refers to this view when he says that a word is nothing more than a reminder of the meaning<sup>2</sup>. Vācaspatimiśra also says that, strictly speaking, the relation between the word and the meaning is that between the "recollector" and the recollected<sup>3</sup> and that the word produces the

---

1. Mānameyodaya, p.93: śabdo 'pi saṃskārodbodhanadvāre-  
naiva padārtham bodhayatīti smaraṇam eva padārtha-  
jñānam iti cidānandaprabhṛtayaḥ.

2. Slokavārttika, Śabda/section, verse 106-7(P.432):  
padam apy adhikābhāvāt smarakān na viśiṣyate  
te 'pi naivāsmṛtā yasmād vākyārtham gamayanti na  
tasmāt tatsmaraneṣvaiva saṃhateṣu pramāṇatā

3. Tattvabindu, p.160: vācyavācakatvam ca pratyāyyapratyā-  
yakatvam, tac ca vicāryamāṇam smāryasmāarakatvam eva.  
See also p.151: na ceyam sāksād arthadhiyam ādhatte,  
yena tatsādhikā syāt, api tu saṃskārodbodhanakrameṇa.



cognition of the meaning not directly and independently, but by rousing the mental impressions of the things previously known. But according to Pārthasārathimīśra and some other scholars, the meaning of a word is conveyed by the primary significative potency of the word (abhidhā)<sup>1</sup>. It is a matter of experience that a word conveys its meaning directly and not by reminding us of the various contexts of situations in which the word was used; moreover, it is simpler to assume that the word conveys the meaning through its expressive power than to consider that it reminds us of our former experiences of situations when the word was used and thus gives us the idea of its meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Of these two views the former is based on the psychological analysis of the process of learning a language; for the use of language itself is a kind of conditioned ~~reflex~~ reflex; The experiments of Pavlov

- 
1. Mānameyodaya, p.93; padaiḥ padārthabodhanam śabda-śaktijanyatvād abhidhānam eveti pārthasārathimīśrādayaḥ.
  2. Nyāyaratnamālā, p.105; śabdānantaram arthadarśanāt tasyaiva tatra kārapatvam kalpayitum yuktam, na tu śabdāt saṃskārod bodhas tataś cārthapratītir iti yuktam; prapñālyām pramāṇābhāvāt. tasmād abhidhāyakam eva padam, na smarakam.



have demonstrated how such reflexes can be produced even in animals. "When a context has affected us in the past, the recurrence of merely a part of the context will cause us to react in the way we reacted before"<sup>1</sup>. We learn language through the observation of various contexts of situation; the linguistic phrases uttered are associated with the contexts of situation; having experienced several such situations, we assume a kind of relationship between the utterances and the contexts. Meaning can be explained only in terms of a relationship of the utterance with the abstract context of situation.<sup>2</sup> The Mīmāṃsakas were fully conscious of this process; but to them the relation between the word and the meaning is something natural and permanent, and the experience of situations only reveals this natural relation. The primary significatory power of the word is based on this relation; when once this relation is known, the word can directly denote its meaning, says Pārthasarathimīśra.

---

1. Urban, Language and Reality, p. 102

2. The 'context of situation' theory is given by Malinowski in the Appendix to The Meaning of Meaning by Ogden and Richards. Prof. Firth has pushed the analysis of 'context' much ~~far~~ farther in his dealings with 'formal scatter' and 'meaning by collocation'. ~~scatter~~. See Modes of Meaning, Essays and Studies, 1951; Technique of semantics, TPS, 1935, etc.



When we hear a sentence, we have first an understanding of the separate meanings of the words one after another; then these word-meanings are related on the basis of ākāṅkṣā (expectancy), yogyatā (consistency) and sannidhi (proximity), and we arrive at the unified meaning of the sentence as a whole. The expression of the individual word-meanings precedes the knowledge of the logical connection among them. The different isolated ideas expressed successively by the words are put together by the collective memory of the listener (samūhālambana-smṛti). The individual word-meanings are remembered separately until all the words are heard; then there is a simultaneous cognition of the sentence-meaning in which all the word-meanings are properly related to one another on the basis of ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and sannidhi.<sup>1</sup>

The sentence-meaning is something more than the sum of the word-meanings. When the meanings of the ~~at~~ different words in a sentence are related with one another

---

1. According to the anvitābhidhāna theory, on the other hand, each word, as it is being uttered, contributes to the meaning of the sentence which is revealed step by step, becoming clearer and clearer with the utterance of subsequent words.



on the basis of the ākāṅkṣā etc., there arises some additional signification which is distinct from the totality of the word-meanings<sup>1</sup>. This unified sentence-meaning<sup>is</sup> referred to by different terms: vākyārtha (sentence-meaning), samsarga (association of the word-meanings) and tātparyārtha (the purport or the intention of the speaker). It is difficult to explain where this special signification comes from. Some call it the power of the sentence to convey a connected sense (vākyasakti), others call it samsargamaryādā or the law of association, and yet others postulate a power called tātparyasakti, the power of the sentence to convey the intended sense in the form of a related and unified meaning.<sup>2</sup>

"How is this samsarga conveyed? It is mysterious and has not yet been satisfactorily explained. In sentences we have a juxtaposition of words, and the element of the relation between the words is conveyed, we have to say, by suppression."<sup>3</sup> This suggestion of the

1. Kāvya-prakāśa, II: ākāṅkṣāyogyatāsannidhivaśāt padārthanām samanvaye tātparyārtho viśeṣavapur apadārthopi vākyārthah samullasatīty abhihitānvayavādinām matam.

2. VP. ii. 41: sambandhe sati yat tv anyad ādhikyam upajāyate vākyārthameva tām prāhur anekapadasamśrayam; see also Puṇyārāja's commenatry thereon; padānām parasparānvaye padārthavaśād ādhikyam samsargas sa vākyārthah.

3. Kuppusvami Sastri, op.cit., p. 21.



connection of the word-meanings is on the basis of the intention of the speaker and the incompatibility of the isolated word-meanings to convey the intended sense. Speech is purposive in nature, and people normally use words with the intention of conveying a connected sense.

The individual words have exhausted their function by conveying their own isolated meanings; so they cannot be considered to be capable of performing another function, namely, that of conveying their mutual relations also, in order that the sentence-meaning may be understood. Moreover, the words cannot directly convey the mutual relation, since between the words and the sentence-meaning lie the word-meanings. So it is the word-meanings that convey the sentence-meaning, and this is in the form of their mutual relation. This is the view of the abhihitānvayavādins.<sup>1</sup> There is a slight difference between the Naiyāyikas and the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas regarding the way in which the mutual connection is conveyed. To the Naiyāyikas the sentence-meaning is only the mutual relation of the word-meanings; but the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas explain

---

1. Māṇameyodaya, p. 93f.



that the sentence-meaning is always conveyed by the secondary power of words.<sup>1</sup> The two condition of lakṣaṇā, namely, the incompatibility of the expressed sense and the relation between the primary sense and the intended sense, apply here also. In a sentence the isolated words are by themselves unintelligible, since they refer to the generic form without any syntactic relation. This is against the purport of the sentence, which is to convey a unified sense. So the general sense of the words, through secondary implication, gives the particular senses consisting in mutual syntactic relation.

This does not mean that the sentence-meaning is not derived from the words, ~~and hence~~ ~~hence~~. Kumārila bhaṭṭa says, "Even though the words convey the word-meanings directly, they do not stop with that; the mere knowledge of the word-meanings is of no use to the hearer. The conveying of the individual senses by the words is indispensable for the cognition of the sentence-meaning, just like the production of fire by fuel is indispensable for the purpose of cooking."

---

1. Kumārila bhaṭṭa, quoted in Tattvabindu, p.153:

vākyaṛtho lakṣyamāṇo hi sarvatraiva ti na s sthitiḥ.

2. Śloka vārttika, p.943 (Also quoted in Tattvabindu, p.153)



The abhihitānvaya theory is supported by the following reasons: "If the words of a sentence have no separate meanings of their own, then the classification of words into nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc., becomes meaningless. Further, in every case in which we are to understand the meaning of a sentence, we must first understand the meaning of its component words. Without a previous understanding of the words no one can understand the meaning of a sentence. Moreover, if the meaning of a sentence were quite independent of the meaning of its constituent words, then any sentence could convey any meaning. Lastly, when we understand the meaning of a new verse, we do so obviously on the basis of our knowledge of the words and their separate meanings. This cannot be explained by any understanding of the sentences, since they are new and unintelligible to us. So it is concluded that the meaning of a sentence is just the synthesis of the separate meanings of its words."<sup>1</sup>

The anvitābhidhāna theory seems to be an advancement on the abhihitānvaya theory.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of a sentence dominates the meanings of its words;

---

1. S. C. Chatterjee, op.cit., p.372

2. Ibid, p. 374f.



both the speaker and the listener are concerned only with the sentence-meaning. We use words without fully understanding their exact meaning; that does not mean we are talking nonsense. "It is obvious that knowing a language consists in using words appropriately and acting appropriately when they are heard. It is no more necessary to be able to say what a word means than it is for a cricketeer to know the mathematical theory of impact and projectiles."<sup>1</sup> The ubiquitous importance of context as a deciding factor in determining the meaning of a word in a sentence points out the fact that the claim of words to have an independent meaning in isolation is very weak. The well-known statement by St. Augustine applies to ~~the words~~ words also; "quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat scio; si quaeranti explicare velim nescio."<sup>2</sup>

Later writers in India tried to reconcile the two theories. Thus, Mukulabhatta, in the Abhidhāvr̥tti-mātrkā, says that both the anvitābhidhāna and the

---

1. Bertrand Russell, An Inquiry into the theory of Meaning and truth, p. 26

2. Confessions, quoted by Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p. 77. (See also Frege's view that 'a word has meaning only as part of a sentence' p. 46).



abhihitānvaya theories contain partial truth: looked at from the point of view of the words the abhihitānvaya theory seems to be preferable; but looked at from the point of view of the sentence preference must be given to the anvitābhidhāna theory. Mukulabhaṭṭa accepts a combination of the two views and calls it the theory of samuccaya.<sup>1</sup>

Bhartrhari's theory of akhaṇḍa-vākya-sphoṭa.

According to Bhartrhari the words have no reality of their own. The entire sentence is to be taken as an indivisible, integral unit; and its meaning is also an instantaneous flash of insight (pratibhā) which has no parts. The indivisible sentence is analysed into words and again into roots and suffixes by the grammarians for facilitating easy study of the language; but these divisions should not be considered to have a real existence, apart from the sentence.

---

1. Abhidhavarṭtimātrkā, p. 15: aneṣāṃ tu mate padānam tattatsāmānyabhūto 'vācya' vācya 'rthah, vākyaśya tā parasparānvitah padārtha iti padapekṣayābhihitānvayao vākyapekṣaya tv anvitābhidhānam. evaṃ caitayos... samuccaya iti.



In language as we find it in the world there are only complete utterances which may be called sentences; we do not notice the words or the word-meanings or the letters in language in operation. Of course in language-material considered and described by the grammarians they do have an existence; that is only based on grammatical analysis, and has no absolute reality. Even though the sphoṭa theory envisages different subdivisions of the sphoṭa, Bhartṛhari accepts only the indivisible sentence-sphoṭa as the real unit of speech. The existence of ~~the~~ words in language is on a par with avidyā <sup>1</sup> stage; words have only a pragmatic existence; they are useful units of language which build up the higher unit of speech, the sentence.

The sentence which is "a single undivided utterance" <sup>2</sup> conveys its meaning in a flash. The sentence-meaning is not built up gradually on the basis of the word-meanings. It is grasped by the listener in an instantaneous flash of insight (pratibhā). This pratibhā is indivisible; and it is grasped in the mind. It is because of the

- 
1. K. A. Subrahmanya Iyer, Pratibhā as the meaning of a sentence, POC., 1940, pp. 326ff.; Gopinatha Kavirāja, The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy, ABORI, 1924.
  2. Puṇyārāja on VP. i. 66: sphoṭātmake vākye pratibhālakṣaṇe vākyārthe vākyavākyarthayor adhyāsarūpas sambandhaḥ



indivisibility of pratibhā, which is the meaning of a sentence, that the grammarians reject the abhihitānvaya and anvitābhidhāna theories of verbal comprehension, in both of which the meanings of individual words have an absolute reality. According to Bhartṛhari the sentence-meaning is not only indivisible; it is also indefinable. <sup>Even</sup> When we have understood the meaning of a sentence, we cannot explain to another the nature of this understanding. He says, "This(pratibhā) cannot in any way be explained to others in terms such as 'It is this'; its existence is ratified only in the individual's experience of it, and the experiencer himself cannot describe it."<sup>1</sup> Bhartṛhari identifies this pratibhā with the instinctive urge in animals which prompts them to act. The behaviour of animals is prompted by this instinctive urge of pratibhā; it is this that teaches the cuckoo to sing in spring, and the birds to build their nests. It is the same kind of urge that results from a sentence. A sentence becomes productive of this urge, because of repeated usage.<sup>3</sup>

1.VP.11.146. Translation by J.Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, p.171

2.VP.11.151, 152

3.VP.11.119; abhyāsāt pratibhāhetus sarvaś caśabdo'parakaismṛtaḥ



Sāntirakṣita quotes this view in the ~~Tattva~~  
Tattvasaṅgraha, and while explaining this Kamalaśīla  
says<sup>1</sup> that by repeated usage words produce an intuition  
in the mind of the listeners, and that they do not  
actually denote any external object. Words are like  
a goad to an elephant. It is ~~an~~ insight or intuition  
leading to an action. If words had been directly grounded  
"in an objective reality, there would have been no occasion  
for the conflicting interpretations of texts or contra-  
dictory expositions; and fictions and stories could not  
have been possible."<sup>2</sup> A sentence produces an urge to  
do something, rather than creating an image of something  
in the mind; this urge varies with each individual and with  
each sentence. Puṇyārāja goes one step forward and  
says that even <sup>for</sup> those who do not know the exact meaning  
of words, there is a feeling that he is to do something,  
when he hears a sentence.<sup>3</sup>

Bhartrhari's theory of the non-reality of words  
met with strong opposition from other Indian philosophers.<sup>4</sup>  
~~Even though~~ <sup>but</sup> it is accepted only by the grammarians in  
India, the importance of the linguistic principle under-  
lying the sphota theory is very great.

---

1. Tattvasaṅgraha, verse 892, and Pañjikā thereon.

2. Satkari Mookerjee, Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux,

3. Puṇyārāja on VP. ii. 119

(p. 113f.)

4. J. Brough, op.cit., p. 167ff.



CHAPTER VI

L A K S A N Ī

M E T A P H O R



Sometimes a word is used to denote a referent other than its normal one. Such metaphoric usage is common in all languages. If we take the word as denoting its normal primary meaning, the sentence may become nonsensical in the context. This produces a "psychic resistance" in the listener, and there is a sort of break in the flow. It excites attention and requires interpretation for understanding the purport. The actual referent of the word has to be taken as different from its normal one, but in some way connected with it, either through similarity or through some other relation. This function of the word to denote a referent different from its normal and primary one, but somehow related to it, is called lakṣanā or upacāra; other terms like gaunī vṛtti and bhakti are also used to refer to this secondary significative function of words.

The three essential conditions generally accepted by the later Ālaṅkārikas as necessary in a lakṣanā or transfer are (a) the inapplicability or the unsuitability of the primary meaning in the



context, (b) some relation between the primary and the actual referent of the word and (c) sanction for the transferred sense by popular usage, or a definite motive justifying the transfer<sup>1</sup>. Of these three conditions the first two are accepted by all writers; but the necessity for the motive element justifying the use of a metaphor which has not received the sanction of established usage, is not stressed by the earlier writers; even later writers belonging to the other schools of thought are not interested in the motive element in a lakṣaṇā; it is only the literary critics who give great prominence to it.

The well known example of lakṣaṇā in Sanskrit is the sentence gaṅgāyāṁ ghoṣaḥ ( The village is on the Ganges). Here the primary meaning of the word

---

1. Kāvya-prakāśa, ii.9: mukhyārthabādhe tadyoge rūḍhito 'tha prayojanāt anyo 'rtho lakṣyate yat sā lakṣaṇā ropitā kriyā. See also Sāhityadarpaṇa, ii.5.



'gāṅgāyām' is 'on the river Ganges'; this is not suitable to the context, since the village cannot actually be on the stream itself; hence the actual meaning of the word Gāṅgā is taken to be gāṅgātata or 'the bank of the river Ganges'; the relation between the normal meaning of the word and its actual meaning here is one of proximity (sāmlpya).<sup>1</sup> This secondary meaning of the word is not understood directly from the word, but only indirectly through its primary and normal meaning. It is the normal meaning that occurs to our mind immediately on hearing a word; when this is found to be incompatible with the context, we resort to lakṣanā and get the actual sense which is related to the normal one and which removes the incompatibility. The special motive underlying the metaphorical usage is rather vague and depends mainly on contextual factors; in the present case it may be to indicate that the village has the qualities of sanctity and coolness associated with the sacred river.

---

1. In English the expression 'A village on the river' does not seem to be a transfer, since it is sanctioned by everyday usage. ~~There~~ One of the normal meanings of the preposition 'on' is accepted to be 'nearness', so that 'A village on the river' can directly mean 'A village on the edge of the river'. But in Sanskrit nobody seems to have considered the possibility of taking one of the meanings of the locative case to be proximity.



Relation between the normal and the actual meanings in a transfer:-

Gautama in his Nyāyasūtras<sup>1</sup> applies the term upaoāra to this secondary function of words. He says that such transfer of meaning is quite common, when the actual referent is closely related to the normal and primary referent, and he enumerates with examples ten such relations.

(a) Association. e.g., yaṣṭikām bhojaya (Feed the stick).

In this sentence the Brahmin is referred to as stick, as he is always associated with the stick which he carries. Another example for the same relation is the use of the term kuntāh (lances) for the lance-bearers in the sentence kuntāh pravṛṣanti (The lances enter).

(b) Location, e.g. mañcāh kroṣanti (The cots cry). Here the term mañca (cot) is used to refer to the children on the cot.

(c) Purpose. e.g. kaṣam karoti (He makes a mat) used in the sense of 'He collects reeds for the purpose of making a mat'. Here the reeds intended for making a mat are referred to as a mat.

---

1. Nyāyasūtra, II.2.62 : saha-carana-ssthāna-tādarthya-vṛtta-māna-dhāraṇa-sāmīpya-yoga-sādhana-'dhipatyebhyo brāhmaṇa-mañca-kaṣa-rāja-saktu-candana-gaṅgā-sātakā-'nna-puruṣeṣv atadbhāve 'pi tadupaoāraḥ.  
See also Vātsyāyana's Bhāṣya on the sūtra.



(d) Behaviour. e.g. yamo rājā (The king is the god of death). Here the term yama (god of death) is used in the sense of 'one who acts like yama'.

(e) Measure. e.g. ādhakasaktavaḥ (Ādhakas of meal).

Here the term ādhaka for the measure is ~~used~~ used to mean 'that which is measured' (ādhakena mitās saktavaḥ).

(f) Consider. e.g. gāṅgāyām gāvaś caranti

(f) Weighing. e.g. candanatulā (One tulā of sandal).

Here tulā is used in the sense of 'that which is weighed on the balance' (tulāyām dhṛtam candanam).

(g) Proximity. e.g. gāṅgāyām gāvaś caranti (The cows are grazing on the Ganges). Here gāṅgā is used in the sense of 'the edge of the Ganges'.

(h) Inherent connection. e.g. kṛṣṇas śātakah (The black cloth). The word 'black' primarily means 'blackness' but here it means 'the thing having blackness'.

The use of the ~~adjective~~ term for quality for the thing qualified (e.g. 'I love beauty') come under this.

(i) Cause. e.g. annam prāṇāḥ (Food is life). Here food which is the cause of life is referred to as life itself.

---

1. (e) and (f) are similar; the former refers to the measurement of volume, and the latter the measurement of weight. Ādhaka primarily means the measure and secondarily to the volume measured by it; tulā primarily means the balance which gives a particular weight, and secondarily to that which is weighed by it. Ganganatha Jha's translation of the term dhāraṇa as 'container' does not bring the idea clearly.



(j) Prominence. e.g. ayam kulam ( He is the family).  
Here kulam is used in the sense of the prominent  
person in the kulam(family).

In all these examples Gautama is giving  
popular examples of figurative usage from everyday  
life; the list is intended only to be illustrative,  
and not to be exhaustive. He also refers<sup>1</sup> to the  
Mīmāṃsaka view that the primary meaning of every  
word is the universal and that the particular to  
which it refers in a sentence is known through the  
secondary function upacāra; but he does not accept  
that view, since according to him a word means the  
universal, the form and the particular.

In the Mahābhāṣya Patañjali<sup>2</sup> also discusses  
such transference of meaning. He gives four different  
relations between the primary and the actual referents  
in such cases, and illustrates them with examples.

---

1. Nyāyasūtra, II.2.65

2. MBH.ii, p.218: caturbhiḥ prakārair atasmin sa ity  
etaḥ bhavati; tāsthyāt, tāddharmyāt, tatsāmīpyāt,  
tatsāhacaryād iti.



(a) Location. e.g. mañcā hasanti ( The cots laugh),  
girir dahyate ( The hill is burning). Here the cots  
stand for the children in the cots and the hill  
stands for the trees on the hill.

(b) Quality. e.g. īatī Brahmadattah ( Brahmadatta is  
an ascetic). It means that Brahmadatta is behaving  
like an ascetic; the qualities of an ascetic are  
superimposed on Brahmadatta.

(c) Proximity. e.g. gāṅgāyām ghoṣah ( The village is  
on the Ganges), kūpe gargakulam (Garga's house is  
on the well).

(d) Association. e.g. kuntān pravesaya (Fetch the  
lances), yaṣṭih pravesaya (Fetch the sticks). Here  
lances and sticks are used for those who carry them.

The Mīmāṃsakas in their attempt to find out  
the basic rules of interpretation so as to explain  
the Vedic passages in a sensible manner have  
naturally to deal with metaphorical transfers of  
meaning. In the Mīmāṃsāsūtras, Jaimini enumerates  
six bases for figurative description; these are  
explained in detail by Sabara in his Bhāṣya.



(a) Tatsiddhih<sup>1</sup> (Accomplishment of the purpose):-  
e.g. yajamānah prastarah<sup>2</sup> (The grass-bundle is the sacrificer), yajamānah ekakapālah<sup>2</sup> (The purodāsa cake prepared in one bowl is the sacrificer)<sup>3</sup>. These Vedic sentences are not to be taken literally, since in that case they would be nonsensical. They have to be explained in a figurative sense. The grass-bundle and the cake accomplish the purpose served by the sacrificer, and hence are indicated by the term 'sacrificer.

(b) Jātiḥ<sup>4</sup> (Same origin): e.g. āgneyo vai brāhmaṇah<sup>5</sup> (The brahmin is Āgneya). This figurative use is based on the fact that both the Brahmin and Agni are said to have had the same origin from Prajāpati.

(c) Sārūpyam (Similarity). e.g. ādityo yūpah<sup>6</sup> (The sacrificial post is the sun). This metaphor is based on the similarity of the post to the sun in brightness and height, and is meant to eulogize the post .

1. Mīmāṃsāsūtra, 1.4.22: tatsiddhi-jāti-sārūpya-prasamsā-bhūmalinga-samavāya iti guṇāśrayā. See also Śabara's Bhāṣya on that.

2. Taittirīya Saṃhitā, 2.6.5; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, 1.6.3.4.

3. ekakapāla means that which is prepared in one bowl, and refers to the purodāsa cake.

4. See Śabara, loc.cit. jātir iti cātra janmopādānam vivakṣitam.

5. Taittirīya Saṃhitā, 2.6.3.

6. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, 2.1.5.2.



(d) Prasamsā (Praise): e.g. apaśavo vā anye gośvebhyah (Those other than cows and horses are not animals), van malinam avāsas tat (Dirty ones are <sup>not</sup> cloths), yad aghrtam abhojanam tat (That without butter is not food).

In these cases the pregnant use of the words paśu (animal), vāsas (cloth) and bhojanam (food) are used in the sense of praiseworthy animal etc.

(e) Bhūma (Preponderance): e.g. srstīr upadadhāti (The srstī bricks are placed). Here the word srstī means the bricks that are associated with a group of hymns with and without the word srstī.

(f) Līngasamavāyah ( Presence of indicative sign): e.g. chatrino yānti (People with umbrellas are going). Here the reference to the umbrella is only to indicate the people, not to describe them, and the sentence may be used even if there be only one umbrella. Similarly the sentence dandino gacchanti (People with sticks are going) can be applied for a group of people with and without sticks.

---

1. These are similar to the arthāntarasamkramita variety of Dhvani of the later Ālankārikas. Even the pregnant use of words as in A is A (An explosive is an explosive, it must be guarded with constant precaution) ~~are~~ are similar (cf. Empson, The Structure of Complex words, p. 351)

These examples could also be explained by taking the negative prefix to mean incomplete or imperfect nature, rather than complete negation.

2. The examples of bhūma and līngasamavāya come under the ajahatsvārthā variety of lakṣanā.



According to Mukulabhaṭṭa,<sup>1</sup> Bhartṛmītra the great Mīmāṃsā teacher noted five relations that generally exist between the primary and the actual referents in the case of a lakṣaṇā:-

(a) Abhidheyena sambandha ( Some indirect relation with the literal meaning):- e.g. dvirepha (literally, 'having two 'r's) which indicates the bee through the word bhramara. Another example is turaṅgakāntā-<sup>2</sup>nanahavyavāha in the sense of the submarine fire, through its relation to the word baḍavāmukhāgni. (turaṅgakāntā = mare = baḍavā; ānana = face = mukha; havyavāha = fire = agni)<sup>3</sup>. Such a lakṣaṇā is acceptable only if it is sanctioned by popular usage, or if there is a special motive for resorting to such circumlocution; otherwise it is a defect. This defect is called neyārtha by the Ālankārikas. If the speaker invents such new words at will without any purpose, the listeners will not be able to understand him, and hence it is a defect.

---

1. Abhidhāvr̥ttimātrkā, p.17: abhidheyena sambandhāt sādṛśyāt samavāyataḥ vaiparītyāt kriyāyogāl lakṣaṇā pañcadhā matā.

2. Śiśupālavadha, 111, 33.

3. Abhidhāvr̥ttimātrkā, p.11f.



According to Mukulabhaṭṭa all cases where the expressed literal sense indirectly leads to some other idea are to be considered as instances of this type of lakṣanā; thus in the well-known example of arthāpatti, "pīno devadattaḥ divā na bhunkte" (Devadatta who is fat does not eat during day), the idea about Devadatta's eating during night is got through lakṣanā. According to this all implied meanings will have to be brought under lakṣanā. This is not acceptable to others. According to many writers lakṣanā applies only to words and not to sentences.

(b) Sādrśya (Similarity): e.g. simho mānavakah (The boy is a lion).

(c) Samavāya (Association such as proximity): e.g. gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ (The village is on the Ganges).

(d) Vaiपरित्या (Contrareity): e.g. brhaspatir ayam mūrkhah (This fool is the teacher of gods). All ironical sentences come under this type of lakṣanā.

Many other similar lists are given by later writers also. Nagesa gives<sup>1</sup> a list of five relations, adding tādarthya (purpose) to the four given by Patañjali. Mammata, Viśvanātha and Hemacandra also

---

1. Paramalaghumañjūsā, p. 7: tātsthyāt tathaiva tāddharmyāt tatsāmīpyāt tathaiva ca tatsāhacaryāt tādarthyāt jñeyā vai lakṣanā budhaiḥ.



1. Kāvya-prakāśa, under II, 6; Sāhityadarpaṇa, II; Kāvya-nusāsana (Kāvya-mālā edition), p. 29.
2. Tantrevārttika, p. 354: abhidheyāvinābhūte pravṛttir lakṣaṇocyate; lakṣyaṇaḥ guṇair yogaḍ vṛtter iṣṭā tu gaṇatā.
3. Haradatta Sarma, The meaning of the word 'upacāra', Poona Orientalist, vol. I, pp. 26 ff.

1. Kāvya-prakāśa, under II, 6; Sāhityadarpaṇa, II; Kāvya-nusāsana (Kāvya-mālā edition), p. 29.
2. Tantrevārttika, p. 354: abhidheyāvinābhūte pravṛttir lakṣaṇocyate; lakṣyaṇaḥ guṇair yogaḍ vṛtter iṣṭā tu gaṇatā.
3. Haradatta Sarma, The meaning of the word 'upacāra', Poona Orientalist, vol. I, pp. 26 ff.



Modern writers on semantics like Stern and Ullmann also give the same distinction between transfers based on similarity and those ~~xxxx~~ based on other relations.<sup>1</sup>

Mammata in his Kāvya prakāśa quotes<sup>2</sup> Kumārila bhaṭṭa's definition of lakṣaṇā and gaunī and says that pure lakṣaṇā there need not be any invariable concomitance between the primary and the actual referents. If there is an invariable association between the two, there ~~is~~ could be no transfer in cases like mañcā krośanti (The cots cry), since the relation between the cots and the children <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ only temporary. Moreover, there will be no necessity for resorting to transfer, since the related sense could be got through inference itself. If the relation is one of similarity, the transfer is qualitative (gaunī), if it is any other relation such as that of cause and effect, owner and the owned, measure and the measured, part and the whole, etc. it is pure lakṣaṇā.

- 
1. Meaning and Change of Meaning; Semantics, passim.
  2. Kāvya prakāśa, p. 50 (He quotes it as abhidheyavinābhūta-pratītir ...): avinābhavo 'tra sambandhamatram nāntariyakatvam, tathā'tve hi mañcā krośantītyādau na lakṣaṇā syād, avinābhāve cakṣepenaiva siddher lakṣaṇāyā nopayoga ity uktam.



It is clear that the various schools of thought in India were unanimous in accepting that in a transfer there must be some kind of relation between the primary and the actual referents.<sup>1</sup> The secondary meaning is resorted to when the primary meaning is found incompatible with the context. This secondary meaning is not got immediately and directly from the word, but only through the primary meaning. The knowledge of the actual referent arises only indirectly; first we understand the primary meaning of the word; when this is found unsuitable in the context, the meaning is transferred to something related to the primary sense.

---

1. Hence it seems strange that some of the later writers should have overlooked this fundamental point in the course of their arguments. Thus to show that the condition for a transfer is not the impossibility of the literal sense in the context, but its incompatibility with the intention of the speaker, it is ~~arg~~ argued that in the well-known example gāṅgāyām ghosaḥ (The village on the Ganges), it is the intention of the speaker that gives the meaning 'the bank of the Ganges' to the word gāṅgā, and that if the intention were otherwise, the implied meaning of the term ghosa (village) might be 'a fish', since even by resorting to that sense the impossibility of the literal sense in the context could be removed. See Siddhāntamuktāvalī, p. 506: yadi cānvayānupapattir lakṣaṇābhiḥ syāt tadā kvacid gāṅgapadasya tire kvaciḥ <sup>ghosa</sup> tirapadasya matsyādau lakṣaṇeti niyamo na syāt. Also, Laghumañjuskā, p. 116. In this argument they forget that there is no conceivable relation between the 'village' and 'fish' and that such a transfer of meaning is not at all possible. (See the section on Tātparya also for further discussion of the problem).



Gaunī vrtti (Qualitative transfer):-

Following Śabara, Kumārilabhaṭṭa discusses some of the theories about the real nature of a qualitative metaphor such as simho Devadattah ( Devadatta is a lion).

(a) One theory is that the word 'lion' is denotative of the whole aggregate of the class, its qualities and actions. Even though all the elements of this meaning are not applicable to the boy Devadatta, the word is applied to him indirectly on the basis of some of the elements found in him. Śabara rejects this view on the ground that an aggregate cannot refer to one part separately. As Kumārilabhaṭṭa says, the term 'hundred' cannot refer to 'fifty' even though the latter is part of the total aggregate. Moreover, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, the primary meaning of a word is the universal, and not actions or qualities.

- 
1. Śabarabhāṣya, p. 356: anyeṣāṃ tu darśanam sarva eva hi siṃhādisabdā jātiguṇakriyāsamudāyavācīnaś sāmāstārthāsambhave devadattādiṣu katipayaguṇakriyāyogād upacaryata iti.
  2. This is similar to the view mentioned by Stern (Meaning and Change of Meaning, p. 304): "In this case, as in most other cases, it is one element of the many in the meaning of 'lion' that is intended by the speaker."
  3. Śabarabhāṣya, with Kumānila's commentary, p. 356: samudāyārthavācītvā naikasabde bhaved gatiḥ śatasabdān na pañcāśan mukhyarūpeṇa gamyate.



(b) Another theory that Śabara discusses is that in a qualitative metaphor the character of one is imposed on another.<sup>1</sup> In the sentence siṃho deva-dattaḥ (Devadatta is a lion) the complete nature of the lion is imposed on Devadatta on the basis of the actions and qualities of Devadatta which are found to be similar to those of the lion. Śabara and Kumārilabhaṭṭa criticize this view on the ground that such an <sup>identity</sup> impossible is absolutely impossible, since the man and the lion have distinct characteristics. It is only under delusion on the part of the speaker or the hearer or both that the characteristics of one objects can be imposed on another. There is, thus, the imposition of water on mirage. But in the case of a metaphor there is no delusion; both the speaker and the listeners are equally aware of the difference between the man and the lion; hence none can have the power to impose the character of the lion on the boy.<sup>2</sup> Here an important linguistic principle is pointed out that in all cases of intentional metaphors there must be the awareness

---

1. Śabarabhāṣya, p. 357: kaścit punar āha samāropita-tadbhāvo gauna iti.

2. Kumārilabhaṭṭa on Śabarabhāṣya, p. 358: dvāv api pratipadyete siṃhapuṃsor viviktatām nādhyāropayitum śaktis tenaikasyāpi vidyate.



of the distinction between the primary and the actual referents. As the criterion of the definition of a metaphor, Stählin observes<sup>1</sup> the same point that "the transfer does not involve an essential identity between the two referents."

(c) The Mīmāṃsaka view is that a qualitative metaphor is based on the existence of certain common qualities between the primary and the actual referents. They argue that all significations of a word are, in some way, connected with its primary meaning and that we should not assume any other potency in a word, if it is possible to explain the secondary meanings also as derived from the primary ones.<sup>2</sup> In the sentence siṃho devadattaḥ (Devadatta is a lion) the word siṃha ('lion') connotes the universal simhatva (lionness) which indicates such qualities as courage, the presence of which in Devadatta justifies calling him a lion.<sup>3</sup> This interpretation

---

1. Quoted by Stern, loc. cit.

2. Tantravārttika, p. 356 : ajahatsvārthā sarvā śabdapravṛttayah, pūrvaśaktyanūsārasambhavesaktyan-tarakalpane pramāṇābhāvāt.

3. Ibid., p. 354 : vahnitvalakṣitād arthād yat paṅgalādi gamyate tena māṇavake buddhis sādṛśyād upajāyate.



is quite sufficient to explain the usage. If, on the other hand, we begin to assume that a word has different meanings in different contexts, there will be confusion, since it will be difficult to understand the precise meaning of a word and since one will be forced at times to assume for words meanings not at all well-known.

Whenever we hear a word, it is only the well-known, normal primary referent that we recognize immediately.<sup>1</sup> Then we find that it is not compatible with the context and so we know that the word has been used figuratively on the basis of the similarity between the primary and the actual referents. Hence the Mīmāṃsaka asserts that the figurative meaning proceeds directly from the primary meaning itself. The power that resides in the word as significativeness is only with reference to the primary referent; other figurative meanings are derived from this and are dependent on this.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Tantravārttika, p. 358: pūrvāmubhūta evārthas smaryate prathamam padāt.

2. Ibid., p. 358: sarvathā tāvad ayam gaunamukhya-vibhāgaś śrotṛnām arthaviśeṣāvadhāraṇe vyāpriyate. te ca padavelāyām anadhyāropitasvārthavṛtty eva śimhādīpadam adhyavasāya devadattādīpadasāmānādhikaranyānyathānupapatyā gaunatām kalpayanti.



There is a discussion about the necessary factors for a qualitative metaphor like agnir mānavakah (The boy is a fire) in Sthiramati's commentary on the Triṃśikā. The three relevant conditions that are essential for a qualitative metaphor are given there<sup>1</sup> as (a) the primary referent of the word, (b) the actual referent resembling the primary one and (c) a common quality existing between the two. In the case of the example considered, the primary meaning of the word agni is fire, the actual referent is the boy who resembles it and the qualities common to both are the bright, tawny colour and the fiery nature. An objection is raised to this common view. The metaphor cannot be applied to the boy either on the basis of the universal common attribute of fireness or on the basis of the qualities in a particular fire. The colour or the fiery nature is not the essential quality of the fire, as otherwise the fireness will be present in the boy also and there will be no necessity for a metaphorical transfer. Again it cannot

---

1. Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi (Edited by Sylvain Levi), Part I, p.17: upacāro hi triṣu bhavati nānyatamābhāve mukhyapadārthe tatsadrśe tayas ca sādṛśye. Tad yathā mukhye 'gnau tatsadrśe mānavake tayas ca sādḥāranadharme kapilatve tīkṣṇatve vā saty agnir mānavaka ity upacārah kriyate.



be applied to the boy on the basis of the qualities in a particular fire, for the quality being inseparably linked with the substrate, the brightness of the boy is essentially different from the brightness of the boy. What we can say is that the quality of the fire is similar to that of the boy; the quality can be metaphorically applied to that of the boy, but not to the boy himself.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, according to the Buddhists there is no primary referent for a word; for the essential nature of an object transcends the pale of all forms of knowledge and expression. Each word is applied to its object only indirectly through upacāra, based on the quality. The thing-in-itself cannot be directly denoted by a word.<sup>2</sup> In the vigrahavyāvartini of the Buddhist writer Nāgārjuna also we meet the same view.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Viññaptimātratāsiddhi, part I, p.17 :avinābhāvitve copacārābhāvo 'gnav iva mānavake 'pi jātisadbhāvāt. tasman na mānavake jātyupacāras sambhavati. nāpi dravyopacārah sāmānyadharmābhāvāt. na hi yo 'gnes tīkṣṇo guṇaḥ kapilo vā sa eva mānavake....evam agniguṇasyaiva mānavakaguṇe sādrśyād upacāro yuktaḥ.
  2. Ibid: mukhyapadārtho nāsti, tasya sarvajñānābhīdhāna- viśayātikrāntatvāt...api ca sarva evayam gauna eva, na mukhyo 'sti.
  3. Vigrahavyāvartini, p.1: sarveṣāṃ bhāvanām sarvatra na vidyate svabhāvaś cet tvadvacanam asvabhāvam na nivartayitum svabhāvam alam.



There, as a prima facie objection, it is said that if the words themselves are devoid of essential nature, it should not be possible to apply them to refute that essential nature. Non-existent fire does not burn; then how could words which have no reality be used to prove that very unreality? The answer is to be found in the Buddhist view that even though words have no <sup>direct</sup> ~~ultimate~~ connection with the ultimate reality, they have the power of practical utility (arthakriyākāritā) as they can refer to the objects indirectly through lakṣanā.

It is interesting to note that the Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school also accept that it is through the secondary significative power that words denote the particular objects in a sentence. According to them the letters of the words in a sentence convey only the universal concepts directly. As these cannot be related to one another, they give way to the particular meanings got through lakṣanā. Thus the sentence meaning is always known with the

---

1. Vigrahasyāvatī, p. 10: na hy asatāgninā śakyam dagdhum... evaṃ asatā vacanena na śakyah sarva-bhāvapratīṣedhaḥ kartum.

Cf. Vātsyāyana's Bhāṣya on Nyāyasūtra 4-2-30  
for such an argument.



help of the secondary significative power of words.<sup>1</sup> For example in the sentence "Bring the cow", the word ~~Bring~~ 'bring' directly connotes the act of bringing in general, and indirectly indicates the particular act of bringing at the given time. Similarly the word 'cow' connotes the universal cowness and indicates the individual cow as related to the act of bringing. Thus in every sentence each component word directly connotes its meaning in the general form and indirectly indicates the particular as related to the meanings of the other words. This is the view of Kumārilabhaṭṭa and his followers.<sup>2</sup>

Jahallakṣaṇā, Ajahallakṣaṇā and Jahadajahallakṣaṇā:-

We have seen that in all cases of metapho-~~r~~ical transfer of meaning there should be some intimate relation between the primary and the actual referents. Now according to the degree of ~~intimacy~~

---

1. Mānameyodaya, p. 94: vayam tu padārthā lakṣaṇayaiva vākyārtham bodhayantīti brūmaḥ. See also the well-known line generally attributed to Maṇḍanamisra: Vākyārtho lakṣyamāṇo hi sarvatraiveti naḥ sthitiḥ (Quoted in Śālikanātha's Vākyārthamātrkāvali)

2. Ganganatha Jha, Purvaṃīmāṃsā in its Sources, p. 152.



to which the primary meaning is retained in the actual meaning it is possible to distinguish three kinds of lakṣaṇās. Of course in a transfer one cannot exclude completely the primary meaning of the word; but its retention may be larger or less.

(a) Jahallakṣaṇā or Jahatsvārthā:- In a sentence like gaṅgāyāṁ ghoṣaḥ (The village is on the Ganges), the primary sense of the term gaṅgā (Ganges) is abandoned and the secondary meaning 'the bank of the Ganges' is taken. This is a case where the primary meaning of the word is abandoned and a secondary meaning which is related to the primary one, but which excludes it, is accepted. This is jahallakṣaṇā. In this type of lakṣaṇā there will be the non-intelligibility of the syntactical relation between the terms, if we take the primary meaning of the word; hence the primary sense has to be rejected to a great extent and another sense connected with it has to be taken to suit the context. Mammata calls it lakṣaṇalakṣaṇā.

---

1. cf. Śaṅkara, Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, 4.1.6 (Kāśī Sanskrit Series, p. 914): lakṣaṇā ca yathāśambhavam sannikṛṣṭena viprakṛṣṭena vā svārthasambandhena pravartate.

Also Kumārilabhatta, Tantravārttika, p. 356: ajahatsvārthā sarvā śabdapravṛttayah.



(b) Ajahallakṣaṇā or ajahatsvārthā:-

It is not necessary that the primary sense should be excluded in all cases of transfers. Sometimes the primary sense is not substantially modified, but only specified by context, or restricted by its syntactic function or extended by the inclusion of another sense. In all such cases the secondary sense includes the primary sense also. In the example kuntāḥ praviśanti (The lances enter) the word kuntāḥ indicate through lakṣaṇā the lances and the men who carry them. The sentence chattrino yānti (People with umbrellas are going) indicates, through lakṣaṇā, both those with and those without umbrellas. And in the Vedic example srṣṭīr upadadhāti (The srṣṭī bricks are placed), the word srṣṭī means, by lakṣaṇā, the bricks that are associated with a group of hymns with and without the word srṣṭī. This type of transfer is called Ajahallakṣaṇā. Mammata calls it upādāna lakṣaṇā<sup>1</sup>. According to the Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas the primary meaning of a word is the universal; its power is exhausted on expressing the general sense, and the meaning of the particular has to be got through lakṣaṇā of the ajahatsvārthā type<sup>2</sup>. Mammata

---

1. loc. cit.

2. See the section on the Primary meaning of a word.



does not accept the necessity of assuming lakṣanā to get the idea of the particular from that of the universal; he follows the Prābhakara school of Mīmāṃsakas in maintaining that, on account of the invariable connection between the universal and the particular, the latter is <sup>cognized</sup> ~~got~~ as implied in the former.

(c) Jahada-jahallakṣanā:- Besides these two varieties of lakṣanā the Vedāntins accept a third variety, called jahad-ajahal-lakṣanā, in cases where only a part or an aspect of the primary meaning is preserved, while the rest is rejected. In examples like pato dagdhah (The cloth is burned) or grāmo dagdhah (The village is burned), it is only a part of the cloth or village that is actually meant as having been burned. Only a part of the primary meaning of the word pata or grāma is retained. Again in a sentence like so 'yam devadattah (This is that Devadatta, the term sah (that) refers to Devadatta as determined by the past time and space; and the term ayam (this) refers to the same Devadatta as determined by the present time and space. The

---

1. Datta, op.cit., p. 283; Huparikar, op.cit., p. 470f; Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV.



sentence does not mean that the two incompatible determinants 'this' and 'that' are identical; nor does it mean that the person as determined in the term 'this' is identical with him when determined in the term 'that'. It only means the identity of the substantive Devadatta, by rejecting the incompatible elements. The two qualified entities cannot be identical; but they refer to the same substantive Devadatta. So the identity here refers to the individual Devadatta who is unrelated to time, past or present. The Vedāntins are very much interested in this type of lakṣaṇā, since they have to explain Vedic sentences such as tat tvam asi<sup>1</sup> (Thou art That) and aham brahmāsmi<sup>2</sup> (I am Brahman). In the sentence tat tvam asi, tvam (thou) as part of the sentence does not mean Śvetaketu as son of Uddālaka, but as stripped of all individual attributes such as limited intelligence; tad (That) means the Universal Soul, stripped of all qualifications such as omniscience. It is only the Pure Consciousness in the individual soul that is identified with that in the Universal Soul.

---

1. Chāndogyaopaniṣad, 6.8.7.

2. Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, 1.4.10.



Such instances, where a word signifying a qualified entity gives up one part of its primary meaning and retains another part, belong to the jahada jahal-lakṣaṇā<sup>1</sup>. Sadānanda in his Vedāntasāra<sup>2</sup> calls it bhāgatyaḡalakṣaṇā (literally, a transfer where a part of the primary sense is rejected.)

Discussing such sentences as 'A is B', William Empson says<sup>3</sup> that if the identity is accepted literally, it becomes nonsense and consequently, there is a feeling of resistance. When the machinery of interpretation is brought into play, there is a feeling of richness about the possible interpretations. This view is similar to that of the Indian philosophers; but later, when Empson says<sup>4</sup> that "people who believe 'hoc <sup>est</sup> corpus' or 'That art Thou' would strongly deny that they are metaphors", he seems unconscious of the fact that the Indian philosophers actually included the sentence tat tvam asi under metaphor,

---

1. Mallinātha in his commentary on Ekāvali (p.68) defines it thus: svārthaikāṃsatyaḡād aṃsāntaram eva lakṣyate yatra, sā jahada jahat svārthā tat tvam asītyādiviṣayadrśyeyam; see also Śaṅkara, Svātma-nirūpaṇa, verse 35: jahada jahatīti sā syād yā vācya-rthaikadeśam apahāya bodhayati caikadeśam so'yam dvija itivād āśrayed enām; Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV; yatra hi viśiṣṭavācakaś śabdaḥ ekadeśam vihāya ekadeśe vartate, tatra jahada jahallakṣaṇā.

2. Vedāntasāra, p.10.

3. The Structure of Complex Words, p.334

4. Ibid., p.337.



though they distinguish it from purely qualitative metaphors like "The boy is a lion". But it is true that the Ālaṅkārikas and the Naiyāyikas do not recognize this type of metaphor.

The theory of lakṣaṇā is important in all philosophical systems which try to discuss the nature of the ultimate Reality which is beyond expression. In the ordinary sense of the word the Absolute is beyond any definition. Śaṅkara himself says in the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya<sup>1</sup> that words denote things through one or the other of the following: name, form, action, distinction, genus and quality; but in Brahman there is none of these differences and hence It cannot be described.<sup>2</sup> When Brahman is described as Intelligence, Bliss etc., it is described by means of a name, form or action superimposed on It. If we want to describe Its true nature free from the difference due to the limiting adjuncts, it is an impossibility. The only way is by negation, "Not thus, not thus". However, it is possible for words to suggest meanings and ideas beyond the range of their expressive power. Vague

---

1. BUB.2.3.6.

2. But see Bhartṛhari who says that there is nothing indescribable; if there is anything, then the word 'indescribable' will apply to it. "avācyaṃ iti yad vācyaṃ tadavācyaṭvena vācitaṃ" (VP.ii. )



suggestion may be useful in poetry, but in logical discussion of philosophical problems. Metaphorical expressions which are fundamentally based on the literal meanings are useful in extending the range of expression without making the ideas too vague for objective communication.

(d) Laksitalaksanā:- A fourth variety of laksanā called laksitalaksanā is recognized by some of the early writers; this occurs when the relation between the primary and the actual referents is not direct, but indirect through some other word, as in the case of the word dvirepha<sup>1</sup>. Here the literal meaning of the word is "a word having two 'r's" and it indicates the word bhramara, and through that word it means the 'bee'. According to the modern Naiyāyikas, however, it can be included under jahallaksanā itself. According to the Vedāntaparibhāṣā even qualitative metaphor (gaunī vṛtti) come under this type of laksanā, since the relation between the two referents in such cases is only indirect, effected through the implication of the common quality.

---

1. Nyāyakosa, p. 702; Datta, op.cit., p. 283.

2. Thus "You are a lion" means "You possess the courage which is implied in lionness". See Datta, loc.cit.



Suddhā, Sāropā and Sādhyavasāna:-

Mukulabhatta in the Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā<sup>1</sup> gives another threefold classification of lakṣanā. (a) When the actual referent appears to be aloof and clearly distinct from the primary referent, it is the suddhā or pure type. (b) When the difference between the two referents is not clear and there is superimposition of the one on the other, it is called the sāropā (superimponent) type. (c) And when the apparent closeness of the two referents is so great that there is no apprehension of the difference at all, it is the sādhyavasānā type of lakṣanā (intro-susceptive). In this third variety the object of superimposition is completely eclipsed or swallowed by the thing superimposed; the <sup>former</sup> ~~latter~~ is not expressed in a word, only the latter is expressed instead. The sāropā and the sādhyavasānā types of lakṣanās, especially when they are based on similarity, play a great part in the literary figures of speech.

---

1. Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā, p. 9: tatasthe lakṣanā suddhā syād ūropas tv adūrage nigirne'dhyavasānam tu rūdhyāsennataratvataḥ.



the sāropa type is the basis of the figure rūpaka, as in mukham candrah ( The face is the moon), and the sādhyaavasāna type is the basis of the figure rūpakātīśayotki as in ayam candrah ( This is the moon) referring to the face. Criticizing this view Mammata says<sup>1</sup> that there can be no complete aloofness between the primary and the actual referents even in instances like gāṅgāyām ghosaḥ ( The village is on the Ganges), since the motive element underlying the transfer could be got only by apprehending their identity.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that lakṣaṇā could be classified from various points of view: (a) on the basis of the nature of the relation between the primary and the actual referents, (b) on the basis of the intensity of that relation and (c) on the degree of the distinction between the two. Again the transfer can be intentional (prayojanavati) or natural (nirūdhā). There are minor differences of opinion among scholars about the subdivisions; but the main bases of classification ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> accepted by all.

---

1. Kāvyaśakāśa, II, under verse 5.

2. It is clear that the identity referred to for a lakṣaṇā is a kind of false identity, as otherwise there will be no incompatibility of the primary sense. Cf. Kumārila's statement about gaunī vṛtti.



1. Brahmasūtrabhāṣya on sūtra 1.4.11: śrutilakṣaṇāśiṣya  
śrutir nyāyā na lakṣaṇā.



According to the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins the secondary meaning of a word is known through a reasoning of the arthāpatti type, which consists in the postulation of a fact to explain two known facts which are apparently unaccountable. In the well-known example "pīno devadattah divā na bhunkte" (The fat Devadatta does not eat by day), the two known facts, viz. Devadatta being fat and his ~~sitting~~ not eating during day are unaccountable unless we postulate the fact that he eats during night. In the case of lakṣaṇā we have to find a way to reconcile two known facts, viz., the primary meaning of the word known through remembrance and the intention of the speaker inferred from the context. "When a dog is spoken of as a lion, the primary meaning is found to be impossible and the secondary meaning is known, through immediate inference of the arthāpatti type, to be 'similar to a lion in courage etc.' as the only one which is related to the primary meaning and which can remove the conflict between the primary meaning and the contextual meaning.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, p.284.



Now, what is meant by the incompatibility of the literal sense (mukhyāarthabādhā or anupapatti)? According to the ancient Naiyāyikas and the later Alaṅkārikas it is only the impossibility~~xxx~~ of establishing the logical connection in the sentence. The Mīmāṃsakas of the Prābhakara school also take this view; Śālikanātha defines lakṣaṇā as "that which is resorted to for convey<sup>ing</sup> a new sense which can be related to the sentence-meaning through the cognition of its primary sense, when that primary sense of the word has no logical connection with the sentence-meaning." But according to the later Naiyāyikas and the Vedāntins, as well as the later grammarians, the incompatibility of the primary sense lies not merely in the difficulty of establishing the logical connection in the sentence, but in the unsuitability of the primary sense with the intended sense in the context (tātparyānupapatti). The Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school also favour this view; in the Tattvabindu

- 
1. Vākyārthamātrkāvalī, p.13: vācyasyārthasya vākyārthe sambandhānupapattitaḥ tatsambandhavaśāpṛāptasyānvayāl lakṣaṇā matā.
  2. Siddhāntamuktāvalī, p.285 : lakṣaṇā śakyasambandhas tātparyānupapattitaḥ; Laghumañjūsā, p.116: vastutas tātparyānupapattir eva ~~xxx~~ tadbījaḥ; Vedāntaparibhāṣā, IV.



Vācaspati criticizes Śālikanātha's definition of lakṣaṇā and says that any kind of incompatibility of the primary sense should be taken as the condition of lakṣaṇā, not merely its incompatibility with the sentence meaning.

In all cases of lakṣaṇā where the primary meaning is not retained ( ajahallakṣaṇā ) such as "gāṅgāyāṁ ghosah" (The village is on the Ganges) there will be the unsuitability of the primary sense of the word in establishing logical connection with the sentence meaning. But in cases where the primary sense is not completely rejected ( Ajahal-lakṣaṇā ) there will be no impossibility the sentence meaning if the word is taken in its primary sense, and hence there will be no lakṣaṇā, if we take the ~~former~~ former explanation of 'incompatibility of primary sense'. Thus the sentence "chattriṇo yānti" (The men with umbrellas are marching) can mean 'a group of people with and without umbrellas are marching', even though the literal meaning refers only to the umbrella-bearers. Similarly, in a sentence "kākebhyo dadhi raksyatām" (Protect the curd from crows), the primary



meaning of the word kāka (crow) is not impossible in the context; but it is also clear that the intention is to have the curd protected from all animals. To include all such instances under lakṣaṇā we have to take incompatibility with the intended sense as the condition for a lakṣaṇā. Moreover, all cases of impossibility of establishing logical connection with the sentence meaning can be explained by the incompatibility of the literal sense with the intention of the speaker or the purport of the sentence.<sup>1</sup>

Those who hold impossibility of establishing the logical connection with the sentence meaning as the condition of lakṣaṇā explain such instances by taking the words to be the upalakṣaṇa for the actual referents. Thus in kākebhyo dadhi rakṣyatām the word kāka (crow) is an upalakṣaṇa for all animals that might eat the curd (dadhyupaghātaka). Upalakṣaṇa is the act of implying any analogous object where only one is specified. The word kāka

---

1. Datta, op.cit., pp. 260ff; Huparikar, op.cit., pp. 260ff.



(crow) is an indication for the animals that eat the curd; the word is a means of referring to the whole group including ~~it~~ the crow which is the literal meaning of the word.

Now, one of the conditions for a sentence is accepted to be yogyatā or congruity of sense; a decisive knowledge of congruity is a pre-requisite of arriving at a valid judgement from a statement.<sup>1</sup> Thus the statement "agninā siñcati" (He wets it with fire) is given as an example for the breach of this condition, since the concept of fire is incongruous with that of wetting. If there is any incompatibility of the primary sense, as we find in all cases of lakṣaṇās, how can there be yogyatā in the sentence? The explanation is that in the case of lakṣaṇā, the incompatibility of the sense is only for the sense when taken literally, and is not real. This could be removed by resorting to the secondary meaning of the word. Even in cases like agninā siñcati, if the incongruity could be explained away by resorting to some secondary meaning, it can be taken as a correct sentence.

---

1. Nyāykośa, p. 172.

2. See the section on Yogyatā. (p. 174)



Nirūdhā lakṣanā or Faded Metaphor:-

The third condition for a lakṣanā is that the secondary sense must have the sanction of everyday usage or that it must be resorted to with a special motive to suggest some new ideas. The ancient writers stressed the necessity of sanction by popular usage; but not the motive element in the use of words in the figurative sense. It is the later literary critics who give great prominence to the suggestion of new ideas as a motive for resorting to lakṣanā.

Śabaravāmin remarks that lakṣanā is based on the usage in everyday life. It is an arbitrary assumption of a sense by society. Sometimes the newly assumed sense becomes so prominent through usage, that the primary, original, sense of the word is not normally noticed, except by the grammarians. The secondary sense is generally accepted as the primary sense <sup>at</sup> itself, and the original sense is taken as the etymological sense.

---

1. Śabarabhāṣya, on sūtra 1.4.2: lakṣanā iti ced varam kalpitā, na yogābhidhānam. laukikī hi lakṣanā haṭho 'prasiddhe kalpanā.



Kumārilabhaṭṭa says that old and deep-rooted lakṣanās express the secondary sense as if it were the primary sense itself, and that in the case of modern and newly made lakṣanās, some are possible, but some are impossible, since they are not allowed by usage.<sup>1</sup> This classification is accepted by Mammata also<sup>2</sup>. In the case of nirūḍhā lakṣanās (Faded metaphors) the actual meaning is as good as the normal meaning itself and there is no need for incompatibility of the original meaning or any special motive to sanction its usage. In the case of these faded metaphors the association of the word with the original, primary, meaning has almost disappeared, and the word becomes an ordinary name for the actual referent without any other cognitive or emotive association. Every language is full of such faded metaphors, and Sanskrit is abundantly rich in them. Many of the synonyms in Sanskrit can be classed under this category. For all practical purposes the metaphoric meaning has become the normal meaning of the expression.

---

1. Tantravārttika, p. 700: nirūḍhā lakṣanāḥ kāścit sāmāthyād abhidhānavat kriyante sāmpratam kāścit kāścin naiva tv aśaktitah.

2. Śabdavyāpāravicāra, p. 7: nirūḍhā kācanānyā tu kāryā sā kācid anyathā.



Mukulabhaṭṭa says<sup>1</sup> that we recognize lakṣanā only in those cases established by the usage of ancients, and that analogous cases must also be warranted by usage, as otherwise any word might have any meaning; if there is a special motive which is clear enough, metaphors can be resorted to. Thus on the analogy of the existing word dvirepha (a word having two 'r's, viz., bhramara) for bee, we cannot coin a word like dvika (a word with two 'k's, viz., kokila) for the cuckoo.

In the Sāhityadarpaṇa, Viśvanātha says that we should not confuse the etymological sense of a word with its primary sense. If we take the meaning of 'expertness' as the secondary meaning of the word kuśala (etymologically taken to be 'one who cuts the kuśa grass'), even the meaning 'cow' for the word gauḥ will have to be taken as secondary, since etymologically it could be explained as 'one that walks' (from the root 'gam').<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā, p. 11f: vṛddhavyavahārābhyamu-  
jñāteṣu eva śabdeṣu tajjātīyaśabdadarśanāl lakṣanā-  
tvam abhyupagamyate, na tu sarvatra; anyathā sarveṣāṃ  
eva śabdānāṃ yenakenaci jātīleṣena sarvān arthan  
prati lakṣanāśabdasya vaktum śakyatvāt.

2. Sāhityadarpaṇa, p. 9: anyad dhi śabdānāṃ vyutpatti-  
nimittam anyac ca pravṛttinimittam; vyutpattilabhyasya  
mukhyārthatve gauḥ śete ity atrāpi lakṣanā syāt.



Hemacandra is definite that we should take all such instances of nirūḍhā lakṣaṇās like kuśala and dvirepha as the normal meaning (mukhyārtha) itself.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note in this connection the clear distinction laid down by the Mīmāṃsakas between interpretation based on analysis ~~and~~ or etymology (yoga) and interpretation based on conventionally established usage (rūḍhi). "They taught that rūḍhi is always stronger than yoga; that is, one must always interpret a word in accordance with its conventional meaning when that can be determined."<sup>2</sup> They never denied the importance of etymology in interpretation; but they said that it must always be overruled by conventional usage. This is known as the maxim of the rathakāra. In the interpretation of the Vedic text laying down that 'fire should be installed during the rain' by the rathakāra, doubt arises about the

---

1. Kāvyaṇuśāsane, p. 30: kuśaladvirephādvipādayas tu sāṅgāt saṅketaviśayatvān mukhya eveti na rūḍhir lakṣyārthasya hetutvenāsmābhir uktā. See also Sarvadarśanaśaṅgraha, p. 111: na ca vyutpattibalād eva sarvatra śabdāḥ pravartate.

2. Edgerton, F., Etymology and Interpretation, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 79, no. 4 (1938), pp. 705 - 714; See also Jha, Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, pp. 314, 384.



meaning of the term rathakāra; etymologically it means the 'chariot-maker'; but it is conventionally used in the sense of a man belonging to a mixed sub-caste. Jaimini says<sup>1</sup> that the conventional meaning should be taken in preference to the etymological one. This maxim is accepted by Nāgasa<sup>2</sup> in his commentary on Paribhāṣendūśekhara and by Jayantabhatta in his Nyāyamañjari.<sup>3</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas, while discussing the relative importance of the six means of evidence in the treatment of injunctions of application (vinīyoga-vidhi) lay down the principle that liṅga or the conventional word-meaning established by usage (same as rūḍhi) is a stronger evidence than samākhyā or ~~name~~ the etymological meaning (yoga). It is interesting to note that the samākhyā is given last in the list of six pramāṇas for subordinating the details of a sacrifice to the main utpattividhi.

---

1. Mīmāṃsāsūtra 6.1.50

2. Under Paribhāṣā 98.

3. P. 140

4. They are śruti (direct statement), liṅga (word meaning), vākya (syntactic connection), prakaraṇa (context), sthāna (position or sequence) and samākhyā (etymological meaning); of these each preceding one is stronger than the succeeding ones. See Huparikar, op.cit. p. 251ff.



Motive element in Lakṣaṇā:-

In India it is the later literary critics like Ānandavardhana and his followers that made a clear distinction between intentional metaphors (prayojanavati lakṣaṇā) and unintentional metaphors (nirūdhalakṣaṇā) and pointed out<sup>1</sup> the importance of the former ~~variety~~ in enriching the content of literature by suggesting new ideas and by stimulating subtle shades of emotions. Even earlier Ālankārikas like Daṇḍin and Vāmana had noticed that metaphorical expressions play an important role in literature. Daṇḍin<sup>2</sup> considered metaphorical expressions as the basis of samādhī guṇa in literature, while Vāmana<sup>3</sup> included all qualitative metaphors under the figure of speech called Vakrokti. The Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas were not interested in the motive element. It is the later Ālankārikas who stress ~~on~~ this aspect of lakṣaṇā.

---

1. Kāvya-prakāśa, II.

2. Kāvya-darśa, I. 93: anyadharmaś tato 'nyatra  
lokaśīmānurodhinā samyag ādhīyate yatra sa  
samādhis smṛto yathā.

3. Kāvya-ālankāra-sūtra-vṛtti, 4.3.8: sādṛśyaḥ lakṣaṇā  
vakroktiḥ.



According to Ānandavardhana the motive element in lakṣanā is apprehended by the function of suggestion only<sup>1</sup>. In an intentional transfer the motive<sup>is</sup> apprehended from the word alone; thus in the well-known example gaṅgāyāṁ ghoṣaḥ (The village is on the Ganges), the suggested sense of coolness and purity is apprehended from the word gaṅgā; but the word has no such conventional meaning. The motive element can neither be included in lakṣanā, because the three necessary elements, viz. incompatibility, relation to the primary sense and sanction by usage or special motive, are absent in this case. The function of lakṣanā is exhausted when the incompatibility of the primary sense is removed by adopting the secondary sense, and should not be extended to the motive element. But the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas, who do not accept suggestion (vyañjanā) as a separate function of words, take the motive element in intentional transfers also as part of the main lakṣanā itself<sup>2</sup>. Moreover,

---

1. Kāvya-prakāśa, II, under verse 8: prayojanam hi vyañjanāvyāparagamya eva; also verses 10, 11.

2. This is discussed in the chapter on Vyañjanā.



in many cases the motive underlying the transfers is vague and ambiguous and depends entirely on contextual factors, and cannot, therefore, be objectively ascertained with a reasonable degree of certainty and accuracy, however great its importance may be in literature.

It is true that in the example gāṅgāyām ghosah the qualities of coolness and sanctity suggested by the word gāṅgā are associated with the village; even if the sentence had been gāṅgātate ghosah (The village is on the banks of the Ganges) these qualities could be implied. This suggestion belongs to the suggestive power (vyākṣanāvyāpāra) of the word. The definite purpose of the lakṣanā is to help in the process of suggestion. In a lakṣanā there is a break in the flow, due to the incompatibility, and the listener has to think about the possible interpretations; thus the lakṣanā stimulates our attention to the suggestive elements that formed the motive in resorting to the metaphorical expression. Hence there is a great deal of truth in the argument that the motive element in a transfer does not form part of it, but that it is conveyed by the suggestive power of the word.



Compound Words:-

According to the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas no special denotative function need be accepted in the case of compound words; they explain with the help of lakṣanā all cases of compounds where the intended sense is not got directly from the members of the compound themselves. Thus in the case of a Bahuvrīhi compound like citrāguḥ (possessing brindled cows) they resort to lakṣanā to obtain the sense of the owner. But the grammarians assume a special power to explain the new meaning distinct from those of its members, since lakṣanā in regard to either citrā or guḥ is not sufficient to bring about the signification of the owner of the brindled cows<sup>1</sup>. The word citrā cannot indicate the owner of brindled cows, and if the word guḥ were to indicate the owner of cows, the meaning of the word citrā will be incompatible with that of the owner, since it is not the owner that is brindled.<sup>2</sup> The grammarians

---

1. Vaiyākaranabhūṣana, under verse 34: citragur ityādaḥ svāmyādipratitaye śaktir āvaśyaki, na ca lakṣaṇaya nirvāhaḥ; see also MBH. under sūtra II.1.1.

2. Tattvacintāmaṇi, Śabdakhaṇḍa, p. 702: na ca citrāpadam citragosvāmīlakṣakam, tatra gopadārthanānvayāt. nāpi gopadam lakṣakam gosvāmini, citrāpadārthanānvayāpatteh. See also Chakravartī, Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar, p. 309.



assign the power of expressing such additional senses to the compounds, taking the whole as an indivisible unit of speech.<sup>1</sup> The Mīmāṃsakas explain this difficulty by taking the whole sentence as lakṣanā. In a Tatpuruṣa compound like rājapuruṣaḥ (The king's man) for rājñah puruṣaḥ, the relation denoted by the genitive is got through lakṣanā. The Naiyāyikas resort to lakṣanā only in the case of one word, either citrā or gauḥ, and take the other as suggestive of the purport (tātparyagrāhaka).<sup>2</sup> The Tatpuruṣa compound has lakṣanā for the first word only; in the case of a Karmadhāraya compound there is no necessity to resort to lakṣanā, since the sense of identity of the members is got from the relations of the meanings themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas assume that since the natural relation of a word is to its primary meaning, no recourse should be taken to the secondary function

---

1. Ibid.

2. Śabdasaṃgrahaprakāśikā, § saṃāsa section: na hi bahuvrīḥau samastapadānām lakṣanikatvam... ekapadalakṣanayāpi bahuvrīḥer vyavasthāpakatvāt.

3. Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣana, p.159: karmādhāraye na lakṣanā padārthayoḥ padārthābhyām abhedasya saṃsargatayā lābhāt.



of words, if it is possible to explain the passage by resorting to the primary meaning itself. This is stressed in their discussion of the meaning of the term niṣādashapati.<sup>1</sup> If it is taken as a Karmadhāraya compound, it means 'a king who is a niṣāda'; but, if taken as a Tatpuruṣa compound, it means 'king of the niṣādas'. Their final conclusion is that the word has to be taken as a Karmadhāraya compound, in which case the members retain their primary meanings, and not as a Tatpuruṣa compound, since that involves recourse to lakṣanā.<sup>2</sup>

Bhartrhari's Views on Lakṣanā:-

Bhartrhari believes that the unit of speech is the sentence which is indivisible and that the meaning of a sentence cannot necessarily be grasped from a knowledge of the meanings of the words. He refers to the usual division of meanings of words into primary and secondary, and gives various popular views about the distinction between the two.

---

1. Mīmāṃsāsūtras, 6.1.51-52.

2. Jha, Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, p. 315.



(a) According to those who hold that a word can have more than one meaning, the distinction between primary and secondary meanings is based on the relative frequency of usage; that which is well known through constant usage is called the primary and normal meaning, while the less frequently used meaning is called secondary. The same word can have more than one meaning, but not simultaneously; it is the context or the connection with some other words that determines the meaning to be taken in a particular sentence.<sup>1</sup>

(b) One theory, attributed to the great grammarian Vyāḍi by Puṇyarāja, is that the primary meaning of a word is that which is well-known and which depends only on its form, whereas the secondary meaning is that which is established with effort with the help of the context. The former is what the word conveys by itself, whereas the latter is different from this and depends on the other words in the sentence and on the context.<sup>2</sup>

---

1.VP.ii.265

2.VP.ii.266-267, 280.



(c) A third view considers the words to refer to the qualities. That object which possesses these qualities to a greater extent is called the primary referent and the other is called the secondary. Bhartṛhari does not support this view, since it is against usage.

(d) According to some others the secondary usage is based on similarity. "Devadatta is a lion" only means that Devadatta possesses some qualities similar to those of the lion. Or, it may even be based on some confusion of the one for the other because of the similarity.

According to Bhartṛhari it is meaningless to discuss the primary and secondary referents of an individual word; the sentence has to be considered as a whole, and in the particular context in which it is uttered. In many of the familiar instances the individual word meanings have no special significance in the context. Thus when a mother says "Tiger eats children who cry", she does not mean

---

1.VP.ii.275

2.VP.ii.322.



that if her child cries, he will be eaten by the tiger; what she really means is that the child should not cry.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, if a traveller says to his companion, "We must go, look at the sun", the meaning conveyed is not merely that of ~~look~~ looking at the sun; the implied sense here is that it is getting late.<sup>2</sup> Again, if a child is asked, "See that the crows do not steal the butter", he knows quite well that he should not interpret the sentence literally and allow dogs to steal the butter.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes in compound words the component parts may not real meaning of their own; thus the thing meant by 'brāhmanakambala' (the brahmin's blanket) does not contain the thing meant by the word brāhmaṇa.<sup>4</sup> It is not satisfactory to explain

---

1.VP.ii.322 and Puṇya-rāja's commentary thereon:  
yathā rudantam vyāhṛo bhakṣayatīti bālaśyoccyate  
na tu vyāhṛabhaṁṣaṁ vastusthityā sambhavati  
kevalam mā kadācit tvam rodīti rodananīśedha  
eva tasya kriyate.

2.VP.ii.312

3.VP.ii.314: kākebhyo rakṣyatām sarpir iti bālopi  
coditaḥ upaghātapare vākye na śvādibhyo na rakṣati.

4.VP.ii.14: brāhmaṇārtho yathā nāsti kaścid brāhmaṇa-  
kambale.



all such usages by resorting to the secondary signifiocative power of a particular word in the sentence. In cases like ironical statements, the meaning of individual words give an entirely different sense from the actual meaning of the sentence in the context. It is true that many of the later writers have tried to include all such instances under laksana; itself; but Bhartrhari has clearly shown the unsatisfactory nature of a theory depending entirely upon word-meanings, even though he is not oblivious to the usefulness of the discussion of word-meanings as an easy method in the study of language. The Dhvani theory propounded by the great literary critic Anandavardhana is partly an answer to this problem.

---

---

1.VP.ii.249 : sūtinindāpradhāneṣu vākyeṣv artho  
na tādrśaḥ.

2.Cf. J. Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, TPs  
1953, p.172. SPT.,



Classification of Lakṣaṇā

<u>Basis of classification</u>		<u>Name of the subdivision</u>
(a) Nature of relation between primary and actual referents.	1. Similarity	<u>Gaunī lakṣaṇā</u> or <u>Gaunī vṛtti</u> .
	2. Other relations	<u>Suddhā lakṣaṇā</u>
(b) Intensity of relation between the referents. ( This division is not applicable to <u>gaunīlakṣaṇā</u> ).	1. Primary sense rejected	<u>Jahallakṣaṇā</u> or <u>Upādānalakṣaṇā</u> .
	2. Primary sense retained	<u>Ajahallakṣaṇā</u> or <u>Lakṣaṇalakṣaṇā</u> .
	3. Primary sense partly retained	<u>Jahada jahallakṣaṇā</u> , <u>Bhāgatyaḡalakṣaṇā</u> .
	4. Relation being indirect	<u>Lakṣitalakṣaṇā</u> .
(c) Degree of distinction between the two referents.	1. Completely distinct	<u>Suddhā</u> ( not applicable to the <u>Gaunī lakṣaṇā</u> ).
	2. Actual referent identified with the primary one.	<u>Sāropā</u> .
	3. Actual referent identified and eclipsed by the primary referent	<u>Sādhyaavasānā</u> .
(d) Purpose	1. Intentional	<u>Prayojanavati</u>
	2. Unintentional	<u>Nirūḡhā</u> .



C H A P T E R   V I I

V Y A Ñ J A N Ā

S U G G E S T I O N

(   A N D   T H E   D O C T R I N E   O F   D H V A N I   )



### Vyañjanā or Suggestion

It is only in the 9th century A.D. that the theory of literal and metaphorical meaning, developed by the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas, was further extended by Ānandavardhana in the Dhvanyāloka.<sup>1</sup> Centuries earlier, Bhartr̥hari had<sup>2</sup> exposed the unsatisfactory nature of a linguistic theory which depends entirely on individual words and their lexical meanings; the sphoṭa doctrine which he brought forward emphasized the importance of taking the whole utterance as a significant unitary linguistic sign. Bhartr̥hari had also shown that the meaning of an utterance depends on contextual factors, and that the logical interpretation of the sentence-meaning on the basis of the individual word-meanings is defective in many cases. At times the meaning of the whole utterance is different from what the individual words indicate. Ānandavardhana took the cue from Bhartr̥hari and developed the theory of language on the lines

---

1. First published in the Kāvyaṃālā Series. It is in the form of karikās (short verses) and their explanations in prose called the vytti. The problem as to ~~the~~ whether the two portions are by the same author or by different authors is still hotly discussed (P.V.Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, pp.154-190; for bibliography, see p.154f of the same).

2. On Bhartr̥hari's date, see H.R.Rangasvami Iyengar, JBRAS, 1951, pp.147-9



suggested by him; but as he was concerned only with the question of literary appreciation, he did not proceed with the full discussion of all the intricate problems connected with speech activity. He confined his attention to his own field of poetic meaning. In the Dhvanyāloka, he openly declares his indebtedness to the sphoṭa doctrine.

Even the Vedic sages understood the fact that the literal meaning of an utterance is only a part of its total meaning and that those who try to analyse the literal meaning may completely lose sight of the real significance of speech. One of the well-known hymns of the Rgveda<sup>1</sup> distinguishes between the man who understands only the literal meaning of a poem and the man who looks more into the inner significance of the passage than to the meanings of the words therein; the former "sees, but does not see; he hears, but does not hear; it is only to the latter that Speech reveals herself completely, like a wife to her husband."

utah tvah paśyan na dadarsa vācam  
uta tvaś śṛṇvan na śṛṇoty enām  
uto tvasmai tanvam viśasre  
jāyeva patya uśatī suvāsāh

---

1. Rgveda, X.71.4. This is also quoted in the Nirukta, 1.19 and the Mahābhāṣya, 1.p.4



In another passage in the Rgveda<sup>1</sup> it is said that great poets compose poems selecting their words, "winnowing away the chaff from the grain", and that it is only men of equal scholarship and literary taste that can fully appreciate such poems.<sup>2</sup>

Anandavardhana does not attack the usual division of speech utterances into sentences and words, into stems and suffixes, and the distinction between the primary and <sup>the</sup> transferred or metaphorical senses of words (abhidhā and lakṣanā). He accepted all these, but in addition he postulated a third potency of language, which he called the capacity to suggest a meaning other than its literal meaning. This suggestive power of language is called Vyañjanā.

---

1. Rgveda, X.71.2: saktum iva titaunā punanto yatra dhīrā manasā vācam akrata. atrā sakhāyas sakhyāni jānate bhadraīṣām lakṣmīr nihitādhi vāci. (This is also quoted in the Nirukta, IV.10, and in the Mahābhāṣya, i.p.4)

2. Cf. A. Gardiner, Speech and Language, p.61:

A curious position sometimes confronts the commentator of letters or ancient texts. The sentences hang together and yield a sense which is satisfactory and certain up to a point, but no further. To the audience addressed by the author the background of fact was known, so that he could 'see what was meant'. But the interpreter is left perplexed and baffled, because for him that background is unascertainable.

3. See also J. Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, TPS, 1953, p.173



It is <sup>a</sup> matter of common experience that an utterance means much more than its literal sense. The Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas, more interested in accuracy and precision in the use of words which they want to analyse objectively than to the fullness of meanings and the possibilities of extending the range of meanings even to the domain of the inexpressible, are satisfied with the normal literal sense; but the poets and the critics who deal with the totality of human experience cannot neglect vast portions of language behaviour. As Professor Brough says, <sup>1</sup>

"Most philosophic discussions of meaning confine themselves to a relatively small portion of language behaviour, namely, statements which describe or report a state of affairs - the propositions of the natural sciences, or, more generally, such statements as are traditionally handled by logic." Thus Wittgenstein dismisses the subject of colloquial languages by saying, "The silent adjustments to understand colloquial language are enormously complicated"<sup>2</sup>. In the Philosophical Investigations, he says, again,<sup>3</sup> "It is only in normal cases that the use of a word is clearly prescribed."

---

1. locit., p. 176

2. Tractatus, 4.002

3. Philosophical Investigations, 142



Abnormal cases are only exceptions. Otherwise our language games will lose their points". This view is on the basis that every word had a definite and fixed meaning and that this is all that need be considered. But, as Angus Sinclair says,<sup>1</sup> "a word has in itself no fixed and definite meaning and has a slightly different meaning in every context". The Indian critics do not deny the existence of fixed literal meanings for words and sentences. But they believe that over and above all these, there is the suggested meaning or 'the social-cultural meaning' as a recent linguist<sup>2</sup> puts it, which varies from context to context."In addition to the regularly recurring responses to the lexical items and structural arrangements, there are also, throughout a linguistic community, recurring responses to unique utterances or sequences of utterances"<sup>3</sup>. These 'social-cultural meanings' fall within the domain of the power of vyañjanā. Ananda- vardhana's basic postulate is that utterances possess a literal meaning, and can also convey a further meaning- the 'social-cultural meaning.' This includes

---

1. The Conditions of Knowing, p.170

2. Charles C. Fries, Meaning and Linguistic analysis, Language, vol. 30, no.1 (1954), p.67

3. Ibid p.66



every thing other than the literal meaning(the primary and the metaphorical senses). And under the term 'meaning' is included not only information conveyed, but also the emotion induced; this naturally necessitates the assumption of suggestive power for language. For even the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas could not argue that the emotions induced by language are brought about by the literal power of the words. Again, Ānandavardhana did not confine himself to the words and sentences as indicators of meaning; he included all the contextual factors, the intonation, stress, gestures and even the pure sounds used in the utterance, as well as the literal sense, as indicators of the full meaning of an utterance. Not only the expressive symbols(vācakas), but the indicative signs (bodhakas) like gestures also form part of language. As Russell says,<sup>1</sup> "Music may be considered as a form of language in which emotion is divorced from information".

Or, using Bhartṛhari's terminology we may say that not only the prākṛta-dhvanis or the normal sound-patterns which reveal the linguistic sign sphoṭa, but

---

1. Human Knowledge, its scope and limits, p.73.



even the vaikṛta-dhvani or the individual modifications of the sound <sup>may</sup> have an important role in speech-activity. Thus, we have to include in language, "even the set of deviations from the norm of the sound segments that signal the meaning that a speaker is drunk, the whispering of an utterance that signals the meaning that the content of it is secret, and the unusual distribution that is the cue to a metaphor".<sup>1</sup> The voice of the speaker can indicate whether it is a man or a woman, a child or a grown-up person and can give even the identity of the speaker to those who know <sup>the</sup> his voice. Ānandavardhana is concerned only with poetic language, and therefore, omits many of these elements of speech from his field of observation. He is concerned only with the suggestion of elements that are of aesthetic value. Though vyañjanā, in the broadest sense of the term embraces all such elements, it is only in its restricted sense as applied to poetry that Ānandavardhana studies the problem. His aim is to establish the doctrine of Dhvani, which is vyañjanā applied to poetry.

---

1. Charles C. Fries, loc. cit., p. 67n.



Ānandavardhana uses the term dhvani to his theory of poetic suggestion. He says<sup>1</sup> that this term is taken directly from the grammarians; just as the sounds of utterances (dhvani in the grammarians' sense) reveal the integral linguistic sign (sphota), so also a good poem with its sound as well as the literal sense reveals a charming sense over and above the literal sense. Just as the grammarians' dhvani reveals the sphota, good poetry (the sound and the literal sense) reveals a suggested sense which has great aesthetic value. On account of this similarity of function, the term ~~dhvani~~ dhvani is applied to suggestive poetry. The term is also used to the suggested sense or the function of suggestion. In the Dhvanyāloka, Ānandavardhana establishes his theory that suggestion is the soul of poetry.<sup>2</sup>

Ānandavardhana says that the beautiful ideas in poetry are of two kinds: literal (vācya) and implied (pratiyaṅga). The latter is something like charm in

---

1. Dhvanyāloka, p. 47 f: prathame hi vidvāṃso vaiyākaraṇāḥ... te oḥ śrūyamāṇeṣu varṇeṣu dhvanir iti vyavaharanti. tathāivānyais tanmatānusāribhiḥ śūribhiḥ kāvyatattvārthadarśibhir vācyavācakaśāmmisraś śabdātma kāvyam iti vyapadeśo vyañjakatvasāmyād dhvanir iti uktaḥ.

2. Ibid, p. 1: kāvyasyātma dhvaniḥ



girls which is distinct from the beauty of the various parts of the body; this implied sense is something more than the literal meaning and depends on the whole poem, and not merely its parts.<sup>1</sup> The expressed sense is invariably an idea; but the suggested sense may be of three kinds, an idea, a figure of speech, or an emotion. This suggested sense is not understood by those who merely know grammar and lexicon; it is understood only by men of taste who know the essence of poetry.<sup>2</sup> This suggested sense is the most important element in poetry; in fact it is the soul of poetry. In all good poetry prominence is found to be given to this element. Such poetry in which the words and their literal meanings occupy a subordinate position and suggest some charming sense( an idea, a figure of speech or an emotion) is called dhvani.<sup>3</sup> It is the highest type of poetry. In cases where the suggested sense is subordinate to the expressed sense, as in some of the figures of speech like samāsokti and pariyāyokta,<sup>4</sup> there

---

1. Ibid, udyota 1     pratiyamānam punar anyad eva vastv  
asti vāṇiṣu mahākavīnām yat tatprasiddhāvayavātiriktaṁ  
vibhāti lāvanyam ivāṅganāsu.

2. Ibid, 1.7: śabdārthasāśanañjñānamātreṇaiva na vedyate  
vedyate sa tu kavyārthatattvajñair eva kevalam.

3. Ibid, 1.13: yatrārthas śabdo vā taṁ artham upasarja-  
nikṛtasvārthau vyanktaḥ kāvyaviśeṣas sa dhvanir iti  
sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ.

4. For details about these figures see Sahityadarpana, X.



is no dhvani; this type of poetry too has some charm, though not much; this type is called gunībhūtavyaṅya. Poetry which does not contain any suggested sense cannot be considered as good poetry, however charming the expressed sense may be. The quality of poetry depends on the importance given to the element of suggestion .

Strictly speaking, the doctrine of dhvani is only an extension of the rasa theory propounded by the ancient sage Bharata, according to which the main object of a dramatic work is ~~the~~ to rouse some rasa or emotion like love or sorrow in the audience.<sup>1</sup>

Ānandavardhana extended this theory to ~~the~~ poetry also. Many of his predecessors had understood the importance of rasa in poetry; but no one had systematically dealt with it before. There is no conflict at all between the theory of dhvani and the theory of rasa; the former stresses the method of treatment, whereas the latter deals with the ultimate effect. Suggestion, by itself, is not enough in drama or poetry; what is suggested must be charming, and this charm can come only through rasa or emotion. The emotion is not something which can

---

1. On the rasa theory see A. Sankaran, Theories of rasa and dhvani; K. C. Pandey, Indian Aesthetics. (For detailed bibliography see P. V. Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, p. 350.



be expressed directly by the words, it can only be suggested.

The whole theory of rasa realization in literature and drama is based on the well-known passage in the Nāṭyaśāstra<sup>1</sup> "vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicāri-samyogād rasanispattiḥ." Rasa is realized in some way from the combination of the sthāyibhāva (permanent and dominant emotional mood) with the vibhāvas (the objects of emotion, namely, the hero, heroine etc., and the exciting causes such as the spring, flowers, moonlight and the bower), anubhāvas<sup>2</sup> (the external manifestations of the emotion such as the movement of the eye-brows, glances, smile etc.) and the vyabhicāri-bhāvas (accessory moods which come and go helping in the manifestation of the rasa. Bharata mentions<sup>3</sup> thirty three such fleeting accessory moods like nirveda or despondency and glāni or fatigue). Bharata also mentions<sup>4</sup> eight dominant emotional moods, or sthāyibhāvas that may be aroused by a dramatic representation into

---

1. Nāṭyaśāstra, p. 274. For details see P.V. Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, pp. 340-356

2. Eight of these anubhāvas are called sattvikabhāvas; these are perspiration, tears, etc. (Daśarūpa, IV. 3)

3. Nāṭyaśāstra, I, pp. 356ff.

4. Ibid, p. 350ff.



the state of aesthetic pleasure. These are rati (love), hāsa (laughter), śoka (sorrow), krodha (anger), utsāha (energy), bhaya (fear), jugupsā (repugnance) and vismaya (wonder); the rasas corresponding to these are respectively called śrīgāra, hāsa, karuṇa, raudra, vīra, bhayānaka, bībhatsa and adbhuta. Later writers accept a ninth rasa called sānta corresponding to the sthāyibhāva of <sup>1</sup> nirveda (resignation). Really the rasa or the aesthetic pleasure derived from literature is one and the same in all cases; the division into the various rasas is based on the difference in the sthāyibhāva which contribute to it.<sup>2</sup> This rasa is a condition produced in the spectator, is a single feeling and a pleasurable one.

The sūtra of Bharata, defining the process of rasa realization, is interpreted differently by different scholars.<sup>3</sup> Lollāṭa, who is a Mīmāṃsaka, believes that the rasa is produced in the hero or heroine; the spectator ascribes it to the actor because of the cleverness of acting, and the spectator's delight is based on the

---

1. V. Raghavan, The Number of Rasas.

2. P. V. Kane, op. cit., p. 343

3. Four main interpretations are by Lollāṭa, Saṅkuka, Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta. Jagannātha (Rasagangādhara, p. 28) refers to eight interpretations. About these various interpretations, see S. K. De, The Theory of Rasa, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volume (III), pp. 240-253.



appreciation of the realistic acting. Sankuka, who is a Naiyāyika, considers rasa to be a matter of inference. The sthāyibhāva in the original hero is inferred to exist in the actor (though, actually it does not exist in him). The spectator forgets the difference between the hero and the actor, and infers the rasa in the actor. These two views fail to explain how the spectator gets aesthetic pleasure by witnessing tragedies. Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory of the enjoyment of rasa lays stress on the subjective aspect of rasa as the aesthetic experience of the spectator. He distinguishes poetic language from ordinary language, and postulates for the former two functions, bhāvakatva and bhojakatva<sup>a</sup> in addition to the primary function abhidhā (which includes lakṣaṇā also). Bhāvakatva is the power of universalization (sādhārāṇīkaraṇa) which makes the vibhāvas, sthāyibhāvas etc. stripped of their individual and personal aspects and generalized in the minds of the spectators by their power of imagination; and bhojakatva is the power by which the sthāyibhāva reaches its climax and is enjoyed by the spectators (this experience is described as something which cannot be defined in words).

---

1. See Abhinavagupta's commentary to the Nāṭyaśāstra, chapter VI for the discussion of these views. The original works of Lollāṭa, Sankuka and Bhaṭṭanāyaka are not extant.



Abhinavagupta, following Ānandavardhana, maintains that rasa is realized through suggestion. According to him the sthāyibhāvas, as well as the fleeting vyabhicāribhāvas, are dormant in the minds of the spectators and are roused by the stimulus of vibhāvas etc., and reach the state of rasa. He says that rasa is suggested by the power of vyñjanā<sup>a</sup> and that rasa realization is not indescribable. His view is similar to that of Bhattanayana whom he criticizes for postulating new functions for words; for bhajakatva is nothing but suggestion.<sup>1</sup>

Abhinavagupta mentions three different psychological stages in the realization of rasa in literature. "The first stage involves the cognition of the formal or intellectual elements of the poem, and serves as a means to the second. The second stage consists of the idealization of things in poetry or drama by the power of imagination in the reader or spectator. The third stage can be marked as the climax of the inexpressible affective (emotional) condition of the

---

1. Rasagaṅgādhara, I ; bhogae tu vyaktih, bhogakṛtvam tu vyñjanād avīṣiṣṭam.



reader or spectator. When thus the formal or intellectual, imaginative and emotional elements of a poem blend into one predominant sentiment and, making a simultaneous appeal, awaken the sthāyibhāva of the reader or spectator, the relish of rasa is manifested as a unity in the heart, leaving no trace of the constituent elements; and this is why the rasa dhvani is called asamlakṣyakramavyaṅgya or the suggested sense with imperceptible stages."<sup>1</sup>

#### Criticisms against the Dhvani theory.

The theory of dhvani had to pass through an ordeal of fierce criticism at the hands of various literary critics before it was accepted universally by the Ālaṅkārikas.<sup>2</sup> The various schools of philosophy in India, like the Nyāya and the Mīmāṃsā, do not recognize the suggestive power of words at all. Later grammarians, however, accept it as necessary from the standpoint of grammar.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Huparikar, The Problem of Sanskrit Teaching, p. 525.
  2. Jagannātha says (Rasagaṅgādhara, p. 425) that the dhvanyāleka settled the principles to be followed in poetics.
  3. Laghumañjūsā, p. 160: vaiyākaraṇānām apy etadsvikāra avasāyakaḥ.



In the Dhvanyāloka, Ānandavardhana himself refers to many of the views against the doctrine of dhvani<sup>1</sup>, some holding that it does not exist, some saying that it is included in laksana, and others considering dhvani to be something beyond the province of words, which is known to men of literary taste. He has also referred to the criticisms of the Naiyāyikas who want to include dhvani under inference.<sup>2</sup> Manoratha, a contemporary of Ānandavardhana, seems to have ridiculed the idea of dhvani as absurd.<sup>3</sup> In Jayaratha's commentary on the Alaṅkārasarvasva, nine anti-dhvani theories are mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

#### Dhvani and Anumana

The Naiyāyikas reject the suggestive power of words. Mahimabhaṭṭa, in his Vyaktiviveka written with the specific purpose of proving that dhvani is included in anumāna or inference,<sup>5</sup> says that the implied sense in literature is always conveyed by the expressed sense through the process of inference itself and that there

---

1. Dhvanyāloka, 1.1

2. Ibid, 3rd udyota, p.448ff.

3. Ibid, p.8 and the commentary locana thereon: granthakṛt-samānakālabhāvinā manorathanāmnā.

4. p.9

5. Vyaktiviveka, 1.1: anumāne'ntarbhāvam sarvasyāpi dhvaneḥ prakāśayitum vyaktivivekam tanute...



is no necessity to accept a new potency for words. Mahimabhatta is not the discoverer of this anti-dhvani theory, for Anandavardhana himself anticipates this objection and criticizes it in the third udvota of the Dhvanyāloka.<sup>1</sup> Anandavardhana's main argument against the inference theory of poetic charm is that inference depends on the knowledge of vyāpti or a universal relation between the middle and the major terms. In literature there is no such invariable relation between the primary sense and the suggested sense, and therefore, the latter cannot be inferred from the former. There cannot be valid inference when there is the fallacy of undistributed middle (anaikāntikatva). Anandavardhana illustrates his point by means of an analogy.<sup>2</sup> He says that the relation between the expressed sense and the implied sense is something similar to that between a light and a pot; the light reveals the pot, even though there is no invariable relation between the two. Again, in inference the minor term becomes related to the major through its relation to the middle term. Thus a degree of

---

1. Dhvanyāloka, p. 448f; vyāñjakatvam śabdānām gamakatvam, tac ca līngatvam atas ca vyaṅgyapratītir līngapratītir eveti līngalīngibhāva eva vyaṅgyavyāñjakabhāvo nāparaḥ kaścit.

2. Ibid, p. 449; see also locana thereon; pradīpālokādau līngalīngibhāvasūnye 'pī vyaṅgyavyāñjakabhāvo 'sti.



mediacy is an essential feature of inferential process, but "in suggestion one feels that the degree of mediacy that is necessarily characteristic of inference is wanting"<sup>1</sup>.

In the Nyāyamañjarī, Jayantabhatta refers to the dhvani theory as one adopted by a wiseacre, and dismisses it as unworthy of serious consideration by scholars.<sup>2</sup> According to the later Naiyāyikas, the vyangyārtha or the suggested sense of a word is really inference from its primary and secondary meanings and is not separate from them.<sup>3</sup>

Precision and accuracy are the chief objects of logic and it should always demand the use of a word in its plain, primary and unambiguous sense. The secondary meaning is also accepted, since it can be ascertained with a fair amount of accuracy through the ~~primary~~ primary meaning. But the suggested meaning is too vague and fleeting and subjective to have any

---

1. S. Kuppusvami Sastri, Highways and Byways of literary criticism in Sanskrit, p. 38

2. Nyāyamañjarī (Viz. s. s), p. 48: yam anyah paṇḍitammanyah prapade kañcāna dhvanim.... athavā nedrśī carcā kavibhiḥ saha śobhate.

3. Śabdasaṁskṛti-prakāśikā, pp. 64 f.



place among logical meanings.<sup>1</sup> Logic whose only appeal is to reason, accuracy and precision recognizes as much of the suggested sense as can reasonably be inferred from the expressed sense; the subtle and subjective suggestions implied in language <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ not a subject of logical discussion. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein laid down that "whatever can be said, can be said clearly. And what we cannot speak about, we must leave in silence". Great poetry is written on the fringe of that silence; it aims at conveying the inexpressible, by means of suggestion. Logicians may dismiss it altogether as unreal, or include a part of it in inference and reject the rest; but the literary critic has to pay special attention to it, for the suggested sense plays an important part in poetry where the appeal is more to the emotion and sentiment than to reason. A philosophy of language<sup>2</sup> which would eliminate whole areas of human discourse as meaningless and unintelligible has little significance for human culture. It is only through the power of language to suggest things which cannot be expressed, that it can

---

1. D.M. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, p. 284f.

2. As that of Wittgenstein. See Urban, W.M., Language and Reality, p. 12



convey philosophical truth. In the Introduction <sup>1</sup> a to  
Metaphysics, Bergson says, "Language is incapable of  
apprehending and expressing reality. But language may  
be used in another way, not to represent, but to bring  
the hearer to a point where he himself may transcend  
language and pass to incommunicable insight. It is a  
dialectical ladder which, when we have ascended, may be  
kicked away." This insight and intuition cannot be  
expressed directly by words, but ~~xxxxxxx~~ they can be  
communicated through the power of suggestion.

#### Dhvani and Arthāpatti

The view that dhvani is to be included in  
arthāpatti<sup>2</sup> is similar to the previous one; for arthāpatti  
is a kind of immediate inference based on the universal  
relation between the absence of the major and the  
absence of the middle terms. Jespersen defines suggestion  
as impression through suppression.<sup>3</sup> He says, "In all  
speech activity there are three things to be distinguished  
— expression, suppression and impression. Expression is  
what the speaker gives, suppression is what he does not  
give, though he might have given it, and impression is

---

1. See Urban, op.cit., p.12

2. Mentioned by Jayaratha in Vimarsinī commentary  
on Alaṅkārasarvasva, p.9

3. Philosophy of Grammar, p.309



what the hearer receives....It is important to notice that an impression is often produced not only by what is said expressly, but also by what is suppressed. Suggestion is impression by suppression". Prof. Kuppusvami Sastri says that this kind of suggestion has to be accepted by all schools of thought and that in the case of ordinary sentences, the individual words give only their isolated meanings, leaving the samsarga or the mutual relation of the words to be conveyed by suppression or suggestion. The Naiyāyikas call this samsargamaryādā, while the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas consider it as a separate function called Tātparyavṛtti. There is apparent contradiction between the juxtaposition of words in a sentence and their not being related to serve some purpose; hence the samsarga is got through a process of inference of the arthāpatti type. We may note here that even in Lakṣanā the transferred sense is got through arthāpatti; and Mukulabhaṭṭa actually quotes the well known example of the fat boy who does not eat during day as a variety of lakṣanā.

---

1. op.cit., pp.20-22

2. Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā, p.21;



The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas accept grutārthāpatti to explain elliptical sentences. This has to be distinguished from dhvani, for here the expressed sense itself is incomplete. Arthāpatti, being a means of valid knowledge, implies accuracy and definiteness of the sense got through it; but in poetic suggestion the implied sense is rather vague and can be fully understood only by men of literary taste.

### Dhvani and Lakṣanā

Some of the Ālankārikas like Mukulabhaṭṭa tried to include vyañjana or the suggestive power under lakṣanā itself. They accept that at times it is possible to convey, through sentences, ideas different from the literal sense; but all such instances can be included in lakṣanā itself. According to Mukula<sup>1</sup> bhaṭṭa, one variety of lakṣanā mentioned by the Mīmāṃsaka scholar Bhartr̥mītra is that wherein the expressed literal sense indirectly leads to some other idea (abhidheyena sambandha). Thus, even instances of arthāpatti will come under lakṣanā. Mukulabhaṭṭa defines lakṣanā<sup>2</sup> in such a way that all instances where the expressed sense indicates other ideas are included

1. Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā, p. 11

2. Ibid, p. 3: arthāvaseyasya punar lakṣyamāṇatvam ucyate.



in it, and says that dhvani, propounded as a new doctrine by some literary critics actually falls within the sphere of lakṣaṇā itself.<sup>1</sup>

Ānandavardhana refers to this anti-dhvani theory and says that lakṣaṇā and dhvani differ from each other with regard to their nature and subject matter. Lakṣaṇā operates when there is some kind of inconsistency in the primary sense; it indicates the secondary metaphorical sense after cancelling its primary sense; but in suggestion the primary sense need not be discarded.<sup>2</sup> This argument is based on the assumption that lakṣaṇā involves the impossibility of the literal sense and not merely the inconsistency of the literal sense with the intention of the speaker. For we know that in cases of ajahatsvārthā lakṣaṇā, the literal sense is not completely rejected.

Lakṣaṇā is based on the primary sense of a word and is its extension; it is part of the primary sense itself and some have called it the tail of the

---

1. Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā, p. 21; lakṣaṇāmārgāvagāhitvam tu dhvanes sahrdayair nūtanayopavarṇitasya vidgate.

2. Dhvanyāloka, III. 33; vyañjakatvamarge tu yadārtho 'rthāntaram dyotayati, tadā svarūpam prakāśayann evāsau anyasya prakāśakaḥ pratiyate pradīpavat.

3. Ibid, 1. 21; as vācakatvāśrayeṇaiva guṇavṛttir vyavasthita.



primary sense(abhidhāpuocha). Dhvani, on the other hand, depends ~~on~~ on suggestion; and suggestion can occur even in cases where there is absolutely no expressed sense, as in the case of emotion suggested<sup>1</sup> by the sound of music or the sight of dances. The emotive element in language can never be explained in terms of the expressive or the metaphorical senses of words. In lakṣanā the implied sense is always indicated indirectly through the primary sense of the word; but in the case of dhvani it is possible for both<sup>2</sup> the meanings to ~~arise~~ occur almost simultaneously. Again, the suggested sense is determined by the contextual factors, the intonation, the facial expression, gestures etc., whereas lakṣanā, as well as abhidhā, are independent.

Even the topics of lakṣanā and dhvani are different. The meaning conveyed by lakṣanā is always an idea; but the suggested sense can be an idea, a figure of speech or an emotion.

---

1. Dhvanyāloka, p. 193f: glādhvanīnām api vyañjakatvam asti, na ca teṣām vācakatvam lakṣanā vā kathanācīl lakṣyate.

2. In asaṃlakṣyakramavyaṅgya, even though the emotion is based on the primary sense, the sequence is not felt.

3. See Huparīkar, op. cit., pp. 493ff.



Even though dhvani is different from lakṣaṇā, there is an element of suggestion in all cases of deliberate and intentional metaphors. The motive element underlying the deliberate use of metaphors comes under suggestion.<sup>1</sup> Anandavardhana says that lakṣaṇā operates only when there is inconsistency of the primary sense and that its function is exhausted when this inconsistency is removed by resorting to the secondary meaning which is related to the primary sense. The motive element which underlined the use of ~~these~~ the metaphor cannot be explained by lakṣaṇā itself. In the example gāṅgāyāṁ ghosaḥ (The village is on the Ganges) the primary meaning of the word gāṅgā is the river Ganges; this cannot apply in the sentence, for the village cannot be on the stream itself. This hitch is at the root of the secondary interpretation adopted. The term gāṅgā is interpreted as indicating 'the bank of the Ganges'. Thus the discrepancy is removed and with that the power of lakṣaṇā is also exhausted. The ideas of holiness and purity that are

---

1. Dhvanyāloka, I.20: mukhyāṁ vṛttim parityajya guṇa-vṛttyārthadarśanam yam uddiśya phalam, tatra śabdo naiva skhaladgaṭiḥ. See also Kāvyaaprakāśa, II.9-10; Sāhityadarpaṇa, II.15



suggested by the statement cannot be implied by lakṣaṇā itself, because this 'overtone' of the word does not depend on the three conditions of lakṣaṇā (inconsistency of the primary sense, direct relation of the implied sense to the primary sense and a clear purpose or the sanction of popular usage behind the transfer); it is determined by the emotional atmosphere which envelops the word and is something elusive. Even in the absence of lakṣaṇā, the word gāṅgā can suggest the qualities of purity and sanctity;<sup>1</sup> lakṣaṇā does not give the suggested sense, but it points the way to the richness of the ideas associated with the word. What might be left unnoticed in ordinary cases is emphasized by the lakṣaṇā; because the inconsistency of the meaning (or the strangeness of the collocation of words) produces a break in the flow, and makes the listeners think about the purpose behind it. Thus, lakṣaṇā leads the way to the land of suggestion.

#### Dhvani and Abhidhā

The Mīmāṃsakas of the Prābhākara school who follow the anvita-bhidhāna theory of verbal comprehension consider dhvani to be included in the primary function

---

1. Thus, sanctity and purity can be implied even in the sentence gāṅgātīre ghoṣaḥ (The village is on the banks of the Ganges).



abhidhā itself; for according to them the meaning of a word is what is conveyed by it. There is no restriction for the significative force of a word. In a sentence a word conveys not only its own individual meaning, but also its relation to the other words in the sentence. The samsarga or the mutual relation of the word-meanings suggested by their juxtaposition in a sentence is also included in the primary meaning itself. In certain contexts a word may suggest new ideas beyond its normal sense, but all those come under abhidhā itself. Just as the range of an arrow can be extended farther and farther depending on the force with which it is discharged, the meaning of a word can be extended to any ~~extra~~ length.

- 
1. Locana on Dhvanyāloka, p.234; prabhākaradarsane 'pi dīrghadīrgho vyāpārah.  
Ibid, p.18; yo 'py anvitābhidhānavādī yatparaś śabdāś sa śabdārth itī hrdaye grhītvā śaravad abhidhāvvyāpārah eva dīrgham dīrgham icchanti.
  2. Abhinavagupta explicitly states that it is the view of the followers of Prabhākara and that it is based on the anvitābhidhāna theory. Govinda, in the Pradīpa commentary on the Kāvya prakāśa referred to it as the view of Bhāṭṭas; and Jhalkikar refers to this theory as that of bhāṭṭamatopajjivinaḥ (in his edition of the Kāvya prakāśa). Dr. S.K. De pointed out this mistake in the second volume of the History of Sanskrit Poetics. Still this mistake has crept even into the work of the great scholar P.V. Kane. In his notes on Sāhitya-darpana he refers to this theory as that 'of some followers of Kumārika' (p.64).

Trivedi, in the notes on Ekāvalī (p.370) alludes to it as the view of Lollata. We do not know the basis for this assumption.



Ānandavardhana and his followers attack this view from the standpoint of the abhihitānvaya theory. The suggested sense cannot be conveyed by the power of abhidhā, for it is only the definite conventional sense, which is directly related to the word, that is conveyed by abhidhā. The power of the primary function of the word is exhausted when this task is performed.<sup>1</sup> Even the sentence meaning cannot be expressed by the words through the primary function alone. Another function has to be accepted to explain suggested meanings. The primary sense is directly related to the word, but the suggested sense is, at times, known only indirectly through the expressed sense. Moreover, suggestion need not always depend on words; the melody of music, gestures etc., are suggestive of sense.<sup>2</sup> The primary sense is definite and fixed; but the suggested sense changes according to the changes in the contextual factors. The primary sense of a word can be objectively learned by any one from a lexicon; but the suggested sense in poetry can be fully appreciated only by men of taste.<sup>3</sup>

1. Śabara, 1.1.7: padāni svam svam artham abhidhāya nivr-  
ttavyapārāṇi; Kāvyaaprakāśa, II.5: viśesyam nābhidhā  
gacchet kṣīṇasaktir viśesane. See also Locana, p.16

2. Dhvanyāloka, 3.33: vācyaḥ hy arthas saṁśāśaśabdasya  
saṁbandhī, taditaras tv abhidheyasāmarthyākṣiptas  
saṁbandhīsaṁbandhī; avāśakasyāpi gītasābdāde rasādi  
lakṣaṇārthāvagamādarsanād, aśabdasyāpi cēṣṭāder artha-  
viśeṣaprakāśanasiddheh.

3. Ibid, 1.7: vedyate sa tu kāvyārthatattvajñair eva kevalam



### Dhvani and Tātparyavṛtti

Some of the Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhaṭṭa school include dhvani under tātparyavṛtti, a function of the sentence which they postulate to explain the verbal comprehension arising from a sentence. The direct relation of the word is to the permanent, 'universal'; in a sentence the primary function of the words is exhausted, when the generic isolated senses of the individual words are presented. The particular sense necessary in the context of a sentence is got through the power of lakṣanā. But the mutual relation of the various words, or the samsarga as it is called, is not conveyed by either of these functions. It is not expressed, it is only suggested. This is done by the tātparyavṛtti. Can poetic suggestion also be included in this?

Tātparyavṛtti is postulated to explain the literal meaning of a sentence, whereas vyañjanā comes at the next stage. The power of the former is exhausted in establishing the logical connection of the word-meanings, and cannot give the further suggestions.

- 
1. Kāvya-prakāśa, II: padārthanām samanvaye tātparyārtho viśeṣavapur apadārthopi vāk्यārthaḥ samuḥṣatīty abhihitānvayavādinām matam. This tātparyavṛtti is the same as the samsargamāryādā of the Naiyāyikas. See Kuṇḍavami Sastri, op.cit., p.20f; Huparīkar, op.cit., pp.504-511.



Abhinavagupta says that when an expression gives its own literal meaning, and in addition suggests some other sense, we cannot consider both these distinct senses to be conveyed by the same power. The former proceeds directly from the words, while the latter comes from this literal sense. Tātparya pertains to the expressed sense (~~vakrokti~~), whereas dhvani pertains to non-expressive factors also such as music, gesture etc.

Dhanañjaya and Dhanika oppose the dhvani theory including it under tātparya; according to them the power of tātparya is not exhausted in giving the logical connection of the word-meanings, but can extend to any length. Some of the later Ālankārikas have accepted tātparya almost as synonymous with suggestion.

#### Dhvani and Vakrokti

In the Vakroktijīvitā, Kuntaka denied the independent existence of dhvani, and included it under Vakrokti or a striking mode of speech. His vakrokti is all-pervading and is almost analogous to dhvani itself.

- 
1. Locana, p.13
  2. Avaloka commentary on the Daśarūpa, p.121; etāvaty eva viśrāntis tātparyasyeti kim kṛtam? yāvatkāryaprasāritvāt tātparyam na tulādhr̥tam.
  3. Vakroktijīvitā, I.11; vakroktir eva vaidagdhya-bhaṅgī-bhaṇitir ucyate.



## Classification of Dhvani

The main subdivision of dhvani is into two types:<sup>1</sup> avivaksita-vācya and vivaksitānyapara-vācya. The former is based on lakṣaṇā and is also called lakṣaṇāmūla; in this type the literal meaning is not intended. The motive element in all cases of intentional metaphors come under this. Corresponding to the two varieties of lakṣaṇā, namely, jahallakṣaṇā and ajahal-lakṣaṇā, the avivaksita-vācya type of dhvani is also subdivided into two: atyantatiraskṛta-vācya where the literal sense is completely set aside and arthāntara-saṅkramita-vācya where the literal meaning is shifted. This second sub-variety covers cases where a word is used in an enhanced or diminished sense. Edgerton compares this with the 'emphasis' of classical western<sup>2</sup> rhetoricians; though in fact the point of view here<sup>3</sup> is somewhat different. What Empson calls the pregnant use of words of the type A is A comes under<sup>4</sup> this variety of dhvani. The ancient Mīmāṃsakas also

- 
1. A fairly detailed classification of the dhvani is given in the Dhvanyāloka ( udyotas i & ii), Kāvya-prakāśa, IV, Sahityadarpaṇa, IV etc.
  2. F. Edgerton, "Indirect suggestion in poetry: A Hindu Theory of Literary Aesthetics", Proc. American Philosophical Society, 1936, p. 700.
  3. J. Brough, Some Indian Theories of Meaning, TPS, 1953, p. 174.
  4. The Structure of Complex Words, p. 351. He gives the example, "An explosive is an explosive, it must be guarded with constant precaution".



recognized the use of lakṣaṇā for praising an object. and gave examples like "Dirty clothes are not clothes"<sup>1</sup> (yan malinam avāśas tat). This pregnant use of words is found in negation also; for negation can be partial. Thus, in the previous example the word avāśas (not clothes) means only "not clothes in the fullest sense<sup>2</sup> of the term". When Shelley says to the skylark, "Bird thou never wert", he does not mean that the skylark<sup>3</sup> does not belong to the class Aves. Around the logical meaning of each word there floats an emotional<sup>4</sup> atmosphere which envelops and penetrates it. The pregnant use of the word can either bring all the feeling tones associated with it along with the logical sense, or can deprive all feeling tones from the sense of the word. And such use by which the normal sense is either enhanced or diminished can produce a ~~suggestion~~<sup>suggestion</sup> suggestion of praise or blame. <sup>An</sup> The example of this type of dhvani given by Ānandavardhana is, "Only when favoured by the rays of the sun are lotuses lotuses".<sup>5</sup> Here 'lotuses' carries the meaning 'lotuses in the full sense of the word; lotuses with all the qualities of beauty which make them worth calling lotuses'.

---

1. See chapter on Lakṣaṇā. (p. 244)

2. Thus, the term 'avidyā' can be explained as 'imperfect knowledge' rather than 'absence of knowledge'.

3. See Ogden and Richard, op.cit., p. 238.

4. Vendryes, Language, p. 182

5. 'ravikireṇānugrhītāni kamalāni kamalāni'



The second subdivision of dhvani, vivaksitānya-para-vācya is also called abhidhāmūla as it is based on abhidhā or the primary meaning of the word. In this type the literal sense is in fact intended, but subserves the implied sense. This is also divided into two sub-varieties; samlakṣyakrama-vyaṅgya where the stages of realizing the suggested sense from the expressed sense can be well perceived, and asamlakṣyakrama-vyaṅgya where the stages in the realization of the suggested sense are imperceptible. The latter is more important and is concerned with the suggestion of poetic emotion. The permanent moods (sthāyibhāvas) latent in the readers are roused along with the understanding of the expressed sense in the form of the vibhāvas (causes of emotion), anubhāvas (after-effects of emotion) and vyabhicāri-bhāvas transient moods; the intermediate steps between the understanding of the expressed sense and the realization of rasa are not perceived. In this case the rasa or bhāva <sup>is</sup> suggested by the express mention of the vibhāvas etc., and <sup>it</sup> they occupy the principal position in the poem. If the suggested emotion is subordinate to the expressed sense, we get guṇībhūta-vyaṅgya variety of poetry. And if the vibhāvas etc., are not expressly mentioned, they have to be gathered from the context and hence the stages in <sup>1</sup> the realization of the emotions will be perceptible.

---

1. And it becomes an instance of samlakṣyakramavyaṅgya



The type of dhvani called samlaksyākramavyāṅgya is again subdivided into vastudhvani where a fact is suggested and alāṅkāradhvani where the suggested sense is a figure of speech. It can again be classified from another point of view, as based on words (śabdasaktimūla) and as based on the meanings (arthasaktimūla); in the former the actual words used are vital to the suggestion and cannot be substituted by their synonyms, while in the latter it is the contextual factors and the social and cultural background that are important in bringing out the suggestion.

In the Sahityadarpana, Visvanātha criticizes<sup>1</sup> Anandavardhana for including under poetry suggestions of a fact or a figure of speech. He says that the suggestion of poetic emotion alone can be considered as the soul of poetry and refuses to recognize any piece of poetry in which emotional elements are absent. Every statement implies many other ideas than<sup>2</sup> are not actually expressed. Thus, the statement "Devadatta went to the village" implies that he was being attended by a servant<sup>2</sup> (in the social context of that time in India), but there is

---

1.p.4. He defines poetry as 'vākyam rasātmakam' (p.5)

2. Ibid, anyathā devadatto grāmaṃ yāti vākye tadbhṛtyasya tadanusaranarūpavyāṅgyāvagater api kāvyatvam syāt.



no poetry in that. Anandavardhana himself was fully conscious of the importance of emotions in poetry. The facts and the figures of speech suggested must ultimately lead to the realization of rasa. He says that the real function of the figures of speech in poetry is to serve in the development of rasa.<sup>1</sup> Abhinavagupta makes the idea clear by saying that really the suggestion of rasa (rasadhvani) alone is the soul of poetry and that the suggestion of ideas and figures of speech (vastudhvani and alankāradhvani) ultimately terminate in the development of rasa.<sup>2</sup>

Samlakṣyakramavyūhaya based on words gives the feeling tones of a word. Sapir says that it is very difficult to come to any scientific conclusion regarding feeling tones. "To be sure there are socially accepted feeling tones or ranges of feeling tone for many words over and above the force of individual association, but they are exceedingly variable and elusive things at best".<sup>3</sup> It is determined by the frequency with which it is used in emotional contexts.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Dhvanyāloka, II.17

2. Locana on Dhvanyāloka, I. # 5; rasa eva vastuta ātmā, vastvalankāradhvanī tu sarvathā rasam prati paryava-  
syete.

3. E. Sapir, Language, p.41

4. See Gokak, V.K., The poetic approach to Language, p.21  
On the emotive elements in language, see Ullmann, op.cit.,  
pp.96ff; Ogden-Richards, op.cit., pp.149ff, etc.



According to Mammaṭa and Viśvanātha, in the case of a homonymous word or expression having more than one primary sense, when the contextual factors restrict it to one of the senses possible, the other sense that still lurks in it is conveyed by the power of suggestion.<sup>1</sup> This they give as an example of vyañjana based on words. Jagannātha Paṇḍita has rightly rejected this view on the ground that all the senses in such cases are primary and are brought to the mind of the listener through the power of abhidhā itself. The contextual factors can only restrict its application, they cannot deprive it of its primary senses. So there is no necessity to bring in vyañjana here.<sup>2</sup>

Jagannātha Paṇḍita says that in the ~~xxx~~ case<sup>3</sup> of yogarūḍha words like paṅkaja (lotus, mud-born) where the etymological meaning is applicable, though it is restricted in its use by the popular usage, the power of abhidhā expresses its popular meaning. Sometimes the etymological sense is also conveyed by the power of suggestion, by a subtle supplementation.

---

1. Kāvyaaprakāśa, II.14: anekārthasya śabdasya vācakatve niyantrite saṁyogādyaśir avācyārthadhīkradvāvr̥tir añjanam; Sahityadarpaṇa, II.14. On the contextual factors see separate section in the chapter on abhidhā.

2. Rasagaṅgādhara, p.108

3. Ibid, yogarūḍhasya śabdasya yoge rūḍhyā niyantrite dhiyam yogaspr̥śo 'rthasya yā sūte vyañjanaiva s̥.



"We seem at times to glimpse behind a word another sense, deeper and half-hidden, and to hear faintly the entry of another meaning, in and with which others begin to sound, and all accompany the original meaning of the word like the sympathetic chimes of a bell. Hence that deep and monorous ring in words which is lacking in artificial and invented languages; and hence also the multiplicity, the indefiniteness, the strange suggestiveness and evasiveness of so much poetry"<sup>1</sup>

Hugo von Hofmannsthal says that this is a peculiarity of oriental poetry: "It leads us into the innermost nature of oriental poetry, into the very mystery and being of language. For this mysteriousness is the deepest element in eastern language and poetry alike, in so far as everything in it is metaphorical, everything remotely descended from ancient roots. The original root is sensuous, primitive, concise and strong, but the word moves away from it by subtle transitions to new related meanings and then meanings only remotely related; yet in the remotest meaning there is still some echo of the original sound of the word, still some darkly mirrored image of the first sensuous impression."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. F. Wisemann, Language Strata, Logic and Language, edited by A. G. N. Flew, second series, Oxford, 1953, p. 13

2. Quoted by Wisemann, loc. cit., p. 13f.



The ancient etymological meaning that lurks behind the normal meaning can be brought back to life by a subtle supplementation. Examples can be found in all good poetry. In the Kāvyaaprakāśa, Mammata refers to the use of the word 'kapālin' by Kālidāsa in the Kumārasambhava verse:<sup>1</sup>

Dvayam gatam samprati śocanīyatām samāgamaprārthanayā  
pinākinah  
Kālā ca sā kāntimatī kalāvatas tvam asya lokasya ca  
netrakaumudī  
(By seeking association with kapālin - Śiva, the holder of the begging bowl - two things have become pitiable; the brilliant digit of the moon and thyself<sup>2</sup>, the light of the eyes of the world). Here the term kapālin directly denotes Śiva; but etymologically it means 'the holder of the begging bowl', and therefore aptly suggests his poverty and worthlessness.

In the case of homonymous expressions (śleṣa) if both the meanings are applicable in the context, the meanings are known through the primary sense abhidhā; but if one is contextual and the other noncontextual, the power of abhidhā might bring the recollection of both, but the contextual factors will restrict it to one of the meanings. The figure of speech such as simile

---

1. Kāvyaaprakāśa, p. 239

2. Pārvatī



that is suggested in such cases is through śabdaśakti-mūladhvani, because the suggestion is based on the actual words used, and the words cannot be substituted by their synonyms.

Arthaśaktimūladhvani is based on the expressed meaning. The suggested sense need not be an idea or a figure of speech; under this type are included instances where the emotions and transient feelings are suggested from contextual factors, without the express mention of the vibhāvas, anubhāvas etc.<sup>1</sup> Even though the primary sense of a word is definite and fixed, that can suggest various other ideas through factors such as the peculiar character of the speaker, or the person addressed, the sentence, the presence of another person, the expressed meaning, the occasion, the place, the time, the intonation or the gestures.<sup>2</sup>

The other type, asamlakṣyakrama-vyāṅgya,<sup>3</sup> are also classified as arising from individual sounds, words or parts of words, sentences, "stylistic structure" (saṅghatana)

- 
1. Thus, bashfulness of Pārvatī is suggested in the Kumārasambhava verse; evamvādini devarsau parśve pitur adhomukhī līlākamalapatrāṇi gaṇayāmāsa pārvatī.
  2. Kavyaprakāśa, III.2-3; Sahityadarpaṇa, II.14-16
  3. Dhvanyāloka, III.2; See J. Brough, op.cit., p.175



or the whole poem. Anandavardhana recognizes the importance of taking the whole stanza or even the poem as a whole, in order that the overtones of the suggested sense are fully grasped.

It is interesting to note that the protagonists of the dhvani theory enlarged the term artha or meaning to include all that is conveyed by a poem. It includes not only the cognitive meaning, but also the emotive or volitional sense<sup>1</sup> as well. Another important point is that Anandavardhana and his followers accepted the grammarians' view about the unity of the sentence-meaning; "the dhvani-theory ~~operates~~ to a large extent operates in terms of larger unities and not individual words". But at the same time "it is possible from another point of view to indicate that the operative factor in producing the overtones of the implied meaning<sup>2</sup> may on occasion be a single word or phrase."

Many of the criticisms against the dhvani theory are based on the fact that the poets and the literary critics did not confine themselves to a relatively small portion of language behaviour which is definite.

---

1. J. Brough, op.cit., p. 174

2. Ibid.



### Intonation

The importance of intonation as a factor in conveying the nuances of the natural sentences of everyday speech was not unknown to the ancient Indian thinkers. In the Nāṭyaśāstra, Bharata refers to the different varieties of tone, tempo and pitch to be employed by the actors to bring out the subtle meanings in their speeches. Even the early grammarians distinguished those variations of the sounds in length etc., which actually formed an integral part of the words themselves and could, therefore, be studied objectively, and those variations which suggest certain syntactic over-meanings and the subtle shades in the speaker's intention. Thus, the division of vowels into short, long and prolated constitute an integral part in the form of the words in Sanskrit; the distinction of the accents into high(udatta), low(anudatta) and circumflex(svarita) forms an integral part of the words in Vedic Sanskrit. They are part of

---

1. ~~Bhva~~ Nāṭyaśāstra, vol. II, p. 391f.



the prākṛta-dhvani (in Bhartr̥hari's terminology). But other personal variations in the mode of utterance such as those in speed, pitch and intonation, as well as the peculiarities of manual gesture and facial expression cannot be put to a uniform objective analysis, even though they play an important part in suggesting the shades of meaning. These belong to the Vaīkṛta-dhvani (again, in Bhartr̥hari's terminology). The former plays an important part in bringing out the linguistic meaning, whereas the latter helps in suggesting meanings, especially the social-cultural meanings.

Bharata refers to two main types of kāku or intonation in a sentence: sākāṅkṣa or expectant and nirākāṅkṣa or non-expectant. The former intonation shows that the meaning of the sentence is not complete and that it requires something more to complete it, while the latter type of intonation shows that the sense is complete.<sup>1</sup> Rājasekhara deals with the problem of intonation in speech in greater detail; he divides

- 
1. Nāṭyaśāstra, vol. II, p. 391: dvividhā kākuḥ sākāṅkṣā nirākāṅkṣā cetī, vākyasya sākāṅkṣatvanirākāṅkṣatvāt.
  2. Kāvya-mīmāṃsā, chapter VII.



the expectant intonation into three sub-varieties as suggesting (a) an objection or disapproval (ākṣepagarbhā) (b) a question (praśnagarbhā) and (c) doubt or uncertainty (samśayagarbhā). The non-expectant intonation is also divided into three varieties: (a) denoting a statement (vidhirūpā), (b) giving an answer (uttararūpā) and (c) asserting a decision (nirṇayarūpā). He defines kāku or intonation as a quality in the mode of utterance which brings out the intention of the speaker clearly.<sup>1</sup> With the change in intonation the same sentence can mean different things - a question, an assertion or a doubt. Only the main varieties are given here, for there are innumerable distinctions in intonation, which<sup>ich</sup> suggest subtle shades of meaning, cognitive or emotive. In the Srṅgāraprakāśa, Bhoja also discusses<sup>2</sup> the importance of intonation in bringing out the vivakṣā or intention of the speaker. Later Ālankārikas accept intonation as a means of suggesting meanings not actually expressed by words. Intonation brings to light all manner of emotional attitudes; irony, pathos, argumentativeness, menace and so forth.<sup>3</sup> More than one type of intonation may be combined in different ways to indicate various emotional attitudes.

1. Kāvya-mīmāṃsā, p. 31: abhiprāyavān pāthadharmah kākuḥ

2. See the summary of contents, in Dr. Raghavan's work on Srṅgāraprakāśa, vol. I, pp. 13ff.

3. Gardiner, A, op.cit., p. 202.



Classification of Dhvani

- (a) Atyantatiraskrtavācya  
(Literal sense completely  
set aside). Based on  
Jahallakṣaṇa.

Avivaksitavācya  
or lakṣaṇāmūla

- I. (Literal sense  
not intended)

- (b) Arthāntarasamkramitavācya  
(Literal meaning shifted)  
Pregnant use of words.

Vivaksitānya-  
paravācya or  
abhidhāmūla

- II. (Literal sense  
intended, but  
subserves the  
implied sense)

- (a) Asamlakṣyakrama-  
vyāṅgya (Stages of  
knowing the suggested  
sense imperceptible)

- (b) Samlakṣyakrama-  
vyāṅgya (Stages of  
knowing the suggested  
sense perceptible)

Sabdi { vastu  
Alaṅkāra

Arthi { vastu  
Alaṅkāra

Ubhaya { vastu  
Alaṅkāra



## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

### A. Original Sources

#### i. Sanskrit Texts

Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā by Mukulabhaṭṭa, Nirnayasagar Press,  
Bombay, 1916

Alankārasarvasva of Ruṣyaka with the commentary called  
Vimarśinī by Jayaratha, KSS, 1939

Apohasiddhi by Ratnakīrti, Six Buddhistic Nyāya Tracts,  
Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1910

Ātmatattvaviveka by Udayana, Ch.S.S., 1940

Bhagavadgītā

Bhāmahālaṅkāra, or Kāvyaḥālaṅkāra by Bhāmaha, edited by D.T.  
Tatacharya, Tiruvadi, 1934

Bhāmatī, commentary on Brahmasūtrabhāṣya of Sāṅkara, by  
Vācaspati Miśra, Nirnayasagar Press,  
1904

Brahmasūtra with Sāṅkara's Bhāṣya, An.S.S., 1900, 1903

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, An.S.S., 1902

Bṛhaddevatā by Śaunaka, edited by Macdonell, Harvard  
Oriental Series, 1904

Bṛhatī, commentary on the Śabarabhāṣya by Prabhākara,  
Madras University Sanskrit Series, No.3.

Chāndogyopaniṣad. See Upaniṣads

Daśarūpaka of Dhanañjaya with the commentary Avaloka by  
Dhanika.

Dhvanyāloka, of Ānandavardhana. Kāvyaṃālā Series.

(Both the Kārikas and the Vṛtti portion are  
referred to as by Ānandavardhana himself,  
without entering into the controversy about  
the identity of the two portions)



Dinakarī, commentary on the Siddhāntamuktāvali by Dinakara  
Ekāvali by Vidyādhara, with the commentary Taralā by  
Mallinātha, edited by Trivedi, Bombay  
Sanskrit Series.  
Gopalikā, by Parameśvara, commentary on the Sphoṭasiddhi  
of Maṇḍanamītra ( See Sphoṭasiddhi)  
Kātyāyanaśrautasūtra, KSS.

Kāvyaadarśa of Daṇḍin.

Kāvyaālaṅkārasūtravṛtti by Vāmana, Poona Oriental Series.

Kāvyaālaṅkāra by Bhāmaha (See Bhāmahālaṅkāra)

Kāvyaīmāṃsā by Rājasekhara, 3rd edition, GOS., 1934

Kāvyaṇusāsana by Hemacandra, Kāvyaṃālā Series.

Kāvyaṇprakāśa of Maṃmaṭa, with Pradīpa commentary by  
Govinda Thakkura, Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay.

.. .. Cantos I & II edited with Notes by Haradatta  
Sharma, Poona Oriental Series, 1939

Kāśikā by Sucaritamītra, commentary on the Ślokaṇvārttika  
of Kumārilabhaṭṭa, Madras University  
Sanskrit Series.

Laghumaṇjūṣā or Vaiyākaraṇaḷaghumaṇjūṣā by Nāgeśabhaṭṭa,  
Ch.S.S., 1929

Locana by Abhinavagupta, commentary on the Dhvaṇyāloka,  
Kāvyaṃālā Series.

Mahābhāṣya of Pataṇjali, edited by Kielhorn, Bombay, 1906.

Mahābhāṣyaṇpradīpa by Kaiyaṭa on the Mahābhāṣya.

Mahābhāṣyaṇpradīpodyota by Nāgeśabhaṭṭa on Mahābhāṣyaṇpradīpa  
Bibliotheca Indica.

Mānameyodaya by Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, Theosophical Publishing  
House, Adyar.



Mīmāṃsādarśanam, edited by Kevalanandasarasvati,  
Satara, 1948

Mīmāṃsādarśanam: The Mīmāṃsāsūtras of Jaimini, the  
Bhāṣya by Śabara and the commentary Prabhā  
Part 1, An.S.S., 1929

Nāṭyaśāstra by Bharata, with the commentary Abhinavabharata  
by Abhinavagupta, G.O.S., 1926

Nirukta by Yāska, with the commentary by Durga, edited  
by L. Sarup, University of Panjab, 1927

Nyāyakandalī by Śrīdhara, commentary on Praśastapāda's  
Bhāṣya on the Vaiśeṣikasūtras.

Nyāyakosa, by Jhalkikar (A Dictionary of Technical Terms  
of Indian Philosophy), edited by Abhyankar, Poona,  
1928

Nyāyamanjarī by Jayantabhaṭṭa. Viz. S.S., 1895  
Also K.S.S., 1936

Nyāyaratnākara by Pārthasarathimīśra, on a Śloka-vārttika,  
Ch. S.S.

Nyāyaratnamala by Parthasarathimīśra, edited by S.K.  
Ramanatha Sastri, Baroda.

Nyāyasūtra of Gautama with the Bhāṣya by Vātsyāyana,  
Poona Oriental Series, 1939

Nyāyabhāṣya or Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya by Vātsyāyana, ibid.

Nyāyavārttika by Uddyotakara, commentary on the Nyāyabhā-  
ṣya, Bibliotheca Indica.

Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭīkā (NVTT), by Vacaspatimīśra,  
K.S.S., 1925

Padamanjarī by Haradatta

Paribhāṣendusekhara by Nāgesabhaṭṭa, ~~XXXXXX~~ K.S.S., 1943

Paṇinīśūtra (Aṣṭādhyāyī).



Papinīyasīkṣā,

Prakaranapañcika by Śālikanātha, Ch.S.S.

Prameyakamalamārttāṇḍa, by Prabhācandra. 2nd edition,  
Bombay, 1941

Pratāparudriya of Vidyānātha, with the commentary by  
Kumārasvāmin, Bāṣamanorama Series, Madras.

Rasagaḍadhara, by Jagannātha Paṇḍita, Kāvyaṁālā Series,  
1930

Rjuvimalā by Śālikanātha, commentary on the Br̥hatī by  
Prabhākara, Madras University.

Rgveda.

Śabarabhāṣya. See Mīmāṃsāsūtrabhāṣya by Śabara.

Śabdakaustubha by Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, Ch.S.S., 1933

Śabdasaktiprakāśikā by ~~Mammata~~ Jagadīśa, K.S.S., 1932

Śabdavyāpāravicāra, by Mammataḥhaṭṭa, Nirnayasagar Press,  
1916

Sāhityadarpaṇa, by Viśvanātha, Cantos I, II & X edited  
with exhaustive Notes by P.V.Kane,  
Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay, 1951

Complete Text, Nirnayasagar Press, 1947

Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha, by Mādhavācārya. Edited by  
Abhyankar, Bhandarkar Research Institute,  
Poona, 1951 (Second edition)

Śāstradīpikā by Pārthasārathimīśra, Ch.S.S.?

Śatapathabrāhmaṇa.

Siddhāntamuktāvalī, by Viśvanātha Pañcānana (Different from  
the author of the Sāhityadarpaṇa).  
Also called Bhaṣāparīcheda and contains  
Kārikāvalī and Muktāvalī. K.S.S., 1951  
(With the commentary Dinakari)



Śloka-vārttika, by Kumārilabhaṭṭa with the commentary  
Nyāyaratnākara of Pārthasārathimīśra, Ch.S.S.

.. .. with the commentary Kāśikā by Sucaritamīśra,  
Madras University Sanskrit  
Series.

Sphoṭasiddhi, by Maṇḍanamīśra, with the commentary  
Gopālikā by Paramesvara, Madras University  
Sanskrit Series, 1931

Sphoṭatattvanirūpaṇa, by Śeṣakṛṣṇa.

Sphoṭavāda, by Nagesa, Adyar Library Series, 1946

Tantravārttika, by Kumārilabhaṭṭa, An.S.S., Poona.

Tarkasaṅgraha, by Annambhaṭṭa. Edited with Notes by  
S.Kuppusvami Sastri, A Primer of Indian Logic,  
Madras (References are to this edition)

... Edited by Athalye, Bombay Sanskrit Series, 1930

Tarkabhāṣā, by Keśavamīśra, Poona Oriental Series, 1943

Tattvacintāmaṇi, by Gaṅgeśapādhyaya, Bibliotheca Indica.

Tattvasaṅgraha, by Śāntirakṣita, with the commentary  
Pañjikā by Kamalaśīla, G.O.S, 1926

Triṃśikā, by Sthiramati, 'Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi', edited  
by Sylvain Levi, Paris, 1925.

Upanisads. The Principal Upanisads, edited with Introduction  
~~xxxxxx~~ and Notes by Radhakrishnan,  
Allen and Unwin, London, 1953

Udyota, by Nāgesa. See Mahābhāṣyapradīpodyota,

Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇa, by Koṇḍabhaṭṭa. Bombay, 1915

Vārttika, by Kātyāyana. Edited with Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali.

Vakrokti-jīvita, by Kuntaka, edited by S.K.De, 1928



Vākyapadīya, by Bhartrhari. With the commentary of  
ṛṣabhadeva for the first canto and that of  
Puṇyārāja on the second, Benaras, 1887.

Third Canto (incomplete) with the commentary  
of Helārāja, Benaras, 1905

(References in the thesis are to this  
Benaras edition)

First Canto, edited with a new commentary by  
Suryanarayana Sukla, K.S.S.

First Canto edited by Charudeva Sastri.

Vākyārthamāṭṛkāvali, by Śālikānātha. Prakaraṇapañcikā,  
Ch.S.S.

Vaiśeṣikasūtra with the Bhāṣya of Praśastapāda.

Vedāntaparibhāṣā, by Dharmarājādhvarīndra. Theosophical  
Publishing House, Adyar, 1942.

Vedāntasāra, by Sadānanda. edited by M.Hiriyanna, Poona.

Vigrahavyāvarttinī, by Nāgārjuna, edited by Guiseppe  
Tucci, G.O.S., 1930

(Pre-Diṇnāga Buddhist Tracts from Chinese Sources)

Vṛttivārttika, by Appaya Dīkṣita, Kāvyaṃālā Series.

Vyaktiviveka, by Mahimabhaṭṭa, Trivandrum Sanskrit  
Series, 1909

Yogasūtra, by Patañjali.

Yogasūtrabhāṣya by Vyāsa

Yogasūtrabhāṣyavṛtti, by Vācaspatimiśra.

-----

Tattvabindu, by Vācaspatimiśra with the commentary

Tattvavibhāvana by Parameśvara, Annamalai  
University Sanskrit Series, 1936



## ii. Translations

---

- Cowell, E.B., and Gough, A.E., Sarvadarsanasangraha, London, 1914
- Haas, Dasarupa, Columbia University, New York, 1912
- Jha, Ganganatha: Śabarabhāṣya (3 vols), G.O.S., 1933-36  
Tattvasaṅgraha and the Pañjikā, G.O.S.,  
2 vols., 1937 and 1939  
Śloka-vārttika, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta  
1900  
Kāvya-prakāśa, Allahabad, 1925  
Tarkabhāṣā, Poona Oriental Series, 1949  
Nyāyasūtra and the Bhāṣya, Poona Oriental  
Series, Poona, 1939
- Pillai, K.R: Studies in the Vākyapadīya, Translation of  
cantos I & II, (Ph.D. Thesis, University  
of London, 1951, unpublished)
- Radhakrishnan, S: The Principal Upaniṣads, Allen & Unwin,  
London, 1953
- Raja, C.Kunhan: Mamameyodaya, Theosophical Publishing  
House, Adyar.
- Sarup, L: The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta, Oxford, 1921
- Sastri, S.S.Suryanarayana: Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Theosophical  
Publishing House, Adyar.
- Thibaut, G: The Vedāntasūtras with Sankara's commentary,  
2 vols. Sacred Book of the East, Oxford,  
1890, 1896
- Venkataramiah, D: Śāstradīpikā, G.O.S., 1940
- Woods, J.H: The Yoga System of Patañjali, Harvard Oriental  
Series.
- Brough, J: Dhvanyāloka ( Manuscript, seen by courtesy)
-



B. Modern works relating to the Indian Theories.

i. General

Agrawala, V.S : India as known to Panini, University of Lucknow, 1953

Apte, V.S. : Sanskrit English Dictionary, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1922

Barnard, Th: Philosophical Foundations of India, ~~Harvard~~ New York, 1945

Dasgupta, S.N: A History of Indian Philosophy, Cambridge University Press. Volume I (3rd imp. 1951), Volume II (2nd imp. 1952).

Yoga as Philosophy and Religion, London, 1924.

.. & De, S.K : History of Sanskrit Literature, (Classical Period), University of Calcutta

De, S.K. History of Sanskrit Poetics, 2 volumes, Luzac and Co., London, 1925

De Smet, R.V: The Theological Method of Sankara, (Unpublished Thesis, seen by courtesy)

Faddegon, B: The Vaishesika System, Vern. Akad. d. w. Amsterdam 1918

Garbe, R: Articles on 'Yoga' and 'Sankhya', Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by Hastings.

Garge, D.V: Citations in Sabarabhasya, Poona, 1952

Heimann, Betty: Indian and Western Philosophy, Allen & Unwin, London, 1937

The Philosophy of Flux, ABORI, 1942, p. 177ff



Hiriyanna, M: Outline of Indian Philosophy, Allen & Unwin,  
London, 1932

The Essentials of Indian Philosophy, Allen &  
Unwin, London, 1949

Ingalls, D.H.H: Materials for the study of Navyanyāya Logic  
Harvard Oriental Series, No. 40, 1951

Jha, Ganganatha: Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources, Benaras  
Hindu University, 1942

Jwalaprasad, Indian Epistemology, Motilal Banarsidoss,  
Lahore, 1939

Kane, P.V: The History of Sanskrit Poetics, Revised edition  
Nirayyasagar Press, Bombay, 1951

Keith, A.B. A History of Sanskrit Literature, Oxford, 1928

Sanskrit Drama, London

Indian Logic and Atomism

Karmamīmāṃsā

The Sankhya System, New York, 1918

Kunst, Arnold: Probleme der buddhistische Logik in der  
Darstellung des Tattvasangraha,  
Krakow, 1939

Maxmuller, F: The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Longman  
Green & Co., London, 1899

Majumdar, R.C: (editor) History and Culture of the Indian  
People, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.  
Vol. I, The Vedic age. Vol. II, The Age of  
Imperial Unity. Vol. III, The Classical Age.  
(Articles on literature and philosophy)

Mookerjee, Satkari: The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal  
Flux, University of Calcutta, 1935



Pathak, P.V: The Heyapakṣa of Yoga, The Panjab Book Depot,  
Lahore, 1932

Radhakrishnan, S: Indian Philosophy, 2 volumes. Allen &  
Unwin, London. Reprint, 1948

Randle : Indian Logic in the early schools

Raja, C.Kunhan: Itsing and Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya,  
Dr.S.Krishnaswami Iyengar Commemoration  
Xiam Volume, Madras, 1936

In Defence of Mīmāṃsā, Adyar Library  
Bulletin, vol.XVI

Introduction to the Brhāti, Madras University  
Sanskrit Series, No.3.

Raju, P.T: Idealist Thought of India, Allen & Unwin,  
London, 1953

The Buddhist Conception of Negation, Prof.M.  
Hiriyanna Commemoration Volume,  
Mysore, 1951, pp.162ff.

The Universal in Western and Eastern Philosophy,  
'Radhakrishnan Volume'.

Indian Psychology, The Cultural Heritage of  
India, vol.III, revised edition, 1953.

Rangaswami Iyengar, H.R: Bhartṛhari and Dignaga, JBRAS,  
1951, pp.147-9

Saksena, S.K: The Nature of Consciousness in Hindu  
Philosophy, Benaras, 1944.

Sankaran, A: The Theories of Rasa and Dhvani, Madras.

Sastri, S.Kuppuswami: Highways and Byways of Literary  
criticism in Sanskrit, Madras, 1945.

Sastri, V.A.Ramaswami: Jagannatha Pandita, Annamalai  
University Journal, vol.II-vol.IV.



Sastri, Charudeva: Bhartṛhari and the Vākyapadīya,  
POC, 5th session, pp. 630-655

Sinha, J: Indian Psychology, Perception. Kegan Paul,  
London, 1934

Stcherbatsky: Buddhist Logic, vols. I & II, Leningrad, 1930  
The Concept of Buddhist Nirvana, Leningrad,  
1927

Ui, H: The Vaiśeṣika Philosophy according to the Daśapadār-  
tha-sāstra, London, 1917

Vidyabhushana, S. O.: A History of Indian Logic, Calcutta  
University Press, 1922.

Winternitz: Geschichte der indische Literatur, vol. III,  
1922

Williams, Monier: A Sanskrit English Dictionary.

Zimmer, H: Philosophies of India, Kegan Paul, London, 1952

---

## ii. Special

---

Allen, W. S: The Origin and Development of Language,  
TPS, 1948, pp. 35-60

Bhattacharyya, G. N: A Study in the dialectics of Sphoṭa,  
Journal of the Department of Letters, University  
of Calcutta, ~~1934~~ 1937.

Brough, J: Audumbarāyana's Theory of Language, BSOAS,  
vol. XIV, part I.

Some Indian Theories of Meaning, TPS, 1953

Theories of General Linguistics in the  
Sanskrit Grammarians, TPS, 1951.

Burrow, T: Indian Theories on the Nature of Meaning,  
(Summary) TPS, 1936



Chatterjee, S.C: The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge, University of Calcutta, 1939

Chakravarti, P.C: The Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar, University of Calcutta, 1930

The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus, University of Calcutta, 1933

Datta, D.M: The Six Ways of Knowing, Allen & Unwin, London, 1932

The Import of a proposition in Vedanta, The Philosophical Quarterly, January, 1929

Indian Epistemology, The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III, revised edition, 1953  
(Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture Calcutta)

De, S.K: The Theory of Rama, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volume, III, pp. 240ff

Edgerton, F: Etymology and Interpretation, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 79, 4, 1938, pp. 705-714

Indirect Suggestion in Poetry: A Hindu Theory of Literary Aesthetics, Proc. of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 76, 1936

Frauwallner: Beitrage zur die Apohalehre, WZKM, vols, 39-42

Foucher, A: Le Compendium des Topiques - Tarkasangraha - d'Annambhatta, Paris, 1949

Gopinathakaviraja: The Doctrine of Pratibha in Indian Philosophy, ABORI, 1924

Heimann, Betty: Sphota and Artha, Prof. P.V. Kane ~~xxx~~ Commemoration Volume, Poona.

Hiriyanna, M: Vyadi and Vajapyayana, IHQ., vol. XIV, pp. 261ff.



Huparikar, G.S: The Problem of Sanskrit Teaching,  
The Bharat Book Stall, Kolhapur, 1948

Iyer, Subrahmanya, K.A: The Doctrine of Sphoṭa, JGRI, vol.V,  
part i, pp.121ff.

Who were the anityasphoṭavādins?, POC, 1935,  
pp.258ff.

Pratibhā as the meaning of a sentence,  
POC, 1940, pp.326ff.

Liebich, Bruno: Über den Sphoṭa, ZDMG, 1923, pp.208ff.

Marulasaidhiah, G: Nature and scope of vṛtti, Half-yearly  
Journal of Mysore University, Vol.XII.

Naidu, P.S: Rasa Doctrine, Journal of Annamali University,  
vol.X, pp.1-10.

The concept of Suggestion in Hindu aesthetics,  
Prof.Kane Presentation Volume,  
Poona, 1941, pp.294ff.

Narahari, H.G: Kumarila's contribution to Philology,  
Poona Orientalist, Vol.V, part 2.

Pandey, K.C: Indian Aesthetics, 1950

Sarma, K.M: Vāk before Bhartṛhari, Poona Orientalist,  
Vol.VIII, nos.1 & 2.

Gleanings from the commentaries of the  
Vākyapadīya, ABORI, 1942, pp.405ff.

Raghavan, V: Śṛṅgāraprakāśa, Parts I & II, Poona.

The Number of Rasas, Adyar Library Series.

Some concepts of Alankārasāstra, Adyar  
Library Series,

Sastri, S.Suryanarayana : Vācaspati's criticism of the  
Sphoṭavāda, Journal of Oriental  
Research, Madras, vol.VI



Sastri, V.A. Ramaswami: Introduction to the Tattvabindu,  
Annamalai University, 1936

Doctrine of Sphoṭa, Annamalai  
University Journal, vols. I & II

Bhavanā, Bharatiya Vidyā, vol. XIII,  
pp. 169ff.

Sastri, S. Kuppaswami: A Primer of Indian Logic, Madras

Sharma, Haradatta: The Meaning of the word upacāra,  
Poona Orientalist, vol. I, pp. 26ff.

Strauss, Otto: ~~Wahrheit und Sphota~~ Altindische Spekulationen  
über die Sprache und ihre Probleme,  
ZDMG, 1926, pp. 99-151

Thomas, F.W: Parts of Speech, TPS, 1949, pp. 117ff.

Varma, Siddhesvara: Analysis of Meaning in the Indian  
Philosophy of Language, JRAS, 1925, ~~pp. 21-35~~  
pp. 21-35

Analysis of Meaning in Indian Semantics,  
Journal of the Department of Letters,  
University of Calcutta, 1926.



**C. Modern works relevant to the principles of semantics:-**  
**(General linguistics, Philosophy, Logic & Rhetoric)**

**Abercrombie:** Principles of Literary Criticism( 2nd  
impression, London, 1926)

**Ayer, A.J:** Language, Truth and Logic(2nd edition, London,  
1946)

**Bloomfield, L:** Language (New York, 1933)

**Bloch, B:** A set of postulates for phonemic analysis,  
'Language', vol. 24, 1948

**Breal, M:** Semantics (Translated by Mrs. Henry Cust,  
New York, 1900)

**Carnap, R:** Introduction to Semantics( Cambridge, Mass., 1942)

**Cassirer, E:** Philosophie der symbolischen Formen (3 vols.,  
Berlin, 1923-29)

**Language and Myth** (Harp and Brothers, New  
York and London, 1946)

**Cohen, A:** The phonemes of English (The Hague, 1952)

**De Saussure, F:** Cours de linguistique générale  
(Paris- Lausanne, 1916)

**Empson, W:** Seven Types of Ambiguity (London, 1930)

**The Structure of Complex words**(London

**Entwistle, William J:** Aspects of Language (Faber and Faber,  
London, 1953)

**Erdmann, K.O:** Die Bedeutung des Wortes (4th edition,  
Leipzig, 1925)



- Firth, J.R:** Tongues of Men (London, 1937)  
Technique of Semantics (TPS, 1935, pp. 36-72)  
Modes of Meaning (Essays and Studies, Eng. Assn. 1951, London, pp. 118-149)  
Sounds and Prosodies (TPS, 1948, pp. 127ff)  
General Linguistics and Descriptive Grammar (TPS, 1951, pp. 85-7)  
Personality and Language in Society (Sociological Review, 1950)
- Fries, Charles C:** Meaning and Linguistic Analysis (Language, vol. 30, 1954)
- Flew, A.G.N:** (Editor): Logic and Language (Basil Blackwell, Oxford. First Series, 1951; second series, 1953)
- Gardiner, Sir Alan:** The Definition of the word and the sentence (British Journal of Psychology, 1922)  
The Theory of Speech and Language (Second edition, Oxford, 1951)
- Gokok, V.K:** The Poetic Approach to Language (London, 1952)
- Gray, L.H:** Foundations of Language (New York, 1939)
- Harris, Zellig S:** Methods in Structural Linguistics (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951)
- Hjelmslev, L:** Prolegomena to a theory of Language (Translated by Francis J. Whitfield, Indiana University, Baltimore, 1953)
- Jespersen, O:** Language, its nature, development and origin (London, 1922)  
The Philosophy of Grammar (London, 1948 edition)  
Linguistica (Copenhagen-London, 1933)



Jones, D: Some Thoughts on the Phoneme (TPS, 1944)

The Phoneme: its nature and use (Cambridge, 1950)

Martinet, Andre: Structural Linguistics (Anthropology today, edited by A.L. Kroeber, Chicago, Illinois, 1952)

Mallinowski, B: The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages (Supplement to 'The Meaning of Meaning' by Ogden and Richards)

Ogden, C.K. and Richards I.A : The Meaning of Meaning (4th edition, London, 1936)

Palmer, L.R: An Introduction to Modern Linguistics (London, 1936)

Pillsbury, W.B: Meaning and Language (Psychological Review, 1908)

Richards, I.A: The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York, 1936)

Principles of Literary Criticism (2nd edition London, 1938)

Robins, R.H: A Problem in the Statement of Meaning (Lingua, December, 1952)

Ries, John : Was ist ein Satz? (Prague, 1931)

Russell, Bertrand: An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (Allen and Unwin, London, 1940)

Human Knowledge, its scope and limits (Allen and Unwin, London, 1948)

Sapir, E: Selected writings of Edward Sapir (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1949)

Sinclair, Angus: The Conditions of Knowing (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1951)



Sturtevant, E.H: An Introduction to Linguistic Science  
(New Haven, 1947)

Stern, G : Meaning and Change of Meaning with special  
reference to the English Language  
(Gottaburg, 1931). It is a monumental synthesis  
of the works done in the west on the subject.

Ullmann, S: The Principles of Semantics( Jackson, Son and  
Company, Glasgow, 1951). It presents a  
competent summary of recent achievements  
in the field of semantics.

Descriptive Semantics and linguistic typology  
( 'Word', December, 1953)

Urban, W.M: Language and Reality (Allen and Unwin,  
London, 1939)

Vendryes, J: Language (English Translation)

Weismann: Language Strata ('Logic and Language', second  
series, edited by A.G.N. Flew, Oxford, 1953)

Wittgenstein, L: Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus  
(London - New York, 1922)

Philosophical Investigations  
(Basil Blackwell, London, 1953)

[References are to the sections, not to pages.]