SPHOTA THEORY OF BHARTRHARI

Sreekumar M. “A comparative study of Sphota theory of language and F.D. Saussures theory of sign” Department of Philosophy, University of Calicut, 1998
CHAPTER - II

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"..... India is the real source of all tongues, the primary source of all ideas ......."

Friedrich Schlegel

ONE

An introduction to the philosophy of language in Indian thought

Language has been one of the fundamental concerns of Indian Philosophical tradition. In the history of Indian Philosophy the study of Language has never been the monopoly of Grammarians. All most all of the schools or darsanas in Indian Philosophy developed their own philosophy of Language inorder to defend their own metaphysics and attack others. So in order to discuss the sphota theory of Bhartrhari we have to make a historical review of Indian Language philosophy beginning from the Vedas. Such an attempt will help us to place Bhartrhari in a historical context.

The language and literature of India began with the Vedas. We should note, first of all, certain distinctive features of the Vedas. The term Vedas does not denote any single book. It denotes large segments of Indian literature. It is traditionally believed that the Vedas are apauruseya; that means, no human
agency was responsible for their creation. The Vedas have existed from time immemorial, and will continue to exist for eternity. In the field of knowledge, Vedas possess absolute validity, because they were free from all the limitations and deficiencies usually associated with a human agency.

The Vedas are also called Srutis, because they are recited and heard, not written and read. The word Sruti, incidentally is also interpreted as the rhythm of the infinite as it is heard by the soul. The Vedas have been transmitted from generation to generation through the oral tradition. So the Indian speculation on language began with the Vedas and have continued till recently without any break. Patanjali, in his Mahabhasya, quotes some of the hymns of Rg veda and comments on them. The philosophy of language as cultivated by the school of Grammar and Mimamsa, is the outcome of elaboration of the suggestions found in the Veda. The divine nature of speech, the creative and illuminative power of the word and the different levels of speech, are the main doctrines, which formed the philosophy of language in Indian thought. All of these stem from the Vedas. the ancillary disciplines of the Vedas, phonetics (Siksa), grammar (Vyakarana) and Nirukta were directly connected with the Vedas. Every system of philosophy in India had to consider language at some stage or other, and each one had given attention to the ultimate question concerning the relation between the word and reality.
Most of the schools have had taken Vedas as a Pramana (valid means of knowledge). So in the Indian thought, Sabda Pramana or Vedas has occupied a central role, just as mathematics, is in the case of Greek Philosophy. If the Western, or Greek Philosophy built their science and philosophy on geometry and mathematics, the Indians built their philosophy on language or Sabda Sastra. Matilal says. "It has often been claimed in recent times that in the Indian Scientific and philosophical tradition, mathematics plays a less crucial role and its place is taken by grammar or linguistics." ¹

The Vedas are the storehouse of ideas, which flourished in the Indian thought and culture through centuries. So Vedas have a central role in India or Vedas are the pivot of Indian philosophy. In this aspect the position of Vedas in India is equal to the position of Mathematics or Geometry in Greek thought.

The approach of Indians to language was never narrow and restrictive. Language was examined in relation to consciousness by most of the Indian philosophers. In Indian philosophy, language had both phenomenal and metaphysical dimensions. The Indians always paid equal attention to the outer or phenomenal aspects and the inner or the metaphysical aspects of language. Grammarians like Panini and Patanjali were concerned with human speech in the everyday empirical world, but at the same time they...
have also given equal importance to the metaphysical aspects of language. Similarly, Bhartrhari begins his *Vakyapadiya* with an account of its metaphysical nature, but then he goes on to explore the technical and grammatical points involved in the everyday use of language. Thus the Indians avoided the reductionist mistake of language speculation. Indians did not reduce language to merely human conventions having factual referents; nor did they fall into the error of metaphysical reductionism.

**Language in the Vedas**

In the *Vedas*, language or *Vak* has a prominent role. In *RgVeda*, *Vak* is described as the support of Gods such as *Varuna, Indra, Agni*, and *Asvins*. In the *Brahmanas* and in the *Vedas*, *Vak* identified with *Sarasvati*, who is the goddess of learning, wisdom and inspiration. Some of the passage of the *RgVeda* given below show that the ancient vision of language, as given by the *Risis*.

"..... Where the sages fashioned language with their thought, filtering it like parched grain through a sieve, friends recognised their friendship; their beauty is marked on the language....."
".....They traced the course of language through ritual; they found it embodied in the seers; they gained access to it and distributed it widely; the seven chanters cheered them......"

".....Many who look do not see language; many who listen do not hear it. It reveals itself like a loving and well-adorned wife to her husband....."

".....Though all friends have eyes and ears, their mental intuitions are uneven. Some are like shallow ponds which reach upto the mouth or armpit; others are like ponds, which are fit for bathing...." ²

According to the hymns, quoted above, the nature and function of language is to manifest or reveal the meaning of things.

And a person should be able to reveal the inner meaning of language only when he uses the intuitive power or antarjnana in language.

Brahman is directly identified with the language in Vedas. The Tenth Mandala of RgVeda states that there are as many words as there are manifestation of Brahman. One of the significant things to note in relation to the Vedas is that the word, or Divine Vak should be considered as the seed of creation, from which all universe bursts forth. Symbols have been used to indicate the divine nature of speech and its evolution to form each cycle of
creation. Aurobindo says about the language of Vedas in his *The Secret of the Vedas*:

".....Veda then is the creation of an age anterior to our intellectual philosophies. In that original epoch thought proceeded by other methods than those of our logical reasoning and speech accepted modes of expression which in our modern habits would be inadmissible the wisest then depended on inner experience and suggestions of the intuitive mind for all knowledge that ranged beyond mankind’s ordinary perception and daily activities. Their aim was illumination, not logical conviction, their ideal the inspired seer not the accurate reasoner, the Indian tradition has faithfully preserved this account of the origin of the Vedas the Risi was not the individual composer of the hymn, but the seer of an eternal truth and the impersonal knowledge. The language of Veda itself is Sruti, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard, a divine word that come vibrating out of the infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge...."
The above quote shows the true nature of the *Vak* and the importance of the seer or *Risi*. Here the *Risi* was not the individual composer of the *Vedas*, but rather the seer of an eternal or impersonal truth. Matilal says

"...The Indians do not always talk about "revelation" in the way it is understood in the Judaeo-Christian tradition...." 4

The *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* equated speech with *Brahman*. In the fourth chapter, *Yajnavalkya* has given a long passage about the nature of word and its connection with consciousness. The *Upinisads* says:

"...Let me hear what any (of your teachers) may have told you". Jitvan *Sailini* told me that "speech, verily, is *Brahman*.

As one who has a mother, father and teacher should say, so did *Sailini* say that speech is *Brahman*, for what can one have cannot speak? 'But did he tell you the abode and the support (of the *Brahman*)? 'He did not tell me'. 'This *Brahman* is only one-footed, your majesty'. 'Verily, *Yajnavalkya*, do tell us'. Its abode is just speech, its support space. One should worship it as intelligence.' 'What is the nature of that intelligence, *Yajnavalkya*? 'Just speech, Your Majesty' said he (*Yajnavakya*). 'Verily, by speech, Your Majesty, a friend is recognised. By speech alone, Your Majesty, are the *RgVeda*, the *Yajur Veda*,

56
the SamaVeda, the Atharvanigirasa, history, ancient lore, arts, the Upanisads, verses, aphorisms, explanations, commentaries, (the effects of) sacrifices, oblations, food and drink, this world and the other and all beings are known. The higher Brahman, Your Majesty, is the truth, speech. Speech does not desert him who, knowing thus, worships it as such. All beings approach him. Having become a god he goes even to the gods. Janaka (King) of Videha said, 'I shall give you a thousand cows with a bull as large as an elephant.' Ya jnnavalkya said, 'My father thought that one should not accept gifts without having instructed...."

Later in the Mandukya Upanisad, the initial vision of the Risis is said to be of the Vedas as one, as a whole, the eternity, Brahman, which represented by 'AUM'. The Mantra AUM includes within itself the three levels of ordinary consciousness. They are waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, the fourth stage of consciousness, or turiya where the sound itself comes to an end. Brahman which is said to be beyond, is also said to be AUM. The first Mantra of this Upanishad, says.
".....The letter OM is all this; of this clear exposition (is started with): All that is past, present or future is verily OM; and whatever is beyond the three periods of time also verily OM...."

The sixth mantra says:

".....This one is the lord of all, this one is omniscient; this one is the inner director of all, this one is the source of all; this one is verily the place of origin and dissolution of all being...." 7

The above passage from the Upanisads shows the divine nature of the Vak or Daivi Vak. Later in the hands of Bhartrhari, it became a firm ground for his philosophy of language.

**Language in the Darsanas:**

Generally in Indian thought, the debate regarding the nature of language, divided the thinkers into two sections; one Brahmanical and the second naturalistic tradition. The Brahmanical tradition stemming from the Vedas, which held that language is divine in origin, whereas the naturalistic traditions of the Buddhism and Carvaka, which held that language is an arbitrary and conventional tool. Some Darsanas like Jaina and Nyaya seem to occupy an intermediary position between the two traditions.

In the Brahmanical tradition Sankhya and Yoga accept three Pramanas, Pratyaksa, Anumana and Sabda; Mimamsaka takes arthapatti and abhava too.
The same six Pramanas are also taken by Vedanta. All of the Brahmanical schools have taken Sabda or Veda as a Pramana.

In Sankhya verbal cognition is regarded as a valid means of knowledge. Sankhya describes Sabda as authoritative statements (aptavacana). If the knowledge of the risis of an object cannot be known through perception and inference, Vedas has been taken as a pramana by the Sankhya philosophers. They distinguished two kinds of Sabda, Vaidika and Laukika. Vaidika Sabda is the revelation of the Vedas. Laukika is the testimony of the ordinary trustworthy persons. Although Sankhya admits Sabda as an independent pramana it is inference which is really the chief Sankhyan pramana. Sankhya philosophers have taken Sabda as a Pramana only when inference and perception fail. P.T. Raju remarks in his Structural Depths of Indian Thought about the Sankhya view of Sabda. He says:

".....The Sankhya accepts nearly the whole doctrine of the Nyaya. But it maintains that Vedas was not composed by any one person, (Apauruseya), but embodies that insight of many great seers, yet although not composed by God, the Sankhya rejects all arguments for the existence of God. The Vedas is not eternal as Mimamsa contends. No sound, not even the word of
the Vedas, is eternal. This part of the view is same as that of
the Nyaya...."  

One point is clear from this passage, namely that Sankhya, in its
classical form, did not give more importance to the Vedas than perception and
inference. It seems to be the aim of all Sankhya philosophers to achieve
discriminative knowledge, so that the real separation of purusa from prakrti
can be realised and liberation from ignorance is achieved. The truth should
be directly experienced, and not known through the Vedas.

Yoga is a psycho-physical practice for the liberation of purusa from
prakrti. Like Sankhya, perception, inference and verbal testimony have been
taken by Yoga System as pramanas. Veda is also known as agama. The most
noticeable difference between the Yoga and Sankhya school is the high place
accorded to Isvara by the former. Yoga emphasising that in Isvara, the seed of
omniscience is present in its utmost excellence. The Isvara verbalises his
omniscience himself and given us as agama. The same Isvara is the teacher of
the ancient Risis. There is one word which when spoken connotes Isvara with
all his power for omniscience, that is, Pranava or 'AUM'. In the Vyasabhasya of
Yoga Sutra, Vyasa states that the relation between word and the meaning
(signified) is inherent and self-manifesting. According to the Yoga school, the
Isvara is the determining factor of the convention of the words. Patanjali
describes the Pranavadhyana. By this practice, the consciousness of the Yogi is more and more coming to approximate the manifestation of the syllable, which is Isvaras, pure and omniscient sattva. The devotee of ‘AUM’ achieves not only the grace from Isvara but also achieves complete clarity regarding the meaning of all words.

Sabda Pramana is a valid and independent means of knowledge in Mimamsa philosophy. Sabda is a chief pramana for Mimamsa, by which we can know the injunctions and prohibitions of Dharma. The relation between the word and its meaning is eternal and therefore not subject to creation by any person. Against the view of Mimamsa, that the relation between word and meaning are eternal, the opponent says that the relationship between word and its meaning is not eternal but natural or conventional, because when a word is heard for the first time, no such in born relationship as the Mimamsa proposes is cognized. We come to know the meaning of a word only when we have heard a word several times. As a reply to this criticism, Sabara has given a detailed examination of the nature of Sabda in his Sabarabhasya. Sabara says that every word is made or composed by letters. In the example gauh (cow), the word is made up of the letters g, au and h. In our experience or when we hear the word gauh, the composite word-unit is never found to be
anything entirely different from the component letters; hence there can be no "word" apart from the component letters.

_Sabara_ has also discussed the problem of universal and particular in his _Sabarabhasya_. The question of universal and particular arises only when we speak the words. When the word cow is spoken, it brings about the idea of the universal or class character which is common to all cows, and at the same time which brings the "Individual" cow too. _Sabara_ says that the universal and not the individual that is denoted by the word. According to _Sabara_, the word such as 'cow' primarily denotes classes or universals, yet at the same time secondarily refers by implication, to the individual possessed of the genetic attribute of cowness.

**The Comprehension of the Meaning of a sentence in Mimamsa:**

In the comprehension of the meaning of a sentence, the _Mimamsa_ divided themselves into two classes. _Sabara_ argues that the sentences cannot have any separate meaning apart from the meanings of the words composing it. The meaning of a sentence is comprehended only on the comprehension of the meanings of the component words. The sentence can have no independent meaning apart from the meanings of the words composing it. This theory is known as _Abhihitanvaya_ theory. Kunjunni Raja makes the
following remarks about the Abhihitanvaya theory, in his Indian Theories of Meaning.

".....According to the Abhihitanvaya theory of verbal comprehension upheld by the Mimamsakas of the Bhatta school and by some of the Naiyayikas, the meaning of a sentence is a concatenation of the individual words have in them self-meanings which can be comprehended separately on hearing a sentence, we have first an understanding of the separate meanings of the words one after other, then we put together this meaning according to the three factors of Akanksa, Yogyata, and Samnidhi and we arrive at the meaning of the sentence, Kumarila bhatta says that the meaning of a sentence is always conveyed by the meanings of words obtained from the word itself. Unlike the words, the sentence does not have a meaning of its own independently...."10

Anvitabhidhana Theory of Prabakara: 

Against the Bhatta and Sabara, Prabakara and his followers formulated the Anvitabhidhana theory; this is primarily derived from the linguistic behaviour of man, in normal linguistic behaviour, people use sentences for the purpose of communication of ideas. The isolated words are not helpful to
the communication of ideas. According to Prabhakara the meaning of words can be known only when they occur in a sentence; Prabhakara denied that the words convey meaning except in the context of a sentence, but Prabhakara regards the words as real and actual constituents of the language. In language, each word has definite meaning, but the purpose of the word is to serve as the part of a sentence. The Anvitabhidhana theory does not deny the importance of the meaning of the words; but they say that both the individual word meanings and their mutual relation are conveyed by the words themselves. According to Prabhakara, on hearing the words of a sentence, we get a unitary sense which arises directly from the collection of words.

Vedanta also accepts the Sabda Pramana. According to the Vedanta School, the word, its meaning and the relationship between the two are eternal and therefore not subject to creation by any person. In his commentary of the Brahmasutra, Sankara says that at the beginning of each creation (kalpa), God who is self illumiminated, creates Brahma and delivers the Veda. Then the Risis realise the Vedamantra. Vedanta also argues that the Sabda Pramana enables one to realise Brahman, but at the same time, Sankara says that once the Revelation of Absolute Oneness is achieved, Sabda and Vedas will have been superseded since Sabda Pramana is meaningful only
where one is in the bondage of Avidya. Generally, this is the view of Vedanta towards the Sabda Pramana.

Carvakas and the Buddhist Approaches towards Language

Against the Brahmansic view of language as a revelation or Divine vak stemming from Veda, naturalistic school considers language as an arbitrary and conventional tool. Carvaka and Buddhist denied the validity of sabda as separate Pramana.

Carvaka accepts perception as the only correct way of Pramana for obtaining the Prama or correct knowledge. They reject Sabdapramana or Veda. They considered sacred scriptures, religious injunctions etc. as useless. Sabda Pramana is rejected by the Carvaka on the ground that, it must first be established other verbal testimony resulting in an infinite regress. Unless at some point there is an appeal to direct sensory experience, it is not valid. Carvaka also holds that Sabda is unacceptable on epistemological grounds, because a man knows only what he perceives, and not what someone else says that he has perceived. In this view, the direct sensory perception is the only valid knowledge of reality.

In case of Buddhists, intuition is the highest source of knowledge. This intuition is defined as knowledge of things as they are in themselves as distinguished from what they appear to us. Such knowledge is only means to
freedom or salvation. Buddha rejects the Vedas because he claimed that Vedic Risis have no direct personal knowledge of the truth of the Vedas. Buddha stressed one thing in the case of prajna or intuition. That is his own teaching and the path of freedom contained therein were only to be accepted provisionally by the disciples until it is found to be true in his own direct experience. This advice of Buddha is highly different from the Brahmanical viewpoint of Sabda or veda, which is taken as an absolute authority without any questioning by the disciples.

Buddhist Theory of Apoha:

*Apoha* theory is an important contribution of Buddhism to Indian thought. Buddhist logicians say that the words have no direct reference to objective realities as the Mimamsaka believes. Kunjunni Raja says:

"....The Buddhist logicians 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 image which are purely subjective construction 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, \textit{(anyapoha)}. The word \textit{‘cow’} doesn’t actually mean
the animal with dewlap, horns etc. It means only the
exclusion of all objects that are now cow.....”\textsuperscript{11}

The Buddhists reject the theory of universal put forward by \textit{Mimamsaka}
and \textit{Naiyayakas}. To them particular is the only real.

According to \textit{Jaina}, \textit{Sabda} is considered as a \textit{Pramana} but it is classified
along with inference, as only immediate or non-perceptual knowledge. \textit{Sabda}
or verbal testimony is the knowledge produced by the word of a reliable
person and which is not inconsistent with the evidence of perception. A
person who knows the object as it is known as a reliable person. \textit{Jaina}
classifies the \textit{Sabda} into two kinds, one is secular testimony (\textit{laukika}) and the
other is scriptural testimony (\textit{Sruta jnana}). When the words come from an
ordinary reliable person of the world, this is known as secular testimony. If
the words proceed from a self-liberated one, it is known as scriptural
testimony.

According to the \textit{Nyaya} school, \textit{Sabda} is the teaching of reliable person
and that it is a \textit{Pramana}. They classify all knowledge from \textit{Sabda} under two
headings \textit{drstartha} or that relating to sensuous object and \textit{adrstartha} or that
relating to supersensuous objects. \textit{Drastartha Sabdas} are the trustworthy
assertion of ordinary person. The evidence given by witness in law courts,
the knowledge about plants that we get from a farmer, etc. are the examples of *drstartha sabda*. The prophets instruction about virtue and vice, the scriptural texts on God, heaven, future life etc. are the illustrations of *Adrstartha Sabda*.

**Sanskrit Grammar**

The origin of Sankrit Grammar is shrouded in mystery. In Indian thought, in contrast to Greek thought, mathematics plays a less crucial role and its place is taken by Grammar or linguistics. The traditional name for this discipline is *Vyakarana*. *Panini, Katyayana, and Patanjali* are said to be the masters of Sankrit Grammar.

The earliest systematic treatment of Grammar is *paninis Astadhyayi*. It has been divided into eight chapters, of there four are *padas*; each of which contain 3,995 *Sutras* (formulas). In his *Astadhyayi*, *Panini* not only deals with both *Sanskrit* and *Vedic Grammar* and mainly *Vedic* accent but also he deals more fully with *Sanskrit Grammar*. According to Indian tradition, *Panini* lived in fifth century B.C. and his native place was Salatroa, which is now in Pakistan.

In his *Astadhyayi*, *Panini* has given reference of an early Grammarian by name of *Sphotayana*" (in rule 6-1-123) (*Avan Sphotayanasya*), Matilal makes the following remarks about *Panini* in his *word and the world*. 

68
"It is by no means clear whether Panini knew about the theory Sphota in an admissible form ...... Haradatta, one of the paniniyas belonging probably to the 10th Century A.D. speculated that this Sphotayana was the propounder of Sphota doctrine".  

Katyayana was a post- Paninian Grammarian. He had written Varttikas on Panini's Astadhyayi. 

Traditionally, Patanjali is believed to be an incarnation of serpent Sesa, who is Vishnus resting place. He has written a Bhasya on the Panini's sutra. It is known as Patanjala Mahabhasya. Mahabhasya is one the most important treaties on Sanskrit Grammar; the later grammatical works have been influenced by it. Before the time of Bhartrhari, Patanjali has said about the Sphota theory. Matilal says "Patanjali, at one place, says that Sphota is the speech or language (Sabda) while the noise or sound (dhvani) is a quality or (a feature) of the speech (language)...... for Patanjali, a single letter of sound (varna) such as R, P, or fixed sound series or letter series, can be Sphota". According to Patanjali, the Sphota is thus a unit of sound, a single letter or a letter series. A sound series can be analysed as a succession of sound-units. But this notion of Patanjali about Sphota is different from the later grammarians concept of Sphota, especially Bhartrhari; for whom Sphota is a whole entity and hence unanalysable.
Conditions of knowing the Meaning of a Sentence:

Before we are going to discuss the problem of words and their meaning, it is important to understand the conditions of knowing the meaning of a sentence.

The most important contribution of ancient India to general linguistics is the concept of Akanksa.

Akanksa is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Kank' which means to desire. Mimamsaka promulgated the theory of Akanksa, Yogyata and Samnidhi. The knowledge of the synthetic units of a sentence is mainly on the basis of the 'Akanksa' or the mutual expectancy of the words. "Akanksa 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 words or their meaning to complete the sense. A word is said to have Akanksa for another, if it cannot, without the latter produces knowledge of its interconnection in an utterance".\(^{14}\) In a sentence, every word necessarily requires another word to complete the sense. To convey the meaning of noun in a sentence, a verb is always needed. For example the words men, elephant etc. do not convey a complete sense in a sentence, if it is not combined with a verb like come, walking etc.
Yogyata is defined as the logical compatibilities of consistency of the words in a sentence for mutual association. Yogyata is a judgement upon a sentence's sense, whether it has a sense or non-sense. When we utter a sentence, if the meaning of a sentence is not contradicted by experience, there is a Yogyata or consistency between the words. The competence of a sentence is to be known from experience. For example, in the sentence 'He wets it with water', there is Yogyata or consistency of meaning but a sentence like, "He wets it with fire" has no Yogyata or compatibility, because we can't wet anything with fire.

If the words in a sentence should be contiguous in time, it is known as Samnidhi or asatti of a sentence. Words uttered at long intervals cannot produce the knowledge of any interrelation among them even if akanksa and Yogyata are present there. If a man utters a word a long interval after the first word, then the connection of the meaning cannot be understood.

In all cases of verbal comprehension, a general knowledge of the meaning intended by the speaker is an essential factor. The importance of knowing the speakers' intention in the understanding of speech is an important factor in communication. For example, if a man says "Bring saindhava" when he eats, the listener understands that the man who eats want 'Salt'. He can never bring a horse instead of salt, because horse is another
meaning of saindhava. Here the listener understands the "Tatparya" or intention of the man when he utters the word in a particular context. Naiyayakas have given great importance to the speaker's intention in fixing the meaning of an utterance.

**Words and their meaning**

In all natural languages, a word has two other meanings than the primary meaning or abhida. In language, any word apart from having one or several primary meanings, could be used to convey meanings or denote objects which, though distinct from the ordinary meaning, are nevertheless connected in some way or other with the same primary meaning. The phenomena is usually seen in Rhetoricians term as metaphor or metaphorical use. Matilal says:

"....Indian philosophers give an account of this phenomena by identifying two different powers in a word. One is that of saying (abhidhana) and the other is that of pointing or indicating (laksana). The first is called the primary meaning-giving power, while the second is called the secondary or indicatory meaning-giving power. By the first the word speaks, as it were, while by the second it only indicates and a metaphor is born..." 15
As pointed out earlier, sometimes a word is used to denote a referent other than its normal one. When a word is used as a metaphor in a sentence but we take the word as denoting its normal primary meaning, the sentence may become nonsensical in the context. Here 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. In Sanskrit, other term like *gauni vrtti* is also used to refer the secondary significative function of words.

The sentence *Gangayam Ghosah* ('The village is on the Ganges') is a well known example of *laksna*. In this sentence, the primary meaning of the word *gangayam* is on the river *gangas*, but this is not suitable in the context, because the village cannot actually be on the stream itself. So the actual meaning of the word *ganga* is taken to be ‘gangatata’ or the bank of the river *Gangas*. 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 *laksana* and get the actual sense which is related to the normal one and that removes the incompatibility.

Besides the primary and indicatory power, the word has another power known as *vyanjana* or suggestion. The suggestive power is sometimes relevant in poetry and rhetorical speech.
Anandavardhana postulated the theory of *vyanjanai* at first. High class poetry, says Anandavardhana, is that where the suggested meaning of the word excels. Poetry would become more beautiful and more charming if it has the power of *Vyanjana*. It should be noted that the secondary meaning or *laksana* arises when, and only when the primary meaning does not fit to the context, but the suggested meaning is appeared to the sentence only after the sentence meaning has been fully comprehended with the help of both normal and metaphorical meaning. In poetry, this has appeal only to the sensitive reader.

Before the time of *Anandavardhana* centuries earlier, Bhartrhari had exposed the *Sphota* theory, in which he emphasized the importance of taking the whole utterance as a significant unitary symbol. Anandavardhana took the clue from Bhartrhari and developed the theory of language on the lines suggested by him. In his famous work *Dhavanyaloka*, he openly declares his indebtedness to the *Sphota* doctrine. In this text, he does not refer to the *Sphota* doctrine as such but refers to the term *Vyanjana* used by the grammarians.

When a person says "*Gangayam Ghosh*" or village is on the bank of Ganga, from this utterance, the hearer comprehends that the speaker here
intends to emphasize the natural beauty and simplicity of the place. This is an example of Vyanjana in language.

In classical Indian tradition Philosophy, Linguistics and literary criticism these three disciplines were intimately connected. All these disciplines were considered an integral part of the Sastra. So a study on this area reveals and brings new dimensions in our present day literary criticism and linguistics philosophy.

As we have seen, in the above paragraph, the literary criticism has been influenced by the language philosophy. The Dhvani theory of Anandavardhana shows its philosophical indebtedness to the Sphota theory of Bhartrhari. In Western thought too we can see such a philosophical touch. In literary criticism, structuralism and post structuralism, especially that of Derrida, as well as Barth owed much to Saussure’s theory signs. 17

TWO

In India, grammar is traditionally known as Sabdanusasana. As the derivation of the word suggests, the grammar is a science which indicates the correct words by separating them from corrupt words. The correct word means the words which are used by sistas or the cultured people. Sanskrit Grammer not only works as an school for making rules for language but also
it gives a spiritual discipline to the students. *Patanjali* has suggested that the ultimate aim of grammar is to teach *Dharma* through which one will get liberation. 18 The basic text of Sanskrit Grammar, *Panini’s Astadhyayi* shows the philosophical base of Sanskrit Grammar.

Bhartrhari has also pointed out the philosophical nature of *Vyakarana* in his *Vakyapadiya*. 19 In ancient India, no enquiry was ever made that did not directly or indirectly aim at a higher realisation of truth and a greater fulfilment of life. After the time of *Patanjali*, Bhartrhari appeared on the stage of Sanskrit Grammar. He synthesised Grammar with Philosophy on a purely idealistic outlook.

**Vakyapadiya: Kandas and Karikas**

*Vakyapadiya* is the major work of Bhartrhari. *Vakya* or sentence and *pada* or word and its grammatical as well as philosophical problems are discussed in this work, and so it is known as *Vakyapadiya*. The text has three *Kandas* or Chapters. That’s why it is also known as *Thrikandhi*. These three *Kandas* altogether contain one thousand eight hundred and sixty *Karikas*. The three *Kandas* are usually called *Brahmakanda*, *Vakyakanda* and *Padakanda*. The philosophical problems of word and sentence are discussed in the first two chapters, and the last chapter deals in detail with the meaning of individual words and the problems of *Karaka* and parts of speech.
Brahmakanda concentrates a great deal on Brahman, the undifferentiated ultimate reality. Second Kanda deals the Vakya sphota with its paradox of containing both the differentiation of the sentence, words and the unitary meaning at the same time. Bhartrhari has written Tika or description on the first two Kandas to explain his ideas related with Sabda Brahman and Sphota theory.

Sabda Brahman:

Like the philosophy of Sankara, Bhartrhari’s philosophy of language is also ultimately grounded in a monistic and idealistic metaphysical theory. He says that transcendental word-essence or Sabdatattva is the first principle of the Universe. The Sabdatattva is eternal and unchanging. This ultimate reality is known as Sabda Brahman. From this beginningless and endless sabdatattva, the whole Universe evolved. The Sabdatattva creates the phenomenal world by the power of Kalasakti. At first, the Akasa evolved from the sabdatattva and then the five bhutas evolved out from the Akasa. In the case of sabda brahman, it creates the whole Universe by the power of maya, but here it is important to note the difference between Sankara’s idealism and Bhartrhari’s “Word Idealism”.

Pramanas:

Bhartrhari takes Sabda or Veda as the highest pramana among the
pramanas. He also admits that the perception, the inference, *Abhyasa* (Practice) and *Adrasta* are other pramanas. Perception that depends on the contact of the sense organs, is valid, but it can be full of mistakes and error cognised by the people who have not experienced the truth. So the vision of the *Risis* should be taken as the pramana more than the perception of the common man. Inference is the other valid means of knowledge, *abhyasa* or practice is another pramana. It is acquired by practice and thus we can attain true knowledge. For example, if a person wants to know the value of diamond, he must practice to value it. *Adrastha* is the knowledge of *Siddhas* or *Risis* and *Devas*. The knowledge of *Siddhas* are beyond the sense perception. But we must take the *Adrasta* as a Pramana.

**Phenomenalization of the Absolute (*Vivarta* and *Parinama*)**

As pointed out earlier the Absolute *Sabdatattva* is the material cause of the entire Universe. It creates the whole world by the power of *maya*. Bhartrhari describes the world as the *vivarta* or *parinama* of the *Vaktattva.*

In this context a question might well be raised by the student of Bhartrhari as to how the Grammarian's view of the Phenomenalization of the absolute compares with the *Advaita Vedanta* theory of *mayavada*. There are apparent parallels on the surface of these two theories. Both *Vedantin* and Grammarian take this world as phenomenal differentiation of the absolute,
yet the absolute is in no way diminished by the Phenomenalization. But from Bhartrhari's standpoint, in phenomenalization a case of *vivarta*, (an unreal appearance) in the Vedantin sense or is it a *parinama* in the Sankhyan sense? In the works of Bhartrhari, especially in Vakyapadiya, we cannot see definite answer to this question, but from a general viewpoint, it can be said that Grammarians did not consider the world as *mithya* or *maya* as the Advaita Vedantins do.

Some scholars pointed out that instead of either *parinama* or *vivarta* doctrinal viewpoint, Bhartrhari's position is much closer to the notion of reflection (*Abhasa*) formulated by the Trika writers of Kashmir. In this viewpoint, the *saktis* and their phenomenal manifestation as words are identical with the absolute. The relationship between the two is described on the analogy of the mirror and its reflection, that is, the latter can have no independent existence without the former. Yet the latter also has a reality which is somehow identical with the former.

But as a strong opposition to the above viewpoint, K.A.S. Iyer gives us strong evidence for interpreting Bhartrhari's thought along the line of traditional *vedanta* doctrine. Iyer bases his interpretation on the assumption that Bhartrhari also says something about *Brahman* and *Maya* and hence he points out the importance of *Upadhi* or limitation of *brahman* in an empirical
world. The problems of universal (jati) and individual (dravya) have been read by Iyer from the viewpoint of Advaita Vedanta. Further, Iyer says that the individual is the limited self of the Absolute or it is limited by Upadhis. Bhartrhari also points out the indivisible brahman and all the limitation of Brahman.

But this has been taken by him only as Asatya or false. So man, cow, horse and such things, are unreal from real viewpoint, but as Vedantin says, it has also empirical reality. Iyer argues that in this philosophical problem (Universal and Individual) the standpoint of Bhartrhari has no difference from the Advaita Vedanta’s Vivartavada. It is the unreal limiting factors which words first denote before pointing beyond themselves to the ultimate reality. The real is thus cognized only through the unreal word-forms. Iyer concludes his remark upon Bhartrhari’s metaphysical position as follows:

“…..He definitely use the word asatya to describe the phenomenal world as cognized by the mind and as expressed by words, and declares, that alone to be Satya which though free from all differentiation, assumes differentiation. This point is very relevant in any consideration of the question whether Bhartrhari propound the doctrine of Vivarta or not...”22
In concluding this observation on the question of whether Bhartrhari was a Vivarta Vadin or Parinamavadin, it must be noted that as yet there seems to be no definite answer to this question, but when we compare the vedanta doctrine of Mithya to Bhartrhari's concept of false and real, we should note that in the hands of Bhartrhari, error means a case of progressive perceptual approximation to the real, (for example, the tree and its vision) but in Advaita Vedanta view there can be only "True" or "False" cognition with no gradation in between.

We shall now proceed to discuss the several stages of Phenomenalization of the Absolute.

Pasyanti:

Bhartrhari takes Sabda or word as the base of his metaphysical viewpoint of language. As pointed out in the above section, the universe is the manifestation of this Sabda in three stages. The first stage is known as Pasyanti. In this stage, the Sabda and Artha are fused together without any differentiation, and this is an undifferentiated state of language and meaning. It is a pre-verbal or potential stage. Here Bhartrhari uses the simile of the yolk of the peachen's egg. Before the manifestation of the egg as a peacock all variegated colours of the peacock lie dormant in potential state in the yolk of the egg. Matilal says:
“.... Similarly in the self of the language speaker or hearer or whoever, is gifted with linguistic capability, all the variety and differentiation of the linguistic items and their meaning exist as potentialities; and language and thought are identical at that stage. Bhartrhari even believes that the nature of the self is nothing but identical with the nature of language - thought....”²³

And also there is no temporal sequence in this stage of pasyanti. Pasyanti is the direct experience of the vakya sphota, and it is a unitary word-consciousness.

**Madhyama:**

After the first stage of complete identity between word and meaning, comes the second stage or madyama. This stage is known as madhyama because this stage is in between the pasyanti and vaikhari. Vaikhari is the proper articulation of the sound sequence or utterance. Before the stage of vaikhari, madhyama works as an intermediate stage. Like pasyanti, here also the language and thought are still undifferentiated, but the speaker sees them as differentiable, “In other words, he recognises the verbal parts, which he is about to verbalise either to himself or to another as distant and separable from the artha or thought.” The Madhyama level of Vak is mainly associated
with the mind or intellect (*buddhi*). From the hearer's point of view which is words or sentence conceived by the mind.

**Vaikhari:**

*Vaikhari* is the most external and differentiated level in which *Vak* or word is commonly uttered by the speaker and heard by the hearer. It is the *prana* or breath that enables the organs of articulation to produce the sounds in a temporal sequence. *Prana* may therefore be taken as an instrumental cause of *Vaikhari Vak*. The chief characteristic of *Vaikhari Vak* is that it has a fully developed temporal sequence. At this level, the individual peculiarities of the speakers are present along with the linguistically relevant parts of speech. But in the above two stages, there are no individual peculiarities and no temporal sequence. When a person utters a word it may contain the idiosyncrasy of the speaker.

Here in these three stages of word, it is interesting to note a similarity between the structure of *Vakyapadiya* and its contents and the levels of *Vak*. The first *Kanda* (*Brahmakanda*) concentrates a great deal on *Brahman*, the undifferentiated ultimate reality to which the *pasyanti vak* is very near. In the second *Kanda* or in *vakya kanda*, *vakya-sphota* is the subject matter. This *kanda* describes the differentiation of the sentence and its unitary meaning at the same time. These ideas are running parallel to the *madhyamavak* level. The
third Kanda or padakanda concentrates almost totally on the analysis or parts of speech and their differentiation, which is identical with the area of Vaikhari vak.

As in the case of vivarta and parinama or the Sabdatattva, scholars have different opinion about the fourth stage of the Sabda brahman which is known as paravak. K.A.S. Iyer accepts such a stage. According to his opinion paravak may be taken as the fourth stage of the Vak. But Kunjunni Raja suggests that although the later grammarians have been influenced by the pratiyabhijna School which interprets sabda brahman as having a fourth of paravak stage of manifestation, in Bhartrhari’s work, there is no such stage higher than pasyanti vak is found. Gaurinath Sastri has made a detailed comparison between the classification of Vak, as found in Vakyapadiya and Kashmir Trika writers and reached the conclusion that the two systems do not differ significantly. Matilal thinks that Tantra Philosophers mixed para with kundalini or muladhara cakra. His observation on this point is interesting. He says:

“....The language (Sabda) at the para stage is identified with the Ultimate Brahman. Those who used this concept of Sphota in Tantra correlated this stage with the kundalini or muladhara cakra. It is also called nada here (not to be confused with nada
in the sense of audible sound). The *pasyanti* stage is also said to be the subtle *sphota*. The ‘intermediate stage is described as the voice of silence. The fourth stage is the External-*sphota*, which is ordinarily called language by all concerned. It is rather intriguing to see how the metaphysical aspect of the doctrine of *sphota*, first enunciated by the grammarians, was elevated to the altar of the ‘worship of nada’, which brought together the grammarians, musicians, artists, poets, and mantra-practitioners under the common mystical umbrella of the *NADA-SPHOTA* reality. But perhaps this is *sphota* in a completely different sense..."²⁸

The question as to whether or not Bhartrhari intends a fourth or *paravak* level is a question which has more metaphysical importance than semantical and pragmatic significance. But we cannot avoid it because in Bhartrhari, language has also a metaphysical side.

**Sabdam-Dhvani,**

Bhartrhari considers *sabdattwo* or *sabda brahman* as the base of this empirical Universe. *Sabda* has an eternal nature. Bhartrhari takes *sabda* and *sphota* are synonymous in nature. In *pasyanti*, *sphota* or *Sabda* is in a unmanifested state with *prathibha*, by the power of *kalasakti*, the unlimited
sabdatattva appears as limited universe. Here he pointed out the unlimited and understructable nature of the sabdam.

The opening chapter of Vakyapadiya known as Brahmakanda, discusses the nature of the word (Sadba-sphota) and its relation to sound (dhvani, nada). According to grammarians these are the two elements in each significant word, that is the element of sound and element of logos, which possesses meaning. Sound reveals the real word. The logos or real word is ever present in the mind and it can be apprehended by another mind by appropriate sound. Sounds are used to reveal the real word and once this is done, the meaning is automatically expressed. But generally people mix these two technical terms and believe that it is sound that expresses meaning.

Bhartrhari describes word, the ever-present principle, as a self-luminous identity (Svaprakasachaitanya), sphota or word reveals itself as well as the object that comes into contact with it, when the sphota reveals itself, it reveals the sound (Dhvani) also, but we confuse word with sound. T.R.V. Murti says that is a confusion like the confusion of the soul with body. He says in his article on “Some Thoughts”. “The word like the soul, has a physical embodiment in the sound and is made manifest through the latter, but the conveyance or meaning is the function of the word, the sound only invokes the word.” 29 We by our ignorance of sabdatattoa, and by the
limitations of *maya*, do not understand the *sabda* and hence we think that the sounds or (*dhvani*) is the soul of the body of language. According to Bhartrhari, *sphota* is a unitary principle that transcends the division, but the sound has division like *Dirga, Hrvasa, pluta* etc, as pointed out in the earlier section, in *Madhyama Vak*. When we utter a word, according to the nature of pronunciation of the speaker, the sound may be long, short or palatal or nasal, but the *sphota* or word is unaffected by the spatial and temporal order and it is always same, but it is we who confuse the *sphota* with sounds. This is because we cannot obtain the vision of *sphota* without sounds. Bhartrhari explains the nature of word and sound with apt illustration. He says that the moon shining above in the blue canopy of the sky is one and fixed, but when she is reflected in the ripples of the lake down below, we can see a thousand and one moons all moving in the water, what is one appears to be many in the water ripples. From an empirical standpoint, all these moons in the water are true and not false, but in actual sense, there only one moon and the dancing moons are the unreal reflections of the moon, in the sky. Likewise *sphota* or *Sabdatattva* is one and eternal and the character of plurality is only by superimposition on it. As in the example of the peahen's egg, all potentialities are laying hidden inside. At the stage of *pasyanti*, *sphota* is one and indivisible it is a homogeneous entity. But as soon as one feels the urge
of conveying one's thought to others, sphota finds its expression through the sound in the shape of letters, words and sentences.

**Prakṛta dhvani and Vaikṛta dhvani:**

(Primary sounds and Derived or transformed sounds)

Bhartrhari draws a line of demarcation between two classes of sounds: *prakṛta* (original sound) and *vaikṛta* sound (derivative transformation). Without the former, the unmanifested sphota cannot be comprehended. The latter enables the manifested sphota to be comprehended for longer and longer moments of time without any cessation.

In the levels of Phenomenalization of the sabda, the first stage is called sphota in pasyanthi stage and the second and third stages are collectively called nada or dhvani. Sphota is the underlying cause of the dhvani. The dhvani in the second stage gets the distinction of short (hroasa) long (dirga) and extra-long (pluta) and it is called prakṛta dhvani. The same dhvani in the third stage gets the differentiation of rapidity (druta) medium (madhyamam) and slowness (vilambita) and it is called vaikṛta dhvani. These two levels of dhvani correspond to the madhyama and vaikhari. In the first two levels of the sabda, the dhvani is known as madhyamavak and in the last step or in the state of pronunciation or utterance of the word, it is known as vaikṛtavak the vaikṛta
dhvani. Vaikṛta vak is transitory in contradistinction to the prakṛtavak. Matilal says:

"....Bhartrhari draws another interesting distinction between two types of sounds in this connection. They are called the 'primary' sounds (prakta) and the 'derived' or 'transformed' sounds (vaikṛta). The usual way to take the 'primary' sounds is to refer to the linguistically relevant sound-sequences which the speaker intends to produce and the hearer expects to hear. It is the shared 'speech' which manifests sphota (where the sphota can be called prakṛti, the 'original', and hence the prakṛta is the manifestor of the 'original'). These primary sounds are not abstractions, but ideal particular which have sequences, duration and other qualities-all specified by the particular language system. The long sounds should be long, of required length, the short vowels should be short and so on. But this must be conceived as divested of all personal idiosyncrasies or 'mannerisms' of the speaker who utters them. It is the norm. The non-linguistic concomitants of any utterance are to be separated from this notion of 'primary' sound. This type of sound is also said to be identified with the sphota though of
course wrongly, for the sphota is conceived as a sequenceless, durationless and partless whole. In other words, one (wrongly) cognizes the sphota as united with this 'primary' sound-series. (See also ch.7, section III.)

The 'secondary' or 'transformed' sounds may therefore be taken to be the individual instances of utterance that either reverberate or continue to show the individual peculiarities of the speakers, various differences in intonation, tempo, pitch, etc. The description here is a bit obscure, for it is also said that the manifestation of the sphota still continues to happen or take place (after the first manifestation by the 'primary' sounds) with the help of the 'transformed' or 'secondary' sounds. 'Difference in the speed of utterance' (vrttibheda) is also a factor in the 'transformed' sounds..."30

Language in the Sphota approach:

In the earlier paragraphs we have discussed the viewpoints of Brahmnical and Naturalistic traditions about language. Now let us outline the viewpoint of grammarians and the particular merits claimed for it.

As an opposition to the naturalistic schools like Nyaya, the grammarians say that the words and their relation with meaning is eternal,
underived and impersonal. But Nyaya philosophers argue that the meaning of the word derive from convention and where even human conventions are not available, divine convention of God may be invoked. Here the viewpoint of Mimamsaka is same as that of the grammarians. The theory of eternality of meaning and words leads to the idea of universals, and eternality of the idea, like St. John's statement in the Bible “In the beginning was the word and word was God”, the Idea of Universals is similar to the idea of platonic concept of Universals. Whereas in the platonic doctrine, the relation of the Ideas to the copies is described as the relation of the immutable to its several manifestations, here in the Vakyapadiya, the word is immutable which is first perceived through its several physical manifestations. For example, take the word 'Go' (cow). Everywhere it is same but its physical manifestation may differ with regard to accent, speed of speaking, place and time of utterance etc. But the grammarians go further than just establishing the eternality of sabda. They identify sabda with brahman. Brahman is the one object denoted by all words and this one object has various differences imposed upon it according to each particular form. But the conventional variety of the difference is due to ignorance. Non-duality is the true state but by the conventional variety of the difference in due to ignorance. Non-duality in the
true state but by the conventional use of the words, manifold expansions have taken place.

On the problem of universals, Indian Philosophy of language contains a vast variety of views ranging from extreme nominalism of the Buddhist to the realism of Mimamsa and Nyaya. In Vakyapadiya, Bhartrhari first makes clear that the real unit of language is the sentence and that for the pedagogical purposes, words are abstracted from the sentence and ascribed a meaning. Here the idea is that words are divided into syllables and sentences into words, but this is only a "conventional fiction".

Different approaches of philosophers in the case of language and understanding the sphota theory give a clear cut answer. "What constitutes the meaning Unit of language?" is the basic question of philosophers. Criticising the position of Mimamsa and Nyaya that the individual letters or words of a sentence generate meaning, the grammarians point out that the letters of a word or words in a sentence die away as soon as they are pronounced so that when we arrive at the last letter of a word or the last word of a sentence, the previous elements have all vanished. How can then the meaning of a sentence can hold the trace of the letters and words, this still does not help, because as only one thing can be cognized at a time in our mind, the memory trace will only replay the serial presentation of the original
parts and no whole meaning will be generated. Bhartrhari has made his sphota theory as an answer to this view of Nyaya philosophers. He says that meaning is a single unitary whole; so also its generating condition must like wise be a whole. On this assumption, the sphota theory is a more advanced theory than any other previous theories.

Definition of Sphota:

The word sphota is quite famous among the grammarians. There was a grammarian by name sphotanya known to Panini. (M:B -6 -1 -121 - Avan sphotanyanasya). The technical term sphota is difficult to translate into English. Sometimes, the word ‘symbol’ is used for sphota in the sense of its function as a linguistic sign. G. Sastri argues that “the fact that logos stands for an Idea as well as word wonderfully approximates to the concept of sphota” 31 The Greek concept of logos best conveys the meaning of sphota. The spoken sounds or the printed letters or ordinary language are distinguished from sphota in that the former are nearly the means by which the latter is revealed.

The sphota is derived from the Sanskrit root “Sphut” 32 which means to burst forth or disclosure, means the idea burst or flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered. Negesa Bhatta describes sphota in two ways: “as that from which meaning burst or shine forth and as an entity which is manifested by spoken letters or sounds.” 33 The sphota may thus be thought of as a kind of
two-sided coin. On the one side, it is manifested by the word sound and on the other side, it simultaneously reveals the word meaning.

Here it is important to note the nature of dhvani or sound and sphota. As we pointed out earlier, sphota is inherent word-meaning and dhvani is the conveyer-belt of meaning. These two aspects, although they may appear to be different, are really identical. The various differences are due to the externalisation. The process is explained as follows: at first the word exists in the mind of the speaker as a unity or sphota; when he utters it, he produces a sequence of different sounds so that it appears to have differentiation to the listener, although at first hearing, a series of sounds, ultimately perceives the utterance as a unity, the same sphota with which the speaker began. Thus the meaning is conveyed.

To describe the sphota concept clearly, let us now briefly restate its definition in a simple diagram:

```
S  Sphoita / Sabda / Word / Symbol
   /
  /  
/    
WS   WM
Word Sound    Word Meaning
```
It must be emphasised that, in case of Bhartrhari the *sphota* is an indivisible and changeless unity. But in the communication process, it is represented as in the diagram with two aspects. The external aspect is sound or written word, which is perceived by our sense organs but it serves only to manifest the *sphotas* inner aspect. The inner aspect is the expressive word-meaning which resides in all being. When a person wants to communicate an idea, he begins with the *sphota* and then he utters it and produces different sounds by the movement of his articulatory organs. The listener hears the *vaikrta dhvani* and ultimately perceives its unity (*Sphota*) and the word meaning, which is inherently present in the self of the listener which reveals the meaning.

In the case of Ogden-and-Richard triangle, the meaning and thing meant are distinguished. It is also necessary to distinguish between the permanent word-(Word-Universal) on the one hand, and the ephemeral or actualised word as it is uttered in speech, (*prakrta dhvani* and *vaikrta dhvani*). According to Indian grammarians, the speech situation can be represented as a rectangle rather than a triangle.³⁴
We can see that the direct relation is only between A and B in the diagram. The relation C and D, A and D, C and B are all indirect and imputed.

In this diagram, the upper portion gives de Saussure’s analysis and the portion ABD refers to the Ogden and Richards’s Triangle.

In the next section, we shall discuss the problem of comprehension of the meaning by sphota.

**How sphota comprehends the Meaning:**

The sphota or the word located in the mind of the speaker and listener be taken as an integral symbol. It is revealed by the sounds produced by the throat in a fixed order, but sounds are only manifesting agencies and they have no function other than that of revealing the symbol. The first varna or letter manifests the sphota vaguely and the next one more clearly than the first one and the next one much more clearly and so on, the last varna reveals the

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96
sphota completely. It is one and the same sphota that is revealed by each one of these letters. The process of revelation of the word by the sounds starts from the indeterminate stage and moves to the determinate stage. It begins from complete ignorance, passes through partial knowledge and ends up in a complete knowledge.

The nature and process of comprehension of the sphota is illustrated by the grammarians by various analogies. A jeweller, examining a jewel or precious stone, has to look it steadily for some time, to enable him to determine the real value. At first, his perception gives him a general knowledge of the gem. Each subsequent perception helps him to reveal the true nature of the gem, and the last perception aided by the impression of previous ones will help him to grasp the real value of the gem completely and clearly. A student, trying to study one anuvaka or the section of vedas, each step as in the case of Jeweller, the sphota manifests. At last, he should study the vedas analogous to the case of the Jeweller and his perception. This is another example of Bhartrhari.35 So in the visual perception, things are cognized as wholes in the sphota theory. Kunjunni Raja compares the “Whole Nature” of sphota with modern psychological trend, namely Gestalt psychology. He says:
"...The sphota theory is quite in keeping with modern gestalt psychology which believes in the primacy of Gestalten. The earlier method proceeded from the elements to the whole from the elements to the whole from the sounds to the words, from words to sentence and finally to the meaning of the discourse as a whole but the present tendency among psychologists is the exact opposite, namely from meaning as a Gestalt to the sentence and the word as elements the sphota is the sentence of word considered as a linguistic sign and perceived as a Gestalt.\textsuperscript{36} He adds: "the theory has to accept that the intellect has the power to interpret a series of sense-data as a finished Gestalt."\textsuperscript{37}

In the sphota theory, 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 is taken as an integral symbol, which is something different from the parts that constitute it. Bhartrhari considers that the parts are only illusionary appearance of the sphota or sabdatattva, but the existence of the parts are not denied by Bhartrhari. He says that sphota is the object of cognition takes place, even though each letter in the word or a sentence has the capacity of
revealing the *sphota*. Everyone of them is necessary because the complete and
distinct manifestation of the word is effected only with the perception of last
letter. *Sesakrsna* gives an example in this case. He says that when a man utter
a sound *ka* with the intention of saying *Kamalam* (a lotus), we know that he is
trying to utter a word beginning with *Ka*, when he utters the next syllable
*Ma*, we have another clue and word can more clearly be guessed, so it
narrowed the field all the words that do not begin with *Kama* are excluded, still
the word is not quite clear. We do not know whether he is going to say
*Kamanam* or *Kamalam*. When the last sound *lam* is also uttered, the word is
known fully and clearly. Thus the function of the letters in a word is to build
up the higher unit.

**Pratibha:**

Another relevant question in this context is how the *sphotasabda*
produces meaning in the mind of the listener. We have to know about
*Pratibha* to understand *Bhartrhari*’s theory of sentence meaning and its
working in the mind of hearer.

*Bhartrhari* says that there is another kind of knowledge in us apart
from *Sphota*. It is a type of flash of understanding. *Bhartrhari* says that all
living beings have such a *pratibha* in their mind or in soul. Birds and animals
make their nest in spring, and spiders weave their webs. Who teaches cuckoo
and spider these activities? The answer is that this is nothing but *pratibha* or instinct. In the same way, language competence and performance is also a type of *pratibha* in man, Chakravarti describes the *pratibha* as follows:

"To the grammarian, *pratibha* is in born intelligence; It is innate and not post natal. *Pratibha* is neither an acquisition, that is sense born nor does it result from common experience. It is called *samskara* or *Bhavana*, firmly seated in our mind and linked together with the continuous currents or knowledge following from previous stage of existence. Here we find the justification why *pratibha* is sometimes denominated as *puroa vasana*. The mind has, truly, says kalidasa, the power of recalling the deep-rooted impression of previous births."

The passage shows the spiritual and metaphysical outlook and the roots of Bhartrhari’s study of language. Like so many other Indian philosophers, he also accepts the doctrine of reincarnation and previous births. Without such a metaphysical standpoint his theory should not be able to solve the basic problem like language competence and performance and the origin of language.
As noted in the first section of this chapter the outlook of Indian grammarians was always in harmony with their spiritual outlook. Let us now examine sabda yoga of Bhartrhari.

Grammar and Salvation (Sabdayoga):

In the philosophy of Bhartrhari, we can see the different levels of language and they are rooted in the doctrine of absolutism. In the sphota theory, a monistic hierarchy is present, the Varna Phonemes are unreal abstractions of the word. The words are unreal abstractions of the sentence and the sentences are unreal abstractions of the paragraph, but the paragraph is not an ultimate reality. It is an unreal division of the chapter of the book. Thus at the top of the language hierarchy, there is only one indivisible reality present. But by human ignorance or by the limitation of the Avidya it manifests as books and paragraphs and the word, the whole universe, is a manifestation of one central, eternal and indivisible principle. sabda brahman or paravak, or generally pranava or the OM is mixed with this paravak.

Matilal observes the importance of Sabda Yoga in semantics. He says:

“To have a clear perception of a tree, for example, we must proceed from a distance step by step when the vague and indistinct blur gradually gives way to a distinct shape and identity. Similarly the sphota, through steps or sequences, is
distinctly understood and identified. Bhartrhari claims that a man who has mastered the ‘sabdayoga’ or obtained the light of the Eternal Verbum (some sages have apparently succeeded in this) can perceive or understand the sphota clearly when the first sound is hear, just as a man with a perfect vision or unlimited power of sight (if such a man exists) can see the tree distinctly even from a distance. Comprehension of the sphota is equivalent to such a distinct vision of reality....”

In the hands of Bhartrhari grammar was not an intellectual curiosity but an earnest and sustained spiritual approach to identify oneself with Brahman or Pranava. Bhartrhari elaborates this approach as sabda-yoga or sabdapurvaka yoga. In Vakyapadiya (1:14), we read the practical application of this Yoga. “It (grammar) is the door way of salvation, the remedy for all the impurities of speech, the purifier of all the science and shines in every branch of knowledge” the Vrtti following makes clear that the use of corrupt forms of vak is a cause of Sin and by the correct use of the vak not only reveal knowledge but at the same time it purifies ourself and one may become united with sabda brahman and the Union, moksa, is finally achieved.

Thus in Bhartrhari grammar is a straight pathway to freedom.
NOTES


4. Matilal, WAW, p. 4.


8. Sankhya Aphorism, 1. 60.


11. K. Raja, ITM, p. 78-79.

12. Matilal, WAW, p. 78.

13. Matilal, WAW, p. 79.


15. Matilal, WAW, p. 22.

16. Ananda Vardhana, *Dhyanyaloka*,

    Prathame hi Vidvamso Vaiyakaranah, Vyakaraṇa amulatvat Sarva Vidianam -

Grammarians occupy the primary place in Scholars - Grammar is the root of all knowledge. This quotation is taken from K. Raja, ITM, p. 283.


20. *Vakyapadiya*, 1 - 120.


23. Matilal, WAW, p. 86.
24. Matilal, WAW, p. 86.


27. Gaurinath Sastri, The philosophy of word and meaning, p. 68-82.


30. Matilal, WAW, p. 93-94.


32. Matilal, WAW, p. 78.

33. Nagesa Bhatta, Sphota Vada, p. 5.


   In this diagram the upper portion gives de-Saussure's analysis and the
   lower portion ABD Refs to Ogden Richards triangle.


