

**CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN INTELLECTUAL
TRADITION TO SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE**

**PROCEEDINGS OF NATIONAL SEMINAR
HELD ON
06-11-2015 TO 07-11-2015**

**EDITED BY
DR.S.S.VIVEKANANDAN**



**DEPARTMENT OF NYAYA
GOVT. SANSKRIT COLLEGE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

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6. THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE IN YOGA DARSHANA

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Language is a phenomenon that always wondered men. In all cultures, we have speculations on language, crude as well as polished theories and ideas about the function of language. In India, the language had been scientifically studied in all its aspects. Grammar, phonology and phonetics, and 'nirukta', were the ancient modes of studying language in the Indian context. The study of meaning, semantics, that involved the analysis of word- meaning relationship and speculations on the function of language, was developed in course of time along with the development of epistemology and philosophical systems. The domain of formal semantics and philosophy of language are entirely different. Though not mutually exclusive, semantics approaches language as a 'means of communication' while to philosophy of language 'it is a means of valid knowledge'. In Indian context, the philosophy of language discussed the questions such as acquisition of language, the word-meaning relationship, the role of context in the production of meaning, textual analysis, tools of textual analysis and above all the art of interpretation. The study of language is possible from two dimensions: language as a tool or medium of communication and language as a medium for creation of knowledge.¹ The first is linguistic approach and the second is philosophical approach.

1. A language is a set of symbols. A symbol is something that references something else. This something else for the some 6000 languages we humans have on Earth is something in the mind. We call this knowledge. So we can say that language references knowledge. "What is the relationship between language and knowledge ..." 2010. 1 Nov. 2015 <<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relationship-between-language-and-knowledge>>

In the first, language is considered as a medium that functions in a speech community that is capable of producing infinite number of productions using a finite number of language components following certain rules and conventions particular to that community. This language can create and modify knowledge about the world that the speaker perceives and lives in and can deal with both facts and things that are true or false, real or unreal. The study of language is possible on its structure and content. The structural exposition or the way 'how a sentence is formed or how a language works' is grammar or syntax and the content or what the sentence mean or how it conveys an idea or object through words is the study of semantics. Here both the syntax² and semantics³ attracted the attention of Sanskrit grammarians and ancient Indian philosophers.

The grammarians considered various aspects of the relation between different types of components (parts of speech) of language that are essential for making a grammatically correct sentence. The karaka⁴ theory of Panini

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2. Syntax is the structure of sentences. Sentences have to follow certain structural rules in order to make sense. You can't just throw any words together to make a sentence! "What Is Syntax? - All About Linguistics - original - Google Sites." 2012. 1 Nov. 2015
<<https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/all-about-linguistics/branches/syntax/what-is-syntax>>
 3. Semantics is a sub discipline of linguistics, which focuses on the study of meaning. Semantics tries to understand what meaning is as an element of language and how it is constructed by language as well as interpreted, obscured and negotiated by speakers and listeners of language. Semantics is closely linked with another sub discipline of linguistics, pragmatics, which is also, broadly speaking, the study of meaning. However, unlike pragmatics, semantics is a highly theoretical research perspective, and looks at meaning in language in isolation, in the language itself, whereas pragmatics is a more practical subject and is interested in meaning in language in use."What is semantics? - All About Linguistics - original." 2012. 1 Nov. 2015 <<https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/all-about-linguistics/branches/semantics/what-is-semantics>>
 4. The karakas are recognized by most scholars as basic semantic notions that pivot sentence constructions. They are similar to the case roles/relations proposed in the case grammars. But karakas are much more than these, and their crucial role as a common substratum of ontology, cognition, and grammar can be understood only if

discusses how the words in a sentence are interrelated to convey an idea. To Panini, the epistemology was not so important since his interest was on describing Sanskrit language. However, his commentator Patanjali and his followers discussed epistemology and the topics that Panini left untouched. Later Mimamsakas, Naiyayikas and Grammarians elaborately discussed the role of syntactic components in a sentence.⁵

The approach towards language by philosophers and the linguists differ in their emphasis and treatment. In philosophy, especially Indian philosophy, language is treated as a means of knowledge. It is a pramana - valid means of knowledge- called 'sabda'. The philosophy of language⁶, in India, is primarily involved with the formation of knowledge through 'sabda' i.e., language. As part of this, these systems evaluated the relation between word and meaning, the ability of word to generate meaning and the nature of the relation between word and the object. As a result, we have many theories like Dhvani, sphota, apoha, anvitabhidhana vada, abhihanvaya vada etc.

we regard them as a manner of classifying 'actions' in the real world. It may not be however inappropriate to suggest that the karaka notions are conceived as properties of the world corresponding to, though independent of their grammatical/morphological manifestations. Panini himself was probably merely projecting the karakas (literally, 'a factor of action') from morphological occurrences in the form of cases to a set of possible actions in the world. "Semiotics Institute Online | The Karaka Theory of The Indian ..." 2011. 1 Nov. 2015.

<<http://semioticon.com/sio/courses/dynamical-models-in-semiotics-semantic/indian-grammatical-theory/>>

⁵ . The Vakyapadiya, sabdasaktiprakasika, vyutpattivada, bhattachintamony, bushanasara etc discussed the logical functions of syntactical components in a sentence.

⁶ . Philosophy of Language is the reasoned inquiry into the origins of language, the nature of meaning, the usage and cognition of language, and the relationship between language and reality. It overlaps to some extent with the study of Epistemology, Logic, Philosophy of Mind and other fields (including linguistics and psychology), although for many Analytic Philosophers it is an important discipline in its own right. It asks questions like "What is meaning?", "How does language refer to the real world?", "Is language learned or is it innate?", "How does the meaning of a sentence emerge out of its parts?" "Philosophy of Language - By Branch / Doctrine - The Basics ..." 2009. 1 Nov. 2015

<http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_philosophy_of_language.html>

Many of these discussions are post fifth century. Before it, the sutrakaras and their immediate commentators discussed these issues. It seems that the Mimamsa sutras and its commentary sabarahshya; mahabhashya, the Yoga Sutra and its commentary Vyasabhashya were the books that discussed the 'problem of language from a philosophical as well as linguistic perspective before Bhartrhari. Following the trend, every philosophical system developed their views in this issue.

The yoga philosophy is considered as one of the ancient schools of Indian thought. The author of yoga sutra is Patanjali. Bhojaraja says that the author of Yoga Sutra and Mahabhashya are one⁷. Hence, there is a possibility

⁷ . The great grammarian and philosopher, Bhartrhari, in the Brahmakanda of his Vakyapadiya, while emphasising the need for trikaranasuddhi refers to the three Sastras, Vaidya, Vyakarana and Yoga as the respective means for the purification of the three karanas, namely kaya (body), vak (speech) and manas (mind).

कायवाग्बुद्धिविषया ये मलाः समवस्थिताः ।

चिकित्सालक्षणाध्यात्मशास्त्रैस्तेषां विशुद्धयः ॥

Again, there is yet another verse, preserved by tradition , which refers to Patanjali as having expelled the mental, verbal and physical impurities of man by means of Yoga, Vyakarana and Vaidya, and hails him as the expounder of these three Sastras that make for trikaranasuddhi. The verse in question runs thus-

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां मलं शरीरस्य च वैचकेन ।

योपाकरोत् तं प्रवरं मुनीनां पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोस्मि ॥

That Patanjali was a reputed author in the three fields of Grammar, Yoga and Medicine is amply confirmed by Bhojadeva, in his vrtti on the Yogasutra of Patanjali. In one of the prefatory verses of this vrtti he has an autobiographical reference, where he has compared himself to Patanjali-whom, perhaps, he idolised-in respect of having composed three different works in the three aforementioned Sastras for the purification of the malatraya.

वाक् चेतोवपुषां मलः फणभृतां भर्तव येनोद्धृतः ॥

And these classics of Patanjali in the three different Sastras are actually referred to by name by Cakrapanidatta in his commentary on the Carakasamhita, in a laudatory verse on Patanjali, whom he eulogises as the author of the Yogasutra, the

of reference to the language. A direct reference to the relation between the word (pada), object (Padartha), and knowledge (Jnana) is found in the sutra III-17. His commentator Vyasa clearly connects this reference with the sphota theory.⁸ Here it should be noted that Yoga is the only philosophical system that subscribes to the sphota theory of Grammarians.⁹ To Yoga, also

Mahabhashya and the arakapratissamskrta, echoing the idea of the removal of the three impurities.

पातञ्जलमहाभाष्यचरकप्रतिसंस्कृतैः।

मनोवाक्कायदोषाणां हर्तेहिपतये नमः॥

..... Ramabhadradikshita in his Patanjalicarita also observes that Patanjali is a sutrakara, bhashyakara and vartikakar'a in one, as he has composed the sutras in Yoga, the bhashya in Vyakarana and the vartika in Vaidya.

सूत्राणि योगशास्त्रे वैद्यकशास्त्रे च वार्तिकानि ततः।

कृत्वा पतञ्जलिमुनिः प्रचारयामास जगदिदं त्रातुम्॥

Sri Ramasastrri and Sri Krishnamurti Sastri, Preface to Patanjali Yogabhashyavivaranam, Edited by Polakam Sri Ramasastrri and Sri Krishnamurti Sastri, Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, 1952, P. x-xii

⁸ . "The later grammarians have argued that those who think that a word is constituted by letters only, would have to admit that each letter must have some significatory power for otherwise their combination (the word) cannot be significant. But there is some absurdity in the conception that each letter, g for example, has some significatory power. The *sphota* is posited to avoid this absurdity. For otherwise the same letter £ occurring in a thousand words would have to have a thousand implicit meanings. Even the advocates of the *Yoga* system of Patanjali lend support to this view of the grammarians, as it was clearly stated in the *Vydsa-bhdsya* of *Yoga-sutra* 3.17. (This agreement, however, does not throw any further light upon the question of identity of two Patanjalis—one the grammarian and author of the *Mahdbhdsya* and the other the author of the *Yoga-sutras*.) Bimal Krishna Matilal, *The Word and The World: India's Contribution to the study of the world*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1990. P. 103

⁹ . Although Patanjali himself does not use the term [sphota] , the yoga school is the only school that accepts the sphota theory of the grammarian school of philosophy, which leads some credibility to the view that, Patanjali, the author of the sutras and Patanjali the grammarian could have been one and same. Edwin F. Bryant, *The Yoga sutras of Patanjali*, North Point Press, New York, 2009. P. 339

sabda is pramana- valid means of knowledge and a means for practicing samyama.

Sabda

The word sabda have a wide array of meanings. To the orthodox mind, 'sabda' is Veda in its most technical sense. Two other words used synonymously are 'sruti' and 'rava'. The word sabda gets wider implication in the definition of sruti given by Mimamsakas that a Vedic sentence becomes shruti only if it can impart the inherent idea directly.¹⁰ Though this definition is commonly used to define meaningful sentences of Vedas, it goes far away from that purpose, conveying a new idea that 'rava' is 'sabda'; i.e. a meaningful utterance. This is impossible without a language. Hence, sabda refers to both spoken and written language. This generalised use of sabda seems followed in the siddhanta muktavali of visvanatha pancanana.¹¹

Another synonym of sabda is agama. The meaning of agama is 'that which imparts the complete idea without any doubt or error'. Buddhists, Jains, Samkhyas, and Yogins accept agama as pramana. Agama is 'apta vakya'. Naiyyayikas hold that sabda is 'apta- vakya'¹². That is, the words of a trust worthy person. The knowledge imparted by him through words is agama. Thus, we can conclude that the terms 'sabda' and 'agama' used in Indian systems of thought refers to language both spoken and written.

Sabdabodha

Cognition produced through language is sabdabodha. Language is built of words and sentences. Words represent objects and concepts that are

10 . निरपेक्षोरवः श्रुतिः। *Arthasamgraha*. Laugakshibhaskara, Motilal Banarsidas. Delhi, 1984 P. 13.

11. Nyaya siddhanta muktavali with Kiranavali , Visvanatha pancanana. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Vamasi, 2003. P. 291.

12. Vide, Nyaya Sutra — 2-1-52

familiar to an individual in a particular group or society. This familiarity creates a convention among the members of the group / society and in turn, this convention makes communication possible¹³. Hence, convention is essential for effective communication. A word possesses an ability to signify an object or concept. This ability is its potency, sanketa or sakti. In modern linguistics, it is called significance.¹⁴ All schools agree with this. However, where this potency rest? They had different answers.¹⁵

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13. A linguistic convention is a principle or norm that has been adopted by a person or linguistic community about how to use, and therefore what the meaning is of, a specific term. Robinson, C. "Knowing linguistic conventions - Taylor & Francis Online." 2014.

<<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02580136.2014.923692>>

In the Indian context, the debate on convention is interesting. It is a debate on the potency of the word to communicate on idea and object. The ancient nayayikas hold that the relation between word and meaning is determined by *god-अस्मद्पदादयमर्थो बोद्धव्य इति ईश्वरेणा सङ्केतः शक्तिः।* But to Neo-logicians mere will (a social agreement) provide potency to words. Mimamsakas say that the relation between word and meaning is permanent. However, it is difficult determine who employed this relationship. It was transmitted from generation to generation; hence, this convention is beginning less. Grammarians also agree with this.

14. The discussion about the function of various elements in a language and the nature of their relationships were dealt in the book, 'A course in general linguistics', of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure emphasized that language is a system of systems. He pointed out that there is no natural relationship between word and its meaning. A language functions in accordance with the conventions that prevailing in a particular group. The convention determines the word-meaning relationship and rules of language. This aspect, which is common to all members of the group, is called 'langue' and the individual usage of language is called 'parole'. Saussure viewed the linguistic unit as a combination of 'a concept or meaning, and a sound-image'. When Saussure mentioned 'linguistic units,' sound-images' and 'concepts,' he was referring to the mental processes that create these entities. The sound image or impression in our minds is of the object and through our language system; we know how that image sounds mentally. We know the concept or meaning associated with this 'sound impression'. The connections between the two elements are made mentally without uttering or writing the word and the two parts formed are joined and become united as a mental linguistic unit. Saussure calls this two-part linguistic unit a 'sign.' The part of the sign Saussure calls the 'concept' or 'meaning' (mental impression/association of the 'thing') he named, 'signified. The part he calls the 'sound-image' (the mental 'linguistic sign' given to the 'thing') he named the 'signifier'. Signifier stands for the word. Signified represents concept. Saussure was a professor of Linguistics who had studied Bhartrhari and his

View of Yoga Darshana on Sabdapramana and prama

Yoga sutra of Patanjali, the basic text of yoga system; and Vyasa Bhasya, the excellent commentary on Yoga Sutras; does not deal with pramana in detail. It accepts three *pramanas* namely, *pratyaksha*, *anumana* and *agama*¹⁶. Apart from this general statement, yoga sutra is silent on the matter. It further names some false cognitions like *viparaya*, *vikalpa* etc. Further Yoga Sutra and its commentators had elaborated the process of formation of knowledge. Only two aphorisms used for this. According to the system, cognition is the result of the modification of the internal organ *chitta*. Explaining the nature of Samadhi sutra says, in *samadhi* the internal organ acquires the form of the perceiver.¹⁷ During all other occasion internal organ is in the form of *vrtti*¹⁸. As far as Sankhya and yoga are concerned, *vrtti* is the operation of internal organ on an object to illuminate it. These two aphorisms together suggest that during the time of cognition *chitta* acquires the form of the object of cognition. This process is similar in all three means of knowledge. That is, in the case of verbal knowledge also the transformation of mind produces verbal cognition. Though sutra is silent on the details of language functions, the commentary of Vyasa is eloquent on the matter. While explaining the 17th aphorism¹⁹ of *vibhutipada* he speaks

linguistic contributions. The idea of language followed by Patanjali, the author of yoga sutra, and Bhartrhari are similar. The commentator of yoga sutra, Vyasa, also considered as a contemporary of Bhartrhari. Perhaps this connection is reflected in the theory of Saussure. Vyasa's commentary on Yoga Sutra III.17 clearly suggests the difference of sound image and the concept represented by it.

15. Vide Siddhanta Muktaivali. 295-319

16. प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि । Yoga sutra 1-7

17. तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेवस्थानम् । Yoga sutra 1-3

18. वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र । Yoga Sutra 1-4

19. शब्दार्थप्रत्ययानामितरेतराद्ध्यासात्संकरस्तत्प्रविभागसंयमात्सर्वभूतरुतज्ञानम् । Yoga sutra 3-17

about the characteristics of concepts like words, sentences, their mutual relation and nature of cognition.

Vyasa's concept of Language

For verbal cognition, knowledge of words and their corresponding objects are essential. A word is constituted of Phonemes (*varna*). These phonemes become meaningful only in words. Auditory organ is capable only to recognise sounds. Intellect differentiates and discriminate the words from the sounds received through ear. These phonemes unite in a particular way to form a meaningful unit called word and this word has the ability to reveal an idea or object. This relationship established between the sign and signified is '*sanketa*'.²⁰ Thus, the word pronounced in an effort signifying an object is unitary in its structure and it's form is intellectual. Its purpose is to communicate an idea elsewhere. The people who hear the word grasp the idea conveyed by the word from the convention existing in that group.

The relation established between a word and object, *sanketa*, is a type of memory. A kind of superimposition operates in verbal cognition and it seems that all of them i.e. word, object and knowledge share one form, yet different form each other (गौरिति शब्दः, गौरित्यर्थः गौरितिज्ञानम्).²¹ This hints that a particular word becomes operational in a society only if its relation with the corresponding object was accepted and followed by the members of that society.

The Yoga darsana believes that all words possess the quality of sentences. A word irrespective of noun or verb is able to convey a complete idea like a sentence, even if its subject or predicate was not properly given or

20.सङ्केतस्तु पदपदार्थयोरितरेतराध्यासरूपः स्मृत्यात्मको योयं शब्दः सोयमर्थः योर्थः

स शब्दः इत्येवमितरेतराध्यासरूपः संकेतो भवति। Vyasabhasya on yoga sutra 3-

17

21. Ibid

not given. For example, the noun vrksha (tree) convey a total idea of its existence, when uttered.²² Words have ability to generate 'akanksa' about its subject or predicate. If it is not available, words force the listener to supply them according to the circumstances.²³ That is, a verb can hint at its object and subject. Vyasa described this as the 'quality of sentence existing in words.'²⁴

A sentence reflects the meanings of words used in it. These words are arranged as subject and predicate. They are karaka and akhyata in Sanskrit grammar. Without these relations, words could not convey a complete meaning of a sentence. To get the meaning of a sentence the words should be analysed separately according to kriya and karaka. One should have the ability to recognise the forms of verbs and nouns. In other words, a good stock of vocabulary along with the rules concerned is necessary for a good understanding of a language either written or spoken. Yoga theory is that word (the sound image) object (the concept or object) and knowledge (the mental modification corresponding to the sound image) share one form and have the nature of superimposition (adhyasa) seem to be an ancient one.

Verbal knowledge and reality

22. Ibid

23 .Siddhauta muktavali — P.- 344-45

24. Ganganath Jha translates this part of Vyasabhashya as "Every word has the force of a sentence: the word 'tree' implies its existence; for certainly existence cannot be denied to any object. Similarly there is no action without the means; so the word "cooks" implies all the agencies pertaining to it; the further mention of the agent, the object and the instruments (Chaitra, the rice and fire) being made only in order to specify these; and further we find single words used for sentences -the word "srotriya" for "studies the Vedas," the word " lives" for " holds life." In a sentence, there is an expressiou of the meanings of words, (thus there being the expression of the meaning of a sentence in a word, and that of the meaning of the word in a sentence, there is a confusion and) the word is to be broken up (into its constituent parts) and then explained as to which part of it expresses the verb, and which the nominative." *The Yoga Darshana: The Sutras of Patanjali with the bhashya of Vyasa*, Bombay theosophical publication fund, 1907. Vide P. 109-110.

The epistemology of yoga darsana is realistic. It is evident in their discrimination of real and unreal cognitions.²⁵ The separation of pramana vrtti-s from apramana vrtti-s emphasizes the reality of the substratum. Yoga Darsana strictly follows correspondence theory. If cognition has a true existent object, it is real and valid. The rest are not valid but accepted as mental transformations. Among these mental modifications (vrtti), vikalpa has some importance from the linguistic view.

Patanjali had defined vikalpa as a verbal cognition, which does not have a corresponding object. This suggests that words can generate cognitions without a corresponding real object. This peculiar ability of language was widely discussed in ancient Indian Philosophy. When two or more words carrying mutually exclusive, contradictory and absurd sense were joined through correct grammatical rules of a language it can impart objectless cognitions. It is well expressed in the popular verse-

Mrgatrsnambhasi snatva

Kha puspa krta sekharah

Esa vandhya suto yati

Sasa srmga dhanurdharah

Patanjali and Vyasa consider these cognitions as unreal and they maintain the standards of realism in epistemology. This clearly exposes the difference in the approach of philosophy and linguistics towards language and the knowledge produced by it.

Pararthanumana and sabda pramana

Vyasa defined sabdapramana as the cognition produced through the words of a trust worthy person about the knowledge he acquired by direct experience, or inference or known from another person. Transferring one's knowledge and experiences to another through the medium of language is

25 .Yoga sutra— 1-7

verbal cognition. There are two types of inferences viz. svarthanumana and pararthanumana. Svarthanumana is one's own inference. When he communicates his experience to his fellow men through five-limbed nyayavakya it is pararthanumana.²⁶ This pararthanumana is sabda for yogadarsana²⁷ because from the side of listener it is a knowledge born out of words.

Conclusion

Yoga philosophy is a system strictly concerned with the control of mind to attain moksha. Unlike Mimamsa, Vyakarana and Nyaya systems, it never discusses the problem of language in any detail. However, the two sutras I-9 and III-17 refers to the language, its role in the formation of knowledge and the relation between the word, concept and knowledge. Patanjali's commentator Vyasa and his commentators Vacaspatimisra and Vijnanabhikshu clarify that Yoga follows the sphota theory of Grammarians. Some scholars consider this similarity as an evidence for the unity of the Patanjali-s, the grammarian and the author of Yogasutra. The view of Vyasa has close similarity with the view of Ferdinand de Saussure, though not same. The approach of yoga towards language is philosophical rather than linguistic.

26. Annambhatta, *tarkasamgraha*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit series, Varanasi, 1993. p.31

27. A certain object, having been either perceived or inferred by an authoritative person, is verbally expressed for the sake of transferring that cognition to another person. The function having, through words, such a thing for its object, is Testimony for the listener. That Testimony fails which is based on the assertion of an untrustworthy speaker, who has neither seen nor inferred an object truly. If however, the original speaker has seen and inferred an object truly, then the testimony becomes infallible. Vyasabhashya I-7; Ganganath Jha, p.27