

Mīmāṃsakas of both the Bhāṭṭa and the Prābhākara subschools refute the idea of a *sphoṭa* carrying the meaning and being different from what we experience, namely phonemes and words, since this contradicts the principle of parsimony and our common experience. Accordingly, they claim that phonemes really exist and that they together constitute words. They also subscribe to the idea that words convey word-meanings, and thus refute the Bhartṛharian holism, again because this idea is confirmed by common experience and common experience should be trusted unless there is a valid reason not to. In fact, human beings commonly experience that one needs to understand the words composing a sentence in order to understand its meaning.

Moreover, human beings also agree about the fact that words (and not complex texts only) are related to a distinct meaning. The relation between a word as meaningful unit and its meaning is fixed, as it is proved by our common experience of language. This experience cannot be denied in favour of a view focusing on the text as a whole and rejecting without compelling reasons our *prima facie* experience of words as meaningful units.

Given that one can thus establish that words are meaningful, what exactly do they convey? Mainstream Mīmāṃsā authors, departing from Śabara, claim, against Nyāya ones, that words convey universals (see ŚBh ad PMS 1.1.24: *sāmānye padam* “the word conveys the universal”). This is, again, confirmed, by our common experience, in which words figure again and again denoting the same element recurring in several particular items, namely their underlying universal aspect. For instance, the word “cow” denotes in every sentence in which it occurs the universal “cowness”, which is shared by all individual cows. However, this thesis seems at first sight to imply that words would never be able to convey a complex state of affairs on their own accord, and would therefore be almost useless. Human language would be constituted almost of extremely general statements about universals and, which is even more important for Mīmāṃsakas, no specific actions could be enjoined. In fact, each order presuppose a specification (one cannot bring the universal cowness, but only a particular cow). In order to solve this difficulty, Mīmāṃsakas claim that a complex state of affairs (*viśiṣṭārtha* in the Mīmāṃsā jargon) is conveyed by a sentence (see again, ŚBh ad PMS 1.1.24:

viśeṣe vākyam ”the sentence conveys the specific”). This means that the sentence-meaning is more than the sheer sum of word-meanings, insofar as at the level of sentence meaning one moves from one level (that of universals) to the other (that of specific meanings). This solution, however, leads to a further question, namely: How are these two different levels reached? Do the same words lead to the one and then to the next?

The process of sentence-signification, leading from words to the sentence-meaning, is distinctly explained by the two main Mīmāṃsā sub-schools, Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā and Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā. Both subschools agree on the basic tenets seen so far, but they differ on the path leading from the words signifying universals to the sentence signifying a particular state of affairs. According to Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā authors, words conclude their function in denoting their own universal meanings (they ground this view in a statement by Śabara, describing words as nivṛttavyāpārāṇi ‘having concluded their function’, ŚBh ad 1.1.25). Thus, it is the word-meanings, conveyed by words, which convey the sentence-meaning once connected together.

One might (as did Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā authors) object that in this case the sentence meaning is no longer conveyed directly by words, but rather by their meanings and that it is therefore no longer strictly speaking linguistic. Thus, the sentence-meaning would no longer be conveyed through linguistic communication as a distinct instrument of knowledge. This might be a sheer terminological problem, but for Mīmāṃsā authors it has a much deeper relevance. In fact, Mīmāṃsā authors explain that only the Vedas can convey knowledge of dharma. This means that any knowledge of dharma obtained through another source is invariably unreliable. Therefore, if the sentence-meaning were not linguistic, then even the sentence-meanings about dharma would no longer be directly conveyed by Vedic sentences, and would therefore end up being unreliable.

Bhāṭṭa authors reply that the sentence meaning is indeed a function of words, although via their meanings. Bhāṭṭas therefore distinguish a direct denotation (abhidhā) of words, through which universals are denoted, and a secondary signification (lakṣaṇā), through which complex sentence meanings are conveyed.

Prābhākara authors object in three ways: 1. They claim that lakṣaṇā is possible only once the direct denotation is impossible (for instance, in the case of “The village on the Ganges”, one comes to understand that the village is on the Ganges’ bank because the primary meaning would be impossible). But what exactly is incongruous in the word meanings once connected? 2. How do word-meanings connect to each other? If they do it because the words bestow into them the capacity to connect to each other, then it is more economical to just postulate that the words themselves convey the sentence-meaning, without the intermediate step of the sentence-meaning. 3. If word-meanings can automatically connect among themselves, then why don’t they do it unless once in a sentence (in this connection it is important to recollect that artha means both a linguistically conveyed meaning and a cognitively acquired one)? A plausible answer to 1. would point to the fact that the connection of various universals leads in fact to an impossibility since, as in the above example, one cannot bring the universal cowness. One might also suggest that lakṣaṇā in the Bhāṭṭa account acquires a technical meaning, different from the one it assumes in accounts of implicature etc. As for 2. and 3., Kumārila Bhaṭṭa answers that word-meanings do in fact connect automatically and this this does actually occur even outside of sentences. The example Kumārila mentions will be discussed by generations of authors and will remain the only one discussed in this connection: A person sees an indistinct white shape, hears a neighing and perceives the sound of hooves. These three unconnected meanings automatically connect into the complex meaning ”A white horse is running”.

By contrast, Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā authors, and especially Prabhākara’s main commentator, Śalikanātha, state that words first get connected and then denote the specified sentence meaning only once connected. This assures that the sentence meaning can be said to be linguistically conveyed, since there is not the intermediary step of word-meanings, a conclusion which is very important for the Mīmāṃsā epistemology, regarding linguistic communication as a distinct instrument of knowledge (see the section above). However, this explanation altogether skips the role of word-meanings. Thus, Prābhākara authors have to explain the fact that the own meanings of single words appear to do have a role to play in the process, since there is an invariable concomitance between knowing the words’ individual meanings and knowing the sentence’s one. This tension between the opposing risks of atomism and holism is dealt with differently by various

authors. Prabhākara seems to present the most basic version of the theory, where word-meanings just don't play a role in the apprehension of the sentence-meaning. Śālikanātha and his Bhāṭṭa opponent Sucarita start discussing the role the memory of the individual word-meanings plays in the process. Words would accordingly cause one to remember their own meanings, then get related to one another and then denote the complex sentence-meaning. The word-meanings would therefore be recollected, but not denoted by words.

Words get connected into a complex sentence meaning through proximity, semantic fitness and syntactic expectancy. These three criteria correspond to the requirement of being uttered one after the other with no intervening time (unlike in the case of the words "a cow" and "runs" pronounced on two different days), being semantically fit to connect (unlike the words "watering" and "with fire") and being linkable through syntactic expectancy (as in the case of a verb and its arguments).

Now come to the point of sentence meaning. Bhartrhari is a sentential holist and has established the theory of sentential meaning as an indivisible unit, by refuting the constructionists we mean those who deny the independent being of sentence and try to interpret sentential meaning only on the basis of world meaning. The eight kinds of sentence which have been above described five of them that held constructionist theory of sentence meaning. Bhartrhari has mentioned at least give types such theories grouped by Punyaraja as *Abhitanvayavada* and *Amvatabhidhanavada* has critically examined them and had proved them to be insufficient in explaining sentential meaning as it figures in the mind through languages

Whereas Bhatt Mimansa held *Abhitanvayavada* Prabhakara Mimansa held *Amvatabhidhanavada* In the former there is expression and then association of words whereas in the latter there is association of words and then there is expression. That is former believes that first the individual words meaning are understood then they are conjoined to get the sentence meaning. On the other hand Prabhakara held that the whole sentence is cognized first and then individual words are provided that meaning in the context of the sentence.

Thus for Bhatt the meaning of the sentence cannot be more than the meaning of individual words whereas for Prabhakara sentence meaning be something more than the individual words.

The controversy between abhihitavayavada and anvitabhidhanavada is not significant for Bhartrhari, as he is not a constructionist but a sentential holist. Meaning, for him, is more than a semantic Unit in its popular use. He is well aware of at least five kinds of constructionist theories of sentential meaning. This theory is different from other sententialist who interprets sentential- meaning as a meaning different from the meaning of a sentence. Meaning, for him, is a cognitive- being, and thus his concern is not only with the controversy among the constructionists or padavadins (including abhihitavagavadins and anvitabhidhanavadins), but between them and the sentential- holists.

This concern are those who accept a semantic unit different from a syntactic unit and those who take a semantic unit as a synthetic unit as a synthetic unity, and those who take it as a cognitive being non-differently revealed by language ubiquitously given in the mind.

Another problem related to this matter is regarding convention.

Whether convention is observed with words or with the sentence, is a central problem of Indian philosophy of language, the solution of which gives rise to various theories of language in general and in Indian semantics. The differences of abhihitavayavadins, anvitabhidhanavadins and akhandavakyarthavadins are essentially rooted in their different views regarding convention. For abhihitavayavadins, what a child observes as a unit of meaning in the use by elder is a word, and, hence, they accept words as independent units. On the basis of word as the primary unit, they explain sentence and sentential- meaning as outcomes of an association of the words and word- meanings respectively.

Anvitavidhanavadins, though they also assume word as the primary meaning- conveying unit, accept convention with sentential-meaning.

They do not believe in the existence of the sentence independently of the word as a meaning- conveying unit. Sentential- meaning for them is not the meaning of a sentence, but of words conveying mutually related word-meaning. There is no need to accept sentence for explaining sentential- meaning.¹⁰ For Vaiyakaranas, communication is accomplished neither by one –to-one putting together of word meanings, nor by mutually related word-meaning, but by indivisible sentential meaning.

The expresser of the sentential- meaning is neither association of words nor the words having mutually related meaning but the indivisible sentence. On the basis of communication in day- to- day practices, Bhartrhari elucidates that convention

is with the indivisible sentences, which is the indivisible expresser of the indivisible unit of communication, i.e. sentential- meaning¹¹. Bhartrhari rejects abhitanavayvadin and anvitavidhanvadins sentential meaning. For him a sentence is an inner, indivisible and a real unit of awareness in nature, i.e.

sphota and sentential meaning is that which it reveals non- differently a flash awareness in the mind, for which Bhartrhari used the word 'Pratibha', is sentential meaning. Thus sphota for Bhartrhari is real language shabda) and the meaning is a clear and a distinct flash of awareness which is pratibha, which is also indivisible. Pratibha as the general meaning of all sentences of or even words (if complete meaning is revealed by them), is cognition or awareness and non different from

sphota. For Bhartrhari sentential meaning is not as an object that figures in the mind. It is an idea or a clear and distinct flash of awareness. So there is not any kind of one to one relationship between the sentence and their meaning. Each flash of awareness is unique in its nature and also may varied from person to person of different mental level or according to their pratibha. Pratibha as the general meaning of all sentences or even words (if complete meaning is revealed by them), is cognition or awareness and non-different from sphota. It is only from the sense of duality that from the point of view of language (expresser) it is called an expresser (sphota) and from the point of view of meaning, it is called expressed (pratibha) but in both of the cases it is a being figured in the mind by the language that reveals it.¹¹ Thus the meaning is integral and indivisible according to Bhartrhari and it is his Sentence- Holism.

If we compare the '*Pratibha theory*'s sentential-meaning with *Abhitanavayavada* and *Anvitavidhanavada* which have been above described, It seems that Prabhakara's view is closer to that of Bhartrhari But actually it is not, because of among other reasons Prabhakara talks about the context of words in the sentence whereas Bhartrhari pointed at the context of the sentence.

Now we come to point out the differences between mimamsaka's and Bhartrhari's theory of meaning. Where mimamsaka are constructionist (padvadin), according to which the world and the phone have their own existence in the sentence and even though they are not in a sentence. They held that phone (the single sound) is real shabd.

According to mimamsaka word is a meaningful unit of language. They also say that meaning of sentence is decided with the association of word meaning. On the other hand Bhartrhari holds that sentence is the basic unit of language and meaningful expression. The meaning of word in sentence has only pragmatic value as for him sphota is a real word and 'Pratibha' is real meaning.

Thus, we see that sphota theory, which is also a holistic theory of sentence, is a special kind of linguistic philosophy that called shabdadwaitwad philosophy where word (sphota) and meaning (sphota or pratibha) is not different.