



One Day National Seminar

On

Classical Indian Theories of Linguistic Communications

**To be organised by
Department of Sanskrit,
University of Gour Banga
Malda, West Bengal
732103**

Venue:

Smart Room, Dept. of Sanskrit, UGB

Date: 22/03/24

Time: 10.30a.m.

Concept Note:

Śabda is regarded as the ultimate reality (brahman) by *Bhartṛhari*. He says-

अनादिनिधनं ब्रह्म शब्दतत्त्वं यदक्षरम् ।

विवर्ततेऽर्थभावेन प्रक्रिया जगतो यतः ॥

Means, the existence of word is time immemorial like the eternal soul and the manifestation of this universe is his creation out of desire; we express it through language with many diversities and the entire process of learning and sharing run by it. Sometimes, this universe is realised through reflection to a yogin, well-versed (tattvavid) the true nature of it.

Patañjali opines about both purposes of a word, 'एकः शब्दः सम्यग्ज्ञातः सुप्रयुक्तः स्वर्गे लोके च कामधुग् भवति'. So, it is considered that language is the vehicle of conveying our thought procedure. Even animal, birds too have their own languages but like human behaviour, language too, has no fixed format. As per context a meaning is construed. A man is rational since he is guided by certain principles. In other cases, it's not so. Whatever we encode from reality, when wants to share and intend that the listener too must visit the same world by way of decoding. Of course, we maintain certain decorum for a fruitful and meaningful conversation in view of keeping a rapport between the speaker and hearer. But language alone stand as barriers in understanding. So, the 'speech act' plays an important role in

mapping reality. Three components-logic, language & reality become main objective for our day-to-day linguistic communications.

Pāṇinīyaśikṣā envisages the epistemological utterances of words-

आत्मा बुद्ध्या समेत्यर्थान् मनो युङ्क्ते विवक्षया ।

मनः कायाग्निमाहन्ति सः प्रेरयति मारुतम् ॥

The soul gets connected with mind intentionally as per intention, churned the physical energy through air and utterances comes into being. This process also culminated Vedic sounds and meters meticulously.

Logo-centrism, is a theory about word-meaning relations - advocated by Jacques Derrida, a French linguist who denied the permanency of relationship of a signifier word (*Vācaka*) and the signified meaning (*Vācya*). Logo-centrism of Derrida relates to his theory of deconstruction of speech.

Bharṭṛhari (5th century A.D.) had authored *Vākyapadīya*, a philosophical grammar of Sanskrit language. Metaphysics being its core and kernel, it takes a holistic view of word and its meaning as natural and intact. Before him, *Patañjali* (2nd century A.D.) had established the concept of ‘Sphoṭa’ to denote the sound (*Dhvani*) which is Universal. However, in usage, the uttered sound is perishable. The linguistic notion ‘phoneme’ is akin to ‘dhvani’. *Bharṭṛhari* accepted this ‘Sphoṭa’ theory and explained its three segments – ‘Varṇasphoṭa’, ‘Padasphoṭa’ and ‘Vākyasphoṭa’ respectively. Any speech act of sentient being involves these three elements.

This sphoṭa theory was vehemently opposed by both the schools of *Mīmāṃsakas*. *Kumārila* talks about *abhihitānvayavāda* - the denotative power of word and composition of meaning. *Prabhākara* takes atomistic position and argues that: the ontological status of meaning exists in word, but would be determined as per context designated as *anvitābhīdhanavāda*. Buddhist logicians too opposed the idea of *Bharṭṛhari*. The *naiyāyika* par excellence *Viśvanātha* opines *tātparyavāda* (intention of the speaker) is the end of verbal understanding.

पदज्ञानं तु करणं द्वारं तत्र पदार्थधीः ।

शाब्दबोधः फलं तत्र शक्तिधीः सहकारिणी ॥

(Opening śloka of śabdakhṇḍa, *Bhāṣāpariccheda*)

It surmises an epistemological expression how does a verbal understanding occurs in beings?

The process follows up four important steps as the śloka decodes

1. The knowledge of word, acts as instrument
2. The knowledge of word-meaning relationship functions as the cause and effect.

3. The result is, understanding the intended meaning being caused by phonemes, leads to the knowledge of morphemes.

4. The intension of speaker or utterances play important role in syntactical formation which leads to settle down the semantics, otherwise known as to outreach the goal.

Here, we must differentiate the definition of word of the grammarians vis-i-vis *Naiyāyikas*. ('suptiñantaṃ Padam', 'śaktaṃ Padam' - respectively).

A word is that which ended with either noun-suffix or verbal suffix. On the contrary, *Naiyāyikas* hold the relationship in between word and its meaning.

In Western post-structuralist linguistics, there is no equivalence of *abhihitānvaya* because it speaks of *anvaya* or 'quest' of the power of meaning. This is spiritualist meaning closest to *anvaya* is the notion of discourse - to some extent "Saussure's concept of langue and parole". Derrida calls it 'logos' or at times 'trace' to refer to the progression of the traces left by signifiers. But on the whole; Sanskrit grammar is based on a spiritualistic notion of *anvaya* which manifests as the 'Sphoṭa' of the *dhvani* that is heard. The post-structuralism 'discourse' lacks the clarity and analytical rigor of 'Sphoṭavāda', but the latter suffers from spiritualistic assumptions.

Syntactical model of *anvaya* relationship with relate could only provide greater clarity of understanding.

Dvanikāra Ānandavardhana and others have always at loggerheads like *Mammaṭa*, *Daṇḍi*, *Rājaśekhara* etc tried fixing up the word-meaning relationship primary (denotative) or secondary (connotative).

This type of interface we come across often between the modern and ancient linguists, grammarians and observations of the *Nyāya-mīmāṃsā* are not to be ignored in this regard!

Sub Themes:

1. Indian Theories of Grammar and Linguistics
2. Theories of Philosophy of Language
3. Communication through language of Art
4. Aesthetic Communication
5. Classical Indian Theories of Language and Reality
6. Contributions of India to Linguistics

7. Classical Indian Forms of Discourse and Debate
8. Epistemology of Aesthetic Experience
9. Author-Reader Relationship
10. Language and Content
11. Meaning and *Kāku* (Intonation)
12. Spiritual Essence of Words
13. Any relevant sub themes

Mode of Paper Presentation:

Offline & Online

Distinguished Speakers:

- **Professor V N Jha**, Former Director of the Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, Savitribai Phule Pune University
- **Prof. Raghunath Ghosh** (retd.) UGC Emeritus Professor, North Bengal University
- **Prof. Gangadhar Kar** (retd.), Department of Philosophy, Jadavpur University
- **Prof. Satyajit Layek**, Professor & Former Head, Dept of Sanskrit, Calcutta University
- **Prof. Prasanta Kumar Mahala**, Professor & Dean, Faculty of Arts, Raiganj University
- **Dr. Kamal Kishore Mishra**, Head, Dept of Sanskrit, Calcutta University

Important Dates:

- Last date of submission Abstract with 250 words to: **10.03.24** through link (<https://forms.gle/Kzv61pno9cTuiXBJ7>).
- Acceptance Letter: **18th March, 2024**.
(Selected participants will be informed through email).
Full paper can be submitted on the day of the seminar.

Registration Fees:

Faculty Members: 1000/- INR

Research Scholars with Presentation: 700/- INR

Participation of Students (P.G./non-presenters): 200/- INR

#The Seminar Organisers are not able to provide accommodation to the outstation participants.

Only non-presenters are allowed to pay their registration fees in spot.

#In the case of a presentation made by joint authors, each of them should get registered separately.

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