

Sabdanusanam

The Integral View of Communication

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Abstract

The rationale for this paper is that the negative trends in present day communication in media and public language in India seem to have formed a complex web of social and political factors in certain sections of society that go beyond any individual, ideology or situation. To find a solution to this problem we need to look within and examine the disconnect between the roots of language in the Indian society and the use to which language is being put by people in certain sections who are not connected with India's linguistic tradition of discipline of words. It is in this context that the classical texts on communication in India need to be explored and relevant ideas adopted for integrative and accommodative communication. Exploration of Indian intellectual tradition in communication is also relevant in the context of the emerging trend of scholars' challenge from the non-Western world against the appropriateness of Eurocentric paradigm of communication. It is argued that the entire focus in India's linguistic tradition has been on restraint and discipline of words 'Sabdanusanam' in accordance with prescribed norms derived from wider social context to achieve meaningful and harmonious communication in the society.

Key words: Linguistics, Communication, Vedic, Sabda, Vakya

Introduction

Scholars have written about three idioms of Indian society: the modern, the traditional and the saintly. The modern signifies the language of constitutional politics and administration. The traditional refers, in contrast, to religion and community and to the language of rural India. The saintly represents the language of Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, and Anna Hazare—*ahimsa, bhoodan, swadeshi and seva*. In the first few decades of independent India, all three idioms co-existed. Today, a fourth idiom has been added to sections of our society, and sadly it seems to have eclipsed the other three. This is the language of disharmony.

This language of disharmony is divisive and disintegrative, for it has crossed the red line of inclusion. In addition to the culture of inclusion that is undermined by such language, it also leads to a culture of violence. When language is filled with courtesies, replete with the protocols of respect, it produces in the mind restraints on bad behavior. Although we may have the inclination to hurt an opponent, when the speech culture is respectful, it will psychologically restrain the inclination to hurtful speech or action. In contrast, the spread of discordant speech weakens such restraints.

Today, fury and incomprehension of words have eroded the minimum standards of courtesy and mutual respect in communication, specially in the cyberspace. We seem to be increasingly unwilling to even try to find a common ground with which to engage with people whose views differ from ours. Such violent language achieves its impact by denying any complexity, conditionality, or uncertainty. It exaggerates wildly to make its point. It is built on a presumption of bad faith on the part of the other person. It accepts no responsibility to anyone to explain anything to anybody, but instead treats the facts as they were a matter of opinion. (Thompson, 2016, p. 17).

In still many more cases, when the words are not violent or offensive, they are still inane. People merely gossip and chat. Though they talk so much they have little to say. This is true particularly of academicians and journalists in urban India. They speak compulsively, mechanically, in jargons. They use many and big words for few and small things. Their debates, seminars and writings are nothing but words reacting to words with little sense of relevance and reality. (Ram Swarup, 2001, p. 91.)

A healthy language knits people together, and ultimately leads to better and more inclusive society. But when communication loses its power to explain and engage, it endangers the bond of trust between people. The critical risk from bad communication is not only in the realm of culture, but also in legitimacy and sustainability of social and political cohesion. When public discourse of a country gets vicious and partisan, democratic society as a whole starts to fall apart. The loud-mouthed rhetoric based on half-truth instead of bringing people together breeds anger, hatred and division in society.

An integral view of communication on the other hand is one that joins, links, coordinates and brings people together. Not in the sense of monotonous uniformity, and not in the sense of erasing all the differences, but in the sense of unity in diversity, shared commonalties along with differences. One way we can frame integral communication is to describe it as holistic, innermost and multidimensional exchange. That is, communication that originates from all dimensions of being – physical, emotional, rational, cultural, and spiritual, and seeks to reach out to as many aspects as possible of the listener. Inherently, then, integral communicators will use inclusive approaches and language that evolve out of a clear understanding of the wider social and universal context of the speaker and the listener. Integral communication could be the bridge between the traditional and modern idioms of Indian and society.

A primary assumption of this view is that the *Sahridayata* or identity we so earnestly seek does exist in all exchanges. (Mishra, 2005, p.93). Our ideas, feelings, and beliefs

spring from the rich foundation of our common humanity and cosmic identity; at the most fundamental level, we are part of the same fabric of being amidst all existence. Conflict may therefore be due to misperception between different manifestations of the same unmanifest reality, and communication can be viewed as coordination to accommodate and integrate multiple manifestations of the ultimate reality. However, regardless of how that accommodation and coordination is defined, the commonality principle has been understood and practiced by very few, and there is instead a strong tendency to put people into different, hierarchical and even opposing categories. The objective of integral communication is to understand and appreciate the universal aspect of being, and the interdependent nature of everyone and everything.

It is the argument of this article that the negative trends in communication stem from a complex web of social, political, and cultural factors that go beyond any individual, ideology or situation. To find a solution to this problem we need to look within and examine the disconnect between the roots of language in the Indian society and the use to which language is being put by people who are unaware of the India's linguistic tradition of *Sabdānusanam*- discipline of words. It is in this context that the classical texts on communication in India need to be explored and relevant ideas adopted for integrative and accommodative communication. Exploration of Indian intellectual tradition in communication is also relevant in the context of the emerging trend of scholars' challenge from the non-Western world against the appropriateness of Eurocentric paradigm of communication being used in non-Western societies. (Miike, 2002; Servaes, 2000; Dissanayake, 2003, 2009; Yadava, 2008; Chen, 2003).

Sacred Speech

Language has been one of the fundamental issues of concern in India's intellectual tradition over the ages. It has received due attention from thinkers right since the ancient times. Study of language has occupied the minds of not only grammarians and literary figures, but also of poets, philosophers, and playwrights. All schools of thought in Indian philosophical tradition began their discussions from the fundamental problem of communication. Generally, the approach to the study of problems of language and communication has been characterized by both analysis and synthesis. Whereas systematic efforts were made to analyze words in terms of stems and suffixes, sounds and elements, at the same time rules of joining the elements and the words in a compound word or sentence were learnt from usage and organized.

The need to interpret and preserve the vast oral Vedic literature of great antiquity required linguistic thought and analysis. This literature had been transmitted through generations by a strong tradition of verbal communication. The reliance on orality was motivated in part by the power of spoken words to invoke the intervention of the gods. In the Vedic tradition, if the text has been learned in the proper way, and by the proper person then the power of the word, when spoken, is irrevocable--the gods *must* act, and will act. The utterance of an invocation was thus automatically what modern speech-act theorists would call a *performative* speech act. In the saying of the word, something is also *done*, and cannot be undone. Indian literature is full of tales in which a word was misused, uttered capriciously or wrongly, with mischievous or even disastrous

consequences. The term `magic' comes to mind here, and in some ways the power of words can be seen as magic; but this is not mere magic.

Maintenance of pre-eminent Vedic texts in the oral tradition depended a great deal on the sound pattern, word structure, and an understanding of meaning. This led to the development of thinking about language in the pre-Paninian period. (Deshpande, 2011). That the thinking about language, its structure, and meaning began very early in India is proven by the fact that the Vedic literature has several references to thoughts on speech, language, and meaning. Vedic thinkers considered language to be a very important factor as source of bringing happiness and togetherness in human life. It was considered as a means of understanding the true meaning of objects and attaining the desired objectives. The results attained by the Indian thinkers in the systematic analysis of language have surpassed those arrived by any other nation. "The Sanskrit grammarians were the first to analyze the word forms, to recognize the difference between the root and suffix, to determine the functions of the suffixes, and on the whole to elaborate grammatical system so accurate and complete to be unparalleled in any other country." (Macdonell, 1927, p.136).

Vedic literature clearly identifies *Brahma* (the Absolute) with language (*sabda*). The *Asya Vamiya Hymn* of Rishi Dirghatamas in chapter 1 of Rig Veda states that the ultimate abode of language is Brahma. Language is described as being the peak of the universe. It also says that "Speech has been measured out in four divisions, the Brahmans who have understanding know them. In that three divisions are of hidden speech, men speak only the fourth division." Here language is related to cosmic order and is understood as the idea of the word as distinct from the spoken word. The spoken word is a limited manifestation of the inner word that reveals the truth. Thus, the *Asya Vamiya Hymn* says that *Gaurir mimaya salilam takshati*, the vibration of speech creates or fashions out the manifold forms out of the waters of the infinite ocean of the ultimate Reality." (Agrawala, 1963, p. 150).

In Chapter 10 of Rig Veda, hymns 71 and 125 establish the significance of speech and language for the thinkers in Vedic times. Hymn 71 speaks of the excellent and spotless treasures hidden in speech which are disclosed when there is affection in the utterances. People with wisdom use speech that wins them friends. Only those who make effort can speak and hear good speech. A person who has not understood the essence of speech can only utter words that are hollow. Good speech comes to those whose action is good and who do not disown friends. People have similar eyes and ears but they do not have similar qualities. People who are neither knowledgeable nor hard working can only have meaningless speech. An energetic, dynamic and knowledgeable person succeeds in society and wins praise from friends. (Saraswati, 2015, p.809-15)

In Hymn 125 the speech goddess celebrates her own power and grandeur in a lengthy *Vak Sukta*

1. *I move with the Rudras, with the Vasus, with the Adityas and all the gods and sages. I am in both air and water, both energy and fire, and both earth sky.*

2. *I carry the flowing Soma, and Sun, and energy and riches. I bestow wealth on the pious sacrificer who presses the Soma and offers the oblation.*
3. *I am the queen, the confluence of riches, the wise and industrious one who is first among those worthy of worship. The gods divided me into various parts, and I enter in many places and many forms and give them strength.*
4. *The one who eats food, who truly sees, who breathes, who hears what is said, does so through me. Though they do not realize it, they dwell in me. Listen, what I tell you should be heeded.*
5. *I am the one who says, by myself, what gives joy to gods and men. Whom I consider worthy by knowledge and action I make great; I make him a sage, a wise man, a Brahmana.*
6. *I stretch the bow for unleashing storm, so that it will strike down the hater of prayer. I arouse and enact the battle for people against evil and I pervade earth and heaven.*
7. *I establish the guardian on the head of this world. My origin is within the ocean. From there I spread out over all creatures and touch the very sky with the crown of my head.*
8. *I am the one who blows like the wind, embracing all creatures. Beyond the sky, beyond this earth, so much is my greatness. (Saraswati, 2015, p.1113-1117).*

In this extensive hymn dedicated to speech goddess, language is considered worthy of worship, and it is seen as energy coexistent with every object in this universe. It is considered as a sustainer of life, a source of success and riches. It brings knowledge and wisdom, and is the force behind the power of goodness.

This identity of Brahma with language is also found in the Upanisads. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad* Brahman is identified as the one reality, without a second, which is identified with language. The *Mandukya Upanisad* links the unspeakable absolute with the speakable word through the symbol of *Aum*. *Aum* is described as connecting the manifest world with the supreme reality. Brahma is identical with language, the basic manifestation of which is the *Aum*. (Coward, *ibid.*)

To understand whatever Indian grammarians said about language and communication one has to remember this philosophical background in which the grammarians made their observations. In this metaphysical background all language and communication is a manifestation of the ultimate reality, the *Sabdatattva*, the essence of the word. The speaker, the words which he utters, the objects which the words denote and the listener are all emanations from the ultimate word-essence. “The cosmic process with its names and forms arises from the subtle essence of Pure Being” (Radhakrishnan, 2007, p.462). This fundamental concept of the identity of the universal and the particular has been validated by modern science which has shown that every particle in the universe takes its characteristics from the pitch and pattern and overtones of its particular frequencies in a vibrating universe. (Leonard, 1978; Charon, 2005; Berendt, 1991).

Yaska’s *Nirukta* composed around 600 BC may be regarded as a link between the earliest Vedic tradition and the later Paninian system of language and communication in India. (Belvalker, p. 5-9). Yaska’s primary objective was to interpret the Vedic texts

correctly so that the benefit of the knowledge of Vedas could accrue to both the speaker and the listener. In the Vedic tradition knowledge of the Vedas required the ability to speak the words in the right accent and rhythm. To keep the oral form pure and disciplined in its presentation it was necessary to use the words precisely and effectively. Only thus could the words become a part of one's consciousness in the act of speaking.

Yaska sought to establish the correct meaning of the words used in the Vedic texts by tracing them back to the "verb roots". (Kapoor, 2019, 151). He believed that without this exercise the exact meaning of the Vedic mantras cannot be known. He said that if anything was learnt without being understood it was meaningless and was like trying to ignite dry logs of wood by placing them on ashes of extinguished fire. For him meaning was the flower and fruit of speech. Yaska's major contribution was in his attempt to specify the meaning in terms of the root verb or activity. In determination of meaning, he took into account the rich context of historical, geographic, cultural, social, psychological, and philosophical factors of the time. The factors involved in the process and their correlation constituted a whole theory of meaning and power of the words. (Kapoor, *ibid.*, p.155).

Living Language

Panini marks the watershed period in the evolution of India's intellectual tradition in the field of grammar and linguistics. Before Panini, study of language was primarily descriptive, concerned with an empirical analysis of language usage and language structure. It culminated in Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*, subtitled *Sabdanusnam in Patanjali's Mahabhasya*, translated as discipline or system of words, which was composed around 5th century B.C. It is an explicit, rule based, comprehensive description of both the spoken language and the compositional language. (Kapoor, 2010, p.10).

Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* represents perhaps the first attempt in the history of the world to describe and analyze the components of a language on scientific lines. It has not only been universally acclaimed as the first and foremost specimen of descriptive grammar but has also been the chief source of inspiration for the linguists engaged in describing languages of different regions. "A very remarkable work it is, providing a model for recent and contemporary work in descriptive linguistics that can stand with the best efforts of modern analysts". (Coward, 1990, p. 15). After Panini, there was development of grammatical thought in India into areas beyond description, from theory of grammar in Patanjali's *Mahabhasya*, to the use of language and communication in performing arts in Bharat Muni's *Natyashastra*, to the philosophy of grammar and of language in relation to thought and reality in Bhartrihari's *Vakyapadiya*,.

Panini undertook an exhaustive investigation of the spoken and the living languages of his times. He applied the inductive method in finding, collecting and classifying his materials for developing his grammatical system. As an untiring and trustworthy witness of linguistic data, he reached out so far and wide that almost every kind of word in use during his time was brought in for analysis. He had sharp insight into the true meaning of words in all their aspects and bearings as they were being used in different localities, Vedic schools, families, trades and social classes of his times. The *Gana-*

Patha, as an accessory treatise to the *Ashtadhyayi*, introduced a comprehensive principle of classification by which a large mass of linguistic data was reduced to order, system and simplicity. By this method Panini was able to integrate comprehensive social, economic, political, cultural and geographical details with grammatical rules.

Panini had explored and taken into consideration vast sources of linguistic material in the country including the dialects, folk lore and local custom, names of places, eastern sports, names of coins, weights and measures etc. Panini's travel across the length and breadth of the region in search of data from the living language and the method of personal interaction to get information was marked by an intensely practical approach in the pursuit of knowledge. It was more than clear from his approach that he looked at language and communication as social processes and not merely as tools of the learned people. (Agrawala, 1953, p.19).

Panini's work was considered by Patanjali as a vast ocean of science. Patanjali also described how Panini's work was based on the materials and sources available in the different schools of learning and it was recognized as a further development of all of them. He pointed out that for Panini to have such an authority among the grammarians his works must have been vastly superior to all the numerous treatises which were in existence before Panini's time. These included works of renowned scholars of Sanskrit like Sakatyana, Gargya, Yaska, Saunaka, Sakalya, Bhardwaja, Apisali, and Audavrji, who had significantly contributed to the study of language during that time.

It is thus evident that Panini's approach was accommodative and integrative, and he was able to acknowledge and appreciate the views of others in a spirit of recognition and inclusion. He avoided extreme views and positions and preferred a path of synthesis between conflicting theories. For example, it is well known that the question whether a word denotes a whole category (*jati*) or only an individual (*vyakti*) was being debated amongst the grammarians at an early stage. This became a subject of sharp controversy subsequently, but Panini clearly showed in his work that he held both the views, one in one context and the other in another. (PSS Sastri, p.41). Similarly Panini took a practical view in the discussion of time on the exact definition of which subtle and elaborate arguments were often given by his contemporary grammarians. Panini maintained that it was not within the purview of grammarians to lay down rules about particulars of time and tense durations. For such regulations one must depend on usage of the day.

What mattered more to Panini was the total, real social environment in which language developed and worked. The practical and the ideal, the particular and the general, and the transient and the permanent, existed side by side in Panini's analysis as he viewed language as a system of meaningful sound and a practical tool of communication in a community structured as a social organization. The scope of language use was vast, it could be used to communicate and coordinate experiences in the inner and outer worlds. Language mapped by Panini was open and flexible, governed as it was by the context of its usage. "Panini's travel in search of facts from the living language and method of personal discussion and interrogation to elicit information were in the true manner of the Takshasila style, which was marked by a practical bias in the pursuit of academic studies". (Agrawala, 1953, p. 17).

Panini's goal was building up of Sanskrit words from their root forms, affixes, verbal roots and their function in a sentence. The underlying principle of Panini's work was that nouns are derived from verbs. Patanjali had also maintained that a sentence cannot be framed without a verb. He explained *kriya* as transaction or interaction. According to him, the basic linguistic unit is a word – provided it generates a meaning. Following the view of Patanjali, Bhartrhari defined *kriya* as “made up of all actions, whether accomplished or unaccomplished, which are expressed as being accomplished because they have a definite sequence.”

Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*, a commentary on Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*, commences with the statement '*atho sabdanushasanam*': here begins the discipline of words (or, here begin the rules governing the words). The three important subjects that Patanjali deals with are all concerned with words: formation of words; determination of meaning; and, the relation between a word (speech sounds – *sabda*) and its meaning. He also stressed the need to learn grammar and to use correct words; to understand the nature of words whether or not the words have fixed or floating meanings and so on.

The Paninian system was analyzed and developed by both Katyayana and Patanjali. In fact, Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali are known as the “three sages”, *munitrayam*, who gave the rules of discipline of words. “Each took for his study the whole field of living language, and the contribution made by each to the stock of inherited knowledge and ideas is quite considerable.” (Belvalker, 2015, p. 22). All the three sages were of the view that the word, its meaning and their relation could be analyzed and standardized from their usage in the world. When the standard meaning of word is prescribed in *Sastra* and word is used in practice only in such meaning, it supports in upholding the established system of social order. (Subrahmanyam, 2008, p. 3).

Integral Harmony

Bharat Muni's *Natyashastra*, believed to have been composed around 100 BC, reflects a world view and fundamental ideas which drew upon the well articulated discourse in language and communication in Indian intellectual tradition. *Natyashastra* helps us to identify the sources on which it was composed and the state of knowledge of linguistics at the turn of the millennium. Bharat Muni was not only familiar with the Vedas and their status in the Indian tradition, but was well aware of their content, substance and form.

Natyashastra traces both the spoken word and the idea of the word from the Rgveda. The integral unity of the spoken world and the undifferentiated word, and its communication is the foundation of the classic text. It integrates the world of essence, the world of reflection and feeling, with that of structure and grammar. Thus universality and specificity, abstraction and generalization, the structured and flexible are seen as interdependent and interpenetrating levels of communication. Language must communicate at varying levels to different audiences in culture specific and trans-cultural contexts. While being in finite time and place, it must have power to communicate beyond time and place. (Vatsyayan, 2016, p. 89-90).

The presentation of the theatre was compared in the text with the performative act of Vedic *yagna*. The mention of *sattva* or mindfulness, and the importance of musical sounds, during the presentation, are instance of drawing upon the living and vigorous tradition of Vedas at that time. The language of *Natyashastra* shows an understanding of the use of different languages and dialects by different groups of people and throws light on recognition and acceptance of diverse people, languages and dialects. The ethno-linguistic data in *Natyashastra* is an important source for tracing the development of Indian languages from Vedic Sanskrit to classical Sanskrit, Prakrit and the dialects. It treats the subject of language and communication, like Panini, as rules, but each section is detailed in very refined analytical manner. The whole is analyzed into parts and each part is examined in depth with a view to again creating an interconnected and interpenetrated whole.

A whole chapter is devoted in the *Natyashastra* on verbal representation which speaks about the nature of verbal representation as well as rules of grammar. At the outset the importance of words is emphasized as these are considered to be the body of the expression. At the same time gestures and emotions are considered important for clarifying the meaning of words. The smoothness and flow in representation is considered so important that it is even mentioned that “there is no word without rhythm, and no rhythm without a word. Combined with each other they are known to illuminate the representation”. (Ghosh, I, p.359). Elsewhere, the specific qualities of good composition and representation are described in detail and include: focus, simplicity, precision, relevance, cohesion, agreeableness, and smoothness. A representation containing simple words, intelligible to common man, using emotions, and accommodating and integrating people is considered good to be shared with the people. (Gosh, ibid. p.434).

The integral view of communication that emerges from *Natyashastra* is most clearly visible in the theory and practice of *rasa* or taste and *bhava* or attitude which is developed as a psycho-somatic system by establishing coordination between the mental and physical. Here Bharat Muni shows a deep understanding of the integration of mind body and speech. (Ghosh, 2016, II-684-87). This is the foundation of the entire work. There is an intrinsic relationship and coordination of mind, body, and speech. Different combinations emerging from this relationship lead to different states of mind which are manifested in various emotive states. These states of mind of the speaker and the listener are the major determinants of the connectivity in communication. Integral and harmonious communication depends on combination of speech, gestures, and mind. For this one should take special care about the focus of the mind. It cannot be produced in an absent minded man. This is something invisible, but it helps to control emotions and state of mind. An ideal performance depends on coordination of all acts. (ibid., p. 584).

Bharat Muni's assertion that *Natyashastra* is the fifth Veda which will be open to all castes and classes, and would include all levels of time and place, all spheres of knowledge, and all crafts and arts, shows the integrating role of communication in the society. He seeks to integrate not only diverse disciplines, but also bring together all aspects of life- mental, physical, and even metaphysical. All this is sought to be achieved

through the refinement of the senses and sense perception. Although Bharat Muni speaks of the theatre, it lays the foundation of integral communication which is not restricted to any particular area of social interaction.

The integrative and interpenetrative nature of the physical, psychical, individual, social, horizontal and vertical aspects of the supreme reality account for a very distinctive attitude writ large in *Natyashastra* of the interdependence and interconnection of body, speech, and consciousness. *Natyashastra* provides the clear framework for an integral harmony in which equilibrium, balance and harmony of the physical, linguistic, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual levels is considered essential. In composing *Natyashastra*, Bharata Muni had “fully internalized the discourse on the senses and sense perceptions as articulated in Upanisads”. (Vatsyayan, 2016, pp.54-55). It provides the most refined statement of a world-view which was conscious of the process of gradual refinement from one level of sense perception to the other and the need for restraint and discipline in reaching the highest level of consciousness. (ibid.).

Unified Vision

It is interesting to note that initially the ancient grammarians did not devote as much attention to sentence and its structure as they did to the word. The noted grammarians like Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali were mainly concerned with the derivation of the correct form of words. Yaska and other etymologists were also primarily occupied with word-meanings. Even the *Nyaya-sutras* of Vatsayana emphasize the nature of individual words.

Subsequently, long debates were held on the question: ‘what is the basic unit of the language that gives forth a meaning? Is it the word (*shabda*) or the sentence (*vakya*)?’ Though the discussions took several positions, it was ultimately concluded that the letters constitute a word; and, the words come together to form a sentence. It was pointed out that just as a word has no separate entity without its constituent letters; similarly, a sentence has no separate entity without words that give it a structure. It was also said that though the words are parts of a sentence, the meaning of the sentence does not independently arise out of them. Meaning is the function of the sentence as a whole. It is the emergent property of a systematically constructed sentence. Though the distinction between a sentence and its parts was recognized, it was said to be mainly, for day-to-day purposes (*loka-vyavahara*) and for analytical studies undertaken by the grammarians.

Bhartrihari’s *Vakyapadia* is considered as a milestone of philosophical development of grammar in India. Dissanayake (2003) sees a refreshing relevance of *Vakyapadia* to modern communication studies. He claims that the basic thinking reflected in *Vakyapadia* is in perfect consonance with some of the modern conceptualization in the field of communication. Dissanayake considers four important streams of thought contained in the *Vakyapadia*.

1. The notion of *sphota* which can be understood as *sabdatattva* or the word essence that is disclosed by the word.

2. The contention that there is no cognition in the world in which the word does not figure, and all knowledge is intertwined with language.
3. The emphasis on the total sentence as the unit of meaning as opposed to most other of his contemporary scholars stress on the need to recognize the word as the unit of meaning.
4. That contextualization of speech facilitates the circumscribing of the field of discourse, thereby eliminating ambiguities of meaning.

The central idea that emerges from a study of *Vakyapadiya* is that the ultimate reality is of the nature of the *sabdatattva* or *sphota*, (Iyer, 1992, p.402). All of us are born with the essence of speech within us, which is also a source of knowledge. Proper understanding and use of language is a discipline by following which man can be successful in his endeavors and attain liberation. Bhartrihari deserves the credit for putting together, for the first time, in a somewhat logical sequence all those general and particular notions which form the basis of the forms of Sanskrit language (ibid.).

Bhartrihari connected the general notions of the words and their meaning with their wider and deeper metaphysical context. He claimed that his metaphysical understanding was derived from Vedic tradition, and it is also true that his writings were influenced by the works of all the major grammarians who preceded him. His writings are linked with those of his predecessors and he was continuing the intellectual tradition established by Panini, Katyayana, and Patanjali.

Bhartrihari regarded the sentence as a single 'integral symbol'; an indivisible unit of communication. The meaning of an integral sentence could be grasped by an instantaneous flash of understanding *Pratibha* or perception through insight or intuition. The complete and true meaning of a sentence can be achieved only by means of such 'intuitive perception' and not through a dissection and analysis of the words and letters. Just as a letter or a syllable has no parts, so also the sentence is to be taken as complete integral unit and not as a collection of smaller elements.

According to Bhartrihari, the gross sound pattern, *Dhvani* or *Nada*, is a sequence of sounds. Those sounds are employed to convey or to give an audible form to the intent of the speaker. Those audible sounds through their divisions and time sequence, produced one after another by the speech organs, act as means or as vehicles to transport the intent of the speaker. Such quanta of sound-sequences might create an impression as though they were independent; and, the meaning intended to be conveyed by them comprised several parts. But, in truth, the individual words have no disintegrated existence; and, both the sentence and its meaning are integrated. A word form conveys a cluster of meanings and one must distinguish between possible and intended meaning, and usual and contextual meaning. The factors that determine the meaning to be assigned to a linguistic form in a particular sentence include among others: the sentence; general context; spatial context; temporal context; probability; and accent.

Another pertinent observation made by Bhartrihari in this respect is that a linguistic form does not illuminate its objective unless it is consciously used for that purpose. So language expresses its meaning only if it is intentionally and knowingly used for that

objective. Language needs to differentiate and discriminate and be precise and specific, so that its meaning may be clearly understood. To give an example, mere repetition and cramming of Vedic linguistic elements is meaningless, and the same Vedic expressions can be better explained and understood depending upon the intention of the speaker. (Coward, 1990, p. 150). This observation has been vindicated by recent researches which have shown that more than 90 percent of the impression that a speaker has little to do with the words and more to do with integrity and credibility of the speaker. (Maxwell, 2010, p.49).

In a similar way, Bhartrihari makes it clear that established system of right conduct and social order cannot be refuted by clever arguments or reasoning based on expedience. If this were to be accepted, than the same argument or reasoning can be refuted by an even more clever argument. This shows the limitations of the use of bare words or hollow words. In another text on the technique of debate, in *Khandankhandakhadya* by Sriharsa, it is suggested that skills for refuting any argument or reasoning can be imparted to any novice. (Tripathi, 2016, p. 237). It is for this reason that Bhartrihari had to say that social order is not established by reasoning dissociated from the established system, even a conclusion arrived at after great consideration by clever logicians can be rejected by others who are more trustworthy. (Pillai, 1971, p.6-8).

Conclusion

The ever flowing stream of India's linguistic tradition does not allow one to come to a conclusion. At best one can hint at confluence of several streams of ideas that converge to enrich the tradition of linguistic thinking in India and make it relevant in the present times. The first and foremost principle that emerges from Indian linguistic tradition is that while language may emanate from within, it is a social and in a sense cosmic phenomenon. Communication cannot take place in isolation from the social and physical reality. Effective communication is always multidimensional and always involves interaction. Language has always to take into account its effect on the people. It needs to be adapted if it is recognized that it is not being understood, or is being misunderstood. The test of virtue in language lies in practice. The choice of words must depend on how the public relates to the them; and on changes in the social and cultural context in which the communication takes place; as facts become outdated or as new developments require attention, language must conform. Adapting to change is not a sign of weakness of language, inclusion makes the language stronger, not exclusion. It has always to be a living language to be meaningful.

The second principle is that words matter. Words are shaped by worldviews and they in turn shape worldview. Words provoke action and reaction, which in turn provoke more words. Getting the words right is critically important. Words are carriers of meanings well beyond the literal. Words trigger frames and images that may lead to several meanings. As has been expressed clearly in the Rg Veda, the real significance of speech is that it creates or fashions out the manifold names and forms, *namarupa*, from the waters of the infinite ocean of the ultimate reality. Metaphors (*rupaka*), which stand for something much broader than the literal meaning, are particularly powerful carriers of content, of emotional resonance, as made abundantly clear in *Natyashastra*. When the

accepted meaning of word is prescribed in the texts and word is used with such meaning, it supports in upholding the social system as it is itself a social system (Radhakrishnan, 2007, p. 167).

Finally, and most importantly, the importance and role of intention is most vital in the process of communication. All the knowledge and consciousness of the ultimate reality and the identity of speech with the ultimate reality is of little use if the human being does not consciously put into practice this knowledge of correct usage. The entire focus in India's linguistic tradition is on restraint and discipline of words in accordance with prescribed norms derived from practice to achieve meaningful and harmonious communication in the society. The metaphysical and the spiritual is not the conclusive end of the intellectual quest of the Indian grammarians. The purpose of all the reasoning and discussions is to refuse to take the popular as the final word and go beyond the apparent to higher levels of refinement of language. The world has to be regained by the use of integral communication, because both the word and the world have their source in the ultimate reality. It's the man who can make the word and the world in the image of the supreme reality.

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