

# Concepts of East & West - Similarities & Dissimilarities.

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**Abstract-**India has been a centre of linguistic activity and hence in the East, the evolution of linguistic analysis was not the same as in the West. Both the two, East and West have grown and developed independently of each other. They have different orientations of their own. They pose different questions propound different theories. There are many concepts in Indian philosophy of language which are unknown to Western analysts like the concepts of sphota, apoha, anvitābhidhāna, avacchedakata etc. These concepts do not fall within the field of modern analysis and have no exact synonyms in English. These concepts cannot be made easily accessible to the English readers because they have lack of knowledge in this field.

**Index Terms-** Epistemology, Sphota, Apoha, Syntactico- Semantical relation.

## Introduction

Together with the development of the science of Linguistics; Logic and Epistemology not only the Eastern philosophers but also Western Philosophers like Urban, Ayer, Russell, Cassirer and Wittgenstein; Linguists like De Saussure, Ogden and Ullmann; Rhetoricians like Richards and Empson; other Psychologists and Anthropologists came to have face various problems in connection with sentence and its meaning. Among these the following are the main problems - ie the function of words in conveying the meanings, the meaning of meaning, the syntactico semantical relation between the individual word meanings, the nature of the total sentence meaning and its constituent parts etc.

## Language- View point of Eastern.

In the East, the 'language' as a concept is as old as Indian culture itself; but in Western thought, the concept of language and meaning was not discussed at all prior to the twentieth century 'linguistic turn'.

Through his theory of Ideas, Plato made significant contribution to the analysis of meaning. J.F. Staal, while writing on 'Sanskrit philosophy of Language' very aptly observes that "at times almost excessive preoccupation with language on the one hand and with philosophy on the other, may indeed be regarded as a characteristic of Indian civilization."<sup>1</sup>

In the view of the Philosophers in the East and West, 'language' is an important concept for philosophical speculation. Bhartṛhari, the author of Vakyapadiya would have liked to define man as a 'languageing' animal."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly Aristotle defined man as a 'Social' animal. Because man cannot live without a society; and hence society is no society without the bond of linguistic communication. Therefore language is the anchor - sheet of man's individual and social existence.

## Divinity of language (Sabda or word).

Many examples<sup>3</sup> represent extreme importance of language given by Indian Grammarians and Philosophers. Over and above it, the scholars from West are of a piece with the orientalist, regarding the divinity of language (word).

Coward quotes the opening verse from St. John's Gospel Biblical saying 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God<sup>4</sup>. K.K. Raja pointed out that to explain the manifold aspects of language behaviour, Sanskrit Grammarians and the Rhetoricians devoted much thought to the problem of linguistic philosophy and general linguistics and evolved different theories

But the writers in the West, while recognizing the importance of Panini's method in the formal analysis of Sanskrit language into a system of roots, stems and suffixes and acknowledging their indebtedness to Panini in the matter of formal analysis have not yet paid enough attention to the Indian theories about the various aspects of meaning.

## Word and Meaning.

All the Indian Grammarians, Philosophers and Naiyayikas accept the direct relationship between word and its meaning. The same idea is accepted by Western Linguists that there is a direct relationship between significant and signified.

Regarding the representation of this relationship Ogden and Richards have shown it through a semiotic triangle<sup>5</sup> which is as follows. Thought or reference Symbolizes a causal relation refers to other causal relation. Symbol Stands for an Referent imputed relation

Ullmann, in about 1950, made an inventory of this evolution in an excellent synthesis and centered on the triangle of name concept thing,<sup>6</sup> - "Sense – Name - Thing. According to the Ullmann's view, the problem of meaning will be as follows: Suppose a person 'x' wants to know the meaning of 'gauh (cow) then the process will be:

Concept (Mental Object) (Sense- or the picture of an animal having Sāsna etc.) Symbolizes Refers to NAME gauh (Acoustic Image) Conventional Relation OBJECT OR THING Sasnadimānpadarthaḥ (Reality) (In all the three triangles, dotted line shows the conventional relation) The indication of hands show that there is nothing before or after or in other words there is no specific order. Word, Sense and Object are interlinked by a very close relationship.

According to the Indian grammarians, the former is the 'prakṛta - dhvani' and the latter is the Vaikyta - divani'. The Mimamsakas call the former a pattern of the permanent 'Varnas' and the latter is called 'dhvani. The Naiyayikas consider the former as a 'class (jati) of which the latter is an instance. Thus, the speech situation can be represented as a rectangle rather than the usual triangle. The physical permanent A word or the word-class sphota revealed by prakṛta-dhvani Word-Sound, physical, C phonic word, Vaikṛta-dhvani B Meaning, thought mental content object-class D Thing meant referent external object In this diagram, Direct relation is only between A and B. Relations between C and D. C and B. A and D- these are all indirect and imputed. Here we can see that line shows the direct relation and... line shows the indirect relation

In the above diagram, the upper portion give De Saussure's analysis, and the portion ABD refers to the Ogden - Richards triangle. Thus in the opinion of Ogden and Richards, as soon as the word (symbol) is uttered, the mental form of the thing meant, which they call thought or reference. is perceived and not the thing meant (referent) itself. Therefore, the direct relation is between the word and the mental form (thought or reference)

and not between the word and the referent. With the help of the above mentioned rectangle, Dr. K. Kunjuni Rāja has made clear that De Saussure and the ancient Indian Scholars also held the same view.

### Meaning of Meaning.

Indian Aestheticians hold that words have three meanings:- namely, Abhidha (the primary meaning) Laksana (the secondary meaning) Vyañjana (the tertiary meaning) Abhinavagupta and Mammata are of the opinion that the greatness of poetry varies directly in proportion to the quantum of suggestiveness found in it.

In the West, the chief distinction established is between the denotative and the connotative powers of words. In their opinion, the dictionary meaning is not enough to interpret great works of literature or to write really well. The poet has to make up for deficiencies of language by violating the lexical meaning of words, by exploiting their connotative powers in addition to their denotative ones. Empson calls it 'ambiguity, Cleanth Brooks Paradox' and Abercrombie 'Value'<sup>7</sup>.

The Indian Aestheticians have made a deeper, subtler and more thorough analysis of the relationship between words and their meanings, than the Western Aestheticians. The latter are aware of the problem and have used practically all kinds of Laksana; but their discussion is not exhaustive. Similarly concept of Vyañjanā as adumbrated by Anandavardhana has been richly explored by theoreticians and practising poets in the West; where as the concepts of Abhidha and Laksana have been more fully explored in India not only by Aestheticians but by Logicians as well. LA. Richards in his practical criticism' says that there are four kinds of meaning and each of them contribute to the Total meaning. One of them is 'sense - which is equivalent to Abhidha (the primary meaning).

The categories of meaning enunciated by LA. Richards namely - sense, feeling, tone and intention may not be equivalent to the categories evolved by Indian aestheticians; but the move seems to be in the right direction. Intention, as a category set up by Richards, has relevance in the context of Laksana as defined by Indian Aestheticians. But Richard's concept of intention is wide enough to cover even suggestiveness .

According to Indian aestheticians, a metaphor corresponds to the concept of gauni laksana. Aristotle uses the term in a wider sense so as to include all kinds of Lakyana, not merely those which are based on identity. Aristotle, like Indian aestheticians, thinks of the extension of meaning as the first condition under which Laksana operates. According to him, the second meaning must draw its sustenance from the primary meaning. If they are not connected, they will cease to be effective and almost certainly appear meaning less.

### Expression of meaning.

Many European and American scholars like Bloomfield, Malinowsky, Sinclair etc, recognise the importance of context in understanding the meaning of a word. E.D. Seliniourt confirms this view in his Oxford Lectures on Poetry, says "words are intellectual symbols, and they are indeed nothing else, so long as they are imprisoned in the dictionary, but as soon as they escape into a living sentence they gain individuality from the speaker's voice and the expression upon his face, and catch subtle shades of meaning, which no dictionary can define, a meaning not purely intellectual, and capable of infinite variation according to the genius of him that uses them. We say that such language suggests more than it expresses."<sup>8</sup> From all of these we can see that there are certain similarities and dissimilarities among the concepts of East and West.

### Notes and References:

1. B.K Matilal, The word and the World , P.5
2. Bhartrhari, Vakyapadiya – 1.127
3. i) Uta tvah pasyan na dadarśa vācam Uta tvah śrīvan na śrīnotyenām | Uto tvasmai tanvam visasrejayeva patyā usati suvasāḥ || Rg. 10.71.4
- ii) Vāg vā va nāmno bhūyasi vāg vā rgvedam vijñāpayati - Chan. Up. 7.2.1.
4. Coward, Harold. G. The sphota theory of language, Op.cit. p.1.
5. Ogden and Richards; The meaning of meaning: p.11.
6. Ullmann.S.; The Principle of Semantics; p.69.
7. Prof. Anraj Chaudhary, Comparative aesthetics :- East and West : p.No: 109.
8. Oxford Lectures on poetry, p.5.