



# CONCEPT OF WORD MEANING DIFFERENT SPECULATIONS

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## Abstract.

Padasya arthaḥ padārthah'. The term 'padārtha' stands for the meaning of a word and it is a compound word consists of two elements:- pada and artha. Padārtha might have been first discussed in grammatical treatises. When we compare a sentence to our body, in which words are different parts of that body and the soul - its meaning only.

**Key Words-Word, Meaning, Yāska, Vedas, Upanishads, Abhideya, Prameya.**

## Introduction

It is place, time and context which determine the meaning of a word. A slight phonetic change can not only change the meaning of it but also impart an opposite meaning to it. From this we can see that only meaningful words are inevitable for communication; and in this process both the speaker and listener take part. By the term 'meaning' the response created in the listener's mind when the speaker utters a word is implied.

Both in Vedic and Classic literature- the use of word is for knowing the meaning "Real knowledge is clarity of meaning". Without the full exposition of meaning, knowledge cannot be attained. Even a long time study of vedas is useless unless the meaning is properly understood. This view has been expressed by Yāska in his Nirukta. This means that the chanting of Vedas without knowing the meaning is simply bubbling. Similarly words, uttered without knowing meaning is akin to a hearth filled with dry wood having no access to fire. He who has "learned" Vedas without knowing meaning is just like a pillar carrying a useless burden. On the contrary, the one who has mastered the meaning will wash away all his sins and will attain the heaven of bliss.

Person to person relation is dependent on the exchange of meaningful word. This meaningful word helps the survival of the world. Man's relation, not only with man but with the entire universe is based on meaningful word. Such an ocean of word is limitless; otherside of it, i.e. meaning also is infinite.

In the opinion of Ogden and Richards<sup>1</sup>, meaning is the central problem of language because the sole purpose of a sentence is to convey a complete idea towards something to the hearer and that idea is the meaning only, which previously exists in the mind of the speaker and by utterance, that image take place in the mind of the hearer. Clearly speaking, the place of meaning in a sentence is same, as the place of thread in a garland. Because a thread combine all the flowers in it, same is the case with meaning because where there may be the set of words like 'gauh as' vaḥ brāhmanāḥ hasti etc.; yet they do not convey any meaning and therefore cannot be the sentence. If 'S' denotes the speaker and 'H' the hearer. Between 'S' and 'H' meaning plays an important role. In this process utterance 'U' sentence's' and language L' also take part.

In our earliest record Vedas, we can see the importance of meaning. After this, Upanisads also expounded the importance of meaning. From the time of Yāska, the study of language began in India. Later on, the various schools of Philosophy and Grammar have paid much attention to the study of linguistics and the problem of meaning has been taken into account.

The term padārtha is also used as synonyms with abhidheya, prameya, jñeya etc. In Sanskrit, the word artha' is used for meaning and Macdonell translated the term 'artha' as the sense of the word.<sup>2</sup>

The term pada' is defined by the Grammarians as that which contains as its and either an inflectional (sup) or a conjugational (tip) suffix. The term 'artha connotes 'meaning'. Thus the word pada, together with artha, constitutes padārtha. It literally means a nameable or denotable thing or a thing which corresponds to a word. To Udayana, a padārtha is that which is denotable by a word. According to Annambhatta, it as the object which is characterised by name ability. Knowability is the definition of padārtha, given by viśwanātha. He further says that abhidheyatva and prameyatva are the other terms acceptable for the definition of padārtha. According to Gautama, a padārtha means indivisibility, form and genus. For instance, in the usage ghaṭamānaya' (bring a jar), the term ghaṭa means the object which is distinguished by the individuality of the jar, its shape and genus.

Puṅyarāja, a commentator of Vaākyapadīya discussed the meaning in detail and gave eighteen definitions of meaning<sup>3</sup>. By giving the sixteen definitions of meaning, Ogden and Richards defined it.

It can be shown as<sup>4</sup>-

- 1) An intrinsic property
- 2) A unique analyzable relation to other things
- 3) The other words annexed to a word in the Dictionary
- 4) The connotation of a word
- 5) An essence
- 6) An activity projected into an object
- 7) i) An event intended and  
ii) A volition
- 8 The place of anything in a system
- 9) The practical consequenceness of a thing in our future experience
- 10) The theoretical consequences involved in or simplified by a statement.
- 11) Emotion aroused by anything
- 12) That which is actually related to a sign by a chosen relation
- 13) i) The Mnemic effects of a stimulus Associations acquired  
ii) Some other occurrence to which the Mnemic effects of any occurrence are Appropriate  
iii) That which a sign is interpreted as being of  
iv) What anything suggests In case of symbols  
That to which the User of a symbol actually refers.
- 14) That to which the user of a symbol ought to be referring
- 15) That to which the user of a symbol believes himself to be referring
- 16) That to which the interpreter of a symbol
  - i) Refers
  - ii) Believes himself to be referring
  - iii) Believes the user to be referring

According to Siddheshwara Varma, meaning has been defined in terms of a relation in the philosophy of language<sup>5</sup>. In the view of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, the particular relations between the word and the object is known as meaning<sup>6</sup>. This relation is the power which exists in the object<sup>7</sup>. Buddhists defined meaning in terms of negation. Prof. R.C. Pandey considered the meaning as product of convention. It is a relation from word to an object, ie. the power of word, it is from a definite word to a definite thing or referend<sup>8</sup>. The power of word is called vṛti.

In the view of Naiyāyikas, power which is concentrated in words denotes the meanings of those words." This power is stated as the wish or desire of God that a certain word would denote a certain fixed meaning". The power is eternally associated with a word to its usually direct meaning". Thus, the meaning of words depends upon the permanent and eternal will of

God. According to the Navya Naiyāyikas, not only the will of God determines the meaning of word, but also the will of an ordinary person also.

Meaning can be classified as either word meaning (padārtha) or sentence- meaning (vākyārtha). The main difference between these two are padārtha stands isolated i.e. unrelated with respect to other items and hence does not convey a complete idea: while vākyārtha, is related to other items and hence conveys a syntactical relation and also a complete idea.

## Conclusion

From all these we can conclude that the essential nature of a word lies in its meaning. A word is that which has a fixed relation to some object, so as to recall it whenever it is heard or read; ie it means an object. In the opinion of Mīmāṃsakas, word has natural capacity to express the meaning it does: but according to Naiyāyikas, a word comes to have a meaning, which has been assigned to it by convention.

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