

Mouthing the Heart: Language Stratification in Indian Philosophy

Rohana Seneviratne*

Department of Classical Languages, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding Author

Rohana Seneviratne

Abstract: The Indian philosophy of language consists of an assortment of topics among which how human speech descends from our thoughts to the vocal cords remains significant with a longer history. Vedic insights into the journey of speech clearly impacted later philosophies to bolster their foundations to construct stronger arguments but Bhartṛhari (fl. 500 - 700 CE), in his grammatical chef-d'oeuvre entitled the *Vākyapadīya*, brought to light a philosophically justifiable way in which the language is stratified in terms of its origin and course. This study succinctly explores how Bhartṛhari presents the language stratification and some views of his contemporaries on it, while comparing his thoughts, where applicable, with relevant positions of recent philosophers and linguists beyond Indian soil.

Keywords: Indian philosophy of language, language stratification, articulation, Bhartṛhari, *Vākyapadīya*

INTRODUCTION

The *Vākyapadīya* (VP) explicates [1] three major strata of the language, i.e. *vaikharī*, *madhyamā*, and *paśyantī*, the last of which is the most supreme and the ultimate Reality (*Śabdabrahman / Śabdātattva*) attainable through the language [2]. Bhartṛhari develops his interpretation of the language stratification obviously on a linguistic foundation rather than on any purely metaphysical plane. By doing so, he casts analytical light on the composition of the natural language about which the mainstream Sanskrit grammarians preceding him were hardly concerned or failed to investigate in sufficient depth [3]. A succinct account of the three strata can be provided as follows [4].

Vaikharī: The Gross Stratum

According to the Indian philosophy of grammar, each language stratum embodies a different kind of perception and transmits a different reality. As the most external stratum of the language revealing the power of action (*kriyāśakti*), the *vaikharī* [5] is the language form that we all articulate and hear in communication. Put differently, it is the physical form of the language that others may grasp when one speaks [6]. The *vaikharī* differs from one speaker to another and consequently encompasses all idiosyncrasies of articulation such as lispings, stuttering, stammering, over-nasalized speech and so on [7]. Further, it houses the physical speech sounds to introduce which Bhartṛhari employs the terms *śruti* (what is heard < *śrū-*), *nāda* (< *ñad-*) [8], and *dhvani* (< *vdhvan-*) in addition to *śabda* (< *śabd-*). It is notable that even before Bhartṛhari, Patañjali who comments on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini explicitly states that the *dhvani* is the sounds capable of bringing out the meaning that the speaker wants the listener to understand [9]. That the *dhvani* belongs to the *vaikharī* stratum has also been asserted in the Kaiyaṭa's [10] and Nāgeśa's [11] commentaries to the *Mahābhāṣya*. The audible sounds are not limited only to those produced by humans but include other types of physical sound graspable with auditory organs such as those by animals, musical instruments, and natural phenomena. However, since grammarians are more interested in analyzing human speech and how the linguistic forms get their meanings, the *vaikharī* is deemed to mean the sounds produced in the process of human articulation efforts [12]. Depending on the discernibleness while being pronounced, the speech sounds are categorized into two classes, *sādhuśabda* (the clear or unambiguous) and *apaśabda / apabhraṃśa* [13] (the unclear or ambiguous) [14].

Like the air is not revealed until done by a fan but its existence around us is not denied by our ignorance of it, the *sphoṭa* remains undisclosed and unnoticed until the *dhvani* reveals it [15]. The *dhvani* is again divided into two subcategories in terms of their function; *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta* [16]. The *prākṛta* sounds are marked by temporal sequence and capable of grasping the different permutations of the same expression due to vowel elongation and the factors of that ilk which change the length of articulation. Even if, for example, the statement 'the cat sat on the mat' is pronounced in different patterns while diversely elongating the vowels each time, the *prākṛta dhvani-s* grasp all the permutations indifferently without considering them as 'pronunciation distortions'. On the contrary, the *vaikṛta dhvani-s* capture the personal peculiarities of speech. A couple of examples will help here. Though a child, an adult or one with speaking difficulties all from a given speech community makes a certain expression its general form is preserved irrespective of the idiosyncratic variables. Furthermore, observe the lemmas or sound-clots in English known as 'to-contractives' which are written like 'hasta', 'useta' 'wanna', 'supposta' or 'gotta' [17]. Even though spoken by numerous people with

variations in intonation, pitch or volume, what these to-contractions stand for may stay unaffected. All the speakers uttering those words and the listeners to them are well aware of that the ‘typical’ forms thereof are ‘has to’, ‘use/ used to’ etc. though they may not intentionally concentrate on them when speaking or listening. The *prākṛta dhvani-s* identify these ‘regularities’ or the underlying phonological structure of speech whereas the *vaikṛta dhvani-s* deal with the surface layer of speech with all idiosyncratic variations. Unless analyzed, the *prākṛta dhvani-s* cannot be distinguished when articulation occurs. Moreover, unlike the *vaikṛta dhvani-s*, the *prākṛta dhvani-s* of the language rest in anyone with a healthy mind in spite of whether or not he has learnt how to analyze the language, i.e. grammar. This ascertains that even those who have never had any systematic learning of the normative grammar do not speak ‘nonsense’ but the ‘naturally corrected’ language as skillfully as those who intentionally learn it [18].

Madhyamā: The Intermediate Stratum

The term *madhyamā* stands for the intermediate language stratum ‘verbalized but unspoken’. It is the internal monologue which reveals the power of knowledge (*jñānaśakti*). Because of sitting between the *paśyantī* the subtlest and the *vaikharī* the gross [19], it surpasses the breath which causes the articulation of the sounds but rests in the intellect. The function of the *madhyamā* is measuring, evaluating, questioning and harnessing the rational and emotional mind so as to formulate the intentions that transform into words. Having been looked at from a linguistic point of view, the *madhyamā* might be renamed as the ‘overall phonological layer’ of the language which ignores the idiosyncratic properties of articulation. Any expression before being uttered using the organs of articulation (*karana*) remains in the form of the *madhyamā* which is subject not to the ears but to the mind [20]. As regards the sequence of sounds, it is the *madhyamā* that grasps them because the auditory sense organ which associates with the *vaikharī* stratum is incapable of doing so. It is attestable in linguistics too that the sequence of pronunciation is harnessed not by the ear but by the mind since, even though those physical sounds become extinguished as soon as they are produced, the mind holds them in their order of production. Furthermore, the *madhyamā* could also rearrange those sequences of the sounds in order for them to become expressive of the appropriate meaning. It is therefore obvious that the *madhyamā* represents the capability of the human mind to rectify the incorrectly arranged syllables of a word and the words in a sentence whose ‘accurate’ (in the sense ‘conventionally standard’) forms are already known to us.

How do the *prākṛta dhvani-s* then correspond to the *madhyamā* stratum? When speaking, the *prākṛta dhvani-s* in the *madhyamā* undergo a set of transformations (*āvṛtti*) whose result is the *vaikṛta dhvani-s* so that the speaker can communicate verbally with others. Similarly, when comprehension happens, the *madhyamā* transforms what is grasped as the *vaikṛta dhvani-s* at the *vaikharī* stratum into a set of mental impressions (*saṃskāra*) in order to let the *sphoṭa* reveal itself. Upon the completion of this transformation (*āvṛttipāka*) is manifested the meaning of what is heard. Bhartṛhari’s explanation of this process is illustrated in detail with the help of the role of *pratibhā* [21]. The transformation of what we hear into what we understand is a continuum analogical to the process of milk becoming curd the steps of which are innumerable and indistinguishable from each other [22].

Paśyantī: The Subtlest Stratum

The innermost stratum of the language revealing the power of desire (*icchāśakti*) is the *paśyantī*, which is described as the subtlest and completely void of differentiations or idiosyncrasies of speech. Often emphasized is that the *paśyantī* where the speaker’s intention (*tātparyā*) rests in accommodates no sequence but is capable of producing one. Since this stratum lies beyond the level of differentiated cognition, and it is impossible to define its nature in words. Further, the *paśyantī* remains at the level of direct intuition and requires to be understood through experience (*anubhūti*) [23]. As mentioned above, the supreme stratum *parā* is not included in Bhartṛhari’s explanation but a recent grammarian-philosopher Nāgeśabhaṭṭa attempts to distinguish between the *parā* and the *paśyantī* in terms of their capacity to be grasped [24]. His argument is that it is the *paśyantī* that becomes subject to the mind but not *parā* which is the pure intention unadulterated by any personal preference. However, the *sphoṭa* is considered to sit in the *paśyantī*, or as some philosophers argue, in between the *madhyamā* and the *paśyantī* [25].

Being completely devoid of all impurities/ ambiguities [26] (*anapabhraṃśa*), the *paśyantī* possesses all the qualities to stay identical with the *Brahman*. For instance, it is not manifold (*asaṃkīrṇa*) but embraces everything and lies ‘beyond the practice of human speech’ (*lokavyavahārātīta*) [27]. Nevertheless, the *paśyantī* is sought by everybody in the world desirous of communicating with others because the mode of worldly communication does not change in keeping with the development of the intellect [28]. As implied by the designation, the *paśyantī* ‘observes’ the whole universe evolve and, due to having inherent powers (*śakti*), could manifest itself at its gross form, the *vaikharī*, through the *madhyamā* [29]. This tenet of Bhartṛhari has guided him to postulate that *vyākaraṇa* or the naturally correct way of language use remains, however unreal, manifold and impure it is, the only direct path (*añjasa-mārga*) towards and the holiest illumination (*puṇyatama-jyoti*) in comprehending the *Śabdabrahman* and thereby to emancipate ourselves [30]. There is no other way to achieve that supreme goal.

Viewed from the perspective of the ultimate Reality which is undivided and unitary, the *paśyantī* is the language stratum from which the ultimate Reality evolves into dividedness and plurality. Put differently, there is no dichotomy between the *Śabda* (ultimate Reality) and the *artha* (worldly manifestations of the ultimate Reality) [31] in the *paśyantī* but differentiation starts happening when the *paśyantī* evolves into the *vaikharī* stratum. It is during this process that our 'world' is created because we start 'naming' the 'things'. When the evolution of the universe happens from the *paśyantī* to the *vaikharī*, the *Śabda* and the *artha* become separately discernible. At the stage of the *vaikharī*, the linguistic forms are the signifiers of the signified. Accordingly, Bhartṛhari holds that this signifier-signified dichotomy seen only in the gross stratum is how the ultimate Reality 'appears' to be [32]. This appearance, according to the *Akhaṇḍapākṣa* philosophers, is due to our nescience (*avidyā*). While commenting on the very first *kārikā* of the *Brahmakāṇḍa*, Bhartṛhari quotes from an unknown source to illustrate that the ultimate Reality, i.e. the *Śabdabrahman* which never perishes (*amṛta*) and is undifferentiated (*nirvikāra*) becomes polluted (*kalūṣa*) and differentiated (*bhedarūpa*) by reason of nescience [33]. The grammar is thus associated with nescience for it makes us think that the *Śabda* is manifold and differentiated in reality whereas *āgama* [34] (tradition/ convention) helps us distinguish the proper use of the language and thereby to liberate ourselves from the cycle of existence. In that regards, as mentioned above, even the advanced-minded have no exception but to admit the constant tradition [35]. Further, with the help of the unbroken tradition can be understood the new activities whose results are unknowable beforehand [36]. Discursive reasoning, as Bhartṛhari advocates, does not deserve priority over tradition and nor could it contradict the Vedas [37].

Parā: The Supreme Stratum

This stratum of language is advocated as the highest and the subtlest by the philosophers of Kashmiri Śaivism who reject the *Śabdabrahman*. Somānanda, a Kashmiri Śaiva philosopher [38] was the first to develop this concept in his poignant criticism against Bhartṛhari and his followers on linguistic monism [39]. The Śaivas consequently hold the *paśyantī* to be devoid of all the qualities of the ultimate Reality since that stratum lacks the qualities of *Śiva*, the Reality which they have faith in [40]. Further, it was they who coined the word '*parā*' (supreme/ utmost) to specify that stratum as sitting beyond the *paśyantī*. The *parā-vāc* is then the supreme, subtlest form of speech. Hence, a Śaiva devotee should seek the *parā-vāc* which is identical with the *avatantra* or *vimarśa* (self-awareness) for liberation [41].

The Śaiva philosophers reject Bhartṛhari's tenet on the ground that the ultimate Reality, the subtlest form of the language as Bhartṛhari claims, cannot be achieved by means of the analyzed form of the language, i.e. the grammar. It is because if it is the case then the goal and the means to achieve it would be the same. In other words, the grammarians who believe in *mokṣa* through the grammar fail to transcend the language for they unrewardingly attempt to obtain a result indifferent from the means of the endeavor [42]. The Śaivas, therefore, advocate the *Śabdaśiva* in such a way Bhartṛhari establishes the *Śabdabrahman* but the difference between these two goals is that the former is considered by the Kashmiri Śaivism to be higher, purer and subtler than the latter. The qualities of the *Śabdaśiva* are *icchāśakti* (power of will), *jñānaśakti* (power of knowledge) and *kriyāśakti* (power of action) in their subtle forms [43]. Since these qualities do not rest together in the *Paśyantī*, the existence of a superior stratum is tenable, which is the *Parā* [44].

As already discussed, Bhartṛhari and the philosophers on the *Sphoṭavāda* do not recognize any higher and subtler stratum beyond the *Paśyantī*. Some [45] cast doubts on the mention of *parā-vāc* by Bhartṛhari's commentators in recent history since they may have had some influence from the Kashmiri Śaivism flourished several centuries later than Bhartṛhari's philosophy. The accurate explication of the distinction between the *paśyantī* and the *parā* strata is still debated among philosophers. While some do not accept the possibility of the *parā* stratum at all and argue for the logicity of the *paśyantī* as the highest and the subtlest level, some others maintain the *parā* stratum to be almost identical with the *Brahman*. Iyer [46], for example, states that the *Brahman* is very near to the *Paśyantī* stratum of speech but is not the latter per se [46] which implies his acceptance of the possibility of a higher stratum than the *paśyantī*.

Critique of Language Stratification and Śabdabrahman

Among the critics of the Bhartṛhari's philosophy, the Naiyāyikas who are atomists and thereby also pluralists particularly criticize the language stratification on various grounds. Their position is thus by no means identical with the linguistic monism of Bhartṛhari. Jayantabhaṭṭa in his *Nyāyamañjarī* argues in favour of the *vaikharī* which he considers to be the only possible sphere of the language and strongly rejects the way the *paśyantī* and the *madhyamā* strata are philosophized as categories (*prabheda*) of the language [47]. According to him, the *madhyamā* is of the form of intellect or cognition (*buddhi-ātmā*) and delineates the signifier (*vācaka*) and signified (*vācya*) while the *paśyantī* is not the eternal language form but merely another name (*nāmāntara*) for the non-conceptual or indeterminate cognition. Thus, Jayantabhaṭṭa maintains that the *vaikharī* is the most significant stratum which is known to all and without which our understanding of the language is never possible [48].

Further, as regards the highest goal that an aspirant should seek, the Naiyāyikas do not comply with Bhartṛhari's position. Having quoted from the *Tripuropaniṣad*, Jayantabhaṭṭa questions how two '*Brahmans*', namely the *Śabdabrahman* and the *Parabrahman* could exist because that one who attained the *Śabdabrahman* (linguistic monism)

then proceeds to attain the *Parabrahman* (supreme monism) [49] is ridiculously untenable. Put differently, the single *Brahman* cannot be twofold and cannot be set as two goals. If this is the case, the Naiyāyikas' line of argument is that either of these two must be an 'abundant *Brahman*' (*brahmasubhikṣa*) which is beyond necessity. Then if one *Brahman* is not the 'genuine *Brahman*' which is sought by all, that abundant or fake *Brahman* should not then be designated as the '*Brahman*'. Further, to continue to hold the possibility of accepting both or the identity of them would inevitably invalidate Bhartṛhari's 'monism' [50]. In short, all these attacks from the Naiyāyikas are to annul Bhartṛhari's way of stratifying the language and to postulate the *vaikharī* as the only form of the language [51].

The Mīmāṃsakas, the Bhāṭṭas in particular, are among those who criticize Bhartṛhari for holding the *Brahman* as the eternal language principle or the ultimate Reality. The Mīmāṃsakas' arguments, in general, are subtler than the Naiyāyikas' since the former group addresses the postulation of the *Śabdabrahman* from numerous standpoints with special priority to linguistic theories over theosophical applications. Their major criticism is against Bhartṛhari's position that the *Śabda* and the *artha* are not two separate entities but a single unified whole. As learned from the VP, the *Śabdabrahman* is also what is signified in every circumstance. The Bhāṭṭas oppose this tenet by holding that the *śabda* (linguistic form) itself cannot be both the signifier and the signified but only either of them [52]. Moreover, they argued first that it is impossible for the means (*upāya*) of achieving something to become the result to be attained (*upeya*) itself. There should not be any superimposition of the form (*rūpādhyāsa / rūpādhyāropa*) of the 'means' upon the 'result'. Then it should follow that the *śabda* (means of communication) and the *artha* (result to be attained during communication) are obviously two entities.

Again, the opponents of the *Śabdādvaitavāda* contend that the *Brahman* cannot be considered to be the *śabda* per se because that would contradict the Upaniṣadic philosophy that the *Brahman* is completely devoid of the properties such as sound, contact, form, smell etc [53]. Moreover, the *Brahman* in the form of the *śabda* would be dependent upon the intellect and not self-illuminating (*svayaṃ-prakāṣa*) if we accept that the *śabda* is, at the *madhyamā* stratum as Bhartṛhari explains, grasped by the intellect (*buddhigrāhya*). One may also argue that if the *Brahman* is not so but self-illuminating, then it must follow that the *Brahman*, which Bhartṛhari attempts to postulate, is by no means different from the *Brahman* elaborated in the Upaniṣadic tradition, which is not identical with the *Śabda* [54]. The philosophers like *Vimuktātman* who belonged to the *Vivaraṇa* school of the Advaita Vedānta, though much later than Bhartṛhari, continues to criticize the linguistic monism on the ground that the *Brahman* cannot be degraded to the *śabda* which they understood as something 'outward (*parāc*)' in opposition to something 'inward (*pratyac*)' like the '*Ātman*'.

The fact which becomes very obvious when considering these criticisms is that most critics have maintained the *śabda* almost always in the sense the 'physical sounds uttered and heard' but not in the more emphatic sense the 'substratum' which bears and supports all of our linguistic capacities, the linguisticity. It is true that Bhartṛhari employs the term '*śabda*' in both senses throughout his philosophy but his doing so must not be understood as if he has established an absolute indifference between them. To repeat, unlike in the arguments of the Naiyāyikas, the Mīmāṃsakas, the later Advaitins and such others, by the term *śabda* as in Bhartṛhari's linguistic monism are known not only the empirical sphere of the language to introduce which the terms '*dhvani*' '*nāda*', and '*vaikṛata dhvani*' are employed but also the linguisticity that creates our world. Therefore, Bhartṛhari's *Śabdabrahman* does not contradict the *Brahman* in the Upaniṣads, which is devoid of 'physical sounds' (*aśabda*).

Likewise, there is no dichotomy, as the Bhāṭṭas attempt to establish, between the signifier (*vācaka*) and the signified (*vācya*) since the signifier (*Śabda* in the sense linguisticity) is the world created by the *Śabda* itself. Again, our world thus created is necessarily the signified (*vācya*). Therefore, the signifier is also the signified or the signifier and the signified are respectively the Real face and the unreal face of the same entity, the *Brahman*. The manifoldness or the complexity of the world is nothing else but sheer mental constructions (*vikalpa*), illusory appearances (*vivarta*) [55] or distortions (*vikāra*) [56] of the ultimate Reality, which is unitary plus eternal. Then, Bhartṛhari means by *Śabda* as the signifier the *Brahman* or the all-inclusive substratum of our linguistic capacities but not the physically audible sounds.

CONCLUSION

The *Śabdabrahman* can be compared with the *Brahman* in the Upaniṣadic Vedānta philosophy but the way of interpreting the *Brahman* as the linguisticity in Bhartṛhari's philosophy exclusively distinguishes his *Śabdabrahma* from the *Brahman* upheld by the Vedāntins. Put differently, like the *nāma* (names) and the *rūpa* (forms) in the Advaita Vedāntic thoughts, the *vācya* (signified, i.e. our world) and the *vācaka* (signifier, i.e. physical sounds) in Bhartṛhari's *Śabdādvaitavāda* are 'unreal' but unlike the *nāmarūpa* in the former, the *vācyavācaka* in the latter are explained as 'linguistically constructed'. As Bhattacharya puts it, 'all our cognitions of objects are imbued with the corresponding verbal counterparts' [57]. Moreover, *pratibhā* that is in the form of the innate awareness '(this) should be done this way' (*itikartavyatā*) invariably resorts to and is inherently associated with our linguistic capacities. Bhartṛhari summarizes this fact by the term '*śabdavyapāśrayāt*' (by having recourse to the linguisticity) [58]. Thus it becomes obvious again that,

when defining the ultimate Reality, he employs the term *śabda* not in the sense ‘audible physical sounds’ but ‘linguisticity’ or the substratum full of our linguistic relations with the world [59].

Abbreviations

BṛU.	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad
KĀ.	Kāvyaḍarśa
KU.	Kāṭhopeniṣad
IS.	Iṣṭasiddhi (by Vimuktātman)
NM.	Nyāyamañjarī
MBh.	Mahābhāṣya
MWSED.	Monier-Williams Sanskrit - English Dictionary
PLM.	Paramalaghumañjūṣā
RV.	Rgveda
ŚD.	Śivadrṣṭi
TU.	Tripura(tāpinī) Upaniṣad
VP.	Vākyapadīya kārīka of Bhartṛhari
VPbh.	Vākyapadīya: Bhartṛhari’s own Commentary (Vṛtti)
VPpr.	Vākyapadīya: Puṇyārāja’s Commentary (Ṭikā)
VPvd.	Vākyapadīya: Vṛṣabhadeva’s Commentary (Paddhati)

References

- ¹ Bhartṛhari might not be the first to have postulated this stratification since even the RV (1. 164. 45), though in a rather implicit way, implies a sort of stratification of the language into four sections. However, Bhartṛhari is deemed to have established it on a much explicit ground.
- VP. 1. 144 *vaikharyā madhyamāyāśca paśyantyaścaitadadbhutam | anekatīrthabhedāyāstrayā vācaḥ param padam* ; A fourth stage, *parā*, as introduced by the *Pratyabhijñāna* school of the Kashmiri Śaivism is not a separate stratum but one identical with the *paśyantī* in Bhartṛhari’s explanation. Kṣemendra in his *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* (folio. 18) thus posits that, for grammarians, the *paśyantī* is the highest stratum. ‘*śabdabrahmamayaṃ paśyantīrūpamātmataṭṭvamiti vaiyākaraṇāḥ*’. Being primarily a grammarian, Bhartṛhari too accepts only three strata of the language of which the highest and the noblest is the *paśyantī*.
- ² Somānandanātha here adjoins the *parā* and the *paśyantī* strata like Bhartṛhari does.
- ŚD. 2. 2 *ityāhuste parambrahma yadanādi tathākṣaram | tadakṣaram śabdārūpaṃ sā paśyantī parā hi vāk*
- ³ How he approaches to this stratification resembles Vygotsky’s way of explaining the threefold levels of the language, i.e., external, egocentric, and inner, which can also be compared with *vaikharī*, *madhyamā* and *paśyantī* strata respectively. See: Vygotsky 1997: 210 - 256.
- ⁴ For a detailed account of the ‘language stratification’ and Bhartṛhari’s stance on that, see: Śāstrī 1980: 67 - 76.
- ⁵ VP. 1. 165, 170; The etymology of the term *vaikharī* is debated. *Vai + khara* (very + hard/ solid) means the physical body and the *vaikharī* is what is produced out of it, the gross speech. Another definition is *vai + kha + ra* (certainly + ear cavity + enters) > what enters to the ear. See: Padoux 1992: 216. fn. 115; Singh 1988: 95; Śāstrī 1959: 71; the etymological meaning of *vaikharī* is ‘what is produced in the mouth’. Cf. MWSED. 1020. col. 3.
- ⁶ PLM. folio 25 *paraśrotrenāpi grāhyā vaikharī vāk*. Cf. Wittgenstein (1958) § 664 ‘[W]hat immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the construction of sentences, the part of its use - one might say - *that can be taken in by the ear.*’ (My emphasis italicized).
- ⁷ PLM. folios. 29 - 32 *sa ca prayogeṇa vaikharīrūpeṇābhijñvalitaḥ svarūparūṣitaḥ kṛta iti tadarthaḥ*.
- ⁸ VP. 1.49; Bhartṛhari here uses ‘*aṇu*’ though doubted if it means ‘phonemes’ per se, to explain what become sounds. Cf. VP. 1.107 *vāyoraṇūnām jñānasya śabdatvāpattiriṣyate* ; He also states that this view has been questioned among the grammarians including Patañjali. See: VP. 1. 108 - 115; Cf. Bartley 2005: 34 - 35.
- ⁹ MBh. (*paspasāhnikā*) 1.1 *pratītapadārthako loka dhvaniśabda ityucyate*.
- ¹⁰ MBhP. 1.1 *sphoṭo nādābhivyaṅgyo vācakah... dhvanisphoṭayorbhedasya vyavasthāpitatvādhābhedenā vyavahāre’pi na doṣaḥ*.
- ¹¹ MBhU. 1.1 *dhvanipadenātra vaikharī, sphoṭapadena... madhyamāvastha āntaraḥ śabda ucyate*.
- ¹² VP. 1.165 *vaikharī vākprayoktīrñām prāṇavṛttinibandhanā* ; this definition of the *vaikharī* by Bhartṛhari is very well consistent with that by Somānanda (ŚD. 2. 7).
- ¹³ Śāstrī 1959: 70; Śāstrī 1980: 84.

¹⁴ Jain & Cardona 2007: 8.

¹⁵ VP. 1.116 *vyajanādvāyuriva sa svanimittāt pratīyate*.

¹⁶ VPvd. 1.75 also quoted in the *Syādvādaratnākara* of Vādisūrī, folio. 654.

śabdasya grahaṇe hetuḥ prākṛto dhvanirīṣyate |sthitabhede nimittatvaṃ vaikṛtaḥ pratipadyate.

Vṛṣabhadeva explains the etymological and functional meanings of these terms as follows. Thus the *prākṛta dhvani-s* are primary sounds from which the *vaikṛta dhvani-s* originate. This position could well be maintained when looked at from the speaker's point of view but hardly from the listener's.

dhvanisattā tasya vā prakṛtiḥ karaṇābhīghātasya sato (dhvanisaṃghātasya vā prakṛtiḥ karaṇābhīghātaḥ | tataḥ prathamato bhāvah prākṛtaḥ, tatastu vaikṛtaḥ | anabhivyaktasyāpātenābhivyakteḥ dhvaniprakṛtiḥ, tadudbhavo vikṛtiḥ, yato 'svārthiko yeneṭi.

Where the *prākṛta dhvani-s* reside is doubted among many scholars. Some admit that it is in the *vaikharī* stratum itself while some others prefer to consider it as sitting in the *madhyamā*. However, the latter view seems to be more consistent with the linguistic theories.

¹⁷ For a thorough study on this matter from linguists' viewpoint; Pullum 1997: 79 - 102.

¹⁸ One may argue here that when it comes to writing, the 'uneducated' may not write as correctly as a learned one does. But then that line of argument seems to turn towards the aspects of Diglossia and deviates itself from its philosophical importance.

¹⁹ VP. 1.166.

²⁰ VPbh. 1.14 *madhyamā tvantaḥsanniveśinī pariḡṛhitakrameva buddhimātropādānā sūkṣmā prāṇavṛtṭyanugatā.*

This explanation of the *madhyamā* shows a good similarity to Chomsky's construal on the grammatical structures in general speakers' speech. Cf. Chomsky (1957), Chomsky (1963).

²¹ VPpr. 2.149; Puṅyarāja prefers to ascribe all the attributes of the *paśyantī* stratum to *pratibhā* too.

²² VP. & VPbh. 1.91.

²³ Coward 1976: 44 - 47.

²⁴ PLM. folios 25 - 27 *śabdabrahmarūpā... parā vāk... manogocarībhūtā paśyantī vāk... etaddvayam vāgbrahmayogīnām samādhou nirvikalpakasavikalpakajñānaviśayaḥ.*

²⁵ For the function of the *sphoṭa* in detail, Chakravarty 1926: 25 - 51; Bhattacharya 1937: 1 - 115; Sharma 1940: 509 - 516; Heimann 1941: 221 - 227; Iyer 1947: 121 - 147; Raja 1956: 84 - 116, Bhattacharya 1957: 83 - 92; Herman 1962: 1 - 21, Karunaratne 1985: 53 - 87.

²⁶ VP. 1.14; the impurity of our speech (*vāṇmala*) occurs when the language is put into practical use at the *vaikharī* stratum. Like physical impurities can be removed through medication, those verbal impurities can be purified with the accurate use of the language (*lakṣaṇa*). Cf. VP. 1. 174.

²⁷ VPpr. 1.144.

²⁸ VP. 3.3.55.

²⁹ ŚD. 2.79; Somānanda's holding that *parā* is the highest stratum and higher than the *paśyantī* is because the Śaivas advocate the view that such a transformation from the *paśyantī* to the *vaikharī* is merely illusionary.

³⁰ Cf. Śāstrī 1957: 203; VP. 1.11, 12.

³¹ VP. 2.31 *ekasyaivātmano bhedau śabdārthāvaprthak stithau.*

³² VPpr. 2.32; Puṅyarāja also elaborates that this division is a sheer appearance (*pratibhāsa*).

³³ VPbh. 1.1 *yathā viśuddamākāśaṃ timiropapluto janaḥ | saṃkīrṇamiva mātrābhīścitrābhirabhimanyate tathedamamṛtaṃ brahma nirvikāramavidyayā | kalūṣatvamivāpannam bhedarūpaṃ vivartate.*

³⁴ VP. 2.233; Cf. VP. 1.30 *na cāgamādṛte dharmastarkeṇa vyavatiṣṭhate* (there is no Dharma that can be established by reasoning with the exclusion of the tradition).

³⁵ VP. 1.41 *āgama* is comparable to consciousness which never ceases to exist.

³⁶ VP. 1.157 *sarvo 'drṣṭaphalān arthān āgamāt pratipadyate.*

³⁷ It is vital to understand the way in which Bhartṛhari exerts the term '*tarka*' here to mean 'reasoning' so that we have an unambiguous picture of his linguistic monism. As found in VP. 1. 151, dry reasoning that contradicts the Vedas can be useful only to the ignorant (*apaśyatām*). But the tradition (*āgama*) is also the convention (*vyavahāra*) in his philosophy since what is conventionally practiced is the tradition itself. Consequently, there is no mediation by any supernatural agent to establish the signifier-signified relation but the conventional practice powered by the tradition determines it. For a discussion on such mediations by external agents found in non-Indic contexts, see: Griffith 1996: 258 - 272.

³⁸ Somānanda is supposedly the teacher of Utpaladeva and a young contemporary of Vasugupta.

See: Śāstrī 1959: 61.

³⁹ ŚD. 3.58 - 61

⁴⁰ Bhattacharya 1985: 6; Beck 1993: 162 - 164.

⁴¹ Sivaraman 1978: 27 '[I]n soteriological terms, it is the difference between achieving of transcendence 'in' language and achieving of transcendence 'of' language itself'; Cf. Padoux 1992: 428.

⁴² Beck 1993: 163; Cf. ŚD. 76 *atraiva śabdanityatvavādinō rūḍhatām gatāḥ | anādinātha tenaiva śabdatattvena tulyatā ;* ‘... anye vaiyākaraṇā eva sphoṭādanyadeva śabdātmānam nityamicchanti, tatraiva rūḍhāḥ | atha tatrāpi teṣām paśyantīrūpeṇānādinidhanātmanā śabdatattvena tulyā pramāṇābhāvādīdūṣaṇatā sphoṭātmanā vā’.

⁴³ ŚD. 3. 4 *sa yadāste cidāhlādamātrānubhavatallayaḥ | tadicchā tāvatī tāvajjñānam tāvatkriyā hi sā susūkṣmaśaktitritayasāmarasyena vartate | cidrūpāhlādaparamo nirvibhāgaḥ parastadā.*

⁴⁴ Beck 1993: 164.

⁴⁵ Śāstrī 1959: 69. ‘[S]ome of the teachers belonging to the school of Bhartṛhari were influenced by the teachings of the Āgamic philosophy and that Puṇyārāja was most probably one of them. Our hypothesis is confirmed by the consideration that Puṇyārāja mentions *Parā vāc* as the supreme Reality at the time of discussing the subject in his own way independently of the text of Bhartṛhari, but avoids a discussion on *Parā vāc* when he is called upon to explain the scheme of Bhartṛhari in which we find a reference to *paśyantī*, *madhyamā* and *vaikharī* only.’

⁴⁶ Iyer (1976: 77) as quoted by Bhattacharya 1985: 5 - 6.

⁴⁷ Varadacharya 1969: 183 - 184.

⁴⁸ NM. 1. folio 355 *jāte ’smin viśayabhāsini tataḥ syādvācamārṣo giro | na syādvāpi na jātu vāgvirahite bodho jaḍatvaṃ spr̥ṣet.*

⁴⁹ TU. 5.20 (quoted also in MaiU. 6. 22) *śabdabrahmani niṣṇātaḥ paraṃ brahmādhigacchati.*

Cf. VP. 1.22 *tadvyākaraṇamāgamya paraṃ brahmādhigamyate.*

⁵⁰ Bhattacharya 1985: 27.

⁵¹ Cf. Utpaladeva on ŚD. 11 - 12 *ekaiva vaikharī vāg vaiti prasiddhā hi.*

⁵² Bhattacharya 1985: 28.

⁵³ KU. 1.3.15 *aśabdamaśparśamarūpamavyayam | tathārasam nityamagandhavacca yat anādyanantaṃ mahataḥ paraṃ dhruvaṃ | nicayya tammṛtyumukhāt pramucyate.*

(By meditating upon the soundless, contactless, formless, unchanging, tasteless, eternal, odorless, beginningless, endless that (*Brahman*), one becomes free from the mouth of death) Cf. BṛU. 1.4.10; for the *Brahman* described as unqualified.

⁵⁴ IS. 1.75.

⁵⁵ As is the case with the term *śabda* used in the both senses, Bhartṛhari’s indiscriminate usage of the terms *pariṇāma* and *vivarta* in the VP might also add to confusion in some cases. Cf. Bhattacharya 1985: 17.

⁵⁶ VP. 3.7.107; commentators on the VP provide a number of analogies to explain the illusory appearance of the ultimate Reality among which the analogies such as *gandharva-nagara* (an illusory appearance of a city in the sky inhabited by demigods; VP. 2.292), *marumarīcikā/ mṛgatṛṣṇā* (the mirage in desert; VP 3.13.8), *rajju-sarpa* (rope mistaken as a snake; VP. 2.288), and *alātacakra* (wheel of fire mistaken as permanent; VP. 2. 291; 3.8.8) are widely known.

⁵⁷ Bhattacharya 1985: 23 - 24. fn. 21.

⁵⁸ VP. 1.129 *itikartavyatā loke sarvā śabdavyapāśrayā.*

⁵⁹ The poets in Classical Sanskrit literature were positively influenced from this line of thinking though there are instances where ‘*śabda*’ (also *vāc* in some places) has indiscriminately been used to mean both the linguisticity and correct use of the language, i.e. grammar. Cf. KĀ. 1.4 *idamandhatamaḥ kṛtsnam jāyeta bhuvanatrayam | yadi śabdāhvayaṃ jyotirāsamsārān na dīpyate* (this whole world would be in darkness if the light called *śabda* does not shine throughout the cycle of existence). Bhartṛhari’s words that ‘anything devoid of language will be void of vitality like a wooden wall’ also fall close to Daṇḍins’; VP. 1.135 *arthakriyāsu vāk sarvān samīhayati dehinaḥ | tadutkrāntau viśamjñō ’yaṃ dr̥śyate kāṣṭakuḍyavat;* Cf. RV. 1.1 *vāgarthāviva samprktau* (well amalgamated like the language and the meaning).