

# DHVANI-THE CONTINUATION OF SPHOTA

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## Abstract

There are many languages in the world. Among them, Sanskrit is one of the most important languages of the Indo-European family. After William Johns, the founder of the Asiatic society, know about the Sanskrit language, Comparative literature became a branch of study. Other languages cannot match it either in structure or in subject. There were many grammarians in Sanskrit, but Sanskrit grammar is known as Paninian grammar based on the Ashtadhyayi of Panini. The language got structural stability by Katyayana's vartika and Patanjali's Bhashya for Ashtadhyayi.

There are many linguistic theories developed in Sanskrit language. Abhidha, lakshana, vyanjana, dhvani, and sphota were some of them. Among them sphota theory was discussed by both Sanskrit grammarians and philosophers. In his Ashtadhyayi, Panini refers to a scholar Sphotayana as his predecessor. Patanjali was the first one who mentioned about sphota in his Mahabhashya,. But Bhartrhari's Vakyapadiya made it a part of Sanskrit grammar and gave it a philosophical dimension. In his Dhvanyaloka, Anandavardhana established Dhvanisiddhanta based on Sphota from Vakyapadiya.

Here we are discussing the sphota theory and Dhvani theory based on these facts.

## Dhvani-The Continuation of Sphota

Sanskrit is one of the most important languages of the Indo-European family. After the west discovered the wealth of Sanskrit literature, comparative literature became a branch of study. Sanskrit as a language stunned the west by its depth and diversity. Other language cannot match it either in structure or in substance. It is a language which has retained its structure over centuries.

## Language- Grammar and Aesthetics

As every other language,Sanskrit language also has its own grammar. Sanskrit grammar is known as *Paniniya* grammar based on the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini. It contains around 4000 sutras. *Katyayana's vartika* and *Patanjali's bhashya* for the *Ashtadhyayi*, gave structural stability to the language. *Sutrakara,vartikakara,* and *bhashyakara* are together known as *munitraya* .*There is a saying Yathottaram muninam pramanyam –* According to the *vaiyakaranas* *Katyayana* compared to *Panini* and *Patanjali* compared to *Katyayana* are authorities in their respective fields.*From ashtadhyayi* Sanskrit grammar got stability.

In Sanskrit, the discussions on aesthetics and poetics were initiated by Bharata in his *Natyasastra*. These discussions on *rasa, alamkara, guna, riti, dhvani, vakrokti, aucitya, and anumana* reached the zenith in *dhvanyaloka* of Anandavardhana and culminated in the *Rasagangadhara* of *Jagannathapandita*.It can be seen by anyone who studied *Bharatiya Kavyasastra* that it was the discussion on *rasa* started in *Natyasastra* which in a zigzag way through poetics reached the study of *dhvani*.But any one who is interested in Sanskrit literature has to accept the fact that it was Abhinavagupta who gave importance to *Natyasastra* and

*dhvanyaloka* that gave equal importance to the *rasa* and *dhvani* in Sanskrit poetics. Abhinavabhāṣṛī and Locana are his interpretations of *Natyasastra* and *dhvanyaloka* respectively.

### Patanjali and Bhartrhary

Sphota was the theory that was discussed by both Sanskrit grammarians and philosophers. As mentioned earlier though Ashtadhyayi is the basis of Sanskrit grammar it cannot be interpreted without *Katyayana's Vartika* and *Patanjali's Mahabhashya*. The roots of sphota can be traced in *Patanjali's Mahabhashya*. Though *Paniini* refers to a scholar *Sphotayana* among his predecessors in his *Ashtadhyayi* nothing more is known about him.

Though *Patanjali* was the first one to mention about sphota it was *Bhartrhary* who made it a part of Sanskrit grammar and gave it a philosophical dimension in his *Vakyapadiya*. *Anandavardhana* started from *Vakyapadeeya* and established *dhvanisiddhanta* in his *Dhvanyaloka* again based on *sphota*.

### Kavyasyatma dhvani

*Anandavardhana* who declared that *dhvani* is the soul of *Kavya* showed that *dhvani* and *sphota* distinct aspects of *sabda*.

*Yatrarthah sabdo va tamarthamupasarjanikrtasvarthau  
Vyangktah kavyavisesa sa dhvaniriti suribhih kathitah*<sup>1</sup>

'In which *kavya* the *artha* makes itself unimportant and *sabda* also makes its meaning unimportant and enlightens its *vyangya*, that *kavya* is *dhvanikavya* according to the scholars.'

He further explains- *suribhih kathitah*. Who is *suribhih*? The term *suribhih* means scholars.

*Suribhih kathita iti vidvadupajneyamuktih, na tu yathakathanjit pravrtteti pratipadyate. prathame hi vidvamso vaiyakaranah, vyakaranamulatvad sarva vidyanam.*

*Te ca sruyamaneshu varneshu dhvaniriti vyavaharanti. tadhaiva anaih tanmatanusaribhih suribhih kavyatatvarthadarsibhih vacyavacakasammisrah sabdatma kavyam iti vyapadesyo vyanjakatvasamyad dhvanirityuktah.*<sup>2</sup>

Thus it was scholars and not by the ordinary men that the term *dhvani* was defined. The scholar means *vaiyakaranas*. Since grammar is the basis for all *vidyas* the grammarians are in the forefronts of scholars. The grammarians call those sensations attained through ears and eyes as *dhvani*. The grammarians are most competent to explain *sabdasakti*.

*Vidyate Anaya iti vidya*. That which causes knowledge is *vidya*. Here what is implied is *bhasatmakavidya* (the knowledge about language). To master that, knowledge of grammar is essential.

### Patanjali

In Indian Theories of Meaning Dr.K.Kunjunni Raja says *Patanjali's* distinguishes between two aspects of words, the *sphota* and *dhvani*.<sup>3</sup>

*Dhvanis photas ca sabdanam dhvanistu khalu lakshyate  
Alpo mahamsca keshamcid ubhayam tat svabhavatah*

The former is the permanent element in the word and considered the essential word, whereas the latter is the actualized and ephemeral element and attribute of the former.  
(*Sphota sabdah, dhvanis sabdagunah*)

## Abhinavagupta

It can be found from the Locana of Abhinavagupta that Anandavardhana followed *Vakyapadiya* of Bhartrhari in *Dhvanisthapana*.

The shrude *vaiyakaranas* called all the *sabd*s, all the words that could be clearly identified, *dhvani*. The *sabd*saktis has accepted a very delicate *sabdatatva* called *sphota* as cause for *dhvani*. All the *sabd*s starting from the very soft to the ears breaking sounds are formed by combination of the *sphota* forms. Since these *sabd*s have *dhvanitva*, as they give rise to extra sensory *sphota*, as they are *sphotavyanjaka*, they are given the name *dhvani*.

According to *Bhartrhari* the *sphota* and *dhvani* can be differentiated as follows-

*Yah samyogaviyogabhyam karanairupajayate  
Sa sphotah sabdajah sabdo dhvanirityucyate budhah*<sup>4</sup>

According to some scholars whatever is produced by the organs of sound production becomes *sphota* received through its sounds and forms. On the other hand *dhvanis* are those which are caused by the formal appearance of the word itself. In short the *sphota* is related to the primary sounds while *dhvani* is originated only after the manifestation of *sphota*.

For grammarians *dhvani* is *vyanjaka*. It is not the *sphota* which is *vyanjaka*. On the other hand for the *kavyamimamsakas* *dhvani* is *vyanjaka*.

*Bhartrhari* continuous -

*Pratyayairanupakhyeyairgrahananugunaistadha  
Dhvaniprakasitesabde svarupamvadharyate*<sup>5</sup>

The real form of a word is fixed in our mind when that is pronounced as different phonemes or sounds. But this fixation of the word is possible only because we are already having some definite cognition based on certain unaccountable or unexplainable but still favorable signs.

*Alpiyasapi yatnena sabdamuccaritam matih  
Yadi va naiva grhnati varnam vasakalam sphutam*

Even a simple sentence is either fully inconceived or fully conceived. There is no intermediate state, i.e., it is partially conceived.

*Bhartrhari* says the following about *vaikrtadhvani* –

*sabdasyordhvamabhivyaktervrttibhede tu vaikrtah  
Dhvanayah samupohante, sphotatma tairna bhidyate*<sup>6</sup>

After the manifestation of the word by way of *sphota* the secondary sounds cause variations in the perception, they themselves being intimately related to the mind. Thus they give a false impression of causing the variation in the *sphota* itself. But *sphota* being eternal itself does not respond to these variations and remains unchanged and undivided.

According to K.Kunjanni Raja the following words in the *Vakyapadeeya* defining the *Prakrtadhvani* and *Vaikrtadhvani* are considered by some commentators to be a quotation from Vyadi's famous work the *samgraha*.

*Varnasya grahane hetuh prakrto dhvanirishyate  
Vrttibhede nimittatvam vaikrtah pratipadyate*<sup>7</sup>

Thus the *prakrtadhvani* is defined as the cause of the perception of the letters and the *vaikrtadhvani* is considered as the cause for the differences in speed of utterance, *vrtti*.

According to Abhinavagupta the *sphota* and *vaikrtasabda* are not different in principle. Based on this, *alamkarikas* accept *sabdārtha vyangyavyanjana* and because the *vyanjaka* belong to the same class, *kavya* as *dhvani*.

## Conclusion

We find that Abhinavagupta described the difference between *sphota* and *dhvani* based on Bhartrhari's *Vakyapadeeya*. The *dhvanitvatva* finds place in poetics while *sphotatvatva* in grammar. From the similarities between *sphotavada* and *dhvanivada* we can see how the grammatical structure of the language is interwoven with the aesthetics. Moreover the Indian aesthetics is structurally comparable with grammar. In other words it was formed on the foundation laid by the grammarians the aesthetics was constructed later by the *Kavyameemamsakas*.

## REFERENCE NOTE:

1. Dhvanyaloka,1.13
2. *ibid*,p.131
3. Indian Theories Of Meaning,p.100
4. Vakyapadiya,1.102
5. *ibid*.1.88
6. *ibid*.1.77
7. Indian Theories of Meaning,p.101

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4. Indian Theoris Of Meaning,Dr.K.Kunjanni Raja,The Adyar Library And Research Centre,1963
5. Vakyapadiyam(Brahmakandam) of Bhartrhari-Munshiram Manoharlal, New delhi,1970