
UNIT 4 MIND AND LANGUAGE

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is two fold: firstly, to discuss the different philosophical issues pertaining to the interface of mind and language such as intentionality of mind and language, basic structure and function of mind and language, priority of language and mind, necessity and contingency in language from western perspective; secondly, to analyse debates concerning the relationship of language and consciousness among Grammarian, Mimamsa and Buddhism in Classical Indian tradition.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Ordinarily, when we talk about the meaning and its content that is thought, we attribute content both to expressions of language: linguistic signs, utterances, gestures — and to the mental states of agents: beliefs, intentions, desires, and so forth. Consequently, it is natural to consider that mind and language are closely related; to have contentful thoughts of certain sorts evidently has something to do with language acquisition. In western philosophical tradition, there has been a general consensus that mind and language are intimately related. Plato had considered thought as ‘the self talking to itself’. In the middle ages, philosophers have started the debate on the ontological primacy of language *vis à vis* consciousness which was reflected in the discussion on the nature of ‘universals and particular’. In the Enlightenment, both rationalists and empiricists have explored the nature of idea and given priorities to thought (consciousness) over language. Language is instrumental in expressing the thought. In his still influential synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, Kant advanced his remarkable idea that concepts of space and time and causality are necessary conditions for the existence of experience of an external world. They pre exist in mind. It seems that Kant also postulated a primacy for the ‘faculties of the mind’.

In the twentieth century a new movement started as phenomenology through the work of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. With this phenomenological approach, there was a major shift of debates from mind and body problem to the problem of the structure of experience. Phenomenologists were more interested to explore the structure and nature of consciousness; how consciousness constitutes the object of knowledge and at the same time how consciousness is constituted by the external objects.

Language was, of course, all that 'the linguistic turn' was about, giving rise to 'Analytic Philosophy with Frege, Wittgenstein and the philosophers of the Vienna Circle. The primary objective of their approach is to investigate intricacies and complexities of language as analytical philosophers think that all philosophical problems arise due to misunderstanding of language.

In Indian philosophical tradition, though the relationship between mind and language has been acknowledged yet its conception of mind and language and its approach towards them, is somewhat different from the western tradition. Almost in all Indian philosophical systems mind (*manas*) is considered as instrument that is an internal sense organ (*antahkarana*) for knowledge acquisition. Hence, the concept of mind in Indian tradition being an instrument can be assumed to be devoid of consciousness. Consciousness is seen as having separate ontological status independent of mind. But in this unit our concern is not to discuss the theoretical details pertaining to the Indian concept of mind. Our aim is rather to discuss the role of mind (in whatever form) in relation to language. Keeping this sole objective, we will discuss a broad based notion of mind in general which includes consciousness also. Therefore, the term 'mind' refers to all internal states of consciousness and it is to be noted that 'mind' and 'consciousness' will be used interchangeably hence onwards.

One of the major concerns of the Indian philosophical systems has been the relationship between language and reality. And in response to this there has been an exploration of the relationship between language and consciousness. There are three distinct views: first, for the Grammarians language is the reality second, for the Mimamsa language accounts for the propositional meaning (*vakyartha*) and finally, in contrast to these two, the Buddhists hold that language is not able to capture the true nature of reality.

4.2 MIND AND LANGUAGE: A WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

In the west, as we have observed that the nature of the mind and language has been one of the primary concerns of philosophical enquiry. And in the last few decades of the last century with the emergence of scientific approach in the area of mind and languages new disciplines such as cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, psycholinguistics, on the one hand and cultural and postmodern approach in the psychology, sociology and cultural studies on the other hand, started debate on the priority of innate capacities of mind over language *vis à vis* language over mind. Despite all the difference in their approaches and treatments, there is an agreement that mind and language are interconnected at the deeper level.

Mind and Language: Inter-Connected

The various mental states such as believing, desiring, hoping, fearing, etc. have propositional attitude for example: Krishna believes that 'Meera loves him'. The content of all the mental state is 'thought' which possess meaning. It should be clear from the above example the content of his belief is 'Meera loves him'. Similarly, sentences of language also contain meanings. Hence, there is a close affinity between thought and language. In addition to mental states one may have different mental acts such as taking decision, making promises, predicting something, requesting something, giving justification and so on. The most important act is that of making rules and following them, which is the basis of language. Language is meant for rule following which may

be arbitrary or conventional. Mind is involved in making of language and language facilitates the mind to evolve further or perform its various mental acts prudently and efficiently.

Our experience of the world is constructed from two basic sources: the data supplied to brain by senses and the symbol of language. Together by representing the world of phenomena these create contents and structure of our consciousness. Any knowledge which an individual acquires about his/her objective world is constructed through the interaction between sensory signals and their symbolization. Although phenomenon impinge on his consciousness such as – heat, light, sound etc. she/he differentiates these phenomenon through the symbols which she/he has for representing them. Objects are therefore, constituted in ones' mind as concepts - as chains of remembered symbols. As one learns to associate symbol with sensation to develop control over symbolic activity, she/he learns to identify features of his/her environment and to project possibilities and hypotheses. Symbolization is the transformation of sense data into meaningful concepts and categories. The rules for the classification and structuring of phenomena are contained in language and language also maintains the conceptual machinery through which experience is interpreted. But these rules range from those which are almost mandatory for everyone in the speech community to those which are matter of social preferences and conventions.

Language is a system of arbitrary as well as conventional symbols which may be spoken or written, iconic or non-iconic. And language has two important aspects: syntactic and semantic. Syntactic means that different words are combined according to syntactical rules in a particular way to make a sentence. The syntactical rules determine whether a particular combination of words qualifies to be correct sentence or not. You may notice a sentence in English language – 'Meera loves Krishna' the sentence consists of three words which are arranged in a specific way. In this connection it is important to notice an important feature of the language that each language though has finite number of words and also finite number of grammatical or syntactical rules yet it enable its speakers to produce infinite number of sentences.

Semantic aspect of language deals with the meaning of words and sentences. Semantic rules provides different procedures whereby a word or a sentence gets its meaning. Though syntax and semantic are different in their nature and yet there is a intricate relationship between two. As often syntactical properties (rules) influence the meaning of a sentence. For example you may see - how two sentences having same words but different structures mean differently. (1) A Lion killed a buffalo. (2) A Buffalo killed a lion. But in some other cases different sentences having same words but different structure mean similarly for example (1). The first Prime Minister of India was Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru (2) Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India. The meaning of sentence is determined by the meaning of its constituents and its syntactical structure. Hence, language has a combinatorial properties of syntax and semantic which provide productivity to language. Productivity of any language means infinite combinations of its discrete finite units (symbols) to mean infinite situations. It is this productivity that distinguishes human language from the communicating system of other lower species.

Mind and Language: Intentionality

Both mind and language have intentionality which prepares the ground for their being about the world or word - directedness. Intentionality means directedness- about-ness or of-ness. It is the distinguishing feature of mind that differentiates mental phenomena from physical phenomena. In fact both (mind and language) exhibit directedness, about-ness or of-ness of world in terms of thought and expressions. Intentionality is associated with meaning in the sense that all that language and mind have as contents are meaningful.

Intentionality is the essential feature of consciousness. Mental states like thinking, imagining, believing etc. involve intentional structure in which they are represented. As intentionality shares an intrinsic relationship with consciousness, resultantly it discloses the intentional relationship of mind with various types of experience. Thinking and experiencing are not two different forms of intentional activity in the sense that these activities are characterised by intentionality. The Content (that is thought) of mental state represents something beyond mental states. Similarly experience of representation unfolds the intentionality involved in the content of representation. The content of representation and experiencing the content are one and the same thing as both share the same form of intentionality. This unifying feature of intentionality shows that mind is not a discrete phenomenon. Rather, it is a unifying principle of thought and experience directed to something beyond itself.

Language has intentional structure because content of symbolic expression [like thought] is meaning embedded. Intentionality account for meaning into language because without it linguistic sign can not be taken as meaningful expressions. As, Searl rightly pointed out that mere syntax of language is not enough. His 'Chinese Room Experiment' clearly shows that even if a machine can operate symbols according to rules but it fail to understand the meaning of symbols as it is not capable of having intentionality. Hence, intentionality is a semantic feature of language and mind and it has to be given a normative status.

All the naturalists who have fascination for scientific explanation of mind try to naturalize intentionality. They locate intentionality in a causal frame work of nature rather than locating it in the domain of conscious experience. The causal frame work denies the intrinsic relationship of mind and intentionality thus mind can be reduced to brain and become epiphenomena. On the contrary, intentional realists hold that the intentional mental phenomena are real in addition to natural process of brain and we can not reduce the former into the later. No science can explain intentional experience in causal framework.

Check your progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Discuss the relationship of mind and language?

2) What do you understand by intentional feature of mind and language?

Language and Mind: Which is Prior?

There has been an intense debate among philosophers whether mind is prior to language or language is prior to mind but this remains true that each mental act (thinking) necessarily involves language. Those who take extreme position that thought is independent of language even believe that at least language is necessary for communicating thought. For Frege thought is objective and ahistorical. Thought exists in the platonic realm which is neither physical nor is mental. Natural laws and mathematical truths (for example- 'the Pythagorean Theorem') exist independent of mind they exist even if nobody knows them. Still, Frege asserts that language is necessary for understanding thought. Thought is inherently structured and this structure is isomorphic to the structure of a formal language. Maintaining autonomy of thought, Frege holds that thought is language-dependent.

Recent developments in cognitive science such as representational theory of mind and computational theory of mind have been centred on the innate capacities of mind/ brain to process information. These theories put forward a mechanical interpretation of mind. Accordingly, mind is viewed as computer whose primary function is to manipulate symbols on the basis of specific rules. Mind like computer functions with its software programme (memory, formal language etc.) and hardware device (brain). And mind is related to brain the way computer programmers are related to the hardware. Mind is not identifiable with or reducible to brain for the reason that programmes (computer operations) are not identifiable with or reducible to the hardware on which they function. The mental operations take place only if human mind/ brain have some innate structure of language or grammar.

In this regard Fodor's hypothesis of language of thought is very important. According to Fodor, cognitive structure of the human mind is rooted in a language of thought which is a system of cognitive functions and symbols known as Mentalese. Fodor claims that intentional states of mind have determinate contents whereas natural language does not. There are sentences which are ambiguous for example 'Mohan run after Hari with a stick may mean Mohan with stick or Hari with stick. That is why, Fodor holds that language of thought is different and prior to natural language.

Wittgenstein and Davidson have taken a clear stand that thought without language is impossible. The crux of their ideas is that to have a thought means to have a concept of thought and to have a concept of thought means one must have mastery of language by participating in linguistic community. To explain this Wittgenstein uses his idea of 'Language Game' which like any other game, is rule governed activity. It involves the ability to use sign following rules of a language. And obeying rule is possible only by being a member of a linguistic community. This linguistic community is important for rule following in view of the fact that there must be public criteria for whether an individual is following the rule in a proper way or not. Accordingly, it denies the possibility of private language (internal thought) that contains name for sensations in which these names are used quite independently of the behaviour and bodily states of user of the language. Denying the possibility of any internal thought independent of language Wittgenstein clearly remarks: 'when I think in language there are not meanings going through my mind in addition to the verbal expression: language is itself the vehicle of thought'. Meaning is determined not by interpretation, an accompaniment of sign (internal thought) but by the way a person is disposed to use or respond to the sign.

But one may raise objection that mere utterance of words is different from utterance with understanding (thought) of words and consequently, understanding involves something more that happens inside mind than merely utterance of words. In response to this objection Wittgenstein makes it clear that no any additional thought process needs to take place in mind when one expresses a thought in words other than production of words. In fact what Wittgenstein points out in his 'Language Game Thesis', is that speaking a language means engaging in certain modes of behaviour that shows a variety of language skills and abilities. To speak a language means to engage in what Wittgenstein calls 'Form of Life'. In case some one utters a grammatically correct sentence without understanding we could not make a sense out of this because his behaviour and his engagement with the contextual situation are radically unexpected and different from a person who speaks with understanding. Hence understanding presupposes language skill. But this language skill does not require any additional mental process.

4.3 NECESSITY OF UNIVERSAL STRUCTURE IN LANGUAGE

We came to know that language is rule governed system of symbols. And these rules provide regularity and stability in language. But there has been long debate whether these rules are rooted in universal structure of language or contingent system of language developed in a human community. Those who argue for some universal structure of language think that language is embedded in a system of necessary rules and basic structure of language account for the universal grammatical rules. This view is advanced by Frege, Fodor and Chomsky in different ways.

For Frege thought is objective and ahistorical. Thought does not take birth out of psychological process rather in the psychological process one gets related to thought. It has a mind independent existence. For example the Pythagorean Theorem exists independent of our mind; even if nobody knows it remains exist. Thoughts have necessary and space-time transcendent existence. Relations (such as inconsistency, entailment etc.) embedded in thoughts are logical and therefore mind independent. In response to the question: Is language necessary for grasping thought or it is merely contingent tool? Frege views that though thought is mind independent yet understanding language is necessary for understanding thought. Hence, thought is language dependent but both are not identical.

Fodor puts forward his computational theory of mind (CTM) to explain how intentional states of mind get its content (thought). The computational theory of mind can be understood in the background of Representational theory of mind (RTM). According to Representational theory of mind intentional states are relations to mental representation. For example believing – 'Rahul is courageous' involves the belief related to mental representation that has meaning- 'Rahul is courageous'. Fodors's computational theory holds that the intentional states are computational relations to mental representations and mental processes. Intentional states involve the manipulation of mental representation. And mental representation has a linguistic structure. That is to mean that thought takes place within mental language what Fodor calls 'Language of Thought' (LOTH). He thinks that 'LOTH' has syntactical and semantic rules similar to natural language like English. 'LOTH' also has finite number of symbols and syntactical rules used for purpose of combining words to form sentences.

One may ask for the justification of postulating 'LOTH' prior to natural language? To answer this Fodor holds that due to linguistic or semantic reason we have to postulate language of thought. His semantic argument for language of Thought as follows: one cannot learn language unless one has language which is innate. He further views that learning a natural language involves the process of acquiring knowledge of the meaning of the words of that language. Fodor thinks that learning is essentially an activity consisting of constructing and confirming hypothesis that represent the meaning of the words the target language. And to construct a hypothesis the language learner must have representational system because without this she/he is unable to form any hypothesis concerning the meaning of words in natural language. It means that language learning must be inseparably related to the representational system of conceptual mechanism that 'LOTH' provides. Fodor explains that the hypotheses take the form of bi-conditional matching between predicate of language of thought and predicated of target natural language. For example learning of the word 'table' in English language involves constructing and confirming a hypothesis of the following form:

[Table (X)] is true (in English) if and only if G (X)

Here G is a predicate of 'LOTH'. A language learner learns this word "table" on account of the fact that she/he adopts the correct truth rule showing table has same extension with G. As a language learner already possesses G by virtue of the fact that it is a predicate of 'LOTH'. Resultantly, She/ he understands the meaning of 'table'. Fodor's formulation of a hypothesis does not aim at to determine what objects in the word correspondence to the English world 'table' but it explicitly directed to specify which representation in the 'LOTH' can be associated with the particular word 'table'.

Chomsky also restates the fact that language has universal structure of grammar which is genetically embedded in the mind/brain. Language is characterized as compositional in the sense that it is constructed as well as comprehended by a conscious mind with minimal effort. It also controls as well as supervises the entire process of communication. It is however not revealed and manifested on the surface level of grammar but it lies embedded in the deep structure of grammar. According to Chomsky language is a mirror of mind in a deep and significant sense. It is a product of human intelligence created anew in each individual by operations that lies far beyond the reach of will or consciousness.

He further explains that all the natural languages have to follow innate rules of the universal Grammar. He defines universal grammar as the system of principles, conditions and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages not merely by accident but by necessity of course biological, not-logical, necessity. Chomsky considers universal grammar as a transformational generative grammar. This kind of grammar is primarily concerned with what Chomsky calls the creative aspect of language that is the speaker ability to produce new sentences which is immediately understood by other speakers. In this regard, transformational generative grammar can be understood as the mental representation of human being. It is a theory of mental state underlying the production and comprehension of utterance. It is a system of rules that a speaker has unconsciously internalized. It has no existence apart from mental representation as Chomsky holds that the properties of grammar must be those that are given to it by the innate mental processes of the organism that have invented it, and that invents it anew with each succeeding generation. Thus grammar is generative since it projects the creative aspect

of language. It is transformational since it generates only grammatical sentences by applying few rules.

4.4 CONTINGENCY OF STRUCTURE IN LANGUAGE

A number of social thinkers leaning towards cultural relativism, postmodernism and anti-foundationalism believe that language has no necessity of any innate (grammatical) structure that account for so called regularity. For an instance Rotry thinks that language is a contingent system of symbols which is accidentally developed in the human community. The rules and linguistic conventions are evolved according to the needs of human community. Hence, it is the only human community which accounts for evolution of language in the particular historical and cultural context. There is no any '*apriori* necessity' of universal structure in language. As a result language does not have any fixed and universal rules.

An individual's symbolic experience, the symbols available to him and his social reality, are very much influenced by his/her location in society and the interaction which takes place between himself and his or her immediate others. Every individual inhabits a social world in which his life appears as reasonably meaningful to him. We are born into families, we have friends, teachers, colleagues and acquaintances. All of these peoples – and many others in varying degree of importance and intimacy, are members of our social world. Some of these individuals are important in shaping our lives. The social psychologist George Herbert Mead called them 'significant others'. They provide us with our ways of perceiving and defining the world. The knowledge which is external to the individual is then mediated to him through actions of others. During the first stage of socialization these people will often be in physical presence. Through their many interactions they design for him appropriate ways in which he can experience his social world.

The relationship between language and social order has been extensively explored by C. Wright Mill. He argues that people are socially and historically located in certain cultural frames. In all societies there are established schemes of interpretation and description which people use to explain and make sense of the world around them. These frames of reference are grounded in the historical social activity of that society and are confirmed in the continuing operation of its major institutions. According to Mill Words carry meanings by virtue of dominant interpretations placed upon them by social behaviour. Interpretation or meanings springs from the habitual modes of behaviour which pivot upon symbol. Language socially built and maintained embodies implicit exhortations and social evaluations. By acquiring the categories of language we acquire the structured 'ways' of a group, and along with language the value implicates of those ways. Our behaviour and perception, our logic and thought, come within the control of the system of language. Along with language we acquire a set of social norms and values. A vocabulary is not merely a string of words; immanent within it are societal textures institutional and political coordinates.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is your stand on the debate whether mind is prior to language or language is prior to mind? Justify your stand with arguments.

2) What do you understand by innate structure of language?

-----3)

Discuss the view - Language is a contingent system of symbols which accidentally develops in the human community.

4.5 MIND AND LANGUAGE: INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

The nature of consciousness has been one of the prime concerns of philosophy in ancient India. And in the process of exploring nature of consciousness Indian intellectuals have taken into account the role of language as how language functions not only to manifest different states of consciousness but also to constitute consciousness. All the classical systems have been constantly responding to questions such as what is the nature of consciousness? What is language? What is the relationship between language and reality? Does language represent reality or construct it out? In this context it is pertinent to address – since all the discourse is constituted in language, how to approach these discourses (texts). This involves the issue of the relationship between language and consciousness.

Broadly, all the philosophical systems have reflected on the above questions but, specifically, debates on language, consciousness and cognition have been centred among three systems of philosophy: Grammarians, Mimamsa and Buddhism. These systems have been constantly debating issues concerning ontic status of language, linguistic denotation, referential reality, eternity or non eternity of words, relation between a word and the world.

Grammarians's System : Theory Of Essential Word (*Sphotavada*)

Sabda has two aspects: *sphota* (to manifest) and *dhvani* (to sound). According to Panini former is permanent element in the word and the latter is the actualised and ephemeral element and an attribute to the former. The *sphota* (potency to manifest) may be single letter or fixed pattern of letters but it remains constant and not affected by the peculiarities of the individual speakers. Its linguistic value (semantic) is the same, although it is pronounced by different speakers. *Dhvani* involves utterances with individual particularities. These two aspects of a word (*sabda*) correspond to '*prakra dhvani*' and '*vaikrta dhvani*' of later Grammarians. Bharthari points out that a word has double power; it reveals the form of expression as well as its content. Language is in fact similar to consciousness in the sense that consciousness reveals itself as well as other things, so also every word has the power of referring to itself as well as to external things symbolised by it. Buddhists also accept double power of a word to express their own identity as well as the things symbolized by them but according to Buddhism this character is cognised only when they become subject of conventional relation, and not at the time of perception. As at the

time of perception of the sound of the words it is only the sound that is known, the expressive power does not belong to sound at that time.

The central point of the above discussion is that word has a potency to manifest/ signify something. Consequently, the debate emerges – whether this potency is inherent or constructed. In the west the same debate occurs as whether a linguistic sign and its meaning, is natural or conventional.

The Grammarians hold that the relationship between word and meaning is given (*nitya*) mental, positive and objective. The word refers to fourfold entities: substance (*dravya*: cowness), quality (*guna*: white), activity (*kriya*: walking) and universal (*jati* cowhood / *gotva*). Reflecting on the nature of *spohita*, Bharthari explains it is given (*nitya*), timeless, invariant, part-less (*akhand*) and non sequential (*akarma*). It is that entity which reveals the meaning. It is abstract level of sound and meaning both. Bharthari visualizes three aspects of language: *vaikrta dhvani*, *prakrta dhvani* and *sphota*. *Vaikrta dhvani* (phonetic aspect of language) is the actual sound spoken by speaker and heard by listener. It includes all the individual variation in intonation, tempo, pitch etc. *Prakrta dhvani* is normative phonological pattern. All the non-linguistic speaker variations are excluded at this aspect of language. But still it has the time sequences. *Sphota* is considered to be invariant, sequence -less, integral linguistic entity which is the unit of meaning. It is made manifest by *prakrta dhvani*.

Bharthari explains how at different stage of *vak*, his notion of *Sphota* functions. Bharthari visualises three stage of *vak*: *pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vikhari*. At the level of *pasyanti* *sphota* exists as an undifferentiated and non sequential entity. *Sphota* and its meaning, lie dormant in the potential form. And it is initiated by the desire of speaker to communicate. At the *madhyama* level it functions as abstract meaning and abstract form. *Sphota* and meaning are still one but speaker perceives them as distinct. All the linguistic elements are present in the latent form here. The speaker is also able to recognise the articulated speech as distinct and separate from *sphota*. At the *vaikhari* level actual speech sounds uttered by the speaker and heard by listener.

Mimamsa: Theory Of Meaning (*Vakyarthavada*)

The Mimamsa theory of meaning accounts for the propositional meaning hence this is designated as *vakyarthavada*. For Mimamsa word is sacred and eternal as it is not produced or created. Words are considered to be denotative of themselves. Words are only expressed or manifested. Firstly, *Jaimini* has given definition of sentence: 'A group of words serving a single purpose forms a sentence if on analysis of the separate words are found to have *akamsa*' (*Mimamsa sutra* II.I.46). But in the next sutra where he lays down the principle of syntactical split (*vakyabheda*), the term *akamsa* or syntactic expectancy among words is accepted as an essential condition for a sentence. He states – 'when the sentence are independent of one another [each sentence having no requirement or expectation of words outside itself to complete its meaning] they should be treated as distinct sentences'. *Akamsa* can be understood as a desire on the part of listener to know the other words or their meaning to complete a sense of sentence. On account of *akamsa* a word is not being able to convey complete sense in absence of another word. Despite this primary condition of mutual expectancy of words [*akamsa*] there are three other conditions: *yogyata*, *samnidhi* and *tatparya*. *Yogyata* can be understood as the logical compatibility or consistency of the words in a sentence for mutual association. It is on account of *yogyata* in

sentence that meaning of sentence is not contradicted by experience. For example in the sentence he wets it with water there is *yogyata* or consistency of meaning since wetting is generally done with liquid like water. But sentence like he wets with fire has no *yogyata* resultantly there is incompatibility between wetting and fire.

Samnidhi means a condition of sentence because of that words in the sentence are proximate in time. If words are uttered at long intervals, sentence would be broken and it will not produce any knowledge. Kumarila Bhatta explains *samnidhi* as - continuous moving about the words or their meaning in the mind [*buddhau viparivrttih*].

Tatparya is basically explained by later Naiyayikas and Mimamsakas. According to later Naiyayikas *tatparya* is the meaning intended by the speaker. For example in a sentence the village is on Ganges [*gangayam ghosah*] it is the intention of the speaker that gives the meaning 'the bank of the Ganges' to the word 'Ganga' and if the intention of speaker has been otherwise, the word 'village' could mean 'fish'. In Mimamsa School, there are two different theories concerning the nature of sentential meaning namely '*anvitabhidhanavada*' propounded by Prabhakara and '*abhihitavayavada*' advocated by Kumarilabhata.

Prabhakara: *Anvitabhidhanavada*

Anvitabhidhanavada means mutually associated meaning (*anvita*) is communicated [*abhidhana*] by the word. The words have their meaning by the mutual relationship in sentence. Hence words do not have their meaning independent of sentence.

Prabhakara in fact puts emphasis on the natural method of learning the meaning of a word whereby a child always learns meaning of a particular word in relation to other words in sentence. A child learns meaning of a word by observing the usage and activity of elders. A child observes that when a person (x) utters 'bring the cow' to another person (y). Then (y) brings the cow. As a result, a child observes both utterance and action. At this stage a child learns the whole of statement and whole of what is signified (meaning). Later the child in another episode observes when (x) utters to (y) bring the horse, (y) brings the horse. By comparing the two sentence and its usages, a child understands the term 'bring' common to the two, must mean command 'to bring' and 'cow' and 'horse' refer the two different animals. Therefore, by psychological process of exclusion and inclusion a child got the idea of individual words and their meanings. Accordingly, the sentence has a unitary meaning of its own while words which are its constituents have meaning only as they are related to this unitary sentence meaning. Thus in the utterance 'bring the cow' the word 'cow' means not the isolated concept of 'cowness' but cow as associated with action of bringing similarly, the word 'bring' means 'the action of bringing in relation to cow'. In fact the words give their own meaning and their syntactic relation to the other words in the sentence, so that the sentence meaning is directly conveyed by the words themselves.

Kumarila Bhatta : *Abhihitavayavada*

According to *abhihitavayavada* words which constitute a sentence express their own individual meaning which are isolated and discrete. These individual meanings relate themselves in accordance with the three syntactic requirements: *akamsa*, *sanidhi* and *yogyata*. Therefore, sentence is nothing but an aggregation of word meaning. In sentence first, we understand the

individual word meaning then we put together these meanings according to three syntactic factors and then arrive at the meaning of the sentence. Kumarila clearly states – ‘The meaning of the word having expressed by each word, independently of one another it is solely from the connection among these word meanings that there follows the cognition of the meaning of the sentence’.

Buddhism: Theory of Meaning (*Apohavada*)

The Buddhist theory of meaning is known as *apohavada* (differentiation) which asserts that a word denotes what the object is not. Buddhists logicians being non essentialist oppose all the categories of reality like class, universal, inherence etc. therefore, for them words (language) do not capture the objective reality in its true sense. Meaning is negative in character and words have no direct reference to objective reality. On the issue of the relationship between word (*śabda*) and sense (*artha*), Buddhists assert that it is mere conventional, there is no any natural relationship because words do not have objective, eternal status. Indeed words are nothing just conceptual images which are purely subjective construction of the mind (*vikalpa*) resultantly, there can be no real connection between words and the external objects. Dignaga explains that the meaning of a word is the negation of all its counter correlates [*anyapoha*] for example the word ‘cow’ does not mean the actual animal [object] with tail, horns etc. it only means only the exclusion of all objects that are not cow. According to Dignaga a word cannot denote the momentary particular [*svalaksana*] which is the ultimately real. Indeed meaning of a word is a conceptual construction and not an objective fact (*svalaksana*). A word can not signify a unique particular as it is momentary entity and cease to exist in next moment. Even if verbal relation is established between a word and particular momentary instant then it can not signify any other particular instant. Consequently language can not function for example a word ‘cow’ would refer only a particular cow in particular time (t-1] not any other cow even same cow at next moment-[t-2].

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1. Critically examine the Grammarian theory of essential words (*sphotavada*).

2. What do you understand by Miamsakas view on conditions for sentence such as *akamsa*, *yogyata*, *samnidhi* and *tatparya*?

3. How does Buddhist theory of meaning response to Grammarian and Mimamsakas?

4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to analyse the relationship of mind and language from western and Indian perspective. We came to know that mind and language are intimately inter-connected.

Mind is involved in making of language and language facilitates the mind to evolve further or perform its various mental acts prudently and efficiently. There has been intense debate among thinkers whether mind is prior to language or language is prior to mind. Mentalists especially Fodor and Chomsky argue that there is innate structure of language in mind which is prior to natural language. And it accounts for regularity and stability in language by providing universal rules of grammar. But Wittgenstein and Davidson hold that thought without language is impossible. Their basic argument is that to have a thought means to have a concept of thought and to have a concept of thought means one must have mastery of language by participating in a linguistic community.

Further, postmodernist and contextualists especially Rorty argues that language has no any innate (grammatical) structure that account for so called regularity. In fact language is a contingent system of symbols which accidentally develops in the human community. Indian philosophical tradition explored the relationship between language and reality. And in response to this these Indian philosophical systems have explicate the relationship between language and consciousness. There are three distinct views in this regard: For Grammarian language is the reality, and for Mimamsa, language accounts for the propositional meaning (*vakyartha*). But the Buddhists being momentarists (*anityavadi*) hold that language is not able to capture the true nature of reality it is merely mental images (*kalpana*).

4.7 KEY WORDS

Intentionality: refers to directedness or about-ness. It is distinguishing feature of mental states that differentiates mental phenomena from physical phenomena.

Language of Thought: is a hypothesis that mental representation has linguistic structure and thought takes place within a mental language (that is language of thought).

Apriori: typically, connotes a kind of knowledge or justification that does not depend on evidence, or warrant from sensory experience.

Ahistorical: means that which is unconcerned with historical development or tradition and culture.

Contingent: refers to an event or a thing which may or may not happen or exist as it is depend on something else.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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