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The Theory of the *Sphoṭa*

Akane Saito

1 Introduction: Five Views on the *Sphoṭa*

This contribution traces the history of the concept of *sphoṭa*, which I will leave untranslated. Oversimplifying, this Sanskrit word serves the purpose of describing the minimal and meaningful unit of speech.

When we study the history of the arguments concerning sentence meaning or word meaning in Indian philosophy, we necessarily need to account for the theory of the *sphoṭa*. This theory was propounded by the Grammarians (Vaiyākaraṇas) and taken up for discussion over and over again by several authors. Throughout its long history, dominated by the fifth-century philosopher and Grammarian Bhartṛhari, the concept of *sphoṭa* differs in each system and period. Beginning from the ancient times when the Grammarians first referred to it, I differentiate the following five variants:

1. The concept of *sphoṭa* as inseparably connected to heard or uttered sound, held by Patañjali (second century BCE) and elaborated by Bhartṛhari.
2. The view of *sphoṭa* as a baseless postulation for the understanding of the meaning, in contrast with the theory of the phoneme (*varṇa*). This view was held by various anti-*sphoṭa* philosophers, such as Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Dharmakīrti.
3. A theory held by Maṇḍana Miśra (eighth century CE), who following Bhartṛhari developed this theory to explain how one perceives a word-form.
4. A theory that equates *sphoṭa* with the highest reality of both speech and the universe, held by Śaiva scholars in medieval Kashmir.

5. A theory held by premodern Grammarians that focuses on “meaning-bearingness” (*arthapratyāyakatva*) and is ultimately connected with the Vedāntic concept of the “Undivided absolute” (*brahman*).

The basic understanding of the *sphoṭa* is that it is the nature of the word or speech (*śabdasvarūpa*), whose distinguishing character is emphatically considered its indivisibility. A reason for changes in the theory is the aspect or level of speech authors have focused on. A collateral effect of the views on the *sphoṭa* is the understanding of what exactly are sound and phonemes. In this chapter I shall briefly illustrate how each of the five different theories of *sphoṭa* is discussed, followed, or rejected.

2 Patañjali’s Ideas on *Śabda* and Sound

In the earliest occurrences of the *sphoṭa* in the Grammarians’ texts, the terms *śabda* (“word” or “linguistic unit”) and *sphoṭa* share overlapping semantic fields. The key to understanding this complexity is the ongoing discussion on the principle of the fixed relation between a word and its referent, which has been conflated with the discussion on *sphoṭa* by later philosophers and by the Grammarians. First of all, let us differentiate these two concepts of *śabda* and *sphoṭa*.

2.1 What Is *Śabda*?

The grammatical rules in Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* show us his strict formulation of the relation between the word and its referent. In his commentary to the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the *Mahābhāṣya*, Patañjali discusses the philosophical issues of language using the Grammarians’ analytic approach. For example, in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 1.2.45–46 the nominal stem (*prātipadika*) is defined as the meaningful unit of language: “A nominal stem is a meaningful element (*arthavat*), that which is neither a verbal root, nor an affix; nor anything ending in any affix other than a primary (*kṛt*) or a secondary (*taddhita*) suffix, or which is a compound word (*samāsa*).”¹ In Patañjali’s commentary on this passage, there is a famous discussion concerning the meaning of a nominal stem to which neither an affix nor a case ending has been added. Against an opponent who claims that a nominal stem, for example, /vr̥ksa-/ , cannot be meaningful without an affix, Patañjali explains that since a *śabda* /vr̥kṣaḥ/—which is the combination of

the *śabda* /vṛkṣa-/ and the *śabda* /s/ (the ending of the nominative singular, changed into /ḥ/ by euphonic rules)—has the referent “tree” and the singular number, and since a *śabda* /vṛkṣau/ has the referent “tree” and the dual number, the nominal stem, namely the *śabda* /vṛkṣa-/, must have the referent “tree,” a neutral meaning without any qualification.²

Here, both the nominal stem and the affix are called *śabda*. Not only a word or sentence but also any kind of linguistic element, whether it is an affix, a case ending, or a stem, is in the domain of *śabda*. Therefore, *śabda* means a linguistic unit which has a particular referent.

2.2 Are Phonemes Meaningful?

There is a discussion of whether phonemes are meaningful or not by Kātyāyana in his *Vārttika* on the fifth *Maheśvarasūtra*.³ First, it is said that phonemes are meaningful, but immediately after it is also stated that they are meaningless. In the first alternative, phonemes are regarded as meaningful, but only when a verbal root, a nominal stem, an affix, or a particle consists in a single phoneme. In other words, phonemes are meaningless except for in these special cases. In general, for Patañjali, phonemes are just constituents of a word or a sentence.

Getting back to the discussion in 1.2.45, Patañjali claims that the entire word has one meaning or purpose, even though its components have no such meaning or purpose, just as a chariot possesses the capacity to move but its disassembled parts lack it (*Mahābhāṣya*, on 1.2.45, p. 220,22–24).⁴ Phonemes are the essential parts (*aṅga*) of the whole word or sentence, but when we observe a word focusing on what denotes the meaning, we cannot start from the component phonemes. Therefore, Patañjali concludes that phonemes cannot be meaningful.

In the opening section of the *Mahābhāṣya*, Patañjali discusses the exact definition of *śabda*, concluding that, in the case of the word “cow,” “*śabda* is that which, when uttered, gives rise to the cognition of those entities which have a dewlap, a tail, a hump, hooves, and horns [i.e., cows].”⁵ This definition of *śabda* has been taken up by Maṇḍana and later Grammarians as the starting point of their discussion of *sphoṭa*. It is therefore easy to trace their *sphoṭa* theories back to the whole argument on the meaningful unit, namely *śabda*, in the *Mahābhāṣya*, but we have to keep in mind that Patañjali does not use the term *sphoṭa* anywhere in this specific discussion.⁶ He does use this term, but always in relation to sound.

2.3 Sphoṭa in Relation to Sound

In the introductory part of the *Mahābhāṣya*, *śabda* is alternatively defined by Patañjali as “the word,” which makes the meaning understood, and as “physical sound.”⁷ The two aspects of being a word and a sound are not fully separable, since every word has its sound aspect. How does Patañjali argue this issue? In the *Mahābhāṣya* on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 1.1.70, he divides *śabda* into *sphoṭa* and sound (*dhvani*-), using the example of a drummer. When he strikes his kettledrum, some sounds reach far away, and some do not; but there is a *sphoṭa* that has always the same extent. Thus *śabda* is a complex entity constituted of sounds, which are the external phenomenon, and of *sphoṭa*, the core of *śabda* to which the sound aspect is subservient.⁸

But what is this unchangeable entity, which has sound as its property? It is the nature of the word, or in other words, the word’s phonetic form (*śabdasvarūpa*), that is common to different individual variations of one word. The word *agni*, for instance, can be pronounced by different agents or in different ways, but it has its own essential form which is the basis of all the variations. The word- or sound-form is its most essential “object” (*vācya*). Each word possesses this unchangeable phonetic form as its core, and how it is heard is affected by the modalities of sound. And according to Patañjali, every word or even mere sound has *sphoṭa* at the core of its existence.

3 Bhartṛhari on the Sphoṭa

The investigation of the word’s phonetic form is found in the *Vākyapadīya* of Bhartṛhari, one of the greatest Grammarians and philosopher, who had a huge influence on the later history of Indian philosophy. Bhartṛhari refined the few remarks on *sphoṭa* left by Patañjali into an elaborate philosophical theory. His *sphoṭa* has three characteristics:

1. Phonemes (*varṇa*), sounds (*dhvani*), and bodily resonance (*nāda*) are differentiated.
2. *Sphoṭa* is the indivisible sound-form manifested in both the utterance and the hearing perception of a word, which are both discussed by Bhartṛhari.
3. Various views on sound, the nature of *sphoṭa*, and the relation between them, are discussed by Bhartṛhari as alternatives.

3.1 Utterance and Hearing of Sound

In Bhartṛhari's argument, *sphoṭa* is necessarily related to sound, which is transmitted through the ether from the speech organ to the auditory faculty, and he explains the transmission of sound using the words *dhvani* and *nāda*, both of which mean "sound" but conceivably have slightly different nuances. In the auto-commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*, I.47, on the one hand, it is told that there are subtle particles of sound (*dhvani*) that spread in space and are the fundamental cause of the manifestation of *sphoṭa*. These imperceptible particles are accumulated by the speech organ before the utterance and are transformed into gross sound (*nāda*).⁹ In the course of the manifestation of *sphoṭa*, there is the process of pronunciation in which the speech organ accumulates subtle external sounds and transforms them into the perceptible entities. Notably, it is just because of the sequentiality of the bodily resonances that we have the impression that the *sphoṭa* is sequential.

In the *Vākyapadīya*, I.76, on the other hand, Bhartṛhari mentions the subclassification of *dhvani* on the basis of how we grasp them. Here *dhvani* is audible sound from the hearer's viewpoint, and it is divided into primary sound (*prākṛtadhvani*) and secondary sound (*vaikṛtadhvani*), both of which are distinct from any imperceptible entity.¹⁰ The primary sound is the cause of the manifestation of *sphoṭa*, and it creates the specific form of a word delimited by time and size. Although we have the feeling that the time required to pronounce a monosyllabic word such as "cow" is shorter than that required for a polysyllabic one like "Isidore," such a difference in size is not due the word's inner form, and is rather caused by the primary sound. The secondary sound, by contrast, causes other inessential conditions such as intonation, pitch, accent, or tempo. In this way, in the course of the manifestation of *sphoṭa*, there is the process of hearing or cognition in which the sounds are limited by various imposed factors.¹¹ Furthermore, Bhartṛhari's explanation on pronunciation and hearing suggests that *sphoṭa* is not a "word" grounded in semantics, but rather a sound-based form, which is not necessarily meaningful.

3.2 How the *Sphoṭa* Is Manifested

The indivisibility of *sphoṭa* is systematized by Bhartṛhari. The gist of his argument is that even though sounds are sequential, the *sphoṭa* manifested by them is without any sequence or parts. Here Bhartṛhari provided the most famous discussion on *sphoṭa*, describing how a unitary idea can manifest from sequential

sounds. He explains this as a non-analyzable (*anupākhyeya*) cognition, which gradually becomes clearer and clearer (*Vākyapadīya*, I.82–84).¹² The non-analyzable cognition is at first a vague image of the word. When the hearer perceives the series of physical sounds uttered by the speaker, at the moment of the initial sound the cognition is ambiguous, because it could become any kind of series of sound beginning with this first one. At that moment, such an initial sound just vaguely manifests the unitary word. Subsequently, each following sound leaves a seed in the hearer's mind, which assists the perception of the immediately next sound and thus makes the initially vague image clearer and clearer. As this process is reiterated, the pronunciation of the final sound produces the cognition of the word-form in its full clarity. In this way, the *sphoṭa* is gradually made clearer by each sound's instigation, until it is completely manifested.

Here Bhartṛhari does not discuss how the hearer understands the meaning of a particular word. The process of manifestation of the *sphoṭa* explains how we perceive an entire word- or sound-form through the sequential process. If we only focused on this sequential process, we would easily conclude that a word is divisible into smaller components such as phonemes. In hearing, however, a word remains a word, and a sentence a sentence: the sequential perception does not affect the unitary nature. Bhartṛhari concedes that upon hearing a word, one inevitably feels like perceiving components such as phonemes. However, just as when we approach an object from a distant place and we gradually cognize it for what it really is, a hearer realizes in the end that a word or a sentence is intrinsically unitary (*Vākyapadīya*, I.89–91).¹³

3.3 Views on *Sphoṭa* and Sound

Though in Bhartṛhari's main argument the *sphoṭa* is the phonetic form of the word, revealed by individual sounds, he also offers other possibilities of interpretation. In the *Vākyapadīya*, I.104, a proponent claims that sounds (*śabda*) play the role of producing an additional and superficial resonance (*nāda*), which arises always together with the body of sound, namely, the *sphoṭa*.¹⁴ The relation between sound, superficial resonance, and body of sound is compared to that connecting a lamp (i.e., sound), a light (i.e., the resonance), and a fiery substance (i.e., the *sphoṭa*). *Sphoṭa* is considered to be the material cause (*upādāna*) of the resonance. Vṛṣabhadeva, a commentator on the *Vākyapadīya*, interprets this passage that the word *sphoṭa* is a sharp sound at the first moment of articulation, while *nāda* means resonance coming after the initial sound. In this case, *sphoṭa* is not a conceptual thing but audible sound.

In the *Vākyapadīya*, the *sphoṭa* is still open for much discussion. In the above context, Bhartṛhari mentions that there are the holders of transient *sphoṭa*.¹⁵ The *sphoṭa* proponents generally rest on the premise that the *sphoṭa* is fixed and permanent (*nitya*), and there is no theory found on the basis of its impermanence in the later period. But we can see that it was not the case in the fifth century. Also in the *Vākyapadīya*, I.93, the view taking *sphoṭa* as the class (*jāti*) of the individual words is referred to as one of the alternative views.¹⁶ In the presentation of these different ideas, the concepts of *sphoṭa* and *dhvani* are sometimes not fully distinct, and there is some inaccuracy in the usage of *nāda* and *dhvani*.

3.4 Bhartṛhari's Word's Generic Form and Class

In Bhartṛhari's discussion on the generic form of words (*śabdākṛti*), we find another explanation of the word's essential form (*śabdasvarūpa*). The generic form of a word is common to every variation of the word in pronunciation.¹⁷ It is not the actualized or superficial form of the word, but rather it is that which is perceived as its true nature, though concealed by sounds. Such a conceptual form arises gradually in the mind in the process of perceiving the word.¹⁸ This description of the generic form is strikingly similar to that of the *sphoṭa*.

The class of a word (*śabdajāti*) is mentioned as an alternative in respects to the word's generic form.¹⁹ It is not the class as the word, because otherwise all words would reduce to that concept, but rather the class of each individual word. To explain, the class of the word X is extracted from numerous variations of X, and it is equated with X's own form (*X-svarūpa*). As such it is also equated with X's generic form (*X-ākṛti*) and with the universal of X (*X-sāmānya*), expressed as X-ness (*X-tva*).

It should now be clear how Bhartṛhari pursued the argument of the core or the nature of the word using not only *sphoṭa* but also other terms: the universal (*sāmānya*), generic form (*ākṛti*), class (*jāti*), and *sphoṭa* can all be taken as synonymous and have slightly differing aspects that need to be taken into consideration. As for *sphoṭa*, the concept is deeply connected with the discussion on sounds.

4 Maṇḍana Miśra's *Sphoṭa*

After Bhartṛhari, the theory of *sphoṭa* was exposed to various criticisms of anti-*sphoṭa* philosophers, who held phonemes (*varṇa*), the smallest units

of speech, to represent the fundamental aspect of language. Maṇḍana Miśra (eighth century CE) is the first *sphoṭa* proponent who answered their criticism. The purpose of his *Sphoṭasiddhi* was to tackle those criticisms and to lay the thoroughly theoretical foundations for the existence of the *sphoṭa*.²⁰ These are the characteristics of his *sphoṭa*:

1. The main opponents are Mīmāṃsā and Buddhist authors.
2. The existence of phonemes is rejected in the manifestation of *sphoṭa*.
3. The focus is on the perception of the word.
4. He refers to, but does not discuss, the *sphoṭa* at the level of the sentence.

Maṇḍana repeatedly uses the word “cow” (*gauḥ*) as an example of “word” (*pada*), and he never specifically discusses the sentence (*vākya*). Hence the *sphoṭa* in the *Sphoṭasiddhi* is restricted to the word-sphoṭa (*padasphoṭa*), in its premodern classification. When the opponent changes from the Mīmāṃsakas to the Buddhists in the latter half of the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, the term *vākya* is used frequently, but Maṇḍana never examines the sentence.

4.1 Maṇḍana’s Response to the Criticisms of the Mīmāṃsakas and the Buddhists

4.1.1 Against Kumārila’s Theory of Phonemes

For proponents of phonemes such as Mīmāṃsā authors, the causal relationship between phonemes and the word’s referent is not direct. This is because the meaning is not grasped at the time of the pronunciation of each individual phoneme, but rather when the sequence of phonemes constituting a linguistic expression is completed. Therefore, Mīmāṃsā authors postulate a role of latent impressions (*samskāra*) between the perception of phonemes and the understanding of a meaning. Śabarasvāmin (fifth century CE), the great authority of the Mīmāṃsā school, claimed that what conveys the word’s meaning is the last phoneme accompanied by the latent impressions produced from the previous phonemes.²¹

After him, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (sixth to seventh century CE) further developed this argument in the Sphoṭavāda-chapter of his *Ślokavārttika*. According to Kumārila the phonemes, which are grasped in a sequence through direct perception, bring about a single recollection, in the form of nonsequential phonemes with the help of latent impressions. He proposes three alternative causes to the understanding of the words’ meaning: either the phonemes, that is, *śabda*, or the recollection of the phonemes assisted by the perception of the final

phoneme of the word, or just the recollection of all the phonemes, including the last one. After having perceived the final phoneme, there is a unitary idea of the word occurring in the hearer's mind either in the form of mere recollection of all the phonemes or with the perception of the last phoneme. And since it is unitary, such recollection does not contain any sequence of phonemes inside, even though it exists at the time of perception.

With this theory in mind, Kumārila claimed that *sphoṭa* is just a fabricated entity. For him the word's own form is nothing but a construct of phonemes, and the cognition of the unitary word is attributed to the unifying recollection.

Maṇḍana, however, argues that the latent impressions produced by the cognitions of the individual phonemes cannot be the cause of understanding the meaning of a word. This is because from the perception of a phoneme there will be a latent impression of that phoneme, and then a recollection of that phoneme alone; analogously, the perception of a word will cause the recollection of a word, and the same will apply to the sentence. For Maṇḍana, Kumārila's latent impressions can only explain the recollection of phonemes, not the understanding of the word's meaning.²² Against the alternative view that the final phoneme assisted by the recollection of previous phonemes is the cause of the understanding of the word's meaning, Maṇḍana claims that when a person learns the relation between a word and its object, he requires the idea of a word and not of the final phoneme.²³

4.1.2 Against Dharmakīrti's Theory of Phonemes

In the *Pratyakṣapariccheda* of his *Pramāṇavārttika*, at the sections dealing with "the refutation of eternity of phonemes and the sentence" as well as "the refutation of the opinion of Kumārila" (*Pramāṇavārttika*, 127–134, 160–161), Dharmakīrti (sixth to seventh century CE) criticized the idea that the unitary word is manifested by the sequential sounds on the basis of momentariness, the most basic tenet for the Buddhist logicians. In Dharmakīrti's view, a single and indivisible entity cannot be produced from momentary phonemes, not even in the mind. He even criticized the Mīmāṃsā authors who accepted the concept of a unitary idea only in a limited sense through the unitary recollection. The uttered phonemes have a prior-posterior relation to each other, and this relation among phonemes is equivalent to the cause-effect relation of the mind-moments of the speaker and that of the hearer. The necessity of the prior-posterior relation is evident in light of the fact that even though it sounds the same, the /s/ of *saraḥ* and the /s/ of *rasaḥ* are quite distinct, because the latent impression of the respective /s/ is distinguished from the other through the cause-effect relation of

the mind-moments. The linguistic convention (*saṅketa*) serves the purpose of aligning the speaker's and the hearer's intentions, so that the hearer can infer the speaker's intention, namely, a word or sentence meaning.

Against such a stance, Maṇḍana brings up two prominent problems:

- (1) The issue of the universal: Buddhist logicians strictly deny the concept of the universal on the basis of momentariness. Against Dharmakīrti, however, Maṇḍana claims that the theory of momentariness cannot apply to phonemes. How could new, momentary phonemes become the cause of the understanding of a meaning shared by a speaker and a hearer? If we do not accept the universal of phonemes, we must accept the *sphoṭa*, akin to the universal of each individual word.²⁴
- (2) The issue of the linguistic convention: Dharmakīrti states that phonemes convey only the referent which has been conventionally established. A linguistic convention, in the form of "this is X," represents the relation between a particular sequence of phonemes, which is taken as one conceptual unit, and an external object (*viśaya*), and according to him it plays the role of bringing the sequential phonemes into the domain of the word. In Maṇḍana's idea, the unitary image generated from what one hears is a prerequisite for the understanding of the relation between the word and its meaning. The unitary word-form is inevitable for learning its convention. For Maṇḍana the acquisition of language is not an object-based relation, but a word-form-based relation. The real object at hand is not directly referred to.²⁵

Maṇḍana also claims that the speaker is not a necessary condition that is needed by the hearer to learn the relation between the word and its meaning. To know the relation of cause and effect of the speaker's mind-moments, one needs to identify the speaker, but if s/he is in a distant or hidden place, we would need to have the idea of hearing not merely a complex of sounds, but one word uttered to denote a particular meaning. In order to specify the speaker, the necessary condition is the cognition of the unitary word-form. Therefore, the cause-effect relationship of the speaker's mind-moments is not indispensable for the understanding the meaning of the word.²⁶

4.2 Maṇḍana's *Sphoṭa* Theory

Except for his refutation of the proponents of phonemes, Maṇḍana's *sphoṭa* theory is based on Bhartṛhari's arguments, and especially for the manifestation

of *sphoṭa* he strictly follows Bhartṛhari by quoting his statements and emphasizing that there is no room for phonemes. The erroneous cognition (*viparyāsa*) of phonemes is examined by him slightly more in detail.²⁷ This erroneous cognition is not a misunderstanding in a general sense, but rather a pre-understanding, preceding the identification of the object (word) as it is. An approximate example is that of the cognition of a rope in a dark place, which is at first mistaken for a snake but afterward manifests its own form. And this process of identification in the mind inevitably happens whenever we see an object and find (perceive) what it is.²⁸

For the sake of the attainment of *sphoṭa*, this erroneous cognition is unavoidable, because only after the gradual analysis from phonemes to sentence one can realize that such a process of analysis is erroneous. Thus the erroneous cognition is said to be the cause of the correct understanding. Smaller components of language can be discarded only after bigger components are grasped, and the sequence of the analytical process is itself refuted in the end.²⁹

4.3 Direct Perception and Understanding

The *sphoṭa* is gradually grasped in its unitary form by the sequential phonemes. Such a graduality proves that the *sphoṭa* itself is in the domain of direct perception, which Maṇḍana maintains to function only progressively, from the mere or vague existence of something, to its specific character. For him the *sphoṭa* is not different from any other object of perception, and therefore its perception shows us the universal structure of direct perception.³⁰

While the *sphoṭa* is the object of direct perception, the same does not apply to the referent (*artha*). Even though the proponents of phonemes are consistently addressing the relation between the word—or more precisely a sequence of phonemes—and its meaning, we should not assume that the proponents of the *sphoṭa* do the same, as is clear from Bhartṛhari's stance. In Maṇḍana's case, however, the starting point of the *Sphoṭasiddhi* is Patañjali's statement that "the word is that which, when it has been uttered, gives rise to the cognition of those entities," which unavoidably reminds us of the relation between the word and its meaning.³¹ This reference to Patañjali shows how Maṇḍana's discussion of *sphoṭa* has a slight semantic angle—Bhartṛhari's total distance from semantics has not been genuinely followed by him. It is certainly the result of his effort of refuting the anti-*sphoṭa* philosophers, but it is nonetheless crucial because his discussion somehow gave momentum to the later concept of *sphoṭa* as "the conveyer of the meaning."³²

4.4 Criticism of the *Sphoṭa* after Maṇḍana

How did the philosophers contemporary to or immediately after Maṇḍana react to his *sphoṭa* theory? Śaṅkarācārya (eighth century?) is probably the first scholar who responded to Maṇḍana's criticism of the phoneme theory. Although it is not an exact parallel, in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, 1.3.28, Śaṅkara appears to summarize and criticize Maṇḍana's arguments.³³ He claims that the cognition of a word is adequately explained through the phonemes. Only phonemes exist, for instance the phoneme /g/, and no /g/-ness (*gatva*). One and the same phoneme /g/ is recognized in every perception of the words in which the phoneme /g/ occurs. Incidentally, this idea that there is only one phoneme, here, /g/, and that therefore there is no universal of /g/ had already been propounded by Kumārila. The minor difference of each phoneme is caused by momentary sound (*dhvani*). In other words, for him *dhvani* is not the cause of manifestation of the word or the *sphoṭa*, but just a property of phonemes. What manifests the word, instead, is the air or breath (*vāyu*). Even the unitary recollection of a word such as *gauḥ* is brought about by the phonemes /g/-/au/-/ḥ/, because we can assume that /g/ keeps having a causal efficiency even after its manifestation. Besides, Śaṅkara also underlines the importance of the sequence in the causal capacity of phonemes, in producing the cognition of a word. In this way, with the Mīmāṃsā authors, he concludes that there is no need to presuppose the *sphoṭa*.

Other influential critics of the *sphoṭa* are Jayanta Bhaṭṭa and Vācaspati Miśra (ninth to tenth century). Jayanta presents two versions of the process of the manifestation of the *sphoṭa*, one through phonemes and another through sound (*dhvani*). Also, Jayanta does not stop at the word-*sphoṭa* and discusses further about the sentence-*sphoṭa* in detail, and even addresses the argument of the three levels of speech, which will be described below.³⁴ Vācaspati discusses the *sphoṭa* both in his commentary *Bhāmātī* to Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, 1.3.28, and in his monograph on sentence meaning, the *Tattvabindu*, where he discussed in detail and criticizes Maṇḍana's approach on the *sphoṭa*. Vācaspati's description of the *sphoṭa* follows Maṇḍana's argumentation and his main quibble is whether the *sphoṭa* can really be the object of direct perception. Vācaspati claims that what is perceived is not the *sphoṭa* or "a vague word-form," but each uttered phoneme. His defense of the theory of the phonemes serves as support for the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā theory of sentence meaning (see Chapter 9 in this volume).

What we notice from the arguments of the anti-*sphoṭa* philosophers is that, unlike in Bhartṛhari's approach, utterance and hearing are not at the focus. They

are rather investigating the relation between the parts and the whole, or the whole and the meaning. By doing so, they somehow oriented the following theory of the *sphoṭa* in a different direction.

5 Śaiva Philosophers' *Sphoṭa*

5.1 *Sphoṭa* as the Highest Reality

Brough (1951, 29, 32,30–33) pointed out that *sphoṭa* has been wrongly taken as a mystic entity in the early scholarly works.³⁵ Already in premodern times, indeed, the theory of *sphoṭa* was merged with the philosophy of linguistic monism (*śabdādvaita*). The metaphysical aspect of the linguistic philosophy, however, has been “wrongly” attributed to the *sphoṭa*, and still we cannot ignore the influence of such an idea. But what are the early sources claiming that the *sphoṭa* is such a metaphysical, mysterious entity? Let us look at some Śaiva material.

The *Netratantra* was composed in Kashmir between 700 and 850.³⁶ In its twenty-first chapter, there is a reference to the *sphoṭa* in the context of the utterance of the sacred mantra *om*: when the *sphoṭa*, whose nature is sound (*dhvani*), flows forth from the form of Śiva, filling the universe with sound, it is called *nāda*.³⁷ Kṣemarāja (eleventh century), who commented on the *Netratantra* from the point of view of Śaiva nondualism,³⁸ gives a semantic analysis of the word *sphoṭa* as “that from which the whole totality of speech-units is split open (*sphuṭ-*).”³⁹

The premodern Grammarians gave two analyses of the word *sphoṭa*: one focusing on the perceptible word-form, “that which is split open by sounds” (*yaḥ dhvanibhiḥ sphuṭyate*), and the other focusing on its function as the bearer of meaning “that from which the meaning is split open” (*sphuṭati artho yasmāt*).⁴⁰ Joshi (1967, 39–40), however, proposes that the latter analysis was not supported by Bhartṛhari,⁴¹ and Bronkhorst (2005, 2–3) positively accepts Joshi’s view, suggesting that the later analysis, or the investigation of “how the *sphoṭa* expresses the meaning” (not “how we grasp *sphoṭa* in the process of perception” as Bhartṛhari and Maṇḍana did), begins with the premodern Grammarians such as Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita (sixteenth to seventeenth century).

Using the same analysis, already in the eighth century Śaṅkara was taking *sphoṭa* as the essential matter of the universe. It means that *sphoṭa* by his time has been taken or well known also as the entity from which the objects are

manifested. All signifiers and signified things come into existence from the *sphoṭa*, which in this sense is the origin of all the phenomenic differences.

5.2 *Sphoṭa* Discussed with Three Levels of Speech

In the *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari introduces an ontological hierarchy of speech, dividing it into three levels.⁴² The first level is called “concrete speech” (*vaikharī*), which consists of audible speech and includes by extension any audible sound. The second one is “intermediate speech” (*madhyamā*), which is the internal murmur existing between the concrete speech and the “intuitive speech” (*paśyantī*), which is the ultimate form of speech, namely, the highest speech (*parā vāc*) that is self-luminous and beyond the order of phonemes or pronunciation. Already, Bhartṛhari introduced a soteriological dimension by stating that “a person who attains the truth of speech is freed from karmic duty.”⁴³ The essence of *paśyantī* is the eternal and all-pervading means for liberation.

This doctrine was adopted in the linguistic theory of the Śaiva philosophers, as we can see in the *Śivadr̥ṣṭi* of Somānanda (tenth century) and in its commentary by his pupil Utpaladeva, both of whom actually criticized Bhartṛhari’s view on the *sphoṭa*.⁴⁴ In the second chapter of the *Śivadr̥ṣṭi* Somānanda starts criticizing the “Grammarians” (=Bhartṛhari), who claim the identity of the supreme *brahman* with the intuitive speech. Among various problems he points out, there is the one caused by the identification between the *sphoṭa* and the intuitive speech. If they are equivalent, the *sphoṭa* should be accorded the highest level, but how would it then be possible for it to be manifested by the unreal words or phonemes?⁴⁵ And in the commentary, Utpaladeva identifies *sphoṭa* with the highest reality, with the highest level of eternality (*kūṭasthānitya*).⁴⁶

When these different levels of speech are discussed by the Śaiva scholars, we find that the speaker’s aspect is assertively emphasized. When an intention to speak occurs, speech, whose essential nature is indeed *paśyantī*, arises in the mind in the intermediate form, adopting the sequence caused by expiration and inspiration; after that, the concrete speech manifests once speech reaches the mouth and gets released through the articulatory effort. It is a description of what happens in one’s body while uttering a word.

5.3 Nāgeśa’s *Sphoṭa* with the Process of Conceptualization

Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa (eighteenth century), who is one of the greatest Grammarians in premodern India, explains *sphoṭa* by combining it with the theory of *paśyantī*

in his *Paramalaghumañjūsā*.⁴⁷ According to him, there is speech of four kinds. At the top of the hierarchy, there is the highest speech (*parā vāc*), the fourth level added by the Śaivas above Bhartṛhari's triadic classification. This highest speech has the nature of being nonconceptual (*nirvikalpa*) and is equivalent to the "supreme and undivided speech" (*śabdabrahman*). By contrast, the second level, the intuitive speech (*paśyantī*), is defined as conceptual (*savikalpa*), clashing with the ideas of both Bhartṛhari and Somānanda, who stated that the intuitive speech is not conceptual. On the intuitive level, speech becomes the object of mental awareness. Both the highest and the intuitive speech are accessible to those who can enter into deep meditation on the speech form of *brahman*. When the speech comes to the intermediate level (*madhyamā*), it has the form of *sphoṭa*, which then expresses various meanings but cannot yet be perceived by the auditory faculty. Once such speech becomes manifest in the various points of articulation and is apprehended by the ears, it is called "concrete speech" (*vaikhari*).

Here, the *sphoṭa* theory is completely overlapping the *paśyantī* theory. Furthermore, in contrast to Bhartṛhari or Maṇḍana, Nāgeśa clearly states that *sphoṭa* is subtle and imperceptible. By his time, one of the most distinguishing characters of the *sphoṭa* had been lost, and it had become the object of intellect (*buddhi*).

6 Premodern Grammarians' *Sphoṭa*

There are various great Grammarians in premodern time who shed the light on the *sphoṭa* again and tried to give comprehensive descriptions about it: Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, Kaunḍa Bhaṭṭa, and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa.⁴⁸ They considered the *sphoṭa* to be the "meaning-bearing unit," and classified it into different categories in accordance with the various segments of language, namely phoneme, word, and sentence.⁴⁹

These are the specific characteristics of their *sphoṭa*:

1. The *sphoṭa* theory necessarily requires the concept of the phoneme (*varṇa*).
2. The *sphoṭa* is ultimately related to the highest reality.
3. All discussion of *sphoṭa* is focused on its role as the conveyor of the meaning (*arthapratyāyaka*).

The most important feature is that how *sphoṭa*, namely the word-form, is grasped is no more at the focus; instead, they discuss a lot about how it makes the meaning understood. Also most of their arguments below are easily traced back to what Bhartṛhari established in the *Vākyapadīya* on the word- or sentence meaning.⁵⁰

Each type of *sphoṭa*, no matter if at the level of phoneme, word, or sentence, follows the principle of indivisibility. If we take into account a larger unit, then the smaller units are to be regarded as unreal entities. Let us see how Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa, a Grammarian of the seventeenth century who was a follower of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, has discussed the *sphoṭa* in his *Sphoṭanirṇaya*.

6.1 Phoneme-, Word-, and Sentence-Sphoṭa

6.1.1 Phoneme-Sphoṭa

In the *Sphoṭanirṇaya* the phoneme-sphoṭa is defined not as each single phoneme but as the smallest and indivisible set of phonemes that constitute morphemes such as stems or suffixes, which means that the term *varṇa* is used in a new and specific acceptation, and not generically as “phoneme” anymore.⁵¹ The Grammarians then have to discuss what the meaningful unit is at the level of morpheme. In Pāṇinian grammar, all the word-forms are analyzed as being derived from an original stem or verbal root, and they pass through various substitutions of morphemes to reach their final form. For example, a word-form *pacati* (he cooks) consists of *pac-a-ti*, the final *ti* (or technically *tip*) of which is substituted for a prototype *laṭ* which signifies the present tense and the agent of an action. So which one of the two, *laṭ* or its substitute *tip*, is the denotative element? Against the Naiyāyikas who insist that the prototype is denotative, Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa claims that the substitute conveys the meaning. This is because even a person who has no knowledge of the prototype *laṭ* understands the meaning of *pacati*, and accordingly, *laṭ* is taken as a fictional element invented for the sake of grammatical analysis.

6.1.2 Word-Sphoṭa and Sentence-Sphoṭa

However, it is certainly not the case that all meanings are explained by the phoneme-sphoṭa. Exploiting the intricacies of the rules of substitution of morphemes in the Pāṇinian grammar, Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa argues that words cannot unambiguously be divided into morphemes,⁵² and we cannot always divide a sentence into words.⁵³ Furthermore, there are cases in which, even though we do not understand the particular referents of each word or parts of a word, we

still understand the meaning of a sentence as a whole. Thus, Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa claims that besides the phoneme-sphoṭa, there must also be a word-sphoṭa and sentence-sphoṭa. In other words, the word is the denoter of the word meaning, and a sentence is that of the sentence meaning.⁵⁴

Phonemes are indispensable as building blocks of words and sentences. Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa maintains that the word-sphoṭa consists in a series of phonemes that are uttered together in association with each other and that the sentence-sphoṭa is made up of such words. Phonemes, however, are always vulnerable to the criticism that they cannot coexist with each other, since they are momentary. Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa replies to this objection as follows: when two phonemes are uttered together, the second is perceived with the first that is present in the mind (*upasthita*) through a relation of uninterrupted succession (*avyavahitottaratva*); in the case of three phonemes, the third phoneme is perceived with the second phoneme specified with the first in the mind. In this way, the existence and the value of the individual phonemes are guaranteed.⁵⁵ At the level of the sentence-sphoṭa, only the sentence is assumed to be the conveyor of the sentence meaning, but at the same time we still see that it is composed of words, stems, suffixes, and so on, each of which reveals its own referent in accordance with the structure of the sentence.⁵⁶

6.2 Indivisible Word- and Sentence-Sphoṭa

This concept of indivisible (*akhaṇḍa*) word-sphoṭa and sentence-sphoṭa moves the theory one step further, in comparison to the previous ideas word- and sentence-sphoṭas. What is held as the conveyor of meaning, at this stage, is a word or a sentence that cannot be divided into subordinate grammatical elements,⁵⁷ even though in its manifestation the listener grasps phonemes, syllables, and words. In other words, a bigger unit is no longer an aggregate of smaller units.

Phonemes are not denotative, even though in the word *gauḥ*, for example, we do not perceive a *sphoṭa* that is different from the phonemes /g/-/au/-/ḥ/. This is because these phonemes are not different from the *sphoṭa*, just as threads are not different from a piece of cloth. Phonemes are just the manifesting agents of the *sphoṭa*, no matter if it is in the case of a word or of a sentence. In this theory, the role of the conveyor of meaning is taken by *sphoṭa*.

6.3 Universal-Sphoṭa

The final level of meaningful unit is the universal-sphoṭa (*jātisphoṭa*), the generic form of the conveyor of the meaning.⁵⁸ Each of the previously mentioned

types of *sphoṭa* has its own generic form, namely, a semantic universality, which is shared by all the homogeneous *sphoṭas*. For example, every particular instantiation of the sentence-sphoṭa “*hare 'va*” has a universal form (“*hare 'va*”-ness), which is the conveyor of meaning and signifies the same referent “O Hari, protect [me].” Even in the case of the universal-sphoṭa, Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa repeats that we have to accept the existence of phonemes, though we may accept only specific types of phonemes as conveyors of meaning, as mentioned above.

This universal-sphoṭa is ultimately equated to the highest reality, in accordance with the elevation of the level of the universal.⁵⁹ In other words, this *sphoṭa* becomes close to Bhartṛharian concept of *brahman* (*śabdabrahman*). From the perspective of this level, all the subordinate categories are denied.

Notes

- 1 *arthavad adhātur apratyayaḥ prātipadikam // kṛttaddhitasamāsāś ca //*.
- 2 See *Mahābhāṣya*, on 1.2.45, p. 219,20–27: *iha vṛkṣa ity ukte kaś cic chabdaḥ śrūyate vṛkṣaśabdo 'kāntaḥ sakāraś ca pratyayaḥ / artho 'pi kaś cid gamyate mūlaskandhaphalapalāśavān ekatvaṃ ca / vṛkṣāv ity ukte kaś cic chabdo hīyate kaś cid upajāyate kaś cid anvayī—sakāro hīyate aukāra upajāyate vṛkṣaśabdo 'kārānto 'nvayī / artho 'pi kaś cid dhīyate kaś cid upajāyate kaś cid anvayī—ekatvaṃ hīyate dvitvaṃ upajāyate mūlaskandhaphalapalāśavān anvayī / te manyāmahe—yaḥ śabdo hīyate tasyāsāv artho yo 'rtho hīyate, yaḥ śabda upajāyate tasyāsāv artho yo 'rtha upajāyate, yaḥ śabdo 'nvayī tasyāsāv artho yo 'rtho 'nvayī //* In the world, when /*vṛkṣaḥ*/ is said, a particular linguistic-unit (*śabda*) is heard, the stem /*vṛkṣa*/ ending with /*a*/ and the suffix /*s*/. A particular referent is also understood[, namely something] having root, trunk, fruits, and leaves, and the singular number. When /*vṛkṣau*/ is said, one linguistic-unit disappears, one appears and something remains: /*s*/ disappears, /*au*/ appears and the stem /*vṛkṣa*/ ending with /*a*/ remains. In the case of the meaning, too, something disappears, something appears and something remains: singularity disappears, duality appears and that which has the root, trunk, fruit, and leaves remains. So we (I) hold the following view — when a linguistic-unit disappears, its meaning disappears. When a linguistic-unit appears, its meaning appears. When a linguistic-unit remains, its meaning remains. See Cardona (1967) for a more detailed explanation on this passage. See also Scharf (1996, 40).
- 3 *Vārttika*, 9–15, pp. 30,2–31, 14: *arthavanto varṇā dhātuprātipadika-pratyayanipātānām ekavarṇānām arthadarśanāt, varṇavyatyaye cārthāntaragamanāt, varṇānupalabdau cānarthagateḥ, saṃghātārthavattvāc ca / saṃghātasyaikārthyatvāt subabhāvo varṇāt / anarthakāś tu prativarṇam arthānupalabdheḥ, varṇavyatyayāpāyopajānavikāreṣv arthadarśanāt //* “Phonemes

are meaningful. This is because a meaning is seen in the verbal root or the nominal stem or the affix or the indeclinable which consists only in a single phoneme; and because another meaning is understood if phonemes are transposed; and because there is no understanding of the meaning if phonemes are not perceived; and because the complex (*saṃghāta*) [of phonemes] is meaningful. Since the complex [of phonemes] has one meaning, there is no case-ending [applied] after [each of those] phonemes. On the other hand, [phonemes] are meaningless because the meaning is not understood phoneme by phoneme. For, the meaning is [still] perceived when phonemes are transposed (*vyatyaya*), dropped (*apāya*), added (*upajana*) or substituted (*vikāra*)."

- 4 *yathā tarhi rathāṅgāni vihr̥tāni pratyekam vrajikriyām praty asamarthāni bhavanti tatsamudāyaś ca rathaḥ samarthaḥ / evaṃ eṣāṃ varṇānām samudāyā arthavantaḥ, avayavā anarthakā iti //* "As, then, the disassembled (*vihr̥ta*) parts (*aṅga*) of a chariot lack the capacity individually (*pratyekam*) to effect the action of locomotion (*vrajikriyā*) but a chariot, which is the composite of these [parts], possesses [this] capacity. In the same way, the combination of these phonemes is meaningful, while [individual] parts are meaningless."
- 5 *Mahābhāṣya, Paspasāhnikā*, p. 1,6–11: *atha gaur ity atra kaḥ śabdaḥ / [...]* *yenocāritena sāsñālāṅgūlakakudakhuraviṣāṇinām saṃpratyayo bhavati sa śabdaḥ /* See Joshi (1986, 12–23), which is the full annotated translation, for further information.
- 6 Kaiyaṭa, a Grammarian in the eleventh century, explains in his commentary *Pradīpa* on the *Paspasāhnikā* of the *Mahābhāṣya* that this Patañjali's statement on *śabda* teaches *sphoṭa*. See Joshi (1986, 9–16,23).
- 7 *Mahābhāṣya, Paspasāhnikā*, p. 1,11–13: *atha vā pratītapadārthako loke dhvaniḥ śabda ity ucyate / tad yathā / śabdaṃ kuru / mā śabdaṃ kārṣīḥ / śabdakāryaṃ māṇavaka iti / dhvaniṃ kurvann evaṃ ucyate / tasmād dhvaniḥ śabdaḥ /* "Alternatively, sound (*dhvani*), of which the meaning of the word is [well-]known in the world, is called *śabda*. For example: "Make a sound" (*śabdaṃ kuru*), "Do not make a sound" (*mā śabdaṃ kārṣīḥ*), "This boy is noisy" (*śabdakāryaṃ māṇavakaḥ*)—a person who is making sound is said in this way. Therefore, *śabda* means sound."
- 8 *Mahābhāṣya*, on *Vārttika* 5, 1.1.70, p. 181,19–24: *evaṃ tarhi sphoṭaḥ śabdo dhvaniḥ śabdaguṇaḥ / katham / bheryāghātavat / tad yathā—bheryāghāto bherīm āhatya kaś cid viṃśatipadāni gacchati, kaś cit trimśat, kaś cic catvāriṃśat / sphoṭaś ca tāvān eva bhavati / dhvanikṛtā vṛddhiḥ // dhvaniḥ sphoṭaś ca śabdānām dhvanis tu khalu lakṣyate / alpo mahāṃś ca keṣāṃ cid, ubhayaṃ tatsvabhāvataḥ //* "If it is so, then *sphoṭa* is *śabda*, and sound is the property of *śabda*. [Question:] How is it possible? [Response:] Like the striker of the kettle-drum. For example, after the striker of the kettle-drum strikes it, some [sound] goes twenty steps, another [sound] goes thirty [steps], and another [sound] goes forty [steps]. But

sphoṭa is of the exactly same extent [in each case]. The increase is caused by sound [alone]. *Śabdā*s have sound and *sphoṭa*. As for sound, as is well-known, it is observed by some people as small and [by some people as] big. Both [sound and *sphoṭa*] are [established] by nature.”

- 9 *Vākyapadīya*, I.47: *vitarkitaḥ purā buddhyā kva cid arthe niveśitaḥ / karaṇebhyo vivṛttena dhvaninā so 'nugrhyate* // “The [word itself], which has been ascertained (*vitarkita*) by the intellect before [the utterance] and which has been made to reside (*niveśita*) in a particular meaning (i.e., a word-form is assigned to a particular meaning), is seized (*anu-grah-*) through sound which has been transformed (*vivṛtta*) by the speech organs.” Auto-commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*, I.47 (pp. 105,6–106,3): *karaṇebhyo vivṛttena iti / avikriyādharmakam hi śabdatattvaṃ dhvaniṃ vikriyādharmānam anu vikriyate / tac ca sūkṣme vyāpini dhvanau karaṇavyāpāreṇa pracīyamāne sthūlenābhraśamghātavad upalabhyena nādātmanā prāptavivartena tadvivartānukāreṇātyantam avivartamānam vivartamānam iva grhyate* // “Regarding ‘which has been transformed by the speech organs’ [in the verse]. Indeed, the reality of the word (*śabdatattva*) which is not characterized by the transformation (*vikriyā*) is transformed according to sound which is characterised by the transformation. Then when the subtle external sound, which pervades [the ether], is accumulated by the function of the [speech-] organ, by means of the gross bodily resonance (*nāda*) which has been transformed and which is the object of perception just like a cloud compacted [by the wind], the untransformable [word itself] is grasped as if it is transformed by imitating the [bodily resonance].”
- 10 Auto-commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*, I.76 (p. 142,1–3): *iha dvividho dhvaniḥ prākṛto vaikṛtaś ca / tatra prākṛto nāma yena vinā sphoṭarūpaṃ anabhivyaktaṃ na paricchidyate / vaikṛtaś tu yenābhivyaktaṃ sphoṭarūpaṃ punaḥ punar avicchedena pracitatarāṃ kālam upalabhyate* // “In this world, there are two kinds of sound, namely the primary sound and the secondary sound. Among these two, the primary [sound] is, indeed, that without which the nature of *sphoṭa* which is unmanifested is not delineated (*pari-chid-*). On the other hand, the secondary [sound] is that by which *sphoṭa*, which is already manifested, is perceived for a longer time, again and again without being interruption.” See Brough (1951, 36–41). Note that in some of my previous papers, I even differentiated the word *dhvani* here from *nāda*, while not in this book to make the argument simple.
- 11 In *Vākyapadīya*, I.101, Bhartṛhari refers to the subclassification of *nāda* too, namely *prākṛtanāda* and *vaikṛtanāda*, both of which are explained in the same way as in the case of *prākṛtadhvani* and *vaikṛtadhvani*. It is possible to say that *nāda* can be the concept of sound related to the body or pronunciation at the speech organ, namely for the speaker’s side, while *dhvani* can be to the outside the body or perception of the external world, namely for the hearer’s side. But I confess that I

cannot give clear distinction between *prākṛtadhvani* and *prākṛtanāda*, and between *vaikṛtadhvani* and *vaikṛtanāda*. We should also keep in mind that since Bhartṛhari introduces various alternative views, each term does not need to be consistent in its usage.

- 12 *Vākyapadīya*, I.82–84: *yathānuvākaḥ śloko vā soḍhatvam upagacchati / āvṛtyā na tu sa granthaḥ pratyāvṛtti nirūpyate // pratyayair anupākhyeyair grahaṇānugūṇais tathā / dhvaniprakāśite śabde svarūpam avadhāryate // nādair āhitabījāyām antyena dhvaninā saha / āvṛttoparipākāyām buddhau śabdo 'vadhāryate //*
 “For example, a chapter (*anuvāka*) or a verse [of the Vedas] come to the state of enduring [for memory] (*soḍhatva*) through repetition. But the [whole] book (*grantha*) is not grasped in each repetition. In the same way (just as the memory of a vedic verse is strengthened by its repetition), through the unanalysable cognitions dependent on the grasping (perception), the [word’s] own form is ascertained when the word is manifested by the sounds (*dhvani*). In the intellect into which the seeds are imparted by the bodily resonances (*nāda*) and which has reached maturity through repetition, the word is ascertained together with the final sound.”
- 13 *Vākyapadīya*, I.89–91: *yathaiva darśanaiḥ pūrvair dūrāt santamase 'pi vā / anyathākṛtya viśayam anyathaivādhyavasyati // vyajyamāne tathā vākye vākyābhivyaktihetubhiḥ / bhāgāvagraharūpeṇa pūrvam buddhiḥ pravartate // yathānupūrvīniyamo vikāre kṣīrabījayoḥ / tathaiva pratipattīṇām niyato buddhiḥ kramah //*
 “Just as when [an object is] in a distant place or in a dark place, one identifies completely otherwise after taking the object differently by previous experiences. In the same way, when a sentence is being manifested by the causes that manifest the sentence, initially the [unreal] cognition occurs in a form that is separated into parts. Just as the prior-posterior relation is fixed in the products of milk or a seed [namely, yogurt or rice grains], the sequence [of erroneously perceiving the word] is fixed in every hearer’s intellect.”
- 14 Auto-commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*, I.104 (pp.170,6–171,4): *iha ke cid ācāryā vyaktaṁ sphoṭaṁ saha jena dhvaninā sarvato dūravyāpinā prakāśasthānīyena gandhena yuktaṁ dravyaviśeṣam ivāvirbhāvakāla eva sambaddhaṁ manyante dhvaninā / yathaiva pradīpe ghaṭasamniṣṭāvayavaṁ praty upādānaṁ tejodravyaṁ tadāśritaś ca tadvikriyānuparivartī prakāśaḥ, ghaṇṭāyās cābhighātena vyaktatarau sphoṭanādaḥ sarveṣāṁ varṇānām abhiniṣpattau dharma iti //*
 “Here, some teachers think that the *sphoṭa*, manifested (*vyakta*) by the sound that arises along with it and spreading like light in all directions for some distance, just as certain substances arise simultaneously with their odour, is linked with it at the very moment of [the *sphoṭa*’s] manifestation. In case of the lamp, there is a fiery substance, which is the material cause (*upādāna*) [shining] on a [particular] part of the pot, and there is the light that depends on that, that changes (*anuparivartin*) by the transformation of the [material cause]. And, [in the same way], as a result of the striking of a bell,

both the *sphoṭa* and resonance [arise] in a very clear form, and [both] are a quality in the production of any phoneme.”

- 15 Iyer (1937) investigates the holders of impermanent *sphoṭa* (*anityasphoṭavādin*) in *Vākyapadīya*, I.102–06 (Iyer 1937, vv. 103–05).
- 16 See Bronkhorst (1991) for further information. Brough (1951, 44–45) explains this in relation to the premodern concepts of *jātisphoṭa* and *vyaktisphoṭa*.
- 17 Scharf (1996, 23, 35–36) shows the Grammarians’ concept of *ākṛti* on the basis of the *Mahābhāṣya*.
- 18 Auto-commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*, I.23 (p. 56,3–4): *varṇāvayavāvagrahaprāptasamskārābhiḥ kramotpannabhir buddhibhiḥ pūrvam agrhītā, avyaktaṃ grhītā vā samskṛte 'ntaḥkaraṇe caramavijñānenākṛtiḥ paricchidyate* / “The generic form, which is previously not grasped or just vaguely grasped by the cognitions which arise sequentially and possess the latent impressions that have been attained by the forms of the phonemes as parts, is discriminated by the final cognition in the predisposed internal organ (i.e., the mind).”
- 19 In the *Vākyapadīya*, I.68–69, and in its auto-commentary, Bhartṛhari gives various views on *jāti* in relation to *śabdasvarūpa*.
- 20 See Iyer (1966) and Biardeau (1958) for a full translation of the *Sphoṭasiddhi*.
- 21 *Vṛttikāragrantha*, 1.1.3–5, p. 38,13: *pūrvavarṇajanitasamskārasahito 'ntyo varṇo vācakah (pratyāyakah)* / “The last phoneme, accompanied by the latent impression produced from the previous phonemes, conveys the meaning directly.”
- 22 The following is a portion of Maṇḍana’s criticisms against the idea that after each perception of individual phonemes, there is a unitary apprehension that makes the sequence understood. Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 8 (p. 66,4–p. 69,3): *tathā hi svato varṇā nityatayā vibhutayā ca na deśanibandhanam nāpi kālanibandhanam parāparabhāvam anupatantīti prakhyānanibandhana eṣa samupāśrīyate / tac cedam advayam akramam, yadviparivartinas te 'rthapratyayahetavaḥ / na cedam pūrvopalabdhisambandhinīm parāparatām gocarayati, varṇāvalambitayā tadupalabdhīnām aviśayīkaraṇena; na cāsamīhitāvadhyavadhimadbhāvaṃ paurvaparyam pratyetur arhati; na caikasmin nānāvarṇāvayavātmani pade bhinnam avadhyavadhimadbhāvaṃ apekṣitum kṣamate; prativarṇopalambhanaprabhāvītāni ca bhāvanābījāni kāmam saṃhatīsamāsādanād ekam anekāvalambi smaraṇam janayeyuḥ, tāvatā caritārthebhyo nāparo varṇātmasu viśeṣo labhyate* / “To explain, phonemes, as being eternal and all-pervading by nature [according to you Mīmāṃsakas], do not follow the prior-posterior relation caused by either locations or time. So it is admitted that this [prior-posterior relation of phonemes] is caused by [a single] apprehension [that comes in the end]. But this [apprehension] is non-dual and non-sequential, those [phonemes] transforming (*viparivartin*) into which are the causes of the understanding of the referent. Also this [apprehension] does not have as its

domain priority and posteriority of the preceding perceptions [of each phoneme]. For, as being resting upon [those] phonemes, it does not have the perceptions of the [phonemes] as its scope. Also [it] cannot recognize the prior-posterior relation without requiring the relation of a limit [in the form of time or space] and what is limited [by such a limit]. Nor can it require the relation of a limit and what is limited, that is distinct (split), in a single word [even though it is] consisting of multiple phonemes as its parts. It is acceptable that the seeds, i.e., the impressions produced from the perception of each phoneme, give rise to the single recollection (= apprehension) which is dependent on the multiple [phonemes], because they attain (*samāsādana*) combination (*saṃhatī*); [but] the other distinguishing character[, namely the capacity to make the sequence understood,] is not attained in the phonemes themselves from those [impressions], which have [already] fulfilled their purpose in this much.”

- 23 *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 13: *na cāntyavarṇamātrasya puraḥ sambandhavedanam / akṣavartmātivṛttatvāt saṃskārasya na tadvataḥ* // “Neither can the final phoneme be known before [learning] the relation [between the word and its object]. Nor can be the latent impression together with the [final phoneme], because [the latent impression] is beyond the range of the sense organ (= it is not the object of direct perception).” Here the important premise for Maṇḍana is that the word, from which a particular referent is understood, must be the object of direct perception. See the following section for the matter of direct perception in the *sphoṭa* theory.
- 24 *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 30: *utpattivādinō varṇāḥ kāmāṃ santu prabhedināḥ / na tv asādhāraṇas teṣāṃ bhedo 'rthajñānakāraṇam* // “Let phonemes be differentiated [each other] for the one who insists on [phonemes] being produced. However, their unique (= always new) distinction cannot be the cause of the understanding of the meaning.”
- 25 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 32, pp. 250,3–251,2: *tasmād eka eva śabdātmā artheṣu saṅketena niyujyate loke pratyayakāle cāśrīyate; anyathā vakṭrbhede durnivāraḥ pratyayaḥ syāt* / “Thus, one and the same word-body (*śabdātman* = *śabdasvarūpa* = *sphoṭa*) is connected to different objects by the linguistic convention, and [that single word-body] is depended on at the time of understanding [the meaning] in the world. Otherwise, the understanding cannot be avoided even though the speakers are different.” The following verse, which appears in the criticism of Kumārila, shows Maṇḍana’s attitude toward the understanding of the word meaning:
Sphoṭasiddhi, v. 26: *arthasyādhigamo na rte padarūpāvadhāraṇāt / tad arthabodhād yadi ca vyaktam anyonyasaṃśrayaḥ* // “The understanding of the meaning is not [possible] without ascertainment of the form of a word. And if the [ascertainment of the form of a word] is caused by the understanding of the meaning, there is clearly the fault of mutual dependence.”

- 26 *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 32: *na hetuphalabhāvo 'ṅgaṃ samutthāpakacetasām / arthabuddher anāśritya sanketaññānakālayoḥ* // “Since [it is] not resorted at the time of [learning] the linguistic convention and of the cognition [of the word meaning], the cause-effect relationship of the [speaker’s] mind[-moments] which make arisen [phonemes] is not the essential element (*aṅga*) for the understanding of the meaning.”
- Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 32, pp. 248,1–249,2: *na khalu samutthāpakacittakāryakāraṇatā tatkrto vā svabhāvabhedo 'rthapratyayāṅgam / jñāpakatve hi svavijñānam apekṣeta / drśyate ca tirohitavyavahitaprayuktāc chabddād arthajñānam / na ca tatra samutthāpakacittakāryakāraṇatām kaś cana niścetum arhati / vaktrekatve ca niścite sā niścīyeta / na cāntareṇa śabdajñānam tanniścayaḥ* / “As is well known, neither the causal relation of the mind[-moments of the speaker] which causes [phonemes] to arise nor the intrinsic distinction [of phonemes], which are made by the [causal relation], is the essential element for the understanding of the meaning. For, if they make known [the meaning of the word], there would be expectation of their own cognition. However, the cognition of the object (meaning) is experienced from the word which is used [by people who are] in a distance or hidden place. But in that case, no one can ascertain the causal relation of the mind[-moments of the speaker] which causes [phonemes] to arise. But it can be ascertained if the identity of the speaker would be ascertained. And it is not ascertained without the cognition of the word.”
- 27 The investigation of error occupies an important position in Maṇḍana’s philosophy. Another of his works, the *Vibhramaviveka*, is directly addressing the structure of erroneous cognitions, as its title suggests.
- 28 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 21, p. 150,3–p. 152,2: *nimittam evedam īdrśaṃ śabdatattvopalabdher yad viparyāsayad eva śabdam upalambhayatīti, niyatasārūpyatvāt; na hi śabdāntaraviṣayadhvanivilakṣaṇā dhvanayo 'nye tasya vyaktau naḥ santi, yenāviparyāso 'vasīyeta / ata eva ca tulyarūpaḥ sarvapratiṭipattīñāṃ viparyāsaḥ, tannimittasya samānatvāt* / “It is this trigger[, namely sounds (*dhvani*)], as described, of the perception of the reality of the word (*śabdatattva*), which creating error causes the word to be perceived. This is because the similarity [of sounds] is always there. For, the other sounds, [similar but] different from the sounds having “another word“[, namely a particular *sphoṭa*,] as their object, are not in my view for the purpose of the manifestation of that [reality of the word, namely that *sphoṭa*], so that non-erroneous cognition could be ascertained. And exactly because of this, all the perceivers have the erroneous cognition in the same form. This is because the cause of the [erroneous cognition] is the same.” Sound /a/ of the word *aśvaḥ* is similar but different from that of *agniḥ* or of the sentence *aśvam ānaya*. Such similarity causes the erroneous cognition that it is made of phonemes.

- 29 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 22, p. 167,1–5: *tathā hi—bhedanānvīyamānam* (emended from *bhedanānanvīyamānam*) *api maṇikṛpāṇadarpaṇādiṣu tattvasya bhedavirodhāt tattvapratyayena samutsāritanikhilabhedaṃ mukham avasīyate / tathā dīrghādibhedānugame 'pi varṇātmā pratyabhijñābalena vidhūtabheda eko 'vagamyate, tathā padam api svapratyayāvagamya mānaikasvabhāvaṃ kiṃcidbhedaparāmarśe 'py abhinnaṃ niścīyate /* “To explain, the face, even though connected to different [appearances], is ascertained as that all of whose variety has been expelled (*samutsārita*) by the cognition of [its] reality, since the reality contradicts the varieties [reflected] on [the surface such as] jewel, sword, or mirror. In the same way, in spite of its being accompanied by such variety as [its being] long are understood, the single phoneme itself whose differences are abandoned (*vidhūta*) is understood by force of recognition. Likewise the word, whose single nature is understood through the cognition of its [own form], is also determined as being undivided, even though there is awareness of some kind of variety.”
- 30 *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 23: *pratyakṣajñānaniyatā vyaktāvyaktāvabhāsītā / mānāntareṣu grahaṇam atha vā naiva hi grahaḥ //* “To manifest both vague and clear [objects] is restricted to perceptual cognition. In the other means of knowledge [such as inference] the object is either grasped or not.”
- 31 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 3ab, pp. 10,1–11,1: *kiṃ punar idaṃ padaṃ nāma? śabdaḥ / kaḥ punar iha śabdo 'bhipretaḥ? kiṃ varṇāḥ? nety āha / api tu—[Sphoṭasiddhi, v. 3ab:] arthāvasāyaprasavanimittaṃ śabda iṣyate // yathoktaṃ “yenocāritena [...]” ityādi /* “But what is the word (*pada*)? It is *śabda*. What kind of *śabda* is intended here then? Is it phonemes? No, *śabda* is rather regarded as the trigger of giving rise to the ascertainment of the object (*artha*)—as [Patañjali] taught [in the form] that ‘[*Śabda* is] that which, when it has been uttered[, gives rise to the cognition of those [entities] which have a dewlap, tail, hump, hooves, and horns].’”
- 32 As we saw in the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 26, Maṇḍana clearly states that the understanding of the meaning is not possible without ascertaining the word-form (*padarūpa*), and his *sphoṭa* theory is how we get this word-form, namely *sphoṭa*, in the process of perception.
- 33 One should note, however, that Śaṅkara discusses the *sphoṭa* while commenting to the aphorism “The universe bursts forth from scripture,” *ataḥ prabhavāt* (*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, 1.3.28), and also the Sphoṭavādin there concludes that “the universe, which is the object of denotation, arises from the speech, whose nature is *sphoṭa*,” *nityāc chabdāt sphoṭarūpād abhidhāyakāt [...] jagad abhidheyabhūtaṃ prabhavati* (ibid.), which reminds us of the Śaiva scholars’ way of understanding the *sphoṭa*.
- 34 For this particular discussion on the sentence-sphoṭa, I have not yet found other texts prior to him. It might be either Jayanta’s invention or it can be the case

that there is some scholar who discussed the sentence-sphoṭa between Maṇḍana and Jayanta. Note that Joshi (1967, 70–72) refers to the *Nyāyamañjarī* when he mentions the Naiyāyika opponents in the *Sphoṭanirṇaya*. When did the confusion of phonemes and sounds happen? It might be the case that Jayanta stands as the turning point.

- 35 This Brough's statement is criticized by Bronkhorst (1991) and Pinchard (2011, p. 462, ll. 21–31).
- 36 Sanderson (2004, p. 242, l. 10–p. 243, l. 3; p. 293, l. 4–p. 294, l. 2). Brunner (1974) is the first scholarly work and summary of the *Netratantra*.
- 37 *Netratantra*, vol. 2, p. 287–88, vv. 62cd–63: *dhvanirūpo yadā sphoṭas tv adṛṣṭāc chivavigrahāt // prasaraty ativegena dhvanināpūrayaṇ jagat / sa nādo devadeveśaḥ proktaś caiva sadāśivaḥ* // “When *sphoṭa*, whose nature is sound, flows forth with great force from the form of Śiva, which is unseen, filling the universe with sound, it is called *nāda*, O Master of the gods, and Sadāśiva.” See Padoux (1990, 93, 96, and 97–98, fn. 33).
- 38 See Sanderson (2007, 398–401).
- 39 *Uddyota* on the *Netratantra*, vv. 62cd–63, vol. 2, p. 288, ll. 3–10: *sphuṭati abhivyajyate asmāt viśvaḥ śabdagrāmaḥ iti sphoṭaḥ śabdabrahma, ata eva dhvanirūpaḥ śabdanasvabhāvaḥ, adṛṣṭād iti anākṛter draṣṭrekarūpāt paranādāmarśātmanaḥ prakāśānandaghanāt śivasvarūpād ativegena avyucchinadrutanadīghoṣavat prasarati / kīḍṛk / dhvaninā ghaṇṭānuraṇanarūpeṇa nādāntena jagat viśvam āpūrayan āmarśanena ātmasātkurvan* / “Sphoṭa, from which the entire (*viśva*) totality of speech-units is split open (*sphuṭati*), [namely] becomes manifest, is *śabdabrahman*. For this very reason, [such *sphoṭa*], whose nature is sound (*dhvani*), [namely] verbalization (*śabdana*), flows forth with great force, [namely] just like uninterruptedly-rapid roaring of a river from the nature of Śiva that consists of nothing but (*ghana*) light and bliss, who is unseen (*adṛṣṭa*), [namely] formless, whose nature is one with the perceiver (*draṣṭṛ*) (so he cannot be seen), [in other words] whose nature is representation of the highest resonance (*paranāda*). [Question:] Of what kind [is the *sphoṭa*]? [Response:] [*Sphoṭa*, which is] filling the world or the universe, [namely] assimilating (internalizing) [the universe] in itself by means of sound (*dhvani*), [namely] by means of ‘the end of *nāda*’ (*nādānta*) in the form of reverberation (*anuraṇana*) of a bell.”
- 40 See *Sphoṭanirṇaya*, 57–60. See also Iyer (1947, 12–15, 134; 1966, 10, 21–25). Filliozat (1984, 139–140) introduces these two definitions, referring them to the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* doxography of the Mādhava (fourteenth century).
- 41 In other words, according to Bhartṛhari, *śabda* surely has the nature of making an object understood (*arthapratyāyakatva*); but when he talks of *sphoṭa*, the focus is the manifestation of *śabda*.

- 42 It is found first in the *Vākyapadīya*, I.134, pp. 213–21, and there is no trace of it before Bhartṛhari.
- 43 *Vākyapadīya*, I.134 Jha, Ņa, Ṭa, pp. 219–20: *seyam ākīryamāṇāpi nityam āgantukair malaiḥ / antyā kaleva somasya nātyantam abhibhūyate // tasyām dṛṣṭasvarūpāyām adhikāro nivartate / puruṣe ṣoḍaśakale tām āhur amṛtām kalām // prāptoparāgarūpā sā viplavair anubandhibhiḥ / vaikharī sattvamātreva guṇair na vyavakīryate //* This [*paśyantī*] is never conquered, even though it is always affected by adventitious impurities, just like the last digit of the moon. When its nature is perceived, one is freed from the [karmic] duty. [People] say that such [last digit] in the soul consisting in sixteen parts is the immortal part. It is in the form of being colored by adventitious impurities. But *vaikharī* is not affected by the attributes, as if it were the pure existence.
- 44 Torella (2009) teaches the difference of the attitudes between Somānanda and Utpaladeva. While Somānanda criticized Bhartṛhari's metaphysics of linguistic monism, Utpaladeva is more in favor of Bhartṛhari's view. Nonetheless, both are against his theory of *sphoṭa* (See fn.20 of Torella 2009). See Nemec (2011) and Torella (2014) for the studies of the *Śivadrṣṭi*. For the previous scholarly works on *sphoṭa* and *paśyantī*, see Filliozat (1984); Padoux (1990, 166–222).
- 45 *Śivadrṣṭi*, 2.60–61ab: *sphoṭasyāsatyarūpair hi padādyair vyaṅgyatā katham / paśyantyāḥ satyarūpāyā asatyair vyaṅgyatā na ca // tādr̥gvyañjanasāpekṣā sā na kiṃ cana jāyate /* “How would it be possible for *sphoṭa* to be manifested by the word and so on whose nature is unreal? And *paśyantī* in the form of real is not manifested by unreal things. Such like she (*paśyantī*) which needs a means of manifestation (*vyañjana*) does not become anything.”
- 46 This is different from Helārāja's stance in his commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*. Helārāja (ca. 980 CE) is a Kashmirian Grammarian who explains *sphoṭa* as well as the ontological hierarchy of speech. He follows Bhartṛhari in the understanding of the *sphoṭa*, and does not give it the status of the highest reality. Also the understanding of the intuitive speech equated with the highest speech (*parā vāc*) is unchanged from Bhartṛhari's explanation. Indeed, the fact that Helārāja refers to the *sphoṭa* and *paśyantī* in the different chapters of the *Vākyapadīya* (*sphoṭa* in the Jāṭisamuddeśa and *paśyantī* in the Dravyasamuddeśa, both in the third book) shows us that he recognizes the difference between *sphoṭa* and *paśyantī*. In Kashmir in almost the same period, Jayanta, Somānanda, Utpaladeva and Helārāja had different views on the *sphoṭa* theory. Their common attitude is the reference to three levels of speech, which is, as far as I know, not discussed anymore outside Kashmir before premodern times.
- 47 Nāgeśa composed three versions, with different levels of abridgment or prolixity, of his *Mañjūṣā*: *Paramalaghumañjūṣā*, *Laghusiddhāntamañjūṣā*, and *Mañjūṣā*. See Coward and Kunjunni Raja (1990, 323).

- 48 There is another *Sphoṭasiddhi* composed by a sixteenth- to seventeenth-century philosopher Bharata Miśra. His approach is different from that of the premodern Grammarians. See Pinchard (2011) for further information.
- 49 According to Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa, there are eight categories of *sphoṭa*: [individual] phoneme-sphoṭa (*varṇasphoṭa*), [individual] word-sphoṭa (*padasphoṭa*), [individual] sentence-sphoṭa (*vākyasphoṭa*), [individual] indivisible word-sphoṭa (*akhaṇḍapadasphoṭa*), [individual] indivisible sentence-sphoṭa (*akhaṇḍavākyasphoṭa*), and also a universal-sphoṭa (*jātisphoṭa*) for each of phoneme, word, and sentence (i.e., *varṇajātisphoṭa*, *padajātisphoṭa*, *vākyajātisphoṭa*). See Seneviratne (2015) and Bronkhorst (2005) for Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa's and Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita's classification of *sphoṭa*.
- 50 Those premodern Grammarians quote frequently Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* as their ground for the argument, but they have almost no remark on Maṇḍana. Rather exceptionally, Seneviratne (2015, 5) points out that Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa has the identical half verse with the *Sphoṭasiddhi*, v. 23, though he does not directly refer to Maṇḍana.
- 51 See Cardona (1976, 303): "In the view of such later Pāṇinīyas the term *varṇa* does not mean 'sound unit' in this context; it denotes a unit lower than a word, namely a base or an affix." See also Bronkhorst (2005, 5, fn.11).
- 52 *Sphoṭanirṇaya*, v. 63 (5): *ghaṭenetyādiṣu na hi prakṛtyādibhidā sthitā/vasnasādāv ivehāpi sampramoho hi drśyate//* "Indeed, in [the words] such as *ghaṭena*, division into [the smaller units] such as a stem is not established. This is because confusion (*sampramoha*) [of how to divide it] is seen even in this [word *ghaṭena*], just as [there is confusion of how to divide] in [the words] such as *vas* or *nas* (the inflected forms of *yusmad* and *asmad*)." See Joshi (1967, 138–40).
- 53 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭanirṇaya* v. 64 (6): *hare 'va viṣṇo 'vetyādaḥ padayoh 'eṇaḥ padāntād ati' ity ekādeśe sati na tadvibhāgaḥ sujñānaḥ /* "When a single substitution replaces [the beginning and ending vowels of] two words in [the sentences] such as 'O Hari, protect [me]' or 'O Viṣṇu, protect [me]' on the basis of A 6.1.109, division of th[ose sentences into the words] is not easily known." *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 6.1.109: *eṇaḥ padāntād ati* "A single vowel /e/ or /o/ replaces /e/ or /o/ which occurs as the last vowel of a word, when a short vowel /a/ follows it." See Joshi (1967, 150–51).
- 54 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭanirṇaya* v. 64 (6): *vastutaḥ padaiḥ padārthabodhavad vākyena vākyārthabodha iti padārthaśaktiḥ padeṣv iva vākyārthaśaktir vākye 'bhyupeyeti padasphoṭavākyasphoṭau vyavasthitau /* "In reality, just as the word meanings are understood by words, the sentence meaning is understood by a sentence. Therefore, just as the capacity [to denote] the word-meanings is [admitted] in the words, the capacity [to denote] the sentence meaning is to be admitted in a sentence. In this way, a word-sphoṭa and sentence-sphoṭa have been established."

- 55 Auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭanirṇaya* v. 65 (7): *uttaravarṇapratyakṣasamaye 'vyavahitottaratvasaṃbandhena upasthitapūrvavarṇavattvaṃ tathā taduttarapratyakṣakāla upasthitaviśiṣṭatadvarṇavattvaṃ tasmin sugrahaṃ iti tā dṛśānupūrvīghaṭitapadatvasyeva vākyatvasyāpi sugrahatvāt* // “This is because we can easily understand that at the time of perceiving the subsequent phonemes, [the subsequent phoneme] is accompanied by the preceding phoneme which is brought [to the mind], through the relation of uninterrupted succession; in the same way, at the time of perceiving [another (third)] phoneme subsequent to that, the [third phoneme] is accompanied by that [second] phoneme specified [with the first phoneme] which have been brought [to the mind]; and accordingly, just as we can easily grasp that it is a word which consists of such a sequence [of phonemes], [it is the same] even for a sentence.” See Joshi (1967, 168–70).
- 56 Joshi (1967, 79): “The *Vākyasphoṭa* theory assumes that sentence alone is the conveyor of meaning, but it does not maintain categorically that the constituents of sentence have no meaning at all. According to it, it is possible to assign some meaning to the components on the basis of structural analysis. The main implication of the theory is that the meaning of word is always contextual, and no study of meaning apart from a complete sentence can be taken seriously. In other words, the words have meaning only when they form a part of sentence.”
- 57 Kaunḍa Bhaṭṭa quotes *Vākyapadīya*, v. I.73 (*Sphoṭanirṇaya*, v. 66): *pade na varṇā vidyante varṇeṣv avayavā na ca / vākyāt padānām atyantam praviveko na kaś cana* // “There are neither phonemes in words nor parts in phonemes. There is no absolute distinction of words from a sentence.”
- 58 See *Sphoṭanirṇaya*, v. 69, where the following verse of Bopadeva, according to Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita’s *Śabdakaustubha*, is quoted: *śakyatva iva śaktatve jāter lāghavam īkṣyatām / aupādhiko vā bhedo 'stu varṇānām tāramandavat* // “It must be regarded that there is simplicity [in postulating] the universal of a denotative capacity (*śaktatva*), just as [we can assume the universal] of the nature of the denoted [objects]. Alternatively, let the distinction be caused by the imposed attributes, just like loudness or lowness of phonemes”
- 59 See the auto-commentary on the *Sphoṭanirṇaya*, v. 72.

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