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## The Notion of Linguistic Convention (*saṃketa*) in the *Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa* 427.22–431.9

Małgorzata B. GLINICKA

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to define the nature and the role of linguistic convention in the *Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa* (PKM, “The Lotus-like Sun [revealing] Objects of Valid Cognition”), Prabhācandra’s (11th cent. CE) commentary on Māṇikyanandin’s *Parīkṣāmukha* (PĀ, “Introduction to [Logical] Analysis”), with particular reference to PĀ 3.100–101 (PKM 427.22–431.9). The problem of linguistic convention has been thoroughly discussed in Jaina philosophical literature, since it is one of the major factors of understanding the relationship between a word and its meaning, as well as a word and an object signified by the word. In order to reconstruct Prabhācandra’s view on this subject I will focus on the nature of this relationship – as presented in the PKM – that is characterised as “conventional”, having regard to the existing discussions in Jaina philosophy of language and trying to assess whether they are reflected in Prabhācandra’s deliberations. In this particular approach to the problem of linguistic convention, an important role is played by what is called *yogyatā* (“power”, “ability”, “compatibility of meaning”), of which an additional element of description is the adjective *sahaja* (“inherent”, “innate”). Tracing instances of the contextualisation of this concept in close connection with the problem of linguistic convention in Jaina philosophical literature and situating the whole complex issue against the background of other interdependent aspects of this nuanced and multifaceted theory of meaning will form the pivotal part of the analysis.

**Keywords:** Prabhācandra, Māṇikyanandin, Jainism, meaning, *saṃketa*, *sahaja-yogyatā*, *śabda*, *artha*, *vastu*

Małgorzata B. GLINICKA, Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland; [mglinicka@iksio.pan.pl](mailto:mglinicka@iksio.pan.pl);  0000-0001-6764-7085



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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper<sup>1</sup> is to define the nature and the role of linguistic convention (*saṃketa*) in the *Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa* (PKM), Prabhācandra's (11th cent. CE) commentary on Māṇikyanandin's *Parīkṣāmukha* (PĀ, 9th cent. CE), with particular (but not exclusive) focus on PĀ 3.100–101 (PKM 427.22–431.9[22]). I confront the relevant PKM passages with Prabhācandra's other work, the *Nyāya-kumuda-candra* (NKC), a commentary on Akalaṅka's *Laghīyas-traya* (LT, 8th cent. CE), when necessary.

Prabhācandra's reflections on linguistic convention are part of an extensive section on language and meaning, which includes the following subsections: construction-free and construction-filled awareness (PKM 27.8–36.12, 69.4–70.6), *apoha* and *sphoṭa* theories (PKM 431.23–458.4), the meaning of words and sentences (PKM 458.5–460.23), the refutation of *anvitābhīdhāna* and *abhihitānvaya* theories (PKM 461.1–465.9), and relation between speech and epistle/ complex text (PKM 684.16–687.12, 689.9–692.27).

The English term “convention” is ambiguous. It is associated with a kind of prearranged order of assigning names to objects, a form of agreement. However, the issue – in the case of all approaches that acknowledge linguistic convention – is whether this order follows from genuinely existing connections between language and objects (meanings) or is just arbitrary. This raises other questions: Is it possible to assess to what extent linguistic features and processes are natural? What is the relationship between language constituted by convention – defined in different ways – and the valid cognition of the real thing? Can such language be a carrier of truth? In the Jaina perspective which I would like to discuss, the term *saṃketa*, rendered as “linguistic convention”<sup>2</sup>, takes on a narrower meaning. As the result of cognitive decision based on an agreement, it is used to shape interpersonal communication – regarding the perception of objects in the external world and influencing the thoughts (mentations) associated with these objects – as well as to convey and understand the content of the scriptures; it does not concern the subtleties of communication style but rather relies on considering meanings based on the syntactic structure of the statement and its constituent parts, also sensitised and particularised by context (which in itself must be referred to and interpreted in a specific way). In an attempt to understand the mechanism of conventionalisation, it is worth considering whether linguistic conventions *constitute* or *create* the meanings of words, sentences and larger linguistic wholes

<sup>1</sup> This article is a revised version of the paper I presented during 19th World Sanskrit Conference in Kathmandu, 26–30 June 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Rendered after BALCEROWICZ (2008: 17, 32, 34, 104, 122), BALCEROWICZ and POTTER (2013: 165, 167, 210).

or merely *ascribe*<sup>3</sup> meaning to them (and finally *stabilise*<sup>4</sup> them). And if we look at the issue from the point of view of utility, are collective discoveries about the meaning of language accessible to all members of a community (who does convention serve)? How do they influence the creation of collective and individual associations? And finally: Does linguistic convention become legitimised through an evolving shared opinion that has been formed and widely established over time or does it need authentication by a concrete authoritative person? And then, does the image of an authoritative person also evolve, which would influence changes to the rules and requirements of conventionalisation patterns?

All these questions inevitably arise when examining this issue from a Jaina perspective encounters the assumptions of Jaina theory of meaning discussed in various texts. When the Jainas speak of linguistic convention, they refer to the relation between language and the realm of objects, and the overarching philosophical problem is to explore the nature of this relation as well as the ontological and epistemological consequences of each of the options considered. Going backwards, it was Siddhasena Divākara (6th cent. CE) who exposes in the *Dvātrīṃśika* (*Guṇavacana* part, DT) that the word or the term may have more than one meaning.<sup>5</sup> Charlotte KRAUSE (1948: 235–236) notes that Siddhasena uses the word *guṇa* in such a way that it reflects its conventional (poetical) meaning, i.e. “virtue” (and other synonymous equivalents), or its technical meaning, i.e. “quality”.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes, as KRAUSE (1948: 235–236) underlines, these two meanings are cleverly combined, creating a new dimension of understanding. The same applies to the word *śrī* that may mean “wealth”, “fortune” as well as the name “Lakṣmī” or – as KRAUSE (1948: 244 n. 1; ref. to DT 5.9) suggests – it may refer to the “Śrī’s avatāra as Rukmiṇī”<sup>7</sup> (another

<sup>3</sup> The term “ascription” with reference to language and, particularly, to meaning has been used e.g. in OETKE (2012).

<sup>4</sup> The issue of the stabilisation of meanings has been undertaken by Stuart HALL (1997: 21) with reference to codes. Stéphane ROBERT (2008: 55–92) considers the “principles of variation and stabilisation” of the meanings of words.

<sup>5</sup> The *Guṇavacana* has been edited and translated by Charlotte KRAUSE (1948: 236–252). I base my references and analysis on this particular edition. Cf. MALVANIA and SONI (2007: 183).

<sup>6</sup> KRAUSE (1948) renders the term *guṇa* as “Qualities” (DT 5.7, 10, 12, 15, 20, 22, pp. 237–240; trans. pp. 243, 244, 245, 246, 247–248), “Qualities” (DT 5.1, 4, p. 236; trans. pp. 241, 242), “virtue” (DT 5.19, p. 239; trans. p. 247, lit. *guṇavatī*, “virtuous”).

<sup>7</sup> E.g. *śrīr āśriteṣu vinayābhuydayaḥ suteṣu buddhir nayeṣu ripu-vāsa-grheṣu tejah* | (DT 5.2ab); after KRAUSE (1948: 236; 241–242): “wealth”.  
*avaśyaṃ kartavyaḥ śriyam abhilaṣatā pakṣa-pāṭo guṇeṣu prasannāyām tasyām katham iva ca na te lālanīyā bhveyuh* | (DT 5.7 ab); after KRAUSE (1948: 237; 243): “Fortune”.  
*na tvēvaṃ tair guru-paribhavaḥ spṛṣṭa-pūrvo yathāyam śrīs te rājann urasi ramate saty abhāmāsa-patnī* | (DT 5.9 cd); after KRAUSE (1948: 237; 244): “Śrī”.

word of this kind is *lakṣmī*<sup>8</sup> etc.). KRAUSE (1948: 235) calls this rhetorical device “occasional paranomasia” and emphasises that it was used by the author of the *Dvātrīṃśika* in order to enter into polemic with the Vaiśeṣika. In this example, both meanings presupposed and considered simultaneously provide an integral, multidimensional semantic whole.

The confrontation with polisemy of this kind (which is linked to issues such as vagueness and ambiguity)<sup>9</sup> opens up a new field of associations and allows many other questions about the nature of language (in this context, it is primarily about philosophical language and non-philosophical language subjected to philosophical analysis) to be asked, for example: What accounts for its various peculiarities and eccentricities?<sup>10</sup> There are other issues related to this subject: the conditions and limitations of language creation and the evolution of linguistic creativity (through modifying language paradigms, neology etc.), the rules for choosing the meaning of words and complex statements (and therefore a certain arbitrariness), the possibilities and limits of using conventional meaning to reveal the intended content.

The problem of linguistic convention was also raised in Akalaṅka’s *Pramāṇa-saṅgraha* (PSa) 7.64 and Siddharṣigaṇi’s *Nyāyāvatāra-vivṛti* (NAV, 9/10th cent. CE)<sup>11</sup> 1.8, 4.3–4.4, 29.18, 27.<sup>12</sup> Akalaṅka places his reflections in the context of the scriptures (*pravacana*),<sup>13</sup> Siddharṣigaṇi – in the context of considerations regarding conceptual and non-conceptual cognition (e.g. at what point in the

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*anyonyāvekṣayā strī bhavati guṇavatī prāyaśo vipṛutā vā  
loka-pratyakṣam etat kṣiti-viṣamatayā cañcalā śrīr yathāsīt |* (DT 5.19 ab); after KRAUSE (1948: 239; 247): “Śrī”.

<sup>8</sup> See DT 5.5 and 5.18, trans. “Lakṣmī”; DT 5.6, trans. “Fortune”. After KRAUSE (1948: 237, 239; 242–243, 246–247).

<sup>9</sup> Polysemy, vagueness and ambiguity are discussed in this juxtaposition in DUNBAR (2001), GRUDZIŃSKA (2011), HABER and POESIO (2024). A valuable analysis of the problem of polysemy in a broader philosophical context is to be found in LIU (2025) and ODROWAŻ-SYPNIEWSKA (2023).

<sup>10</sup> The phrase “linguistic eccentricities” has been used e.g. in BROCK (1988).

<sup>11</sup> The commentary on the Siddhasena Mahāmāti’s *Nyāyāvatāra* (NV, 8th cent. CE). Dating given according to BALCEROWICZ (2005–2006: 14 n. 21). Cf. BALCEROWICZ (2016a: 993–1039).

<sup>12</sup> BALCEROWICZ (2008: 16–17, 340–341; 32–35, 359–362; 104–105, 449–450; 121–122; 470–471). According to BALCEROWICZ (2001: 385), “Siddharṣigaṇi explicitly states that to determine the truth-value of an utterance we have to take into account at least the intention of the speaker and the linguistic convention, beside the denoter-denotatum relation.” Simultaneously, BALCEROWICZ (2001: 385) suggests that other “additional factors” are possible, referring to the passages of the NAV and *Śyād-vāda-māñjarī*.

<sup>13</sup> The following question is raised in PSa 7.64 (pp. 116–117): *puruṣātīśayo jñeyo vipralambhī kim iṣyate? samāna-pariṇāmārthe sañketāc chabda-vṛttitah*. “Why are the excellent qualities of a man that cannot be cognised accepted as deceptive? Because of linguistic convention with regard to an object whose modifications are similar, due to the functioning of words.”

course of perception and by what means does the recognition of an object occur and the object become associated with a name?); as well as in the light of the Jaina ontology of substance (*dravya*), which is associated with qualities (*guṇa*) and modes (*pariyaya*) (see TS 5.38, p. 132), and therefore certain phenomena resulting from the variable configuration of manifestations are still not enough to be associated with linguistic characteristics or description. Siddharṣiṅgaṇin realises that

[...] [certain] momentary or indescribable transient occurrences of a substance are inexpressible, inasmuch as it is impossible to express [them], if there are no means of grasping the linguistic convention [relating them and the linguistic units denoting them] (NAV 29.27).<sup>14</sup>

Reflection on linguistic convention in Jaina philosophy should also be considered against the background of the method of four standpoints (*nikṣepa-vāda*), the method of viewpoints (*naya-vāda*) and the method of the seven-fold modal description (*sapta-bhaṅgī*),<sup>15</sup> because all these methods set the framework for manifold referring to a given object – grasped, ideated and named differently in non-identical situations and contexts. Due to the modes of this diverse framework, the linguistic convention itself takes on a different meaning and scope of application. As BALCEROWICZ (2001: 379; 2003: 37) underlines, these three approaches are intrinsically linked to the theory of the multidimensionality of reality (*anekānta-vāda*). According to this theory, every object – with a complex structure that comprises substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*) and mode (*pariyāya*) (cf. PSā 1.10,<sup>16</sup> TS 5.37–41,<sup>17</sup> etc.), subject to continuous metamorphoses (*pariṇāma*) (TS 5.42<sup>18</sup>) – can be found in an infinite number of relational configurations with other objects, which contributes to infinite possibilities of description.<sup>19</sup> All these interrelated procedures of describing reality, which protect one from falling into the description loop, evince how difficult it can be to reach epistemological and linguistic agreement on any

<sup>14</sup> NAV 29.27, p. 470 (line 15–16): [...] *kṣaṇikālakṣya-dravya-vivartānām saṅketa-grahaṇōpāyābhāvenābhilāpituṃ aśakyatayānābhilāpyatva-*. Balcerowicz's translation in BALCEROWICZ (2008: 121–122).

<sup>15</sup> See BALCEROWICZ (2001); CLERBOUT et al. (2011).

<sup>16</sup> PSā 1.10, p. 10: *ṇatthi viṇā pariṇāmaṃ attho atthaṃ viṇeha pariṇāmo | davvagunapajjayattho attho atthittanivatto ||*  
Sanskrit *chāyā*: *nāsti viṇā pariṇāmaṃ artho 'rthaṃ viṇeha pariṇāmaḥ | dravya-guṇa-pariyaya-stho 'tho 'stīva-nirvṛtataḥ ||*

<sup>17</sup> TS 5.37–41, pp. 131–132: *bandhe 'dhikau pāriṇāmikau | guṇa-pariyayavad-dravyam | kālāś ca | so 'nanta-samayaḥ | dravyāśrayā nirguṇā guṇāḥ |*

<sup>18</sup> TS 5.42, p. 134: *tad-bhāvaḥ pariṇāmaḥ |*

<sup>19</sup> A significant elucidation of the complexity of the structure of reality and the relationships within it, together with outlining the problematic nature of its description, is provided by BALCEROWICZ (2016b: 569–573).

object. Since Prabhācandra does not consider the relation between these methods and linguistic convention in the passage in question – although he refers to the method of viewpoints followed by the juxtaposition of *naya-sapta-bhaṅgī* and *pramāṇa-sapta-bhaṅgī* elsewhere (PKM 676.5–684.15)<sup>20</sup> – the emphasis in this paper is placed solely on the issues raised therein. In Prabhācandra’s analysis, reflection on the scriptural authority leads to ontological cogitation on the realm of objects and its relation to language.

## 2. Conventional *versus* natural

Convention connotes arbitrary and methodical procedures of determining ways to approach knowledge and is often contrasted with the natural character of cognitive processes, but in Māṇikyanandin’s and Prabhācandra’s perspective, linguistic convention is associated with a term referring to the inherent potentiality of a word, a sentence or an expression.<sup>21</sup>

Prabhācandra’s reference to linguistic convention, and starting point of reflection on it, occurs in the commentary on Māṇikyanandin’s *Parīkṣāmukha* 3.100–101 (PKM 427.25–26, 428.5):

Words, etc., are the causes of apprehension (*pratipatti*) of the real thing (*vastu*), by virtue of linguistic convention (*saṅketa-vaśa*) [associated with] inherent semantic power (*sahaja-yogyatā*). Like, for example, [the sentence]: “[The Mountain] Meru, etc., exists.”<sup>22</sup>

Māṇikyanandin introduces in PĀ 3.100 the term *yogyatā* (“power”, “capability”), of which an additional element of description is the adjective *sahaja* (“inherent”, “innate”). The subject of the co-occurrence of this power – preceded by the same adjective – and linguistic convention is taken up, except Prabhācandra and Anantavīrya (another *Parīkṣāmukha* commentator from 11th cent. CE, author

<sup>20</sup> Māṇikyanandin does not address this issue, concentrating on epistemological aspects (i.e. the cognitive criteria).

<sup>21</sup> Y. J. PADMARAJIAH (1963: 356, fn. 3) writes on the co-presence of these two factors.

<sup>22</sup> PĀ 3.100–101: *sahaja-yogyatā-saṅketa-vaśād dhi śabdādayaḥ vastu-pratipatti-hetavaḥ || yathā merv-ādayaḥ santi ||* Most of the translations are mine, except for those where another author is credited. In GLINICKA (2020: 128), I translated this sūtra in the following way: “words [etc.] are the causes of the cognition of things by means of linguistic convention in the presence of innate semantic fitness”. Finally, I have decided to render *yogyatā* as “semantic power” after BALCEROWICZ and POTTER (2013: 165). The term *yogyatā* itself, used without reference to the issue of meaning, appears in PKM 14.11–16.10, where there is a longer and more complex argument concerning the power or capability in the context of the contact (*sannikarṣa*) between a sense (*indriya*) and an object (*artha*) which – as the basis for the emergence of perception – has been referred to in *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.4: *indriyārtha-sannikarṣōtpannam jñānam avyapadeśyam avyabhicāri vyavasāyātmakam pratyakṣam* (THAKUR 1997: 10). “Perception is cognition which arises from the contact between the sense organ and the object, [that is] not to be verbalised, [that is] unerring, [and the one] whose nature is [cognitive] decision.” Trans. *vyavasāya* after BALCEROWICZ (2008: 30–31, 36–37).

of the *Parīkṣāmukha-laghu-vṛtti*, PĀLV), by Vādidēvasūri in the *Syād-vāda-ratnākara* (SRK 701.19–715.20 = *trītiya pariccheda*), an autocommentary on the *Pramāṇa-naya-tattvālokālaṅkāra* (PNTĀA 4.11<sup>23</sup>). Vādidēvasūri defines the term *yogyatā* as “the power that demonstrates the meaning of a word” (*śabdasyārtha-pratipādana-śakti*), which is a synonym to the term *sāmarthyā* in PNTĀA 4.11, and he adds that it is a power of the same kind as “the power of making known the object of cognition by cognition” (*jñānasya jñeya-jñāpana-śakti*) (SRK 701.21–22). In the case of *saṃketa*, which is according to Vādidēvasūri an equivalent expression to *samaya*, the word is the cause (*kāraṇa*) of, i.e. the basis (*nibandhana*) for, the knowledge (*bodha*) of the meaning (*artha*) of a word, i.e., the understanding (*avagama*) of what is to be expressed (*abhidheya*) (SRK 701.22–23). These definitional agreements are accompanied by a lengthy analysis regarding i.e. cause and effect relationships and other aspects of meaning.

Before going on to discuss Prabhācandra’s position expressed in the PKM, it is worth emphasising that the problem of the relation between a word and its object – as well as a word and its meaning – forms part of a longer argument in the field of philosophical reflection on language in the NKC. In that treatise, Prabhācandra develops, among other things, the same aspects that he presents in a more condensed – and less systematic – form in the PKM. Although the elements of the theory of meaning are numerous, the most representative passage, in the light of this paper, is NKC 538.12–555.6, a commentary on LT 26,<sup>24</sup> in which he addresses the same as in PKM 427.22–431.9 issue of linguistic convention (he uses both terms *saṃketa* and *samaya*) associated with inherent semantic power (NKC 538.12–541.5). In attempting to describe the nature of the co-occurrence or concomitance of linguistic convention and inherent semantic power, Prabhācandra applies the phrase *saṃketa-saciva-yogyatā*, which means “power associated with linguistic convention” (NKC 539.1); then he moves on to the question of the statement made by an authoritative person (*āpta-vacana*) (NKC 541.6–542.16); the ability of a word to illuminate the real thing (*√prakāś*) (NKC 542.17–543.5); the issue of negating cognition (*bādhaka-pratyaya*) (NKC 543.6–8); considering a word as a cognitive criterion<sup>25</sup> (*pramāṇa*) (NKC 543.9–15); the nature of the relationship between a word and its object (NKC 543.16–547.1); the role of human being in the process of conventionalisation (NKC 547.2–548.5). Prabhācandra stops longer at the hypothetical assumption that the relationship between a word and its object could be permanent and

<sup>23</sup> Commentary on PNTĀA 4.11: *svābhāvika-sāmarthyā-samayābhyām artha-bodha-nibandhanam śabda iti* || “A word is the basis of the understanding of meaning in agreement with natural capacity”.

<sup>24</sup> LT 26, p. 9: *pramāṇam śrutam artheṣu siddham dvīpāntarādiṣu | anāśvāsam na kurvīran kvacit tad-vyabhicārataḥ* ||

<sup>25</sup> I render the term *pramāṇa* after Piotr Balcerowicz, who explains his choice in detail in BALCEROWICZ (2008: 139–144 n. 4).

considers: What would be this permanent component (a word, an object, or both)? Other related issues are also considered (NKC 548.6–555.6). Some phrases or sentences from the NKC overlap in formulation with phrases or sentences from the PKM, and sometimes the same idea is expressed in a slightly different way.<sup>26</sup>

At the beginning of his commentary to PĀ 3.100–101 – pointing out the question behind Māṇikyanandin’s *sūtra* – Prabhācandra verbalises the opponent’s doubt: Since the relationship (*sambandha*) between words (*śabda*)<sup>27</sup> and signified (denoted) objects (*artha*)<sup>28</sup> has not been proven, how can a word, including that spoken by an authoritative person (*āpta-praṇīta*), create knowledge with regard to an object (*arthe jñānaṃ kuryād*)? And just after quoting verse PĀ 3.100, he explains:

<sup>26</sup> The following sentences illustrate this convergence: NKC 538.13–14: *yogyatā hi śabdārthayoḥ pratipādyā-pratipādaka-śaktiḥ, jñāna-jñeyayor jñāpya-jñāpaka-śaktivat*, and PKM 428.1–2: *sahajā svābhāvīkī yogyatā śabdārthayoḥ pratipādyā-pratipādaka-śaktiḥ jñāna-jñeyayor jñāpya-jñāpaka-śaktivat*; NKC 538.18: *yogyatāto 'nyasya kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvādi-pratibandhasya tatra tat-pratiniyama-hetor asaṃbhavāt*, and PKM 428.2–3: *na hi tatrāpy ato yogyatāto 'nyaḥ kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvādiḥ sambandhostīty uktam*.

<sup>27</sup> I decided to render *śabda* as “word” to convey the relationship between a single numerically defined thing and a word, although this term may be rendered as: “speech element” (e.g. BALCEROWICZ 2008: 1), “sound” (MONIER-WILLIAMS 2005: 1052) etc.

<sup>28</sup> The term *artha* is a term that is ambiguous and broad in meaning (it may mean “object,” “meaning,” “sense,” “notion” etc. after MONIER-WILLIAMS 2005: 90–91). This was noticed, among others, by Patrick MCALLISTER (2020: 83), who, in his translation of Ratnakīrti’s *Apoha-siddhi*, chooses “referent” as an optimal rendition of the term *artha*, justifying his choice with the following words: “Here *artha* shall be translated as ‘referent’, with the intention of expressing the object that words refer to. By not translating this *artha* as ‘meaning’, the suggestion that it might correspond to ‘sense’ in a rigorously philosophical (Fregean) interpretation can be avoided.” (MCALLISTER 2020: 83). Piotr Balcerowicz, in his synopsis of the content of the PKM in BALCEROWICZ and POTTER (2013: 85–211), also interprets this relation as the relation between language and objects, when he summarises the beginning of the PKM’s section, which is the subject of this article: “Words etc. are the causes of the cognition of things due to linguistic convention [...] in the presence of inherent semantic power which concerns the relation of the signified thing and the signifying instrument (the word) that obtains between objects and the speech. An example is: ‘Like the sentence: Mount Meru etc. exists.’” (BALCEROWICZ and POTTER 2013: 165). In Jainism, strong emphasis is laid on a particular theory of reality (*anekānta-vāda*), infinitely complex, and therefore never fully cognisable (except for the position of the omniscient, who in their state does not need tools to describe it), which serves as a starting point for further consideration. This is reflected, for example, in the distinction between *artha* and *artha-mātra* (PKM 429.11–13), which fits well with the Jaina theory of reality (by identifying a single referential core amidst the transformations of all elements of reality). Anantavīrya, referring to the same PĀ’s *sūtra*, asks significant question: “How to ascertain the object [that is] the real thing on the basis of the word [...]?” (*śabdāt katham vastu-bhūtārthāvagama* [...], PĀLV 232.4–5), which demonstrates the significance of discovering a valid way of cognising the objects of reality in the Jaina thought. When I consider it appropriate, I render *artha* (expressed in relation to *śabda*) as “signified object” after BALCEROWICZ and POTTER (2013: 165) or “object”.

Inherent (*sahajā*) [means] arising from one's own nature (*svābhāvīkī*), semantic power (*yogyatā*) is the power (*śakti*) [of the relation] between that which demonstrates (*pratipādaka*) and that to be demonstrated (*pratipādya*), [i.e. between] the word (*śabda*) and the signified object (*artha*), as in the case of the power (*śakti*) [of the relation] between that which cognises (*jñāpaka*) and that to be cognised (*jñāpya*), [i.e. between] cognition (*jñāna*) (~ subject of cognition) and the object of cognition (*jñeya*). For it has not been stated that the relation (*bhāva*) between cause (*kāraṇa*) and effect (*kārya*), etc., that is different (*anya*) from this semantic power (*yogyatā*), is the relation also in this [case]. When there is this [semantic power], there is linguistic convention (*saṅketa*). For by virtue of it, words, etc. are evidently the causes of the apprehension (*pratipatti*) of the real thing (*vastu*).<sup>29</sup>

In this passage, Prabhācandra explains that this relationship between that which demonstrates and that to be demonstrated should be distinguished from other types of relation, such as the cause and effect relationship. Elsewhere in his treatise, in the polemic with the Sāṅkhya, he attempts to understand the relationship between cause and the effect:

[...] for the distinction (*vibhāga*) between the cause and the effect is seen (*dṛṣṭa*), for instance, a lump of clay (*mṛt-piṇḍa*) is the cause, a pot (*ghaṭa*) is the effect. And this pot, whose nature (*svabhāva*) is distinct (*vibhakta*) from the lump of clay, has as its aim holding (*dhāraṇā*) and carrying (*haraṇa*) wine (*madya*) and water (*udaka*), etc., but not the lump of clay.<sup>30</sup>

When Prabhācandra writes about the distinct nature of the pot, he clearly means the difference in functioning – compared to a lump of clay – stemming from the distinctiveness in form that the same substance has taken on in the two stages of various modes. On the other hand, the relation between that which demonstrates and that to be demonstrated applies to situations when there is no identity of the substratum (cognitive v. non-cognitive domains), but the two separate substances meet in one event of cognition.

<sup>29</sup> PKM 428.1–4: *sahajā svābhāvīkī yogyatā śabdārthayoḥ pratipādya-pratipādaka-śaktiḥ jñāna-jñeyayor jñāpya-jñāpaka-śaktivat. na hi tatrāpy ato yogyatāto 'nyaḥ kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvādīḥ sambandho 'stīty uktam. tasyām satyām saṅketaḥ. tad-vaśād dhi sphuṭam śabdādāyo vastu-pratipatti-hetavaḥ.* In the case of the PKM, I occasionally suggest slightly different punctuation.

<sup>30</sup> PKM 289.5–7: [...] *dṛṣṭo hi kārya-kāraṇayor vibhāgaḥ, yathā mṛt-piṇḍaḥ kāraṇam ghaṭaḥ kāryam. sa ca mṛt-piṇḍād vibhakta-svabhāvo ghaṭo madyōdakādi-dhāraṇā-haraṇa-samartho na tu mṛt-piṇḍaḥ.*

### 3. Permanent *versus* Impermanent

A large part of Prabhācandra's commentary to PĀ 3.101, that is PKM 427.22–431.9, is taken up by considering whether the inherent semantic power is permanent (*nitya*) or impermanent (*anitya*), which is important for capturing its very nature, and thus approaching the essence of linguistic convention itself. The analysis focuses on the response to the philosophy of the Mīmāṃsā, as was in the case of Anantavīrya's commentary on Māṇikyanandin's *sūtra* (PĀLV 3.95, pp. 203–232) immediately preceding the two *sūtras* I discuss in this paper:

Scriptural testimony (*āgama*) is the cognition of an object (*artha-jñāna*) that is caused by the statement (*vacana*), etc., of an authoritative person (*āpta*).<sup>31</sup>

It was the Mīmāṃsakas who brought together the question of the eternity of the Vedas – understood as tradition without beginning (*anādi*) – and therefore, the uninterruptedness of this kind of verbal transmission, and the concept that the Vedas are authorless, i.e. of non-human origin (*apauruṣeya*) (e.g. MS 1.1.27–32, *adhikaraṇa* VIII, pp. 19–21;<sup>32</sup> MŚV 2.46, p. 59; 2.61–120, pp. 65–82<sup>33</sup>).<sup>34</sup> Akalaṅka refers to this idea in several places in the *Nyāya-viniścaya* (e.g. NV 3.405, 436, 469) – he explores the specific nature of “the manifestation of the speech that is not made by a man” (*vācām apauruṣeyīṇām āvirbhāva*) in the context of cognitive criteria (*pramāṇa*), agreement or assent (*samaya*, *saṁvāda*), right cognition (*samyag-jñāna*), etc.<sup>35</sup> Anantavīrya's argumentation and line of

<sup>31</sup> PĀLV 3.95 = PKM 3.99 (391.1): *āpta-vacanādi-nibandhanam artha-jñānam āgamaḥ |*

<sup>32</sup> MS 1.1.27–32, pp. 19–21: *vedāṁś caṅke sannikarṣaṁ puruṣākhyāḥ || anitya-darśanāc ca || uktaṁ tu śabda-pūrvatvam || ākhyā pravacanāt || paran tu śruti-sāmānya-mātram || kṛte vā viniyogaḥ syāt karmaṇaḥ sambandhāt ||*

<sup>33</sup> Olle QVARNSTRÖM (2006: 90–91) realises that Kumāṛila, the author of the *Mīmāṃsā-śloka-vārttika*, opposed the concept of the non-human origin of the Vedas to the concept of, as Qvarnström puts it, the “personal omniscience of the Buddha”, which drew criticism from Jainas, for example from Haribhadrasūri, the author of the *Śāstra-vārtā-samuccaya* and the *Sarva-jña-siddhi* (QVARNSTRÖM 2006: 91).

<sup>34</sup> Francis X. D'SA (1980) examines this problem in the philosophy of Śabara (105–110) and Kumāṛila (192–200). As far as Kumāṛila is concerned, this problem “can be studied from his statements on three distinct but not disconnected topics: i) the rejection of an omniscient person, ii) the unacceptability of a creator for this world, and ii[i]) the beginningless tradition of Veda-recitation-and-learning” (D'SA 1980: 192). “[i]” added by the author of this article. This problem – seen from the perspective of Śabara, Prabhākara and Kumāṛila – has been discussed in JHA (1964: 144–153, 178).

<sup>35</sup> NV 3.405, p. 84: *āgamaḥ pauruṣeyaḥ syāt pramāṇam atilaukikam |*

*saṁvādāsambhavābhāvāt samayāvīpra-lambhanaḥ ||*

NV 3.436–437a, p. 88: *vācām apauruṣeyīṇām āvirbhāvo na yujyate |*

*samyag-jñānānkuṣaḥ satyaḥ puruṣārthābhīdhāyakaḥ ||*

*atrāpauruṣeyatvaṁ jātu siddham anarthakam |*

NV 3.469, p. 92: *apauruṣeya-vṛttānto 'py ata eva virudhyate |*

*pratyakṣam aṅjasā spaṣṭam anyac chrutam aviṣṭam ||*

reasoning on this aspect is even more detailed than Prabhācandra's. He considers several clearly defined issues: is it possible for the Vedas to be of non-human origin as “eternal current” (*pravāha-nityatva*)<sup>36</sup> (PĀLV pp. 209, 219)?; what kind of units of sound (speech)<sup>37</sup> or sets of sounds does this statement – which suggests permanence inherent in the transmission of the Vedas – refer to (*varṇa*, “phonemes”; *śabda-mātra*, “mere words”; or *viśiṣṭa[-śabda]*, “specific words”) (PĀLV pp. 206, 219)?; and who would be the potential audience of the Vedas (PĀLV pp. 220–228)? The author of the PĀLV emphasises that this tradition must not be uninterrupted due to the inadequacies of knowledge transfer pathways (including the shortcomings of the human mind, the intentional alteration of the true content of the Vedas).<sup>38</sup>

The idea of the omniscient person (*sarva-jñā*), compared to a person who has partial knowledge (*kiñci-jñā*), occupies a special place in these considerations. The person who has partial knowledge remains in relation to “unfathomable” (*duradhigama*) objects, and thus can conceive ( $\sqrt{klp}$ ) them falsely (PĀLV pp. 220–228). In Mīmāṃsā philosophy, these considerations on the permanent nature of the Vedas are related to the conviction about the permanent nature and “ubiquitousness”<sup>39</sup> of words (e.g. MS 1.1.6–23, *adhikaraṇa* IV, pp. 9–16); as well as whether the word that is used in the Vedas, and its relation to the respective object, is different from the same-sounding word used in ordinary speech (MS 1.3.30, *adhikaraṇa* X(a), p. 91).

Prabhācandra formulates an objection made by the opponent (i.e. the Mīmāṃsakas) that it cannot be stated that this inherent semantic power is impermanent, because it would lead to the undesired consequence (*prasaṅga*) in the form of *regressus ad infinitum* (*anavasthā*). The reasoning, which indicates these undesired consequences, is as follows: The relation between the word “pot” (*ghaṭa*) and the signified object – which relation is not yet well-known (*aprasiddha*) – is established (*kriyate*) by means of another word, such as the demonstrative pronoun “this [one]” (*ayam*), etc., whose relation (*sambandha*) with its object is well-known (*prasiddha*). Furthermore, the relation between that word “this [one]” and its object would have to be established – in a certain

<sup>36</sup> DESHPANDE (2022) translates the term *pravāha-nityatva* as “fluid persistence”. FRESCHI and KATAOKA (2012: 40 fn. 105) explain: “Permanence (*nityatva*) can be of two types: *kūṭasthanityatva* and *pravāhanityatva*. The former is the permanence of something which never changes throughout times, like a mountain (if compared to the life-span of a human being). The latter is the permanence of something which changes continuously, but whose later stages are identical with the former ones, like a river, which is always the same notwithstanding the fact that the drops of water composing it change at every second.”

<sup>37</sup> The term “unit of speech” after <https://www.britannica.com/topic/phoneme>; <https://www.britannica.com/science/phonology> (accessed 19 December 2025).

<sup>38</sup> HANDIQUI (1968: 388) refers to the position of Anantavīrya.

<sup>39</sup> The word “ubiquitous” with reference to the nature of a word in Mīmāṃsā philosophy has been used by MOOKERJEE (1978: 37).

previous referential context – by means of yet another (*anya*) word, whose relation with its object – at the time of establishing this particular relationship is well-known; and again the relation between that word and its object would have to be established by yet another word, whose relation with its object is well-known, and so on, *ad infinitum* (PKM 428.7–10).<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, one cannot claim that this semantic relation is permanent in an absolute sense. Prabhācandra gives as an example ostension (*hasta-samjñā*) and implicitly other forms of non-verbal signs (*ādi*), such as gesticulation, where the relation between the sign and its own object (*svārtha*) is impermanent, but these signs are able to lead to the apprehension (*pratipatti*) of the object (*artha*). This is a clear response to Mīmāṃsā statement – expressed in his own words – that if this inherent semantic power were permanent, the fact that words are the causes of the apprehension of the real thing (*vastu*) due to the permanent relation has been proved (PKM 428.10–12). Therefore, no relation that is dependent on signs of this kind (*tad-āśrita-sambandha*) can be permanent. Prabhācandra illustrates this constation with the following comparison: When there is the absence (*vyapāya*) of a fragment (*bhitti*), the picture or ornament (*citra*) that is dependent on it cannot fail to disappear (*√vyape*) (PKM 428.12–16).<sup>41</sup> The author of the PKM realises that even if the relation between a word or a sign and the signified object (the object it denotes) is impermanent, it does not mean that the fact of this denotation occurring is not seen:

<sup>40</sup> PKM 428.7–10: *nanu cāsau sahaja-yogyatā 'nityā, nityā vā? na tāvad anityā, anavasthā-prasaṅgāt – yena hi prasiddha-sambandhena "ayam" ity-ādīnā śabdenāprasiddha-sambandhasya ghaṭādeḥ śabdasya sambandhaḥ kriyate tasyāpy anyena prasiddha-sambandhena sambandhas tasyāpy anyenēti.* “And now [an objection is made by the opponent:] ‘Is this inherent semantic power impermanent or permanent? To begin with, it is not impermanent, because [otherwise] it would lead to the unwanted consequence in the form of *regressus ad infinitum*; for the relation between the word, such as “pot”, etc., whose relation [with its object] is not [yet] well-known, [and its object], is established by means of [another] word, such as “this [one]”, etc., whose relation [with its object] is [already] well-known; [and] the relation between that [word and its object would] also [be established] by means of another [word], whose relation [with its object] is well-known; [and the relation between] that [word and its object would] also [be established] by [yet] another [word, whose relation with its object is well-known, and so on *ad infinitum*].”

<sup>41</sup> PKM 428.10–16: [...] *hasta-samjñādi-sambandhavac chabdārtha-sambandhasyānityatve 'py artha-pratipatti-hetutva-sambhavāt. na khalu hasta-samjñādīnām svārthena sambandho nityaḥ, teṣām anityatve tad-āśrita-sambandhasya nityatva-virodhāt. na hi bhitti-vyapāye tad-āśritaṃ citraṃ na vyapaitīty abhidhātum śakyam.* “[...] even if the relation between the word and the signified object is impermanent, as in the case of the relation of denotation through ostension, etc., the fact that words are the causes of the apprehension of the object is possible. Indeed, the relation between denotation through ostension, etc., and one’s own object is not permanent, because since these [types of relation as denotation through ostension etc.] are impermanent, the relation that is dependent on them, is contrary to permanence. For the following is not possible to be carried out: When there is the absence of a fragment, the picture that is dependent on it does not disappear.”

And it is not the case that when [the relation] is impermanent, the fact – that this [sign, like ostension, etc.,] is the cause (*hetu*) of the apprehension of an object – is not seen (*dṛṣṭa*), because [otherwise] it would be contrary (*virodha*) to perception (*pratyakṣa*).<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, temporal gestures and other non-verbal signs, such as various forms of visual or auditory expression, can also be the source of cognition, due to their unique architecture, since their efficacy (i.e. access to this moment of cognising the object) is immediate and apparent to the seer or listener.

Prabhācandra continues to explore the possibility that this relation is impermanent, referring to the association between being in relationship and being dependent on something:

Even if the relation between the word (sign) (*śabda*) and the signified object (*artha*) is such (*evam*) (i.e. impermanent, as in the case of ostension, etc.), the following should be said: For, to begin with, this [relation] is not independent (*anāśrita*), because what is not dependent, cannot be relation, like the sky (*nabha*).<sup>43</sup>

Having made this assumption, the Jaina thinker investigates further the nature of that on which the relation is dependent (whether it is permanent or impermanent) and considers what might have such a nature:

If [this relation is] dependent (*āśrita*), is what it depends on (*tad-āśraya*) [1] permanent (*nitya*) or [2] impermanent (*anitya*)? [1] If it is permanent, what is [then] that which you call “that on which it is dependent”, which is intended to be permanent? [a] A universal (*jāti*, lit. “class”) or [b] an individual (*vyakti*)? [a’] First of all, it is not a universal, because this [universal], when it is the object [signified by] the word, is demonstrated (*pratipādana*) as the absence (*abhāva*) of activity (*pravṛti*), etc., and because [it] is to be rejected (*nirākariṣyamāṇa*). [b’] However, when an individual (*vyakti*) is that on which this [relation] is dependent (*āśraya*), how can there be permanence [to this relation] on account of its being non-accepted [by others] (*anabhyupagama*) and thus on account of the absence of cognition (*pratīti*)? [2] And when that on which it is dependent is impermanent, the impermanence (*anityatva*) of the relation with reference to its disappearance is proved (*siddha*), as in the case of a picture, when its fragment disappears.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> PKM 428.17–18: *na cānityatve śyārtha-pratipatti-hetutvaṃ na dṛṣṭam, pratyakṣa-virodhāt.*

<sup>43</sup> PKM 428.18–19: *evam śabdārtha-sambandhe ’py etad vācyam – sa hi na tāvad anāśritah, nabhavad anāśritasya sambandhatvāsambhavāt.*

<sup>44</sup> PKM 428.19–429.3: *āśritas cet kiṃ tad-āśrayo nityah, anityo vā? [1] nityas cet, ko ’yam nityatvenābhipretas tad-āśrayo nāma? [a] jātiḥ, [b] vyaktir vā? [a’] na tāvaj jātiḥ, tasyāḥ śabdārthatve pravṛty-ādy-abhāva-pratipādanāt, nirākariṣyamāṇatvā ca. [b’] vyakties tu tad-*

In an attempt to consider these possibilities, Prabhācandra quotes Bhartṛhari's *Vākya-padīya* 1.23,<sup>45</sup> which states the permanence of the relation between the word or the sign and the signified object (meaning), and stresses that what this *kārikā* conveys is inappropriate, because – as he explains –

in no way is it possible for the word, whose object is distinguished (*viśiṣṭa*) by the modifications of the same [property] (*sadṛśa-pariṇāma*), and for the relation that is dependent on that [which is impermanent] to be permanent<sup>46</sup> (PKM 429.3–9).

A further argument for the fact that the real thing, which is permanent, cannot exist is that such an existing thing is capable of the efficient action (*artha-kriyā*) (cf. PKM 69.25), when the efficient action is considered to be executed either consecutively (*krama*) or simultaneously (*yaugapad*),<sup>47</sup> which is contradictory to permanence (PKM 421.8–10, cf. 498.22–499.19).

Referring to the fault (*dūṣaṇa*) of *regressus ad infinitum* – postulated by the opponent (i.e. Mīmāṃsakas) – which he had already addressed (i.e. the infinite sequence of relations between the word and the signified object established by the other word whose relation with the object is well-known), Prabhācandra states that this objection is flawed (*ayukta*)...

because the word, such as “this [one]” (*ayam*), etc., is in a well-known relation with the object itself (*artha-mātra*) in an uninterrupted succession (*anādi-paramparā*), since the word “pot” (*ghaṭa*), etc., whose relation with [its object] is comprehended (*avagata*) by virtue of this [word “this one”, etc.], is caused by linguistic convention.<sup>48</sup>

The Jaina understanding of the relation between words and their objects stems from the assumptions of their specific ontology, according to which an object undergoes modifications successively; it is not fixed and well-defined, therefore, the characteristics of such an object – as well as the characteristics of objects remaining in relations with other objects of equally complex nature – cannot be unchangeable or predictable.

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*āśrayatve katham nityatvam anabhyupagamāt tathā pratīty-abhāvāc ca. [2] anityatve ca tad-āśrayatvasya siddham tad-vyapāye sambandhasyānityatvam bhitti-vyapāye citratvat.*

<sup>45</sup> *Vākya-padīya* 1.23 (RAU 1977: 39): *nityāḥ śabdārtha-sambandhās tatrāmnātā maharṣibhiḥ | sūtrāṇām sānu-tantrāṇām bhāṣyāṇām ca praṇetṛbhiḥ ||*

<sup>46</sup> PKM 429.8–9: *sadṛśa-pariṇāma-viśiṣṭasyārthasya śabdasya tad-āśrita-sambandhasya caikāntato nityatvāsambhavāt.*

<sup>47</sup> PKM 429.9–10: *sarvathā nityasya vastunaḥ krama-yaugapadyābhyām artha-kriyā-sambhavato śattvam cāśva-viṣṇavat.* “And non-existence of the permanent thing is completely due to the possibility of the efficient action [when efficient action is considered to be executed either] consecutively or simultaneously, like in the case of a horse’s horn.”

<sup>48</sup> PKM 429.11–13: [...] “*ayam*” *ity-ādeḥ śabdasyānādi-paramparāto rtha-mātre prasiddha-sambandhatvāt, tenāvagata-sambandhasya ghaṭādi-śabdasya saṅketa-karaṇāt.*

Prabhācandra proves that a similar (*tulya*) error (*doṣa*) of falling into *regressus infinitum* can be levelled at the proponents of the theory of the permanent relation (*nitya-sambandha-vādin*, i.e. the Mīmāṃsaka) themselves and their line of reasoning:

For the manifestation (*abhivyakti*) of the relation between a word whose relation [with its object] is not manifest (*anabhivyakta*) [and its object] should be done by means of [another] word whose relation [with its object] is [already] manifest (*abhivyakta*); [and the manifestation of the relation] between that [particular word and its object should] also [be done] by [yet] another (*anya*) [word] whose relation [with its object] is [already] manifest. If, on the other hand, the manifestation of the relation between a certain (*kaścid*) [word and its object is] exclusively out of itself (*svatas*) (i.e. out of this very word), this [manifestation of the relation] between another (*apara*) [word and its object] is also exclusively such (*tathā*), therefore, making linguistic convention (*saṅketa-kriyā*) is useless (*vyarthā*). And when there is the acceptance (*abhyupagama*) of the difference (*vibhāga*) between words (i.e. expressed in that the relation between the word “this one”, etc., and the object is out of itself and the relation between the word “pot”, etc., and the object is established by the other word such as “this one”, etc.<sup>49</sup>), enough with the concept of the permanence of relation.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, Prabhācandra comes to the conclusion:

Furthermore, if [this semantic power] were conjectured to be [permanent], there would be the apprehension (*pratipatti*) of the object also for the linguistic convention that has not been grasped (*agrhīta-saṅketa*). The [following statement] is also not correct: “The linguistic convention manifests (*vyañjaka*) this [permanent word]”, because it is unjustified to assume that what is permanent is that which is manifested (*vyaṅgya*). For the real thing (*vastu*) that is permanent, if it is manifested (*vyakta*), only then is it manifested, moreover, also [if] it is unmanifested (*avyakta*), only then is it unmanifested, because this [real thing] has [one] undivided nature (*abhinna-svabhāva*). And the consequence (*anuṣaṅga*) in the form of a fault (*doṣa*) rejected (*nikṣipta*) by [the proponents of] the position (*pakṣa*) that is in favour of the manifestation of the word is indeed similar (*tulya*) also in this case (*atra*).<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> See Shastri’s remark no. 24, p. 429 (“*ayam ity-ādi-śabdasya svata eva sambandhaḥ. ghaṭādi-śabdasya tu ayam ity-ādinā śabdenāpareṇa sambandha iti*”).

<sup>50</sup> PKM 429.14–19: [...] *anabhivyakta-sambandhasya hi śabdasyābhivyakta-sambandhena śabdena sambandhābhivyaktiḥ kartavyā, tasyāpy anyenābhivyakta-sambandhenēti. yadi punaḥ kasyacit svata eva sambandhābhivyaktiḥ, aparasyāpi sā tathaiṅvāsītī saṅketa-kriyā vyarthā. śabda-vibhāgābhyupagame cālaṃ sambandhasya nityatva-kalpanayā.*

<sup>51</sup> PKM 429.19–23: *kalpane cāgrhīta-saṅketasyāpy ato ’rtha-pratipattiḥ syāt. saṅketas tasya*

From the interpretation that Prabhācandra has made in the above passage – which can also be attributed to the NKC (cf. NKC 539.5–8) – it follows that for him linguistic convention is taken through grasping that which can be understood as the learning process: this intuition can be applied to linking the term *saṃketa* with the verb  $\sqrt{\text{grah}}$  (“to grasp, gain, learn”). In light of such a reading, linguistic convention may be understood as an accessible intermediary means that lead to a greater understanding of words as well as their clusters and combinations, and consequently and gradually bringing one closer to the truth. A similar approach is represented by Anantavīrya.<sup>52</sup> In this very passage, Prabhācandra makes an important ontological observation that the real thing has undivided nature, and it cannot undergo the process of transformation that is manifestation (it can be either manifested, or unmanifested).

#### 4. The restrictions of linguistic convention and the role of human beings

In the subsequent part of his argument (PKM 430.1–431.2), Prabhācandra raises numerous further questions regarding the restrictions of linguistic convention, such as: Would linguistic convention be restricted (*niyata*) – by virtue of permanent relation – to one signified object (*ekārtha*) or many signified objects (*anekārtha*)? (PKM 430.4–5) If it is restricted to one signified object, does it occur with one part of it (*eka-deśena*) or with its entirety (*sarvātmanā*)? (PKM 430.5–6). If it occurs with one part of it, is this one place restricted to one imagined object (*abhimataikārtha*) or one unimagined object (*anabhimataikārtha*)? (PKM 430.7–8). If this one part is restricted to one unimagined object, how is it possible that the lack of cognitive validity (*aprāmāṇya*) is not characterised as falsity (*mithyātva*)? If this one part is restricted to one imagined object, then it should be decided whether it is restricted on account of a human being (*puruṣa*) or on account of its own nature (*svabhāva*) (PKM 430.8–10). Later, Prabhācandra asks: Is this relation between the word and the signified object sensory (*aindriya*), extrasensory (*atīndriya*), or inferred by inference (*anumāna-gamya*)? (PKM 430.15–18). This argument leads gradually to the lengthy disquisition aimed at refuting the Buddhist theory of semantic exclusion and the *sphoṭa* theory (PKM 431.3–458.4).

In answering these questions and considering various alternatives, Prabhācandra looks at the role of the human being in the overall process of attributing names to objects, suggesting that the Mīmāṃsakas have rejected the possibility that man is the creator of the Vedas due to his “blindness [caused by] affection”

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*vyañjakah, ity apy ayuktam, nityasya vyañgyatvāyogāt. nityam hi vastu yadi vyaktam vyaktam eva, athāvyaktam apy avyaktam eva, abhinna-svabhāvatvāt tasya. śabdābhivyakti-pakṣa-nikṣipta-doṣānuṣāṅgaś cātrāpi tulya eva.*

<sup>52</sup> Prof. Piotr Balcerowicz drew my attention to the fact that according to Anantavīrya linguistic convention can be learned.

(*rāgādy-andhatva*) (PKM 430.11–13). The Jaina author emphasises strongly that linguistic convention has its undeniable foundation in the human being (*puruṣāśraya*) (PKM 430.1; cf. NKC 547.2–548.5). From the PKM one can learn that a man is capable of efficient action (*artha-kriyārthin*) (PKM 25.18–20), in the case of which “the root of activity” (*pravṛtti-mūlā*) is “obtaining an admirable object” (*upādeyārtha-prāpti*) in accordance with “human will” (*puruṣēcchā*) (PKM 26.3–4; cf. 402.20). In other places in the text, Prabhācandra considers human nature during the discussion with the Mīmāṃsā philosophy on the non-human origin (*apauruṣeya*) of the Vedas (PKM 391.7–403.13) and during the investigation into the concept of the omniscient person (*sarva-jñā*) (e.g. PKM 247.13–265.9). In the context of linguistic convention, human beings impose various restrictions – resulting from the limitations of their mind – on the understanding and interpretation of words and signs, one of which is volition.

## 5. Conclusions

Prabhācandra’s reflection on linguistic convention in the form in which it was presented in both texts, PKM and NKC – along with the entire spectrum of references to (and the critique of) the achievements of representatives of other Indian philosophical schools – is a part of a broader discussion on language and meaning. Although the NKC presents a more complex argument, the analysis contained in the PKM 427.22–431.9 can still be considered valuable. It is structured in a layered way and takes the form of numerous alternatives examined in order to determine the exact nature of inherent semantic power that is the power of the relation between words (and signs) and objects signified by them. By analysing these alternatives, Prabhācandra seems to reject what he considers to be erroneous ways of describing this relation, moving closer to the desired characterisation of it. Recognising the permanence of this relation, or its momentary or intermittent nature, that would indicate how persistent is the attribution of objects to the signs and names by which we communicate, allows one to assess how coherent and consistent our image of reality is, and how much it is subject to transformation under the influence of various factors.

Analysis of Prabhācandra’s treatise does not indicate that he is interested in the question of whether the formulas for the use of language can show a higher or lower degree of conventionalisation (resulting from the process of the clarification of meaning). Ultimately, Prabhācandra defines the nature of the inherent semantic power in accordance with the theory of the multidimensionality of reality (*anekānta-vāda*) – it is neither completely impermanent, because it expresses itself by the uninterrupted succession, nor completely permanent, because the object to which the words and other description units refer does not have a once and for all defined and established form; and because the changing form requires the constant repositioning of a given object in new frames of

references. Any modification in this kind of relation implies an alternation of the whole context, and it forces flexibility to adapt understanding to the variability of the relations of this kind (linguistic convention being renewed or built anew). Moreover, the relation between words (signs) and signified objects cannot be dependent in the absolute sense on anything permanent or impermanent. Prabhācandra proves that both the worldly (*laukika*) word and the Vedic (*vaidika*) one – which demonstrate the object by virtue of linguistic convention associated with an inherent semantic power (these both factors are inseparable) – should be accepted, because, as he stresses, no other “explanation” (*prakāra*) is plausible. All these factors and restrictions have an impact upon the possibility of the apprehension of the real thing and the assessment of the truthfulness of its cognition.

Linguistic convention is a complex phenomenon consisting of the procedure of meaning reconciliation coexisting with a natural manifestation of meanings by the language itself and – as something that people learn, acquire and pass on to others – it is a factor that stabilises the meaning of words, sentences and larger expressions. At the same time, in a sense, it evolves along with the transformation of the relationships between objects endowed with efficacy. It is, above all, reliant on man, who being both perfect (as potentially omniscient) and imperfect (as bound by the ties of *karman*) plays a limited but indispensable role – because without him, this agreement on how to relate to objects in the world would not have come into being at all, and concurrently because of them, it is restricted in different ways – and simultaneously it is dependent on the context as capable of being grasped and interpreted under certain conditions. An authoritative person determines how an object is referred to and described, recognising the connection between the object and the word in a defined framework (e.g. the ultimate structure of reality in the perspective of the paramount goal of human life) and attempting to grasp the ontology of objects (sources and principles of its existence), as well as their epistemology and eschatology.

## Funding

The article is funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, under the project “The Theory of Meaning in the Jaina Philosophy of Language (11th–17th c. CE),” no. 2022/44/C/HS1/00097.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the reviewers for their valuable comments. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Małgorzata Wielińska-Soltwedel and Prof. Ołena Łucyszyna for their substantive comments, significant corrections and insight. I am solely responsible for how I responded to the suggestions.

## Abbreviations

DT	Siddhasena Divākara, <i>Dvātrimśika</i> . See: KRAUSE (1948).
LT	Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa, <i>Laghīyas-traya</i> . See: (1) ŚĀSTRĪ (1939), (2) ŚĀSTRĪ (1991).
MS	Jaimini, <i>Mīmāṃsā-sūtra</i> . See: JHA (1979).
MŚV	Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, <i>Mīmāṃsā-śloka-vārttika</i> . See: TAILĀṄGA (1898–1899).
NA	Siddhasena Mahāmati, <i>Nyāyāvatāra</i> . See: BALCEROWICZ (2008).
NAV	Siddhārṣigaṇin, <i>Nyāyāvatāra-vivṛti</i> . See: BALCEROWICZ (2008).
NKC	Prabhācandra-sūri, <i>Nyāya-kumuda-candra</i> . See: ŚĀSTRĪ (1991).
NV	Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa, <i>Nyāya-viniścaya</i> . See: ŚĀSTRĪ (1939).
PĀ	Māṇikyanandin, <i>Parīkṣāmukha</i> . See: JAIN (1964) and SHASTRI (1990).
PĀLV	Anantavīrya, <i>Parīkṣāmukha-laghu-vṛtti</i> . See: JAIN (1964).
PKM	Prabhācandra, <i>Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa</i> . See: SHASTRI (1990).
PNTĀA	Vāḍidevasūri: <i>Pramāṇa-naya-tattvālokālaṅkāra</i> . See: MOTĪLĀL (1926–1930).
PSa	Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa, <i>Pramāṇa-saṅgraha</i> . See: ŚĀSTRĪ (1939).
PSā	Kundakunda, <i>Pravacana-sāra</i> . See: UPADHYE (1964).
SRK	Vāḍidevasūri, <i>Syād-vāda-ratnākāra</i> . See: MOTĪLĀL (1926–1930).
TS	Umāsvāmi, <i>Tattvārtha-sūtra</i> . See: Sastri (1944).

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