

Buddha as Progenitor of Pali,

the Non-parole *Lingua Dhammica*

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See end of paper for brief Bio)

ABSTRACT

There is agreement among scholars that at some point in time in the early history of Buddhism, there came to be a *lingua franca*, but also a perception that what constitutes Pali is a ‘translation’, or a ‘normalization’ of this, but post-Canonically. In Part I, this paper argues that Pali was no translation, but indeed the very ‘*lingua franca*’ (see later for change of label) in which the Canon was transmitted, and that it comes to be shaped at the hands of the Buddha himself, making him the ‘Progenitor’. The ‘critical other’ for this to happen is Ananda, ‘foremost’ in several language related skills, this suggesting the emergence of Pali to be around twenty years post-Enlightenment. However, Pali was no *parole*, i.e., not used for speaking, but a *langue* (in the Saussurean distinction), with only the inner circle of pupils privy to it initially, and over time, only the ordained Sangha, both male and female. As such, it comes to be used exclusively as the linguistic medium of the Dhamma to be retained to posterity in its pristine purity. In that sense, it may be characterized as a ‘High Prakrit’, or *Ucchakrt* (cf *Sanskrt*), somewhat different from a ‘koine’. Given that the label *lingua franca* does not capture the specific nature and function of the language constructed by the Buddha, we seek to capture its uniqueness in the new label *Lingua Dhammica*. The paper uses a novel methodology of ‘regression’, i.e., going back in time. It, however, is not based in linguistic analysis, and nor does it deal with the issue of what language the Buddha ‘spoke’ or used in his public teachings. There is, of course, no conclusive proof, beyond a shadow of doubt, in support of our thesis, given that there cannot be such unless with some external evidence. But it can be said that it is logically based, and evidential. It is intended for both the specialist scholar in the field, as well as the non-specialist.

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1. Pali No Translation of a *Lingua Franca*

The language in which the Buddhadhamma was committed to writing in Sri Lanka in the 1st c. BCE, now called Pali¹, is seen by respected scholars as “the underlying language” of Buddhism and labelled ‘Buddhist Middle Indic’. However, it is considered to be “later than the earliest language of the Canon...”². But there is also agreement that at some point during the Buddha’s time, there came to be a *lingua franca*³ and that what constitutes Pali is a ‘translation’⁴, possibly “created by monks”, and “normalized for religious purposes”⁵.

But we posit that Pali was no translation, but indeed the very *lingua franca*, or, as we shall call it *Lingua Dhammica* (see later). However, we shall begin by going with the thesis for now that Pali is a translation, and exploring the potential contexts that would call for, or allow, such translation, this to clear the underbrush to help us walk along the path to discovery. Seeing no such context, we then briefly touch on the nightmares of translation as an additional basis to refute the assumption. Based on these two, we come to conclude in this section the *untenability* of the position that Pali is a translation.

1.1 Potential Contexts Calling for Translation⁶

If Pali is the translation, a *lingua franca*, the question then arises as to when it would have taken place, better, what context(s) would have prompted, and allowed, it. We may think of five such potential contexts. To go in a reverse historical order, to adopt a novel methodology⁷, the first is when the Tipitaka comes to be committed to writing in the 1st c. BCE in Tambapanni, as Sri Lanka was then known. The second is the introduction of Buddhadhamma itself to Tambapanni two centuries earlier in the third c. BCE. The next are each the three Councils, all in the context of India – Third, Second and First.

¹ While the language had no name until the 17th c (Norman 1983), Buddhaghosa, the renowned commentator in the Theravada tradition, calls it the ‘language of Magadha’ (*magadhābhāsā*). So the label is used here as a heuristic device.

² This, and most of the references to the contemporary scholarship literature, is from Levman (2016).

³ We shall use this label until the alternative suggested in the title comes to be evident.

⁴ “...we know that Pāli is a composite dialect, and although it contains elements of what is probably an eastern dialect that the Buddha may have spoken, it is nevertheless not an “original language of Buddhism but a translation of something earlier.” (Levman, 2016, 1-2).

⁵ Norman 1983: 4; von Hinüber 1983: 1–9; Lamotte 1988: 563; Levman 2014: 43–46, cited in Levman, 2016, 2.

⁶ This section may be skipped by the scholar in the field of historical Buddhism for whom there would be nothing new here.

⁷ The ‘novel methodology’, is as identified by Michael Berman of Brock University, Canada (Berman, 2012) in relation to the present author’s study, *Arahant Mahinda as Redactor of the Buddhapuja in Sinhala Buddhism* (Sugunasiri, 2012). In his words, “In many key ways, his approach mirrors the historical-critical method employed in Judeo-Christian Biblical scholarship”, referring in particular to Prof. Bart D. Ehrman, in *Jesus Discovered*. “Unlike in Biblical scholarship, however, the author of the text in Buddhapujava is unknown. Hence it is that 15 criteria are developed, based in internal evidence.” It was this methodology that then helped this author in identifying Arahant Mahinda as the Redactor of Buddhapujava in Sinhala Buddhism by beginning in India, and ending up in Lanka in the 1st c. BCE”. However, in the present study, the reverse order is taken: from the most recent to the past, and ending up at the Buddha’s door!

1.1.1 The Tambapanni context

1.1.1.1 Committing to Writing of the Oral Tradition

To go in the reverse order, then, since what constitutes the Tipitaka in Pali today is what we have inherited from the time when it was committed to writing in Aluvihara in Sri Lanka in the 1st c. BCE, it would be reasonable to consider this to be the point at which the translation would have been made. The introduction of the Dhamma to the island is said to have been ‘in the language of the island’ (*dīpa bhāsāya*)⁸. This would then seem to suggest that the translation into Pali was at the hands of the Sinhala monks.

To begin with, it would assuredly be a stretch of imagination to assume that a Sangha collectivity, responsible for committing to writing, created a new language. This would have to be a ‘grammarians collectivity’, of sophistication, and creativity. How likely would this be? First, writing a grammar is not a task for a collectivity but done by an individual. Again writing a grammar would be for an existing language. The task here was to not only come up with the grammar, but also to create a language. If this was double-duty, so to speak, there was the third waiting in the wings. And this was the translation itself. This would have required one or more members of the collectivity to be knowledgeable of the Prakrits used in India at the time. Again, how likely would this be for a Sangha living in an island separated from the mainland?

All of this then rules out the context of committing the Dhamma to writing as the context of the emergence of Pali⁹.

1.1.1.2 Introduction of Buddhadhamma

Going back in time as in our methodology, the next context for the possible translation into Pali would be the point at which the Buddhadhamma comes to be introduced to the island by Arahant Mahinda two centuries earlier. Indeed we have evidence that the first sermons given by him, to the king and the royal ladies¹⁰, are directly from the Tipitaka.

So we could take the words ‘in the language of the island’ not to mean that the entire Tipitaka was taught by Arahant Mahinda in Sinhala, but simply to mean that in introducing the Dhamma, it was *explained* in Sinhala, Arahant Mahinda somehow coming to master the language. This, of course, would be no different from today when a Teacher (or a Professor) explains the Dhamma, studied in Pali by oneself, to a local congregation (or class) in the local medium – Sinhala, Thai, Burmese, English, German, etc. Arahant Mahinda may have first given the text in Pali, and then explained in the local language. For, upon listening to the Dhamma, sub-queen Anula and her retinue is said to have come by the ‘first stage of sanctity’ (*sotapanna*)¹¹. It would surely be unrealistic to think that a whole group comes to attain a spiritual experience of high calibre by simply listening to the Dhamma in a linguistic medium other than one’s

⁸ Mahavamsa xiv 65.

⁹ However, of course, committing the oral content into writing itself was no minor achievement and contribution. Had it not been committed to writing, Buddhadhamma would have ended in the dustbin of history as it happened in India! So while no credit can be given to the Sinhala monks for translating a *lingua franca* to Pali, all gratitudinal credit goes to them for recording the Dhamma to posterity. Indeed it was these writings that the pioneering Rhys Davids collected and translated into English, producing a Dictionary as well. See also Abeynayake, 2000.

¹⁰ These were Culahatthipadupama Sutta (MN I 175-184) to the king and Petavatthu, Vimanavatthu and the Sacca-samyutta Sutta to the royal ladies respectively (Mahavamsa, xiv 22; xiv, 58).

¹¹ Mahavamsa xiv 58.

own, i.e., in an alien language (of Pali or *lingua franca*) just introduced. So although the *explanation* by Arahant Mahinda would certainly have to have been in the language of the island, there is no evidence to show that the entire Tipitaka was delivered in the language of the island.

Another infallible piece of evidence that the Dhamma had been brought in Pali is that the *Commentaries* had come to be written in Sinhala, which in turn were translated into Pali: “While the scriptures were handed down to posterity by them [Sihala monks] in their original Pali, a series of commentaries grew up in the native language designated in Pali as *sīhala-bhāsā* or *dīpa bhāsā* by the commentators”¹². Had the entire Tipitaka been rendered in Sinhala, it would be hard pressed to believe that it would go unrecorded in a culture known for its meticulous record keeping, including rock inscriptions.

This would then be conclusive enough evidence that the Tipitaka was already brought to Lanka in the Pali language¹³.

This brief overview then rules out the Tambapanni as the context where Pali had its birth.

1.1.2 The Indian Context: the Three Councils

The context of Tambapanni ruled out, the next context for the potential emergence of Pali takes us back to the three Councils. We take them one by one, again in reverse order.

1.1.2.1 Third Council

The immediately preceding context of translation then would have to be the 3rd council, in which Arahant Mahinda was a participant. However, this can be summarily dismissed as the point of the birth of Pali given that it had other business to be taken care of. It was called by King Asoka in the second c. after the Buddha, when “the fabric of the Buddhist Order was badly torn apart”¹⁴. By then, there had come to be eighteen schools. And those of non-Buddhist sects, too, had entered the order who “proclaimed their own religio-philosophical views as those of the Buddha”. The situation would have been so frustrating that the leading Arahant of the time, Ven Moggaliputtatissa, simply retired to a forest hermitage. It was to rectify this situation that King Asoka invited back the Arahant, who then called an assembly of a thousand Arahants and “worked out a recension of the Dhamma”, through a rehearsing of a part or the total. A new Abhdhamma work had come to be produced as well, *Kathāvatthu*, “to refute the numerous dissentient views ... seems to have been the principal work achieved by the Council”¹⁵. It is clear then that the context would hardly have allowed a translation of the Canon. Further, when a recension of the Dhamma was worked out at the Council, in what language could it have been if not Pali? Likewise the production of the new work *Kathāvatthu*. What this clearly tells us that the Tipitaka was already in Pali by this time. On this basis, then, we can rule out the Third council as the context of translation of the Buddhadhamma to Pali.

¹² Witanachchi, 2006, 91.

¹³ One may, however, be tempted to argue that since the Mahavamsa was written in the 6th c CE, it only shows that by the sixth c., Pali had come to be the language of Sinhala Buddhism, and that the translation to Sinhala was done at the point of committing the oral tradition to Sinhala. But that could be rejected on the basis of the other evidence provided here.

¹⁴ Witanachchi, 2006, 724. While there are original sources one can fall back on, the facts are well known enough that we are adding nothing new. Hence all references here as well as elsewhere in this section all come from the same summary source, namely his Encyclopoedia article.

¹⁵ Witanachchi, 2006, 725.

1.1.2.2 Second Council

When it comes to the Second Council, about one hundred years or so after the Buddha, it was again to deal with issues relating to the Dhamma and Vinaya practice. What led to it was “.. the practice of Vajjian monks of Vesali to solicit money from the laity”¹⁶, this being one of ten violations of the Vinaya rules. An Elder Yasa brings this to the attention of the Sangha of the western and southern regions who decide to convene a general meeting of the Sangha. A Committee of eight representing the regions determine them to be violations. While there is no specific reference to a rehearsing of the entire Tipitaka, “the main purpose of the Sangiti was to reach a consensus on the legality or otherwise of the contentious issues.” The only way that that could be done, most certainly, was to have the text against which the violations could be checked.

It is clear again, then, that the Second Council could not have been a context to have a whole body of material translated, telling us that Pali was already in place by this time.

1.1.2.3 First Council

Now we come to the First Council as the immediately preceding potential context of translation. As well established, the Council was called three months after the Buddha’s Parinibbana. Aggrieved monks, in the company of Mahakassapa on their way to Kusinara, were all in tears, when the monk Subaddha sought to appease them with the words, “Well relieved are we from the Great Recluse.” Adding that the disciples have been often harassed by his orders - “this befits you, and this fits ye not...”, he says, “Now we will do what we desire and not do what we desire not”. It was recalling these remarks that the Council was called by Mahakassapa, proclaiming that the Dhamma and the Vinaya be rehearsed and consensus arrived at before any distortions could arise¹⁷. And recited were the five nikayas (*pañcanikāya*) and the two-fold vinaya (*ubhato vibhanga*)¹⁸. And further, “Various accounts of the first rehearsal refer to the settlement of some other disputes resolved at this Council.” E.g., the Buddha had allowed that after his passing away, some of the minor rules (*khuddānukhudda*) could be removed. But since Ananda had not double-checked with the Buddha what they were, a long debate ensued, with the Sangha badly divided. Hence the assembly comes to give consensus to Mahakassapa’s proposal that all rules be kept untouched. We also know that Ananda led the reciting of the Sutta and Upali the reciting of the Vinaya. Further, “The later testimony of the Council Appendix affirms that the Elders of the First Council *revised corruptions of the text*”¹⁹.

It is then clear that the purpose of this First Council was to ensure the continuity of the Dhamma and the Vinaya in its pristine purity, and that it was no context for a translation of a *lingua franca* into Pali. The words of monk Purāṇa tells us in no uncertain terms that Pali already existed by the time of the first Council. When he was informed that the Elders had recited and fixed the Canon, and was asked to bow, he politely replies: "Gentlemen, the Doctrine and Discipline have been beautifully chanted in chorus by the Elders. But, all the same, I shall maintain what I heard and received from the mouth of the Blessed One exactly as I heard it."²⁰. Clearly by then the standard language used at the Council had come to be distinct

¹⁶ Witanachchi, 2006, 723.

¹⁷ Vinaya, II 284.

¹⁸ Vin II 287; Sp 1.15.

¹⁹ Edmunds, 1901.

²⁰ Edmunds, 1901.

from the language, or the Prakritic variant, in which Purana had come to hear the Buddha's teachings directly from him.

This brief overview above then should establish that there existed no context for a translation to take place either in Lanka or India in the context of the three Councils, with no mention of any such in the descriptions as given, e.g., in the Mahavamsa. The fact that the duration of each of the three Councils came to be 7, 8 and 9 months respectively²¹, though not conclusive certainly, may also seem to suggest a commonality across them both in terms of content as well as language. The additional one and the two months at the second and third may be seen as being required by a higher amount of discordance that had to be resolved in terms of content, rather than language.

1.2 Translation nightmares

Those who have been engaged in translating Pali into English (or any other language) know how difficult it can be to capture a Canonical concept or term in another language. Taking the single term '*vedhamissakena*' in the Mahaparinibbanasutta, Levman²² talks of the "perils of transmission of the Buddhadhamma". Likewise, Analayo writes on "the vicissitudes of memory" pointing out how "we need to take into account the working mechanics of memory"²³.

While the former treatment gives us a good picture of the nightmares in linguistic terms, the latter speaks to the need to consider the human contexts that contribute to them. Though by no means comprehensive, we shall deal here with a few other human factors such as ethnocultural variations, personal biases, high language vs low language preferences, literal vs figurative vs creative preferences, etc., relating to a given translator (individual or collective). Now each translator, of course, brings to the table one's own understanding of the concept as well.

We begin with the last - concepts that absolutely defy translation. The phrase *sīlabbataparāmāsa*, one of the three lower fetters to be jettisoned in the path to liberation, has been translated as 'rite and ritual' for the last 100 years²⁴. But, as noted by Bodhi²⁵ neither the Canon nor the Commentaries support it.

To give an example of ethnocultural bias, Analayo notes how 'mother and father' (*mātāpitunnam*) (MN 1, 163.29) in the Pali version finds a reversal in the Chinese Agama version, father mentioned first, reflecting a "Confucian influence"²⁶.

As an example of translator preference to be literal, we can take the example of *yakkha*, left untranslated by Bodhi as by Norman²⁷. The present writer takes it literally as 'one [with] eyes' <'yo + *akkhi*', or 'the seeing one', giving us the female rendering *yakkhini* 'she [with] eyes' or 'she who sees'²⁸

²¹ Mahavamsa,iii.37, iv.64, v.279 respectively.

²² Levman, 2009, 5-35.

²³ Analayo, 2009, 13.

²⁴ See PED.

²⁵ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Tr.), 2000, 726.

²⁶ Analayo, 2012, 26, fn 43.

²⁷ Bodhi, Tr, Suttanipata, 2017, 185, and p. 1475-76, n. 1405

²⁸ In this context (Devata samyutta SN), a voice is addressing the Buddha but with no visible form. So it is clear that she sees the Buddha whom she is talking to. Following a teaching from the Buddha, she disappears and then appears in full human form, no longer one who only sees, but who is also present, in the form of a well-dressed woman. So

and the male form *yakkho* ‘he [with] eyes’ or ‘he who sees’. Another example of a preference for the literal would be the present writer’s rendering of *anattā* as ‘asoulity’ (as in ‘amorality’), “absence, not negation”²⁹ as in the popular usage ‘non-self’.

Now, to turn to linguistic but personal complications entailed in translation, the difficulties in translation of Pali, an Indic language, into a western language, English or German, of the Germanic branch, may be explained in terms of the socio-linguistic distance between them. But how about Sinhala, a language that grew in the very womb of Pali? In the translation of the Tipitaka by the Sinhala Sangha, the phrase *kāyassa bheda* (in *kāyassa bheda parammaraṇā*) has been translated as *kābun* (*marañin pasu*), understandable at best by the ordained Sangha. Now the term *kābun* is not only *not* in the spoken language, but it is not even in the standard educated variety. So, the high sounding translation would be an example of preference for ‘high Sinhala’ on the part of the Sangha translators³⁰.

This brief treatment should give us an indicative picture of the personal dimension that comes into play in translation, in addition to the linguistic.

Now imagine if the original words of the Buddha were to be in several languages, the reference here being primarily in relation to the meaning (*nirutti*) (see later under *sakāya niruttiyā*) of a word or phrase or expression, etc., rather than the pronunciation itself³¹, although, of course, the pronunciation may also not be unrelated to a meaning as understood. His disciples, including the most erudite, would invariably bring one’s own idiolect, dialect and the personal tendencies. In the end, each one bringing one’s own bag of linguistic tricks, so to speak, as seen from the comment of the monk Purāṇa above, would we not end up in an interpretative jungle? And if this were to be avoided, who would best be able to do so other than the Buddha himself, this by making it available in a standard language? (See next for the evidence.)

1.3 Summation

This then is as far as we can go to show that the scholarly view of Pali being a translation of the *lingua franca* is hardly tenable. To make it clearer with an analogy, we can meaningfully ask the gratitudinal question³² “When did you say Pali was translated into English by Rhys Davids?”, or the historical question, “When were the Commentaries in Sinhala translated into Pali?”. Of course, each of English and Pali existed to be translated into. But how could we even ask the question as to who or when the Canon was ‘translated’ into ‘Pali’, holding at the same time the position that there was no such language, with or without a name, distinct from, and independent of, other dialects or Prakrits? So we would like to suggest that the scholarly question “When was the *lingua franca* translated into Pali?” makes as much sense as asking, “What’s the

what the Buddha really means by the term may also be rendered as the ‘invisible’ one. But that is less specific than ‘she who sees’.

²⁹ Sugunasiri, 2011.

³⁰ This would be *kaya bindunaṭa passe* or at the next level, *kayehi bindīmen anaturuva*. See Sugunasiri, 1975, on the triglossic context of Sinhala.

³¹ It would be inevitable that the pronunciation of a given word would vary in different Prakrits. “For example, Dravidian native speakers did not recognize a difference between voiced and unvoiced stops, so both *loka* and *loga* sounded the same to them. In Gāndhāri, *loka* was always pronounced and written *loga*.” (Bryan Levman, email Sept 22 2019).

³² This is to draw upon again the Buddhist value of gratitude (*kataññutā*) (mahamangala sutta), rarely heard in the West, even among Buddhists, this being my personal mindfulness at always seeking to keep the moral fibre woven into the academic fabric. While the English term ‘gratitudinal’ I have used is not in the Dictionary, it has been created by the writer on the basis of attitude > attitudinal.

hair colour of the child of a barren woman?!” In other words, it is a non-question, a non-sequitur! Could this then explain why the issue of the origin of Pali has eluded the academy thus far?

But, if a translation of a *lingua franca* to Pali is a non-sequitur, there still remains the issue as to how Pali ends up as the language of the Tipitaka. This then takes us straight to the door of Buddha, to which we next turn.

2. Buddha as Progenitor of Pali

Having gone past a new methodology, we begin this section on a methodological note in relation to reading the rest of the paper. The angle from which we approach the topic, as you may have already guessed, is non-traditional. Additionally, the topic we are dealing with, is related to several other disciplines, such as historical and comparative linguistics, history, psychology, sociology, comparative religion, etc. Then there is also the association of the Buddha with a perceived mundane-like activity like constructing a language. For reasons such as these, the reader may be pulled this way and that way. So, by way of avoiding the undermining of your reading objectivity, we respectfully invite the reader to do a first reading of this paper for *internal* validity only, in a sort of a willing suspension of disbelief; and then, now wearing your Discipline hat, to do a re-read for *external* validity. This is so as to avoid the learning curve entailed in reading the paper coming to be encroached upon by the onslaught of expectations of your Discipline-based norms and thought.

2.1 Pali as ‘New’ Language

We have sought above to show, negatively, that there have been *no post-Buddhian contexts* for the translation of Pali from a *lingua franca*. Now we seek to show, positively, that Pali emerged at the hands of the Buddha, rendering him to be the **Progenitor** of a *new* but nameless language that we know as Pali today.

What is meant by ‘new’ calls for some clarification. It is obviously not new as in the sense of an invention as e.g., by Thomas Alva Edison of the light bulb. Nor is it new in the sense of a discovery, as in the case of Darwin – i.e., something there was already, though unknown. However, it is not unassociated with the process of evolution, although not in the sense of Bonobo (pygmy chimpanzee) turning into man³³ but in the sense that the new language that emerged as not being unrelated to both the diachronic and the synchronic linguistic lay of the land. That is to say that it can be said to be an ‘evolution’ out of the existing languages themselves, known as the Prakrits (meaning ‘original’ but implicitly ‘folksy’ and ‘rural’), or as hypothesized in the academic literature, a *lingua franca*. The new language is a culmination (from a Buddhist point of view) of a process of drawing upon the same phonetic, morphemic, syntagmemic and semantic corpus as in any other Indic language of the time.

However, it came to evolve in a new way. The choice of phonemes and morphemes, and their concatenations into syntagmemes (i.e., phrases, clauses, sentences, by themselves or in their conjoint forms (*sandhi* and *samasa*), etc.), to generate a specific meaning, by themselves or in combination, comes to be distinct, taken overall, from any other. So in broad terms, then, Pali can be seen as a sibling of the Indic language family, but brand new, just as ‘English’ can be said to be a sibling of German in the Germanic branch. It was ‘new’ at the ‘point’ it comes to diverge from its siblings.

³³ Zimmer, 2001, 254 ff.

If a non-linguistic parallel would be helpful, we may think of a ‘new house’. A given house is ‘new’ at the point of construction because it was not there earlier in the first place! But that does not mean that it is not built out of the same basic raw material with which other houses are built - brick and mortar, shingle or tiles, wood frames and nails. The new house is ‘new’ also because it is distinct from the neighbouring ones in architectural design – direction, space, light, height, rooms, washrooms, steps and stairs, levels, etc..

So what is meant by saying that Pali was a ‘new’ language is simply that it was different from any other existing varieties, and unique in terms of how the raw materials had come to be strung together - retaining the Indic roots, but guiding and shaping and modeling the linguistic stem, the branches and the foliage in a unique way so as to be distinct from any existing language. The language that evolved was thus not unrelated to the *lingua franca* that had emerged by the time, possibly “formalized or standardized or normalized as Pali”, as in the words of Levman³⁴.

Human language is the result of tacit approval, and not one emerging from people sitting around a table. A meets B in the morning and says, “Good morning”. B in turn says, “Good morning”, and adds, “How are you this morning?” or “Did you sleep well last night?” “Oh, not bad, not bad at all, and you?” Now each of A and B simply drew upon what each of them had heard growing up, since becoming a linguistic adult around age 6. Now a philosopher C uses the same phonemes, morphemes, syntagmemes, intonation, etc. as A and B. But, the content of the language comes to be deeper. And so, though the language of the philosopher is drawn upon the same linguistic raw material as that of the Register of A and B, they come to be used with more precision. So with scientist D or Architect E.

But, unlike in the case of natural language varieties, including the *lingua franca* itself, the emergence of the language of Pali didn’t happen automatically. So, if any, it can be said to be the result of a process of ‘genetic’ engineering. That is, take the ingredients and manipulate them in a way to bring about a product as in one’s design.

So the question then is “Whose hand was behind it?”. Who was the engineer? This then is when the Buddha appears on the scene.

The Buddha’s communicative challenge was undoubtedly tough, so much so that for a split second, following the Night of Enlightenment³⁵, he even wondered whether he should even seek to explain what he had discovered, i.e., reality as it had come to be (*yathābhūta*), deep and complex (*gambhīra*), and in wisdom (*paññena*). So the precision with which to use language to impart what he had discovered to his listeners, disciple or other, had to be razor-blade sharp. Yet, the medium in which it was to be delivered had to be easy of both *reception* as well as *production*, as in linguistic terms. In other words, the language had to be understood well (reception) but also, as in the case of his disciples, reproduced (production) well, too. So ‘ease in pronunciation’ (*sukhoccāraṇa*) had to be a key feature of the language. So the Buddha’s task was coming up with a language that allowed for a complex message to be given in a simplex medium.

But, in his many years of experience of teaching, he sees none of the existing linguistic varieties up to the task. And so, it was in the face of this challenge then that the Buddha could be said to have come to see the need for a new, and unique, language, to take on the role of the medium of Dhammatransmitter

³⁴ This is as in the words of Bryan Levman (email of Sept 22, 2019).

³⁵ See Mihita, 2019b.

(to create a new term)³⁶ to cast the seed of Dhamma as wide as possible. Happily there was already an existing *lingua franca* that was used for trade, government and cross-cultural, perhaps even cross-class, communication, upon which he could draw as well.

But this *lingua franca* had a drawback. As in any parole, that is, spoken language, it was subject to the winds of change - cultural, dialectal and idiolectal, if also temporal and functional. It was then not difficult for the Buddha to see how the deep message in his Dhamma could likewise get muddled, or twisted, twirled and turned in the process (see more of it later).

Right then and there came the answer in his pragmatic wisdom. And that was to develop a distinct language, but kept protected from the winds of change by keeping it under the wraps and to be open only to a qualified few (see later).

Decision made, now he sets to the task of *designing* one. The process entailed can be seen as that of a *sculptor*, moulding and refining and shaping, both in the knowledge of what is out there, but also what is in here, meaning in one's imagination, and the sensitivity to the potential eyes of the world. Now then emerges what we have now come to call Pali. It is in this sense, then, that Pali can be said to be a new language – distinct from all others, and consciously brought to life and not a 'natural' evolution as in the case of other languages, in a Darwinian process.

So Pali was no mere formalizing or standardizing or normalizing of an existing *lingua franca*, which, by definition, was all this. But it was a *langage nouveaux, maix pas la parole* (see later for more).

Now when it comes to natural languages such as English, French, Russian, Chinese, Hindi or Swahili, the point at which each of them comes to part company from its siblings (though never from the parent), making its unique presence, comes to be over time, though still within a certain time frame as determined by sociocultural conditions. But the point at which Pali (to use the label that it comes to earn later) comes to get a life in its distinctiveness and uniqueness comes to be immediate, i.e., as soon as it comes to be designed and sculpted, and put to use, this clearly during the lifetime of the Buddha itself, indeed beginning the last 25 years of his life, as we shall see.

It is thus that we see the Buddha as the Progenitor of the language now called Pali, 'progenitor' defined as "a person who first thinks of something and causes it to happen", as in e.g., "*Marx was the progenitor of communism*"³⁷.

We may use the characterization 'Designer-Sculptor' to clarify further what is to be understood as 'progenitor', the noun meaning "a person who..". Now to take the verbal meaning of 'design' as 'verb transitive' (here, changing the order given in Webster's):

- 1: "to form (plans, etc.) in the mind; contrive";
2. "to .. make preliminary sketches of; sketch a pattern or outline of";

³⁶ This is drawn upon the term and concept 'neurotransmitter' in neurology, meaning the carrier of the message along a neuron, from one point in the mindbody to another. So *Dhammatransmitter* may be seen as a neurolinguistic parallel.

³⁷ The intransitive verb 'originate' defined as "to take or have origin", as in "That board game *originated* in the 1940s", the *intransitive verb* defined as "to give rise to", as in "The composer *originated* 10 songs for the Broadway musical" <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/progenitor>> (downloaded Sept 25, 2019).

3. “to ... set apart”.

So we can see Buddha, as ‘designer’, first contriving in the mind, and then sketching a pattern in a way to set the language apart from existing ones. To take the meaning of the term in its noun form, he can be said to have had

1. “a purpose, intention, aim”;
2. “a plan, scheme, project”;
3. “... an outcome expected”;

And so he can be said to go into

4. “the arrangement of parts, details, form..., especially so as to produce a complete ... unit”.

This then is when he comes to be the ‘sculptor’ when he begins to “model , carve, ..”, a sculpture being “the art of carving..., chiseling, .. casting ..., modeling...” and “.. to change in form...” (Webster’s).

2.2 Conditions for Emergence of Pali

Now we propose three conditions, minimally, under which the new language Pali came to be designed and sculpted at the hands of the Buddha:

1. Dhammaic call for language standardization;
2. Ananda as ‘critical other’; and
3. What the Buddha brings to the table.

We now take each of them in turn.

2.2.1 Dhammaic Call for Language Standardization

The Buddha’s decision to create a new language as the medium to maximize the chances of retaining the Dhamma to posterity can be said to have been conditioned by the pragmatic realities. Indeed he had already foreseen how his Teachings could well be understood and interpreted differentially as implicit in the words of Purāṇa (as above). To take another context, we read in the Pasadika Sutta³⁸, how upon the passing away of the Jain leader Jina Mahavira, there had come to be feuding among the disciples as to the master’s actual teachings. The disagreements were so serious that we read it said, “You would have thought that .. Nataputta’s disciples were bent on killing each other”! And so, when the monk Cunda brings it to the attention of Ananda, he suggests that the news be taken to their own Master. Here, then, is the Buddha’s admonition³⁹:

... Therefore, Cunda, all you to whom I have taught these truths that I have realized by super-knowledge, should come together and recite them, setting meaning beside meaning and expression beside expression [*atthena atthaṃ vyañjanena vyañjanam*], without dissension, in order that this holy life may continue and be established for a long time for the profit and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans.

³⁸ Digha Nikaya, Sutta 29 ; DN III 117. As in the words of Bryan Levman, “The *locus classicus* for this, of course, could be seen in the Buddha’s admonition in the Vinaya that the teachings be learned *sakāya niruttiyā*.” See later.

³⁹ This is as in the translation of Walshe (Walshe, Tr, 1995, 431-2).

We may note two points in relation to this quote relating to the importance of checking for accuracy. First we read, “I have taught these truths that I have realized by super-knowledge”. The Pali term for ‘super-knowledge’ is *abhiññā*, from *abhi-* ‘high(er)’ + *(ñ)ñā* ‘knowing’. But they refer to not merely a mundane type of knowledge, or at a level higher than of an average person. *Abhiññā* also means ‘psychic’ powers - ‘levitation’, ‘clairaudience’, ‘reading of others’ minds’, ‘recollection of one’s own past lives’, ‘recollection of other people’s past lives’, ‘knowledge of jettisoning defilements’ (*iddhi, dibbasota, paracittavijānañāṇa, pubbenivāsānaussatiñāṇa, cutūpapātañāṇa, āsavakkhayañāṇa*)⁴⁰.

This then can be seen as one reason for a Dhammaic call for the continuity of the Dhamma in its pristine purity. Because it was a reality discovered in a super-knowledge, and would be a pity to have it debased.

The same call can be seen to be made in relation to the words, “in order that this holy life may continue and be established for a long time for the profit and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans”.

These then are two initial reasons for seeking to retain the Dhamma in its pristine purity, which can only said to be possible through a language standardization.

Now the words “without dissension” (*na vivāditabbam*), also suggest the need for the continuity of the Teachings in its pristine purity.

These can then be seen as a Dhammaic call for language standardization, also suggesting the Buddha taking steps to make a standard language available in his own lifetime.

We see the Buddha giving a similar advice as to Cunda in relation to how to respond to a claim made by a monk that what he holds is the word of the Buddha (as in the case of Purāṇa).

Monks, I will teach you four criteria...⁴¹. Suppose a monk were to say, “Friends, I heard and received this from the Lord’s own lips: this is the Dhamma, this is the discipline, this is the Master’s teaching”, then monks, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving his words, his words and expressions [*padavyaṅjanāni*] should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the discipline⁴².

And, if the words of a claimant do not conform to the Suttas and the Vinaya (‘Discipline’), then they are to be rejected, but if they do conform, then the conclusion must be that “Assuredly this is the word of the Buddha, it has been rightly understood”. Likewise when a claim is made by a monk that he has heard the words in the context of “a community with elders and distinguished teachers”, “a place ... [with] many elders who are learned, bearers of the tradition, who knows the Dhamma, the discipline, the code of rules [*mātikā*]” or “one elder who is learned code of rules” – reject if no match, accept if in accordance.

While the specific reference here is to the thirty seven *bodhipākkhiya dhamma*, ‘Enlightenment-bent Teachings’ (as I translate the phrase), needless to say, the words apply to the totality of the teachings

⁴⁰ DN iii 281.

⁴¹ The Pali term translated as ‘criteria’ is *apadesa*. But, as will be clear following the next para, ‘criteria’ hardly captures the sense here. PED give the meaning as ‘reason, cause, argument’ (MN 1.287); ‘pretext’, but better ‘four contexts (for ascertaining claims)’, since the Buddha gives only a single criterion – concordance or not with the Sutta and the Vinaya.

⁴² Walshe, 1995, Tr, 255-256 (DN II 124). It may be noted that *vyāñjana* is translated as ‘expression’ in both contexts. See later for a discussion.

- ‘discoursed [*desitā*] by me the Dhamma realized in super-knowledge’ (*mayā dhammā abhiññā desitā*)⁴³ and ‘well discoursed in deep wisdom’ (*gambhīra paññena sudesitāni*)⁴⁴. So we read that not only was the Dhamma of *abhiññā* quality, but so was the discoursing, too.

This again then can be seen as a Dhammaic call for language standardization and evidence for the availability of a standardized text (oral) in a standard language, in the Buddha’s own time.

We know of enough intentional misinterpreters of the Dhamma in the Buddha’s lifetime itself such as e.g., Devadatta, the six *chabbhaggiya* trouble-making Bhikkhus⁴⁵, protesting Bhikkhunis⁴⁶, etc., and post-Parinibbana disputants such as Subaddha (“we’re now free”) and Purāṇa (refusing to bow to the first council rendition). We see no less of such disputants among the Devas – Mara, out to get the Buddha for a lifetime, for one. And there are also up in the sky the disciples of other teachers, and of different backgrounds – regional, linguistic, ethnic, and differing opinions, making claims on behalf of their own teachers⁴⁷.

So would our All-compassionate Leader (*mahākāruniko nātho*), bent on the good of the many, as above, allow his Dhamma to be left behind in a *lingua franca* to be translated, polished up, smoothed out, or subjected to whatever other process, by someone else? It is, of course, not that he didn’t know that, over time, it would be translated into other languages (as into Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan as we see today), but that he wanted to leave behind his authoritative words in all authenticity to be checked against, allowing for the seal of approval for such translations.

Who but the Buddha would, then, have the wisdom and the compassion, not to mention all the psychic powers, etc., to capture not only the direct meaning (*vācyārtha* as in Sanskrit poetics) but also every nuance, wordplay, creativity, etc. (*vyangārtha*) of his teachings? Would not even his ‘best’ disciple be unarguably of a lesser quality? So, making absolutely sure that the Dhamma will be transmitted to posterity in its pristine purity, what would be the best measure to be taken by the Buddha other than codifying a language himself? Who but the Buddha himself could do this best, or better? This then would have been a deep Dhammaic call for the Buddha - to have his Teachings in a standardized language *while alive*, constructing, as we shall see, such a language, too, which we now know as Pali.

As another piece of evidence, when the Buddha was asked by Ananda as to who his successor would be, his words were that their guide would be the Dhamma and the Vinaya. The two areas of content given such authority, would it make sense not to have the contents relating to both codified by the Master himself?⁴⁸

Levman reminds us of what could have been a wider reason for the Buddha to look for a standardized language. And that was “that very early on, perhaps in his lifetime, ...as his teachings spread rapidly across India, they became less and less understandable in their original form to speakers of other

⁴³ While here, grammatically speaking, *abhiññā* may be understood as referring to *desitā* than to *dhammā*, that it refers to *dhammā* (as above) comes to be clear in the next excerpt.

⁴⁴ Ratana sutta, KN.

⁴⁵ Vinaya, Mahavagga, passim.

⁴⁶ Vinaya, Mahavagga IX,4.7.

⁴⁷ See Devata Samyutta, SN.

⁴⁸ An interesting thought occurs to the writer as this is written. While, of course, the Dhamma and the Vinaya are impersonal, do we not see a symbolic *persona* here, the mindbody (*nāmarūpa*) of the Buddha himself, Dhamma being the ‘mind’ and Vinaya the ‘body’?

dialects.”⁴⁹ Envisioning the translation nightmares, and the possible miscreant disciples, not to mention any number of other reasons seen in wisdom and compassion, it is that the Buddha can then be said to have come up with a new language, this for a deeply complex Teaching, along with an associated strategy to ensure its continuity to posterity without bleed⁵⁰.

Witanachchi makes another critical observation. While the Councils now come to be called *sangāyanā*, earlier they were identified as *sangīti*. Both, of course, stem from an identical construction: *samgāyati* (*sam+* *gāyati*), meaning ‘to sing (or recite) together’, - *gīti* in *sangīti* also meaning ‘singing’. But he makes the critical comment about the underlying, and the symbolic, meaning of the original term ‘*sangīti*’, missing in PTS, which he explains as “expressing non-discordance with regard to any text”⁵¹. We see the evidence coming directly from the advice given to Cunda (above): “... Therefore, Cunda, all you to whom I have taught these truths ... should *come together and recite* them without dissension” [italics added]. Witanachchi points out how it is clear from the wordings that “*sangāyitabbam*” needs to be taken as meaning not just coming together to recite, but to ‘be recited in unison’, and ‘without dissension’ (*na vivāditabbam*).

The distinction between *sangāyanā* and *sangīti* then sheds additional light on the first Council, rejected above as the last potential translation context. Chanting in unison without dissension suggests that all participants had come with access to a common language. This then means that the language which we now label Pali had by now emerged. For otherwise, would there be no dissension, if each of the Arahant participants had come with his own language variety? Against what would each of them have checked what they were listening to?

All of the above then argues for not only the compassionate intent on the part of the Buddha (‘for the good of the many...’ as above) but for his pragmatic communicative wisdom prompting him to have the Dhamma codified in a standardized language, i.e., Pali as we are arguing for, by himself, not leaving it to anyone else, or chance.

This then would be the initial positive argument that would rule out the scholarly view of a *lingua franca* waiting to be translated, normalized, etc., post-Canonically. If this holds, then that would be a first piece of positive evidence that the Pali was not the *lingua franca* of the time used for trade, etc., but a new language, sculpted by the Buddha towards the goal of keeping the Dhamma to posterity, this then the overarching Dhammic condition. This, of course, is not to be taken to mean that Pali was the language SPOKEN by the Buddha. a topic not treated in this paper.

So we could say that in creating Pali (as it had to be, but see later), the Buddha was guided by the dictum, as in my own construction: ‘That which I come to understand, that I do’ (*yathā anubodham tathā karomi*)”!⁵²

2.2.2 Ananda as ‘Critical Other’

The second context for the emergence of Pali at the hands of the Buddha himself can be said to be Ananda becoming his personal attendant.

⁴⁹ Levman (2016, 2). While the original adds “or shortly thereafter”, it has been dropped since it adds nothing to the case being made, and in fact, negates, but of course, with no evidence.

⁵⁰ See later for an elaboration.

⁵¹ Witanachchi, 2016, 720-722.

⁵² This coinage is drawn upon the Buddha’s personal motto, “*yathāvādī tathākārī yathākārī tathāvādī*”.

Several points attract our attention here: 1. The qualifications Ananda comes with, 2. The fact that it was the Buddha who chooses him, Ananda himself not volunteering his services, and 3. Ananda outliving the Buddha (by two to four decades depending on the sources).

To begin with the qualifications, the Buddha declares Ananda to be the foremost of his attendants (*upaṭṭhakānaṃ*). But he is also “pronounced [as being] pre-eminent in five qualities”, all other leading disciples excelling only in one category:

1. heard much (*bahussutānaṃ*);
2. good memory (*satimantānaṃ*);
3. mastery over the sequential structure of the teachings (*gatimantānaṃ*);
4. steadfastness in study (*dhitimantānaṃ*);
5. serving as attendant (*upaṭṭhakānaṃ*)⁵³.

It may be of more than passing interest (as we shall see) that excelling in what he was sought for, i.e., as personal attendant, comes to be last in the Buddha’s listing. So there must surely be a reason. And the other point is why a personal attendant needs to have all these other qualities. After all, what the Buddha says is that the attendants in the past would drop the bowl and run away leaving him alone, or not obey him, etc. So would it not be sufficient that the new attendant simply be an improvement on personally attending on him? This, of course, Ananda does beyond measure. It was his spiritual advancement of humility that could be said to have assisted him on this score, having come to be a streamerant (*sotāpanna*) during his first rains retreat⁵⁴. The very first fetter (*saṃyojana*) to be let go in coming by this experience is the ‘body-is-me view’ (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*)⁵⁵. The insight gained in this process of oneself as nothing but a process can be said to have allowed him to give more than one hundred percent in the service of the Buddha, the total trust and faith in the Buddha (resulting from the absence of the second fetter, *vicikiccā*) supporting it.

We then postulate then that Ananda was picked by the Buddha not just for the reason of attending on him, but to have someone in proximity with certain specific skills, the term *upaṭṭhaka* literally meaning ‘standing near’ (see more of it later). To begin with, these skills were

- a. to learn the Dhamma well, and
- b. to learn a new language well.

Item b. here is to posit that by the time Ananda was picked, the new language of Pali had come to be created by the Buddha, or was, in its final stages, a point we shall return to soon.

While both entail what in terms of communication is called ‘reception’, Ananda’s other skills relate to ‘production’, or in linguistic terms, ‘competence’ and ‘performance’:

- c. to reproduce the Dhamma, i.e., repeat it as learned, in chant ideally or otherwise, and
- d. to explain the Dhamma to an audience on his own, on the basis of what was handed down to him.

We see Ananda doing precisely the latter when the Buddha on occasion calls on him to continue a Teaching when he is too tired to continue. Reproducing in chant eminently is precisely what is done by

⁵³ Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997, 150.

⁵⁴ Vin 2, 138.

⁵⁵ See Mihita (forthcoming II) for this translation.

Ananda at the First Council. Both tasks relating to production clearly relate to the two dimensions relating to reception as well⁵⁶. For, if not received well, what would be produced could come to be flawed.

It is not everybody that is a good language learner, any more than everybody can run the 100 metres under 10 seconds although every able-bodied person can run. But Ananda brings two qualities that makes him that rare candidate, namely, being “steadfast in study” (*dhīmantānaṃ*) and having a “good memory” (*satimantānaṃ*), “a most extraordinary memory”⁵⁷ in fact. Learning a language other than one’s own requires the study skills to learn the rules of grammar and the structure of the language – cases, word order, compounding rules, exceptions, etc. And one also needs a good memory to keep in mind the vocabulary in particular, all this critical at a time when the Dhamma was still available only orally.

In a footnote in their translation of the Majjhima Nikaya, Nanamoli & Bodhi⁵⁸ add the commentarial take on *sati* and *gati* (items 2 and 3 above): “MA explains *sati* as the ability to grasp in mind a hundred or a thousand phrases as they are being spoken; *gati* as the ability to bind them and retain them in the mind”. Or, as in my interpretation, *dhīti* could also be understood as ‘grasping fast’, *dhṛta* in Sanskrit meaning ‘held, borne, maintained, supported, kept, possessed’⁵⁹. The extended form *dhīmat* meaning ‘steadfast, calm, resolute’⁶⁰, then adds another quality in Ananda. Even though quick on the pick up, he retains them in a Buddhist calmness.

The quality *gati* can be taken as the ability to ‘move it’, colloquially speaking here, that is, putting what has been grasped to use, or ‘go’, *gati* literally being from *gam* > *gacchati* ‘to go’. So it can be said that the qualities of *dhīti*, *sati* and *gati* in that order, and / or in relation to each other, are the ones that help Ananda in learning the Dhamma as it is delivered to him by the Buddha orally, at a slow pace it may be assumed, in a newly minted language. And, of course, we may remember a condition he had asked upon accepting the job, and agreed to by the Buddha; that is that “if he had any doubts or inquiries about the Dhamma, .. the right to have them cleared up at any time”⁶¹. Being in proximity on a regular basis would have facilitated it, serving as personal attendant guaranteeing such presence (see later as well).

Now interestingly, the qualities that Ananda brings to the task are a perfect fit with a method identified in contemporary literature as an ideal methodology in learning a second language. And this, as is commonly known, is ‘mim-mem’, standing for ‘mimicry memorization’. So, as the Buddha was repeating to Ananda, his quality of *gati* would have kicked in allowing him to immediately grasp the material by mimicking the Buddha, that is, repeating after him, and the Buddha pausing until the mimicking ends of each line, phrase, segment or any other breakdown adopted by the Buddha. His strength of

⁵⁶ In an incidental note, the take on *gatimantānaṃ* (item 3 of Ananda’s skills as above) by Nyanaponika & Hecker (1997) is “mastery over the sequential structure of the teachings”. This then can be seen in relation to the totality of the Buddha’s Teachings, all 82,000 (see below). So it may be conjectured that while it was Ananda’s task to repeat the Teachings at the First Council in the very sequence they had been repeated to him by the Buddha directly - what more of an efficiency could be asked for in repeating the Teachings that had been given prior to Ananda’s time?, it may have been Mahakassapa who might have taken the leadership in organizing them into the five Nikaya, *gati* also taken to mean ‘going’ into the future.

⁵⁷ This is as in the characterization of Nyanaponika & Hecker (1997, 143).

⁵⁸ Nanamoli & Bodhi (Tr), 2001, 1199.

⁵⁹ Though the dictionary meaning does not include ‘fast’, it is based in relation to dance, when a step is said to be in *dhṛta laya* ‘quick ...’ as contrasted with *vilamba laya* ‘slow’, the concept as also in Indian music. However, I have no source to quote, and so this is from personal knowledge.

⁶⁰ Monier-Williams.

⁶¹ Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997, 140.

having a good memory (*sati*) would have ensured that what was repeated by way of mimicry was retained in memory (memorization), successfully completing the mim-mem routine!

And it would be the qualities of *satimanta* ‘good memory’ and *bahussutā* “heard much” (see Ananda’s own words below) that made him fit the following characterization as in the words of the biographer Hecker: “So great was Ananda’s mastery of the Dhamma that the Buddha even spoke of him as a living embodiment of the Dhamma. Once a lay disciple asked the Buddha how, after he had honoured the Teacher and the Sangha, he could honour the Dhamma .. The Buddha replied, “If you wish to honour the Dhamma, go and honor Ananda, the guardian of the Dhamma”⁶². Not only. Adds the Buddha, “Ananda is still one on the path of higher training, yet it is not easy to find one which equals him fully in wisdom”. So it is Ananda’s wisdom, then, that can be said to have seen the connection between and among the diverse and complex teachings of the Buddha, lending a hand to memory. If mim-mem made the learning easier, wisdom would have provided the cement to glue them together, helping to make the connections in the very same process.

Lastly, to now come to the first item in the list of Ananda’s qualities⁶³, namely “Heard much” clearly refers to why he comes to be characterized as the ‘Treasurer of the Dhamma’ (*dhammabhaṇḍāgārika*). In his own words,

82,000 Teachings from the Buddha

I have received;

2,000 more from his disciples;

Now, 84,000 are familiar to me⁶⁴.

So could the Buddha have expected a better language learner and a Dhamma repository than Ananda - taking in full the Teachings thoroughly well, keeping them in memory, and re-delivering them as at the First Council, or earlier at other times during the lifetime of the Buddha itself, to seekers who had no access to the Buddha, Mahakassapa or Sariputta, or after the passing away of the Buddha?

So in looking for an attendant, the Buddha would not have had in mind an exclusively personal comfort. It was indubitably by way of finding a qualified human repository in whom the Dhamma could be deposited, to be drawn upon in his absence, while alive or after his Parinibbana, thus ensuring a strong foundation for accuracy of the Dhamma, “for the profit and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans”.

There would have been another factor. And that is that both the Buddha and Ananda came with the same mother tongue. This could have been a big advantage in that the Buddha could have explained something relating to the Dhamma that Ananda may not have understood or picked up wrong or misheard, etc., by providing an explanation in the mutually understood mother tongue. Using the mother tongue in a second language learning is discouraged in second language teaching theory because that would be to cut back on opportunities for ‘being with’ the new language and practice the new language promotive of performance if also competence. But there would have been no downside to it in this context given that the

⁶² Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997, 142.

⁶³ The back-walking here though is of no particular methodological significance.

⁶⁴ *Thg* 1024.

communication is between two wise individuals (Buddha calling Ananda wise, as above), even though, of course, not comparable in degree⁶⁵.

Indeed we may even envision the opener in the Mahamangala sutta as the ‘language test’ given to Ananda by the Buddha to test his ‘linguistic performance’ (i.e., ‘mastery’ (*gati*)), going beyond mere silent ‘linguistic competence’ (‘memory’ (*sati*)), and ‘steadfastness’ (*dhiti*). In general, the opener in discourses is limited to the words ‘Thus have I heard’ followed by the context in brief, and then going directly into the Teaching given by the Buddha. But while the opener in the Mahamangala sutta covers the same ground - the context of who, when, where and why, it comes to be in a whole long paragraph, entailing as can be seen below, a lot of grammatical detail. And a particular feature is the inclusion of a verse:

Thus have I heard. On one occasion, the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatti in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika Park. Then, when the night had advanced, a certain deity of stunning beauty, having illuminated the entire Jeta’s Grove, approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, stood on one side, and addressed the Blessed One in verse⁶⁶.

First, it is clear, that the sermon relates to the time where the Buddha lived during the last part of his life during which Ananda was attendant. Even if research were to establish that the sermon had been given prior to recruiting Ananda, this still allows for our premise that retelling Ananda the encounter was by way of the Buddha meeting one of the conditions agreed to with Ananda – i.e., to repeat to him personally, and by implication, privately, whatever that had been taught, or was to be taught, in Ananda’s absence. True enough that the opener follows the standard pattern of setting out the context. But a closer look at the original allows us to see how it calls upon an extensive list of grammatical features. So we give below the Pali rendering, in order to make the point clearer:

Evaṃ me sutāṃ ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvattiyāṃ viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Atha kho aññatarā devatā abhikkantāya rattiyā, abhikkanta vaṇṇā kevalakappaṃ jetavanaṃ obhāsetvā, yena bhagavā tenupasāṃkami. Upasāṃkamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi. Ekamantaṃ thitā kho sā devatā bhagavantaṃ gāthāya ajjhabhāsi:

Bahū devā manussā ca mangalāni acintayūṃ

ākhaṅkamānā sothānaṃ brūhi mangalamuttamaṃ.

Here, then, is the list of grammatical components entailed in the piece:

- 1 Just about all case endings but the vocative:
 - a. nominative (*bhagavā* ‘the Blessed One’);
 - b. accusative (*bhagavantaṃ* ‘the Blessed One’);
 - c. genitive (*anāthapiṇḍikassa* ‘Anathapindika’s’);

⁶⁵ See later for a second critical one - that it was not a parole that Ananda was learning, i.e., not learned for purposes of speaking, but for retention of the Dhamma.

⁶⁶ Bodhi, tr., 2017, 199.

- d. locative (two alternative endings: *-iyam* as in *sāvattthiyam* ‘at Savatthi’; ; *-e* as *jetavane* and *ārāme* ‘in Jeta’s grove’);
- e. instrumental (*gāthāya* ‘in verse’); (*yena ... tena*) ‘where... there’).
- 2 Tenses:
- a. Simple present (or, historic present) (*viharati* ‘lives’);
- b. Simple past (*upasaṃkamaṃi* ‘approached’; *aṭṭhāsi* ‘stood’; *ajjhabhāsi* ‘addressed’);
- c. Present continuous (*ākhankamānā* ‘keep wondering’);
- d. Past participle (*sutaṃ* ‘have heard’);
- e. Locative absolutive with past participle (*abhikkantāya rattiya* ‘the night having ended’; *upasaṃkamtivā* ‘having approached’; *abhivādetvā* ‘having paid homage’);
- f. Imperative (*brūhi* ‘pray tell me’).
- 2 Both active and passive voice relating to verbs: active (*upasaṃkamaṃi* ‘approached’); passive voice (*me sutam* ‘heard by me’).
- 3 Adjectives ’ (*kevala* as in *kevalakappaṃ jetavanaṃ* ‘entire Jeta’s grove’); past perfect as adjective / qualifier (*thitā kho sā devatā*).
- 4 Conjunctions (*athako* ‘then’).
- 5 Sandhi (*tenupasaṃkamaṃi* < *tena* + *upasaṃkamaṃi* ‘approached where he was’).
- 6 Reference (*evaṃ* ‘thus’).
- 7 Gender matching: *aññatarā devatā*; *sā devatā*⁶⁷.
- 8 Temporality (*ekaṃ samayaṃ* ‘once upon a time’).
- 9 Description expansion (to give the literal translation of the line, given idiomatically in Bodhi translation):
- a. *abhikkanta vaṇṇā* ‘of stunning beauty’,
abhikkantāya rattiya ‘when the night had advanced’,
kevalakappaṃ jetavanaṃ obhāsetvā ‘having illuminated the entire Jeta’s Grove’;
- b. *yena bhagavā* ‘wherever the Blessed One was’,
tenupasaṃkamaṃi ‘there he was approached’.
- c. *upasaṃkamtivā* ‘having approached’,
bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ‘having paid homage to him’,
ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi ‘stood on one side’;

⁶⁷ The ending *-tā* in *devatā* is an abstract form which may be used both as female and male, but here, the issue of gender is irrelevant. The matching of the ending could also have been for reasons of grammar.

ekamantaṃ ʒhitā ‘having stood on one side’,

kho sā devatā ‘that Devata’.

- 10 Use of *double entendre* (...*abhikkanta* in *abhikkantāya rattiyā* meaning ‘when the night had advanced’ referring to a time span; and *abhikkanta* in *abhikkanta vaṇṇā* meaning ‘of stunning’ (beauty), referring to personal characteristic.

That these were Ananda’s own words, of course, there is no doubt since it begins with ‘Thus have I heard’ and entails no Teachings of the Buddha. And the prose part can be said to be the end product as constructed by Ananda: the details re the when, where, who and how. If the detailed breakdown of every movement of the Devata in approaching the Buddha - paying homage, standing on a side, and addressing the Buddha standing, etc., may be by way of Ananda showing his own respect for the Buddha, it also could be said to be by way of showing his grammatical skills. The end product in these areas alone, then, would be enough to earn a Grade A+! Congratulations, Ananda!

If 1 to 10 are the grammatical skills displayed by Ananda, the use of the *double entendre* as in 11 can be seen as showing Ananda’s ‘grasp’ (*dhiti*) of Buddha’s acumen in identical use. We have e.g., Buddha’s use of the terms *aggañña* (meaning both ‘beginning’ and ‘best’)⁶⁸ and *tathāgata* ‘thus come’ (*tathā + āgata*), ‘thus gone (*tathā + gata*).

The end rhyming (*acintayum / ..muttamaṃ*) and the rhythm (*devā / manussā / ākhankamānā sotthāna[m]*) of the verse could be Ananda’s way of showing his poetic skill⁶⁹. However, there could have been also the phonological dimensions of the test, this relating to pronunciation and intonation.

To take the former, the testing can be e.g., said, to relate to the differentiation of the pronunciation of the vowel /a/ in the stressed and the unstressed positions. The term *sarabhañña* provides an example, accurately to be pronounced as *sa- + rə + bha + ññə*, pronouncing /a/ in the stressed position (1, 3) and /ə/ in the unstressed (2,4), and not as *sa+ ra+ bha + ñña*, pronouncing /a/ as /u/ in [cut] in all positions, as in the very common error made by Western instructors of Pali who, seeking to be genuinely authentic, pronounce the /a/ as if each were in a stressed position⁷⁰. Of course, this dimension of the test would have been a piece of cake for Ananda, since all Indic languages come to be pronounced in this manner – using the schwa in unstressed position.

⁶⁸ See Sugunasiri, 2014, for a treatment.

⁶⁹ This insight comes from the personal experience of the present writer, both as learner and teacher of a second language. Every exam in Pali, Sanskrit or French that he was tested in (English learned at an early age around 10), there was a question relating to translation, the passage given in English, this question constituting the most difficult.

⁷⁰ This, of course, is to ignore a similar pattern in their own native language of English. To take the example of the term ‘*amalgam*’, it is assuredly pronounced /əmaelgəm/, with the first and the third /a/ as a schwa, and second /a/ as /æ/ as in [cat] and not as in [cut]. Same with *amalgamation*; though pronounced /əmaelgəmēʃən/, it is written as if the fourth /a/ is to be pronounced as /ə/ as again in [cut] and not as long /ē/. Likewise if pronounced as /əmaelgəmeʃən/, again with schwa in unstressed position.

The unintended error in mispronouncing Pali may clearly be traceable to Rhys Davids himself who, in putting Pali in the Roman script, adopted the existing English writing system, resulting in the mispronunciation now common in the west and possibly by non-Indic speakers reading Pali, even though he himself would have got it right, having studied Pali under Sinhala-monk teachers, the Sinhala language following Pali pronunciation. Under the IPA system, each syllable of this word comes to be written with an /a/: < *sa- + ra + bha- + ñña*, pronouncing the /a/ as if each is in a stressed position. resulting in the mispronunciation.

Coming to the latter – intonation, the Devata addressing the Buddha in verse may have been the niche that the Buddha would have used in testing Ananda in this phonological dimension. Thus we see that while Ananda’s preparatory words, i.e., the introduction, to the Buddha’s listing of the Blessings are in the form of a statement, i.e., in prose, the Devata’s words, as noted, are in verse.

It could be surmised that the Buddha simply told Ananda the story of how a deity had approached him in the latter part of the night, and addressed him, in verse, asking for what constitutes the blessings. All this would have been in their shared mother tongue, with instructions to construct the opener then in the newly learned language, and making it as elaborate as possible, giving the additional instruction as well to render the request poetically and in good chanting style.

While we see Ananda coming out with flying colours in grammar, clever use of words and vowel pronunciation, he is likely to have not scored high on this last challenge. While it is possible that by this time, the Buddha may have had some notions of a chanting style fitting the delivery of the Dhamma, he may also have wondered what creativity Ananda could come up with, and thus including it in his testing. It is also possible, however, that, preoccupied as the Buddha was with the colossal task of moulding into shape a language different from the existing ones, while also busy delivering the Dhamma and this in the context of a multiple other Teachers (as in the Brahmajala Sutta, e.g.), he may not have paid much attention to it. With Ananda coming up with no satisfactory style, however, this itself could be said to have directed his serious attention to the matter of style of delivery, the task of building the language now behind him. This may be when the style of chanting called *sarabhañña* ‘vowel-speaking’⁷¹ had come to his mind (see next). The style humming in him, he could have been waiting for a suitable opportunity, when the young monk Sona comes to see him⁷². This then is what tells us that Ananda had not done well in this dimension of coming up with a suitable delivery style.

“The term ‘attendant’ [*upaṭṭhaka*] is actually not comprehensive to do enough justice to the Venerable Ananda’s position”, notes Hecker⁷³, receiving our nod, as we note again how being the foremost of all of his attendants comes to be shown last in the list of the five dimensions in which Ananda is declared to be so. This on the one hand can be taken to suggest that the Buddha is seeking to draw attention to how Ananda attends to him not merely giving a 100% plus of himself physically – carrying the bowl, keeping the residential kuti clean, fetching water, attending to health needs, gate-keeper for visitors, etc., but also giving four other 100 percents plus psychologically – quick grasp of material, steadfast in study, memory, etc. These qualities then could be said make Ananda a ‘Good Language Learner’⁷⁴. Though not mentioned, *saddhā* ‘respectful confidence’ in the Buddha, is clearly an implicit psychological element as well behind all that Ananda brings to his attendant duties of all types.

However, ‘standing near’ (*upaṭṭhaka*) may be understood not only in this literal sense but in more than one symbolic and figurative sense as well. It well relates to the non-physical. Indeed we get evidence of the reference of the term to the non-physical dimension from the *satipaṭṭhāna* sutta, where *satipaṭṭhāna* is to be taken as *sati + upaṭṭhāna*⁷⁵ in relation to mindfulness. So it may be noted that the term *upaṭṭhaka* could well be applicable to the non-physical dimension of the Buddha himself. What then would this be?

⁷¹ This is as is practiced even today in Sinhala Buddhism. See Mihita, forthcoming I, for a study.

⁷² See later for details.

⁷³ Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997, 147.

⁷⁴ See later, too, for the relevance.

⁷⁵ Analayo, 2003, 29-30.

What else could it be other than the Dhamma itself? When asked by Ananda who his successor will be, Buddha unequivocally says that the Dhamma, and the Vinaya will be the joint players of that role. Would we then not say that Dhamma in particular is indeed the non-physical Buddha? Given the Buddha's identified goal of retaining the Dhamma to posterity in its pristine purity, attending upon the Dhamma can then be seen as also attending to the Buddha himself, the term doing double duty! Indeed now we have Ananda attending to the entirety of the Buddha's *nāmarūpa* 'mindbody', Dhamma constituting the 'name' component. Given that 'mind is the forerunner'⁷⁶, the listing of Ananda's qualities that relate to the non-physical then should hardly be surprising, in relation to other reasons as well.

Entailed in this teaching-learning context may also be a psychic dimension. While the Buddha's search for an attendant may be due to his experience with his earlier attendants, it is not unlikely that the Buddha may have, in *abhiññā*, foreseen Ananda as the most fitting to serve him in both dimensions. Though Ananda is not formally recognized as having psychic skills, as e.g., Moggallana, it is not unlikely that in learning the Dhamma, falling back on, too, was a psychic capacity, such as the ability, if not to read the Buddha's mind, but at least to psyche out some of its dimensions. And there may well have been reciprocal psychic communication between the Buddha and Ananda in the process as well, physical proximity facilitating it, the term *upaṭṭhaka*, as noted, literally meaning 'standing near'.

Now this condition of proximity may have other associations of psychicality (new term). That is, it would have facilitated the 'implanting' of the Teaching by the Buddha, in the medium of the brand new language, upon Ananda. But if implanting by mere association could be rejected as mere speculation, we have the case of Sona (as named above). This is a novice monk from an outlying district who visits the Buddha. Seeing him from afar, the Buddha instructs Ananda to set up sleeping facilities in the Buddha's own *kuṭi*. After meditating outside, they both spend the rest of the night in the *buddhakuṭi*. The next morning, the Buddha asks Sona to recite the *aṭṭhaka*. Recited intonationally, it wins the Buddha's highest praise, giving rise to the *sarabhañña* style of chanting⁷⁷. The suggestion here then is that the style was implanted, or transplanted, in Sona by the Buddha through thought transfer, arranging to have him sleep in the *kuṭi* providing the facilitating condition of proximity.

But still, the evidence that there was such thought transfer is tangential. Happily, however, we have more concrete evidence in the Canon, with the Buddha accessing the mind of Roja Malla through Metta and impacting on him: *atha kho bhagavā rojaṃ mallaṃ mettena cittaṃ pharitvā uṭṭhāyāsanaṃ vihāraṃ pāvīsi* "Then the Buddha, having extended (*pharitvā*) *metta citta* [mind of loving kindness], rose from his seat and entered his residence [*vihāra*]."⁷⁸ Here then is an example that specifically speaks to the Buddha implanting in another's mind.

So the Buddha can be said to have looked for someone to attend on him not only personally, but also 'attend on him', psychically if also linguistically and dhammaically as well. Surely one doesn't need as old an attendant as Ananda at 55, to look after the bowls well or to make sure of his personal

⁷⁶ Dhammapada, 1.

⁷⁷ See Mihita forthcoming I, "Sarabahnna...", for a detailed exploration.

⁷⁸ Buddha accesses the mind of Roja Malla such that he would be made to come looking for him, even though he was not in contact with the Buddha personally, he joins others in providing a processional lead to the Buddha and his disciples entering Kusinara. Later, Roja Malla is told by Ananda that the 'door is closed' (*vihāro saṃvuta dvāro*) and is asked to approach the venue with little noise, enter the corridor in no rush, do a 'cough knock' [on the door]. And that then "He will open his door" (*vivarissati te bhagavā tassa dvāraṃ..*) (Vinayapitaka, Mahavaggapali, bhesajakkhandaka, Sinhala version, Vin Pitaka 3, Mahavagga Pali Part 2, p. 616, 51 (*bhesajakkhandaka*)).

comfort. It was noted above how Ananda's spiritual advancement as a streamerant helped him to be the foremost of the Buddha's attendants. The same can be said to have been supportive of the rest of his qualities as well, with him possibly advancing over time to the next two levels along the Path, namely once-returner and non-returner, the mind with even less defilements being clearer⁷⁹.

Regardless of the validity of my proposition that the Mahamangala Sutta was the Buddha's test instrument of Ananda, there is no question that as far as the Buddha was concerned, it is the language-related attendant duties of Ananda that were the more critical in picking him, the psychic connection adding fuel to the fire, so to speak. So, this primacy seems to be the strongest evidence that Ananda was sought out by the Buddha as an aide primarily in relation to his own linguistic initiative of building a new language as the steady medium for the Dhamma, the qualities brought by Ananda as lead hand assuring a successful launch and implementation of the initiative. It is on this basis that we then affirm as well that there was a psychic dimension to Ananda learning the Dhamma and the new language.

So if all of the above speak to the reasons for picking Ananda by the Buddha to be his attendant, another relates to the fact that Sariputta "foremost in the Dhamma", and on occasion asked by the Buddha to sit in, was passed over, in picking an attendant, even though he had himself volunteered. One reason for not picking Sariputta, of course, could be that being one of two Chief Disciples, the Buddha may have had other expectations of him. But is that all? It may not have been Ananda's multiple skills alone that made him to be the pick of the crop. It may be Buddha's *abhiññā* precognition that showed that while Sariputta was going to predecease him, Ananda was going to outlive him. So picking Sariputta to be the one to learn the new language and retain and repeat the Dhamma would not have helped the task of transmitting the Dhamma in an authentic media post-Parinibbana, the critical period. It is thus no surprise the Buddha picking Ananda over Sariputta (or any other) when indeed Ananda was not among those who volunteered.

So then it could be said that in addition to the pragmatic *Dhammaic condition* of continuing the Dhamma to posterity, Ananda was the human condition, indeed the qualitative '*human condition*', his ongoing physical proximity to the Buddha being the facilitative material *proximate condition*.

Finally, and incidentally, we may ask why Ananda was not then simply picked up in private, as in the case of the earlier attendants? Making it public may have been to elevate the status of Ananda, such that he would earn respectability of the Sangha for being the Buddha's choice. That would have facilitated as well Ananda's role, not just as the front man of the Buddha, but also the Treasurer of the Dhamma.

It was said in the earlier section that the Dhammaic call for preserving the Teachings in its pristine purity was the theoretical condition for the emergence of Pali. We now have Ananda as the 'human condition' contributive to the Buddha coming up with the language of Pali, as is our thesis, as we await other evidence.

In conclusion then, we doubly affirm Ananda to be the second condition, the 'critical other', for emergence of a new language, later Pali.

⁷⁹ See Sirimane, 2016, for a field-based research.

2.2.3 What the Buddha brings to the Table

We have now seen two conditions for the possible emergence of Pali – Dhammaic call and Ananda⁸⁰. But the most critical condition, of course, is the Buddha himself. So what does he come with to be the Progenitor of a brand new but nameless language that we know as Pali today?

To begin with, he, the Fully Enlightened One (*sammāsambuddho*), of course, comes with super ability to do whatever he sets his mind on. However, his wisdom and pragmatism can be said to guide him in determining what it is that he needs to, and should, set his mind on. Coming up with a linguistic medium to carry the message of the Dhamma⁸¹ then can be one such praxic idea that hits him, most likely in meditative *sampajañña* insight⁸² in response to what he may also have encountered during his teachings.

In terms of what he comes with to the task, we can think of two particular strengths already in the literature. He is the ‘charioteer in taming man’ (*purisadamma sārathī*), and creating a language may be seen as ‘taming a medium of communication’ (*sannivedanadamma sārathī*) (to coin a phrase), language being a primary feature that marks man from animal. He is also a ‘teacher of devas and humans’ (*satthā devamanussānaṃ*), a strength that is easily transferable to being a ‘teacher of language’ (*satthābhāsānaṃ*) (to coin another phrase).

2.2.3.1 Preparatory skills

While the above can be seen as general conditions, the Buddha can be said to bring two specific assets. These are 1. *Erudition* and 2. *Being a ‘Linguist’*, which we could count as preparatory skills in a theoretical thrust.

1. *Erudition*

As an intended future ruler in training, Prince Siddhartha understandably came to receive a comprehensive and diverse education under the tutelage of Brahmin teachers. Under Asita Kaladevala, he comes to be introduced academically to Vedic language, literature and culture. Vessamitta teaches him the martial arts (swordsmanship, archery, horsemanship) and Bharadvaja statecraft. In relation to his spiritual life, the discipline of the martial arts would certainly have introduced him to a strict self-discipline as he goes in search of reality and personal liberation, equally applicable later to the disciples (as in the Vinaya) also in search of liberation. While statecraft would have been of no relevance as would be in a lay context, it would have provided him the management skills needed to govern the Sangha, via a strict but principled enforcement of the Vinaya. The first quality that the Buddha, then, brings to the creative task of constructing what we now know as Pali can be said to be *erudition*, stemming from a sound educational background.

⁸⁰ On a theoretical note, each can be said to entail both a sentient as well as a non-sentient condition. While Saddhamma is theoretically an information package, it comes to be alive at the hands of the Buddha, or the Sangha. While Ananda is a sentient being, he comes out ‘alive’ in the current context only in learning and teaching the Saddhamma.

⁸¹ As per McLuhan (1964): “Medium is the message”.

⁸² Three qualities of mind are recommended in the Satipatthana bhavana to be maintained: *satimā*, *ātāpi* and *sampajañña* - relatively, ‘mindfulness’, ‘diligence’ and what I take as ‘co-emergent knowing’ < *sam-* ‘co-’ (i.e., together with) + *pa-* ‘emergent, but literally ‘forward’ + *jañña* ‘knowing’. This, of course, comes from the Buddha’s own experience: “When I was in meditation, monks,” ... such and such knowledge dawned upon me or such and such thought occurred to me.

2. Linguist

Passing mention has been made above to his introduction to the Vedas. To expand on it, under the careful and the meticulous guidance of Kaladevala, he gradually gains proficiency “in the Vedas, together with their ancillary studies such as etymology, grammar, semantics and poetics”⁸³, a point confirmed when we read how his Brahmin disciple Brahmayu is said to be a “master of the three Vedas, with their vocabulary, liturgy, phonology, and etymology”⁸⁴. These then could be said to speak to the language-related training the Buddha had had in his education under a Brahmin.

This tells us then that he came with a knowledge of Vedic Sanskrit, entailing grammatical concepts such as case endings, tense, number (singular / plural), gender, compounds and the like at the morphological level, and phrase and syntactic structure, word order, etc. at the syntagmemic level, both, of course, entailing semantics.

A particularly rich source the Buddha brings to building a language can be said to relate to vocabulary - borrowing words with or without phonetic change (*tadbhava*, *tatsama* respectively), with or without semantic change, such as, e.g., *kamma*. Though derived from *karma*, it comes to be understood not necessarily as exclusively predetermined, but changeable as well through one’s conduct in mind, body and word. The borrowings would also have allowed creativity in constructing new terminology (see below) to capture the nuances of his ground-breaking discoveries. Now all of this, of course, would be no different from the practice in Western science of drawing upon Greek and Latin in coining technical terms for newly emerging concepts.

We have the Buddha’s own words to show his grasp of the nature of language as we know from contemporary Linguistics. We may begin by recalling his advice to Cunda of the importance of *attha* and *vyañjana* (*atthena atthaṃ vyañjanena vyañjanaṃ*)⁸⁵. In another context, his reference is to *pada* and *vyañjana* (*(padavyañjanāni)..*)⁸⁶, seemingly equating *attha* with *pada*.

Walshe seems to catch the essence of the two terms when *attha* is translated as ‘meaning’ (as in ‘setting meaning beside meaning’) and *pada* as ‘word’⁸⁷, since meaning can be understood as in relation to words. But when it comes to his translation of *vyañjana* as ‘expression’, he may not have got it right. An ‘expression’ is a string of words, a concatenation of vocabulary. ‘Not by a country mile’, e.g., is an expression as is ‘oh no!’, and each is made up of individual words. But the meaning of the total expression is not the cumulative meaning of each of the individual words that go to make up the expression. To understand *vyañjana* as ‘expression’, then, is to place it in the morphemic and syntagmemic category rather than the semantic.

Coming to the translation of *padavyañjanāni* by Edmunds⁸⁸, we see *pada* translated as ‘line’ and *vyañjana* as ‘letter’: “. . . it must be compared with the established Doctrine and Discipline, *line by line and letter by letter* (*padavyañjanāni*, as also in PED (meaning 4)). The problem with the translation of *pada*

⁸³ Kalupahana, 1982, 10. Cf. Macdonnell’s listing of *śikṣā*, *chandas*, *vyākaraṇa*, *nirukta*, *kalpa* and *jyotiṣa* in relation to Vedic studies (Macdonnell, 1990, 223).

⁸⁴ MN 91.

⁸⁵ DN iii 127.

⁸⁶ DN ii 124.

⁸⁷ Walshe, 1995, 432 and 255 respectively.

⁸⁸ Edmunds, 1901.

as ‘line by line’, however, is that, to begin with, it seems to suggest an association with the written language. But more critically, in our context, it seems to be too broad and hence problematic.

As for broadness, we only have to note how a ‘line’ of the Pali text in a palm leaf original, in Sinhala, Burmese, Thai or Tibetan could go a full page if not more! But leaving that aside, while a ‘line’ is made up of words, checking ‘line by line’ means checking the line in its totality, even if it entails checking each of the words that it is constituted of. Given the semantic, contextual, sociological and other associations of a single word, checking out each word of every line to understand the line would not only be an impossible task, since one may not be sure which of the words in what sense is obfuscating the meaning, and what would happen if it were to be replaced, and with what. We may take the earlier example of the term *sīlabbataparāmāsa* translated as ‘rite and ritual’ for over a hundred years, but with no support for such an interpretation either in the Canon or the Commentaries (as above). And all this even when it is not even a ‘line’! Now imagine the task entailed if it were to be a line, as noted that may run into a paragraph.

What the Buddha must have surely meant by ‘pada’ then is a narrower ‘morphic’ and ‘morphemic’ level, a ‘morpheme’ being a ‘minimal semantic unit’, or to expand on it, “a distinctive collocation of phonemes (such as the free form *pin* or the bound form *-s* of *pins*) having no smaller meaningful parts”⁸⁹. But unlike a ‘word’, it may or may not be free-standing, i.e., could be a joint-morph.

To continue with the example of *sīlabbataparāmāsa*, the analysis may need to be first at the morphic or morphemic level, *sīla-*, (*b*)*bata*, *parā* (or *para-*) and *āmāsa*. Understanding each of them next would be at the ‘joint-morph’ level - *sīlabbata* and *parāmāsa*. Eventually, of course, the understanding could be at the total phrase level – whether it signifies a single concept, or two different concepts⁹⁰. This close analysis then tells us that what the Buddha must mean by ‘*attha*’ or ‘*pada*’ would not be ‘word’ or ‘line’.

Some evidence of this interpretation comes from the next component, namely *vyañjana* (as in both *atthena atthaṃ vyañjanena vyañjanaṃ* and *padavyañjanāni*). This comes to be translated by Edmunds as ‘letter’ (as above). But, as noted by him this “... implies, according to Western ideas, a written standard whereto appeal could be made”⁹¹. But Pali, the earliest written version of the Dhamma, only comes to be committed to writing long after the Buddha’s passing away (in the 1st c. BCE in Tambapanni, present day Ceylon) (as above). So in using the term *vyañjana*, the Buddha’s reference could not have been to ‘letters’, namely a graphemic representation, either. While we shall deal with it below, for now, what is relevant is that *vyañjana* seems to be taken as referring to a dimension other than the morphosemantic and the syntagmemic.

If the translation of *pada* as ‘line’ and of *vyañjana* as ‘expression’ or ‘letter’ are unsatisfactory, what then could the Buddha have meant by the terms *attha*, *pada* and *vyañjana*?

To begin with the last, in Indic grammatical analysis, *vyañjana* (in Pali, but less commonly *byanjana*), stands for ‘consonant’, in contrast to *svara* (Sanskrit; *sara* in Pali), both in the *phonological*

⁸⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/morpheme>.

⁹⁰ See Mihita (forthcoming II).

⁹¹ We are setting aside the issue of whether the reference here is to a ‘written standard’, writing not unknown in Buddha’s time, this being beyond the scope of this inquiry.

dimension. So when the Buddha uses only the term *vyanjana* but not *sara* in telling Ananda how to ensure accuracy of the Dhamma, is he missing out on the dimension that gives life to consonants, namely the *phonemes*, they being indeed what makes a language unique as in contemporary linguistic analysis? Certainly not, for more than one reason. First, there was no need for the Buddha to make such a distinction, since he was, in this context, writing no grammar. He was merely identifying the phonological dimension of language, as we shall see, in contrast to the morphosyntagmemic, covered under ‘*pada*’⁹².

But there could have been another reason. In Euro *syllabic* writing, as visible in the term *vyanjana* (*vyan+ja+na*), the consonants and the vowels are shown separately (as e.g., se + pa+ rate + ly). As in the Pali example, we see it, e.g., in both the two final syllables, *-ja-* and *-na-*. By contrast, in the *phonetic* writing system of Devanagari, the vowel is *inherent* to the consonant. Thus, e.g., implicit in the phoneme (as represented in the grapheme) *-ja-* (ज) ⁹³, is the back vowel /a/ (अ), as by default. Now the other vowels, as in English *jet*, *jig* or *jog*, are likewise shown in the Devanagari consonant with an additional marker, as e.g., ‘je’, ‘ji’ ‘jo’, but still as a single component, i.e., phonetically, and not syllabically as in the Euro system. So when reference is made to *vyanjana*, the understanding has to be that the vowel is necessarily implicit, and is therefore to be included as well.

Indeed, when it comes to ensuring accuracy, it is the phonemic dimension that is more critical than the morphosyntagmemic. This is because phonemes are specific to a given language, while morphemes could be shared, without change or with change (as above). So would be the syntagmemic, such as e.g., word order, compounds, etc. But the phonemes, defined as “the smallest meaningful sound” of a language are not open to such variation. And if Dhamma is to be retained in its purity, then indeed the phonemes would be the most critical component⁹⁴.

To explore this, there are many morphemes that are shared by Sanskrit and Pali, but the distinction lies precisely in the phonemes which bear upon the meaning. *Kamma* and *karma* (to repeat the example) may mean roughly the same thing, the phonemic differences ignored. But the difference in meaning between *atta* ‘self’ and *attha* ‘wealth’ lies precisely in the phonemic difference (inaspirate vs aspirate), as also in *puṇṇa* ‘complete’ or ‘full’ and *puñña* ‘merit’. The semantic distinction comes to be made in relation to the point of contact in pronunciation: alveolar frontal with tip of tongue in the former, and alveolar back with tongue flat, etc.

So, phonemic accuracy can then be said to be more critical, and demanding, in memorizing or chanting, than in relation to *pada* ‘word’ or *attha* ‘meaning’.

So what the Buddha’s reference, in using the terms *attha* and *pada* on the one hand and *vyañjana* on the other, seems to be to ‘morpheme’ and ‘phoneme’. But he may have had in mind even the more

⁹² As above, only *sīlabbata* (as in Ratana sutta) comes to be used, omitting *parāmāsa*, the first component enough to capture the sense, or one of the senses, he was trying to communicate. See Mihita (forthcoming II) for an exploration.

⁹³ <https://www.lexilogos.com/keyboard/devanagari.htm>.

⁹⁴ Though may not be directly related, in Sinhala, the language that grew in the womb of Pali in Sri Lanka, the term *vyanjana* (*vāñjana* in Sinhala) means ‘curry’! That is to say that that is what gives life to the food on the table, making the rice tasty, is the curry. This sense seems not far removed from the role of phonemes in language, ha ha ha!

basic level - ‘morph’ and ‘phone’ sans –eme ‘meaning’, double-checking if the phone, e.g., is dental /t/ (as in *attha* ‘meaning’) or retroflex /ʈ/ (as in *aṭṭha* ‘eight’), voiceless or voiced (as e.g., in *atta* ‘soul’ vs *attha* ‘meaning’), etc., and then going on to check how well each phone fits the semantic context.

So then, the Buddha’s reference could be to ‘semantics’ (*attha*), ‘morphemes’ and ‘syntagmemes’ (*pada*) and ‘phonemes’ (*vyañjana*). In this understanding, then, *atthena atthaṃ vyañjanena vyañjanaṃ* needs to be translated as ‘*setting meaning beside meaning and phoneme beside phoneme*’ and *padayañjanāni* as ‘*morpheme by morpheme and phoneme by phoneme*’.

Interestingly, we have the same words *attha* and *vyañjana* used in relation to unity of the Sangha, too: “Two are two types of Sangha unity, Upali, one that has *not* been arrived at (*apeta*) via *meaning* but arrived at (*upeta*) by *letter*, and the other arrived at via both meaning and letter” (*dvemā, upāli, sangha sāmaggīyo. .. atthāpetā byañjanūpetā atthupetā byañjanūpetā*)⁹⁵. So it is clear what is meant by *attha* and *vyañjana*. The distinction then is between understanding at the surface level of the ‘letter’, and the deeper level of the meaning, meaning ‘intent’ and/or ‘spirit’, or as in the Chomskyan distinction of ‘surface structure’ and ‘deep structure’⁹⁶. This then helps us assert that what the Buddha meant was that the intent of the Buddha’s words be understood by going to the jugular phonemic level which makes the semantic distinction⁹⁷.

The brief analysis above should tell us that while *pada* ‘word’ and *attha* ‘meaning’ may be taken to mean the same, and usable invariantly, there can be a distinction at a deep structure level. In the context of *padavyañjana*, the semantic component clearly relate to the phonemic level.

We have certainly not given a comprehensive exegesis on Linguistics. The only point of the discussion is to show that the Buddha is a good Linguist, with an analytical understanding of the dimensions of language, both structure and function.

2.2.3.2 Praxic Skills

We have seen how the Buddha comes with a sound understanding of the features of language. But knowing the features of language is one thing, and constructing a language another. Indeed constructing a language is not unlike constructing a building. Knowing about the raw materials – cement, bricks, shingles, etc. and the tools needed, will not result in a building. What is needed is the praxic skills of putting up the bricks and laying the shingles using the required tools in specific ways. So what specific praxic assets does the Buddha bring to the task of building a new language? We can think of several.

3. Being a ‘Good Language Teacher’

Clearly his experience of 20 plus years of Teaching, this before the time of Ananda, would have assuredly given him an overall view of the challenges of communication, and insight regarding the potential audience, from the sophisticated to the naïve. Then there were the disciples themselves with different mother tongues. These then can be said to have given him the guidelines for a model for coming

⁹⁵ Mahavagga x x, 6.1-2.

⁹⁶ An example given is ‘The snow was piled by the wind’ and ‘The snow was piled by the window’.

⁹⁷ Though not as an example at the phonemic but the morphosyntagmemic level, the significance of the semantic level can be seen with the classical Chomskyan example, “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.” Here we have an example of English which, at the surface structure level, is phonemically and morphemically unquestionable, and grammatically and syntagmatically upright. But at a deep structure level, however, it means nothing - a semantic disaster!

up with a linguistic medium of instruction that serves both the structure-function needs of the language as well as the pragmatic needs of the audience, this including both disciples as well as the wider population⁹⁸ in a way to keep the saddhamma to posterity in its pristine purity. Teaching experience can then be said to be the first pragmatic skill brought by the Buddha to the task of building a new language.

4. *Being a second language learner*

The Buddha would clearly have spoken at least one more language other than his own mother tongue. Given his long sojourn in the region of Magadha, Māgadhi props as the contender. Of course, Sanskrit learned in his youth was also a part of his language repertoire, the evidence being that he was knowledgeable of Vedic saints. Another is how he rejects Chando, as a way of delivering the Buddhadhamma, when proposed by two of his disciples (see below). This then makes him a *second language learner*, of both a popular and a classical vintage. If this gives him a comparative view of language, making him comparative linguist, what is of particular relevance is that he comes to the task of building a new language with communication skills across languages.

A native speaker of a language is neither aware of the grammatical structure behind the spoken word nor interested in ever finding out, unless one takes to formal language study. Speaking is by way of a tacit understanding, and not by sitting around a table arriving at an agreement as to the grammar, vocabulary, deep structure, surface structure, etc. Every speaker using one's own idiolect, personalizing a language or dialect spoken by the community, it would be nothing but natural for language to change.

A second language learner, however, comes to be in the advantageous position of being able to *watch* this unfolding drama of everyday language usage from the outside. For the Buddha, it was both in a formal setting as relating to Sanskrit and informally in a communicative setting, as during his life. The native speaker will be drawing upon all the features of one's language, such as number (singular / plural), gender, case (nominative, genitive, vocative), etc., as well as the syntgmemic concatenations as above, but it would not be in conscious thought. While, once learned, the second language learner may also be using language functionally for communication without stopping to label them, or recalling them formally, there is no doubt that the sounds, grammar, meaning and labels will all be there at an upper conscious level. One will not be unconscious of not only the straightforward use of the native speakers, but also their creative use in terms of nuances, such suggestion (*dhvani*), hinting (*vyangya*), etc., not however only in the context of the literary use of language but in their everyday use as well.

Such a comparative understanding can be said to make one sensitive to the linguistic expectations of the users, and one's own capacity for good communication. And the sensitivity to the nature of language itself can be said to be sharpened in the process. So, being a second language learner can then be said to be a second pragmatic skill brought by the Buddha to the table in building a new language. Now when we consider that the language in question is Pali, coming with knowledge of Vedic Sanskrit as a second language can be a definitive asset, given that they both belong to the same wider Indic language branch.

5. *Grammarian*

A Grammar is a “system of rules for speaking and writing a given language...”, ‘system’ here referring to “word structures and word arrangements of a given language of a given time” (Webster's). Even though this definition relates to a language that already exists, it can be said to apply equally to building a language from scratch. Assuredly a language builder will have to have a grasp of the grammatical categories, such

⁹⁸ See later for the intended users of the new language.

as e.g., case, number, gender, phrase and sentence structure, word order, meaning, etc. Thus it is that we say that the Buddha was a grammarian. Even though there was a model, namely, each and all of the other Prakrits, it was a new language that he was literally going to create. It is by pulling in the different strands of the Prakrits - north, south, east, west, through a process of analysis, retaining, modifying and dropping some and creating others, and entailing not only words and word arrangements as in the definition, but also phonology and semantics, that the Buddha can be said to come up with a new language. All this making him a grammarian, we see a third praxic skill that he brings.

6. Organizational Capacity & Penchant for Systematicity

Being a grammarian knowledgeable of the elements of language such as sounds, words, nuances, meanings, etc., however, would hardly generate a language automatically. This would be no different from saying, as earlier, that having brick, mortar, wood and shingles, etc. would not result in a building. Language is a systematic structure, and so developing a language then calls for an organizational praxic skill, generated by a mind-set for systematicity.

There are any number of Discourses where Buddha's penchant for systematicity comes to be evident. For example, in the *satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, we see the Buddha characterizing the process of the contemplation on the body in terms of an increasing complexity: 'training' (*sikkhati*), 'considering' (*paccavekkhati*) and 'comparing' (*upasaṃharati*). Explains Analayo⁹⁹, "This change in the choice of verbs underscores a progression from comparatively simple acts of observation to more sophisticated forms of analysis". But if this is to introduce variation, the 'refrain' (as in the study by Analayo) in the Sutta speaks to a standardization, and a further systematization. It is the *modus operandi*¹⁰⁰, introduced after each of the four meditation exercises: body, feelings, mind, dhamma. Its task is "to direct attention to the those aspects that are essential for the proper practice of each exercise", both "internally" and "externally".

This example can be said to find a parallel in relation to a language. There is first the standard sentence structure – noun-verb, case endings, gender differences, etc., this being both a refrain as well as a variation dimension. Moving from a simple sentence to a complex one, or from a simple morpheme to joint morphemes of compounds (*samāsa*) would be another parallel. So building a language then means building these features into it.

If this calls for a penchant for systematicity on the part of the Buddha, the penchant seems to be a total mindset, when we read that when he begins to walk, he is said to always begin with the same foot: "When he walks, he steps out with the right foot first..."¹⁰¹, as if in a military discipline¹⁰². A capacity or organization and a penchant for systematicity then can then be said to be another praxic strength brought by the Buddha to create a new language.

7. Pedagogic skill

While all of the above relates to constructing the new language, the Buddha will assuredly not be its only user, if the goal is to ensure the Dhamma to posterity in its pristine purity. Pupil Ananda may have the multitude skills to grasp the Dhamma immediately, but what is critical is that the language be taught well.

⁹⁹ Analayo, 2003, 119

¹⁰⁰ Analayo, 2003, 92, drawing upon W S Karunaratna.

¹⁰¹ Nanamoli & Bodhi, 2001, 746 (Brahmayu Sutta, MN ii 137).

¹⁰² This association is from the writer's own experience of being a cadet at high school, when marching was to always begin with the left foot: left-right, left-right....

So, being a good language teacher alone would ensure that the newly constructed language will be accurately taught in a sound methodology. Such pedagogic skill can then be considered yet another praxic skill the Buddha brings to the task of language construction.

2.2.3.3 Supportive Skills

The above then are some language-specific practical skills that the Buddha brings to the task of constructing a new language. But there are supportive conditions as well.

8. Pragmatism

Teaching for 20 years prior to Ananda becoming the Buddha's attendant, the need for a standardized language could have come to the Buddha's mind over time. Yet, creating a language takes time. And then finding someone to test it on can happen only on the availability of a qualified one like Ananda. And so it is the pragmatist in the Buddha then that made him wait for the right moment to construct the new language. Of course, the Buddha's pragmatism is anecdotal. When, e.g., Chief Disciple Sariputta suggests that the Buddha come up with rules for the Sangha, he is politely told that the Buddha knows best when! His pragmatism, that entails right timing, also can be said to be yet another praxic skill the Buddha brings to the task.

9. Flexibility of mind

Stemming possibly partly at least from a penchant for systematicity, *flexibility of mind*, would be a distinct supportive condition for constructing a new language. The Buddha, steeped in wisdom and compassion, and also guided by his real life experiences, can be said to come with a mind of flexibility, the Middle Path being example enough. The advice to Chatta Manavaka for paying Homage away from the ritualistic format can be said to speak to this flexibility of mind at a more mundane level:

*Yo vadatam pavaro manujesu
Sakyamunī bhagavā kata kicco
Pāragato bala viriya samangi
Taṃ sugataṃ saraṇatthamupemī.*

This is followed by verses related to paying homage to the Dhamma - *dhamamimaṃ saraṇatthamupemi*, and *the Sangha (saṅghamimam...)*¹⁰³.

If this speaks to a flexibility in a non-linguistic focus, it can also be said to be guided by the princely training in poetics (as above). So we may say, that in a reverse and reciprocal relationship, the flexibility of mind would have contributed to the flexibility that would come in practically handy in creating the new language.

10. Language entrepreneur

All of the background above can be said to make the Buddha a 'language entrepreneur'¹⁰⁴, meaning as in my characterization, 'one who makes bold in novel language usage, breaking boundaries going

¹⁰³ Chattamānavaka Gāthā, KN, *Vimanavatthu* 886.

¹⁰⁴ Sugunasiri, 1978. This concept was developed writing a doctoral thesis titled *Humanistic Nationism*, relating to sociology and politics, but with no religious or spiritual connotations, though with linguistic associations. However, the Buddha seems a perfect fit: "the Buddha at times interpreted expressions commonly used within ascetic circles to

beyond convention'. An entrepreneur in the financial sphere is one who looks for creative ways and means of making more money, or put in lighter terms, making the money run for its life beyond the boundaries. Buddha the language entrepreneur likewise can be said to make the language make a run beyond tradition, covering a wider audience, and with new meaning. There is first scientific precision in language usage. The listing of the Four Noble Truths – *dukkha, samudaya, nirodha, magga*, would serve as an example of such scientificity, each single term capturing a whole range of meanings but with precision.

In the Tipitaka, we see the Buddha himself breaking into poetry. So an associated strength brought by the Buddha in creating a new language could be said to be literary creativity, such as *dhvani* (non-literal), *vyangya* (implicative), *vakrokti* (figurative expression), etc.¹⁰⁵, if also going traditional with the 'straightforward meaning' (*yathartha*). Then, as noted above, there are the *double entendres* such as *tathāgata* (*tathā + gata* 'thus gone' or *tathā + āgata* 'thus come') and *agga* as in the *Aggañña Sutta*, where it is used to mean both 'earliest' in relation to time or 'highest' or 'best' in relation to the Dhamma (as above).

The Buddha's potential as a Language entrepreneur may have resulted from the language-related insights in his education as well as all his life experiences. But it is also possible that the very experience of constructing the language (Pali) guided him, making out of him the entrepreneur, poet, literary realist¹⁰⁶, and originator of the embedded story structure¹⁰⁷.

So *Language entrepreneurship*, then, can be another supportive condition that the Buddha brings to the novel task of creating a language.

11. Knower of the Dhamma

This then brings us to a most critical, though most obvious, quality behind creating a linguistic medium specifically suitable for the retention of the Dhamma to posterity in its pristine purity. And that is being a knower of the Dhamma. While this needs hardly be said, he being the Buddha, analytical comprehensiveness in a study demands that this dimension be included as an inevitable background and strength towards building a language¹⁰⁸. The point becomes clearer when we consider the case of Panini. In coming up with the Sanskrit grammar, there was no question of a need for him to have the knowledge of any form of spirituality. So the Buddha stands in sharp contrast as a builder of language in coming with the knowledge of Dhamma.

12. Visionary

Finally we come to the overall quality in the Buddha in constructing the new language - *visionary*. His vision, as already seen in his words to Cunda, was "that this holy life may continue and be established for a long time for the profit and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans". Now this visionary stance then is what can be said to have prompted the Buddha to come up with the new language in the first place.

express his own position", another example being the use of "forceful vocabulary" (Anlayo, 2003, 36, 37)]. See pages 36-39 for details.

¹⁰⁵ See Warder, 1989, for a discussion of Indian poetics.

¹⁰⁶ See Sugunasiri, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ See Sugunasiri, 2014b.

¹⁰⁸ An example of Buddha's comprehensiveness would be the inclusion of the 'stimulus' in his characterization of the mindbody, though it is outside of the mindbody, identifying it as the external condition. See Bodhi (Gen Ed.), 1999, for a comprehensive treatment, and Sugunasiri, 2001, for a popular take.

So we have now seen twelve strengths that the Buddha brings to the creation of the new linguistic medium in which the Dhamma may be conveyed:

- Two Preparatory skills
 1. *Erudition;*
 2. *Linguist;*
- Six Praxic Skills
 4. *Experience in Teaching Dhamma;*
 5. *Being a second language learner;*
 6. *Grammarian,*
 7. *Organizational Capacity, Penchant for Systematicity;*
 7. *Language teaching skill;*
 8. *Pragmatism;*
- Four Supportive Skills
 9. *Flexibility of mind;*
 10. *Language entrepreneurship;*
 11. *Knower of the Dhamma;*
 12. *Visionary.*

These are, of course, in addition to all the other qualities such as extraordinary memory and ‘psychic capacity’ (*abhiññā*) - reading other minds, clairvision, clairaudience, telepathic communication, etc.

2.2.3.4 Buddha as Authority Figure

It was noted that constructing a language is not unlike constructing a building. And the first requirement here is the need for an architect, formal or informal, who comes with an understanding of the different dimensions – from the initial plan to the ongoing process requiring the differential raw material and tools needed to the end product. So we have seen above how already the Buddha is fully qualified to be the eminent language architect.

But then there is also the need of a master builder to make sure that the construction is done according to plan. We see the Buddha filling in this role, too. So when it comes to the construction of Pali, the Buddha can then be said to be both the architect and the principal builder. What wonderful news!

Having all of the above qualities may prepare the Buddha to construct the new nameless language. But what conditions will be required to ensure the completed product will not be put to misuse¹⁰⁹ and be retained in all its authenticity in its role as the medium in which the message of the Dhamma will be carried effectively? This condition can be said to be the need of an Authority Figure. While this, of course, is a given since there could be no better authority than the Buddha himself when it comes to the Dhamma, it bears additional relevance here.

The end product in a building construction would be a home (or office, etc.) that is secure from internal structural danger as well as external threats. Likewise can it be said that the newly constructed language of Pali was intended to be a home for the Dhamma to live in, in the secure expectation of

¹⁰⁹ A hearsay example that comes to the writer’s mind is how mindfulness meditation is said to be practised by army personnel to be better sharp-shooters and bombers against enemy targets.

withstanding any internal or external attacks of misinterpretation! So it should hardly be surprising that the architect the master builder would want to ensure that the house just built is free from any such potential threats.

It may be recalled that the Buddha's first reason for constructing a new language was to ensure maintaining the Dhamma in its pristine purity into the future. But he would have been more than alive to the reality of how languages do change, the multiplicity of Prakrits bearing enough evidence. Each Prakrit can be said to be a localized, i.e., dialectal, version of a common Proto-Indic language¹¹⁰ that has branched out over time, and continue to keep changing. And he was not unaware of what would happen if the new language were to be put to everyday use, allowing it to be a parole¹¹¹, allowing for further idiolectal usage at the individual level. Sanskrit provides the evidence, if indeed any evidence would be needed:

There is, indeed, no doubt that in the second century BC, Sanskrit was actually spoken in the whole country But who spoke it there? Brahmans certainly did. .. Its use however, extended beyond the Brahmans. For we read in Patanjali about a head-groom disputing with a grammarian as to the etymology of the Sanskrit word for 'charioteer' (*sūta*). This agrees with the distribution of the dialects in the Indian drama ... Here the king and those of superior rank speak Sanskrit, while the various forms of the popular dialect are assigned to women and men of the people. The dramas also show that whoever did not speak Sanskrit, at any rate understood it, for Sanskrit is there used in conversation with speakers of Prakrit. The theatrical public .. must also have understood Sanskrit. Thus, though classical Sanskrit was from the beginning a literary and, in a sense, an artificial dialect, it would be erroneous to deny to it altogether the character of a colloquial language. .. The position of Sanskrit, in short, has all along been, with still, much like of Hebrew among the Jews or of Latin in the Middle ages¹¹².

While the example relates to a later period than that of the Buddha, he would assuredly not have failed to insight this scenario - how the same fate would befall Pali if it were to be used (a) for anything other than as the exclusivist linguistic medium of the Dhamma, and (b) put into daily use. Going the same route as Sanskrit, it would assuredly come to be 'embellished' or 'vulgarized', if not distorted, in the sense of the Dhamma coming to be interpreted according to the understandings, if not the whims and fancies, of 'men of the people'. Among them would not only be the Buddha's disciples themselves but the recluses of other sects as well.

¹¹⁰ This is to draw a parallel from 'proto-I.E.', of which e.g., Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Indo-Iranian, etc. are (4 of 10) branches. Indo-Iranian itself separating and going their own way, we end up with Indic, which is what we're re-labeling as Proto-Indic to refer to an original variation distinct from Iranian, but then resulting in a branching off as we see in the Prakrits.

¹¹¹ "Saussure distinguishes between "language (*langue*)" and "speech (*langage*)". Language is a well-defined homogeneous object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts. Speech is many-sided and heterogeneous: it belongs both to the individual and to society. Language is a self-contained whole and a principle of classification: it is social. Language is not complete in any speaker: it is a product that is assimilated by speakers. It exists only within a collective. Language is "a system of signs that express ideas"".

To explain how the social crystallization of language comes about, Saussure proposes the notion of "individual speaking (*parole*)". Speaking is willful and intentional." (given under the title, 'Semiology: *langue*, *langage*, and *parole*': <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Course_in_General_Linguistics

¹¹² Macdonnell, 1990, 18-19.

So how then could the Authority Figure ensure that the newly constructed linguistic medium will not face the same fate? It is thus that we then posit that Pali comes to be of a closed fist, a restricted language (*pālita bhāsā*, to coin a characterization in Pali; see later for a particular relevance) authorized to be used exclusively by a handpicked few, namely, the closest disciples, certainly beginning with Ananda. Allowed in, to the exclusive and secretive, unnamed ‘Pali club’ soon after the final touches were done, could well have been the Chief Disciples Sariputta and Moggallana, ‘father of the Sangha’ Mahakassapa (who was willing to hold the First Council without the participation of Ananda), ‘Master of Doctrinal Exposition’ Mahakaccana, “the foremost among those who could accurately expand an utterance of the Master's which had been spoken concisely” and Upali, reciter of the Vinaya at the First Council, among the male disciples. Among the female disciples would have been Mahapajapati Gotami (the first female Arahant), ‘the debating ascetic’ Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, ‘preserver of the Vinaya’ Patacara and Khema ‘of great wisdom’ and ‘the chief patroness’ Visakha¹¹³. By the First Council, it should be clear that the 500 Arahants participating in it would have been privy to the newly minted language. And so it may be surmised that during the Buddha’s lifetime itself, every Arahant, male and female, would have come to be included in the exclusive Pali club.

Protecting the language, of course, is not unrelated to conserving the Dhamma as well as the Sangha. We only have to look at the Vinaya. It is a code that seeks to guide even the minutest detail relating to living the life of a sangha, this both promotive of Sangha comfort as well as promotive of continuing respect of the laity for the Sangha. And of course, each one of the 227 / 252 rules come with the Buddha’s words “I give my assent to” (*anujānāmi*)¹¹⁴. It was his responsibility to ensure the quality of the Sangha in their personal and public behaviour, making him the ‘charioteer in taming people’. If the conduct of a multivariied discipleship called for a single and standardized and systematized code of conduct, would that not apply to his teachings within the context of a multiplicity of languages, if they are to mastered by one and all?

We see the Buddha specifically being the strict hand in relation to the Dhamma in more than one context. As an example, once, two monks, Brahmin brothers, named Yameḷutekulā, approach the Buddha and say, “Nowadays, Sir, there are many monks, of various names, various descents, various nationalities and various clans who have gone forth were spoiling the Buddha’s words ‘defiled through personal etymological interpretations’ ... (*sakāya*¹¹⁵ *niruttiyā buddhavacanam dūsentī*). Let us enscone¹¹⁶ (*āropema*) the Buddhavacana in the *chando*.”¹¹⁷. While there may be more than one interpretation given by scholars for the term ‘chando’, coming from Brahmin brothers, there is little doubt that the reference is to the Vedas, and/or to the Vedic chanting style itself. Even though they had only the best of intent in approaching the Buddha, they come to be reprimanded. While this may be surprising, it would have

¹¹³ The characterisations are as in Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997, though with the exception of Upali not featured.

¹¹⁴ This translation has been arrived at after rejecting a few alternatives. While ‘allow’, given as the translation of *anujānāmi* in Rhys Davids & Oldenberg (see below), would be ‘permissive’, taking away the sense of authority, a term like ‘decree’ sounds too authoritative, though not incorrect in capturing the sense of the Buddha’s term. While ‘concur’ reflects no such authoritativeness, it suggests agreeing with someone else’s view’. ‘I go along’ is too informal.

¹¹⁵ Vinaya II 139. Here *sakāya* < *sa* + *kāya* ‘own body’, the *a*- in *sa*- here is pronounced as *schwa*, as in the unaccented first syllable in ‘succumb’ and not as in its accented second syllable.

¹¹⁶ Even though this has the meaning of ‘in comfort’, it also has the meaning ‘in security’ (Webster’s).

¹¹⁷ Vin II 139, 1-16.

been the Buddha's judicious strategy to ward off any other possibilities of a second and a third to come with whatever suggestions. After all, wouldn't the Buddha know it best?!

To take another context, we have seen above that if and when someone were to claim that he was repeating the Buddha's words, to check it word by word (or meaning by meaning) and phoneme by phoneme. So when it was brought to the Buddha's attention that monks were 'defiling' his words, that would be what the Buddha would say. And thus in the Vināya we read the words, *anujānāmi bhikkhave sakāya niruttiyā buddhavacanam pariyāpunitum*¹¹⁸. While this has been translated by scholars in different ways¹¹⁹, we translate it as 'I give consent to, oh monks, to master the Buddha's words in their own etymological origins'. While what has been translated as 'own' is *sakāya*, there is also the other close rendering *sakkāya* as in *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* (the first of the hindrances jettisoned by a streamwinner (*sotāpanna*)) which I have translated elsewhere as 'own body' (*sa-* 'own' + (*k*)*kaya* 'body')¹²⁰. The term 'body' here can be taken as in the English usage 'body of a text', or as in 'the body of the argument ...', meaning 'the crux of the argument'. So, then *sakāya niruttiyā* may be also taken to mean as in the 'original body' (taking *nirutti* to mean 'original'). So it may be taken, literally 'as in the body of the text of the Buddhavacana' and idiomatically as 'as in the context of the Buddhavacana'.

What we see in *sakāya niruttiyā* is a clever *double entendre* on the part of the Buddha as referring to both disciple's one's own understanding but also meticulously in relation to the etymological origins as intended in the Buddhavacana. If this sounds confusing, let us take the term 'Buddha'. Straightforward as it may look, would not each one of us understand it on the basis of what we come with? For example, a Theravadin would take the Buddha as a down to earth human being though certainly with special skills while the Mahayanist would see a superman in the Buddha, and nothing less, from the word go. Or take the term Dhamma, again a single term. Does each one of us not take it to mean from our own vantage point, especially since it comes to be used by the Buddha himself in variant ways – Dhamma as Teachings, reality, etc. This interpretation can still be said to speak to the injunction to check out word by word and phoneme by phoneme when a claim by someone is made that what s/he comes with is the Buddha's words.

This call that the Buddha's words are to be followed meticulously then is what would make the Buddha the Authority Figure, over and above the obvious reality of his being so.

Another example of the Buddha taking a firm hand in the Vinaya is making it an offence for a bhikkhu to have a layperson recite Dhamma line by line¹²¹. Handing out the Dhamma freely, i.e., making a 'free distribution' of it, would be to create the conditions that would allow the interpretation of the Dhamma by the uninstructed *sekhas*, 'men of the street' (as above), setting the new language on the same course as in relation to the example of Sanskrit!

Such an injunction may make us wonder as to why the Dhamma, that the Buddha intended to be for the benefit of one and all, needs to be reined in. One surface level explanation may be that it was so as to ensure that the Sangha doesn't get too close to laymen, especially if it happens to be of the opposite sex. Another is that the larger the chunks of Dhamma available to a layperson, the higher the chances of misinterpretation, and misteaching by him or her if in a community leadership position in the absence of the Sangha. And thirdly, and ironically, if a layman were to in fact teach the Dhamma correctly, that may

¹¹⁸ Cullavagga V.33.1.

¹¹⁹ See Levman, 2009, for a detailed treatment.

¹²⁰ Mihita, forthcoming, II.

¹²¹ Vinaya, Sutta Vibhanga, Pacittiya Rule 4,

result in the lowering of the respect for the sangha, who by definition are the repositories of the Dhamma. However, the primary reason for the injunction could well be that it was to ensure that the carefully constructed new language is not lost in the jungle of Prakrits, becoming just another *la parole* resulting in interpreting the Buddhavacana in varied etymological interpretations (*sakāya niruttiyā*) of the claimant, and not in the etymological understanding as in the Buddhavacana¹²².

There may be another ironic reason. Constructing a new language, and seeking to maintain its longevity in *unchanging* health, in a closed fist, clearly goes against the Buddha's own teaching of impermanence (*anicca*). And only in his role of Authority Figure can it be said that the seeming contradiction can be managed and handled, noting as well that the Saddhamma, his Teachings, are also intended to be 'timeless' (*akāliko*).

Now creating a language and making it available for use, as was done by Panini, of course, requires no Authority Figure. But in the context of the newly created language to retain the Dhamma to purity, an Authority Figure comes to be critical. After all, it is only the Buddha that could have ensured and enforced such exclusivity. Of course, as in relation to the Vinaya, it was not that he was seeking to be a strong hand or rigid ruler, but that his hands were forced into the stance by the call of administrative efficacy and the Buddha's original and ongoing goal of retaining the Dhamma to posterity in pristine purity for the good of the many. So while the Buddha was no dictator, but for reasons of administrative efficacy, he certainly had to take an active role to ensure that the *nouveau langue* 'new language' would not end up as another lost creature in the Prakritic parole jungle.

For all these reasons, then, we posit that the Buddha decided to play the important role of the firm hand in relation to the newly constructed medium of the Dhamma, later called Pali.

Interestingly, the meaning of the term 'Pali' is shown in PED as 'causeway', 'bridge'. So it was to help the disciples to cross over the Dhamma, without getting their feet dirty, so to speak metaphorically, that the new language had to be constructed. But just as a bridge is left behind, and undamaged, and not carried on the shoulder by one who crosses it, so was Pali – to be used to get across on the Dhamma, but left behind uncorrupted, so others could use to get across, too, in full confidence of the authenticity.

But even more telling is how the label Pali has its roots in the idea of 'protected', as sought to capture in my coinage, *pālita bhāsā*, in the context of the exclusivity, and secrecy it had come to be. Giving it a visibility seven centuries later, Buddhaghosa names it *magadhabhāsā*, drawing upon the characterization in VvA as *pālito + aṭṭhupattito*, 'pālita' literally means 'protected' well capturing the Buddha's intent as above¹²³.

2.3 Summation

If in the earlier section we had provided the negative argument that Pali was no translation of the *lingua franca*, the three conditions dealt with above can be said to constitute the positive argument: (a) Dhammaic call to retain the Dhamma to posterity in its pristine purity, (b) the presence of Ananda as 'critical other', and (c) Buddha's own qualities. If item a. serves as the conceptual factor, Ananda and Buddha serve as the human factor.

¹²² Another parallel would be as in relation to the Vedas when kept exclusively in the hands of Brahmin teachers.

¹²³ Also written as *Pāli*, it comes to be understood as meaning 'line' (PED), and used in the sense of 'text' as in the Sinhalese *Peḷa*.

“Sylvain Lévi (1912) was the first to note the existence of *une langue précanonique*..”¹²⁴. Taking the position that there had come to be a *lingua franca* in the time of the Buddha, von Hinuber calls “the underlying language” ‘Buddhist Middle Indic’, “.. from which both Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit branched off, but one he believed was later than the earliest language of the Canon...”¹²⁵. By contrast, we posit that Pali was indeed *canonique*, i.e., ‘*le langue canonique définitif*’ with the additional proviso, ‘*mais pas la parole*’. That is to say that Pali is neither post-Canonical nor pre-Canonical, but Canonical. It is the very original language of the Canon to the extent that it came to be finalized at the hands of the Buddha, with the active participation of the ‘critical other’ human condition of Ananda, the ‘foremost’ in multiple language skills, both receptive and productive. Keeping the newly minted Pali in the exclusive hands of the elite Sangha was the ‘critical other’ strategic condition. And Pali can be said to have come into existence about twenty years post-Enlightenment, when Ananda comes on board.

For all of the reasons such as the above, then, we call the Buddha the ‘Language Progenitor’ (*bhāsājananaka*, to coin a term) of Pali.

A related piece of textual evidence that Buddha played the role of Progenitor lies in the Buddha’s characterization of Ananda as being ‘foremost’ in the several dimensions: “heard much”, good memory, mastery over the sequential structure, steadfast in study. Such a statement could only have been made after the fact. To say that Ananda was the foremost as attendant, the Buddha would have had to receive his services in the first place. Likewise, to say e.g., that he was the foremost in memory and being steadfast in study, etc., the Buddha would have had to see him memorize and study. So what did Ananda study, and in what language would that have been?

Ananda and Upali are identified as presenting the Dhamma and the Vinaya respectively at the first Council. Did Ananda, never mind Upali, “translate” all of the 84,000 plus Teachings learnt from the Buddha and the Elders in the short time span of three months after Parinibbana? And this, while still also striving to gain Arahant hood to qualify for his participation at the First Council? Translation is not among the skills identified in Ananda. The Pali terms shown in Buddhadatta (1979) for translation are *anuvāda* and *bhāsāparivattana*., neither of them, most relevantly, appearing in any such sense in PED, which gives their meanings as follows: *anuvāda* ‘blaming, censure, admonition’¹²⁶; *bhāsāparivattana* ‘setting going, keeping up, propounding’. Even though happily the second meaning well fits Ananda, as Treasurer of both Dhamma and the newly minted language (as above), it is not a quality of Ananda listed by the Buddha. Further, the term ‘translate’ suggests that there is a language to be translated into. So then, we ask again, did Ananda construct a new language and also translate the Teachings simultaneously, within the span of three months leading up to the First Council? Well...., and we shall leave the reader with that gasp, as we continue that this then adds to the argument that Pali was in place during the time of Ananda serving the role of attendant to the Buddha. and that the Buddha was the progenitor of the new language

3. Theoretical Postulations

Having made the case, we now turn theoretical, taking a look at the claim from other angles.

¹²⁴ Levman, JSALL 2016.

¹²⁵ Von Hinuber, 1983: 192–193, cited in Levman 2016, 4.

¹²⁶ On a lighter note, that is unless we are planning to gang up on Ananda for yet another of his failings (as is found in the Canon, as e.g., not checking with the Buddha as to what is to be understood as *khuddanukhudda* rules that could be let go of following his passing away, or not respectfully inviting the Buddha to live longer when a hint was given by him that the possibility is there for him to live longer)!

3.1 Pali in a Conditioned Origination Paradigm

We may see the three factors contributive to making the case for Pali as the language of the Canon as a case of ‘conditionally originated’ (*paticcuppanna*)¹²⁷ in relation to need¹²⁸. We seek to capture this diagrammatically below, adding some other implicit conditions as well:

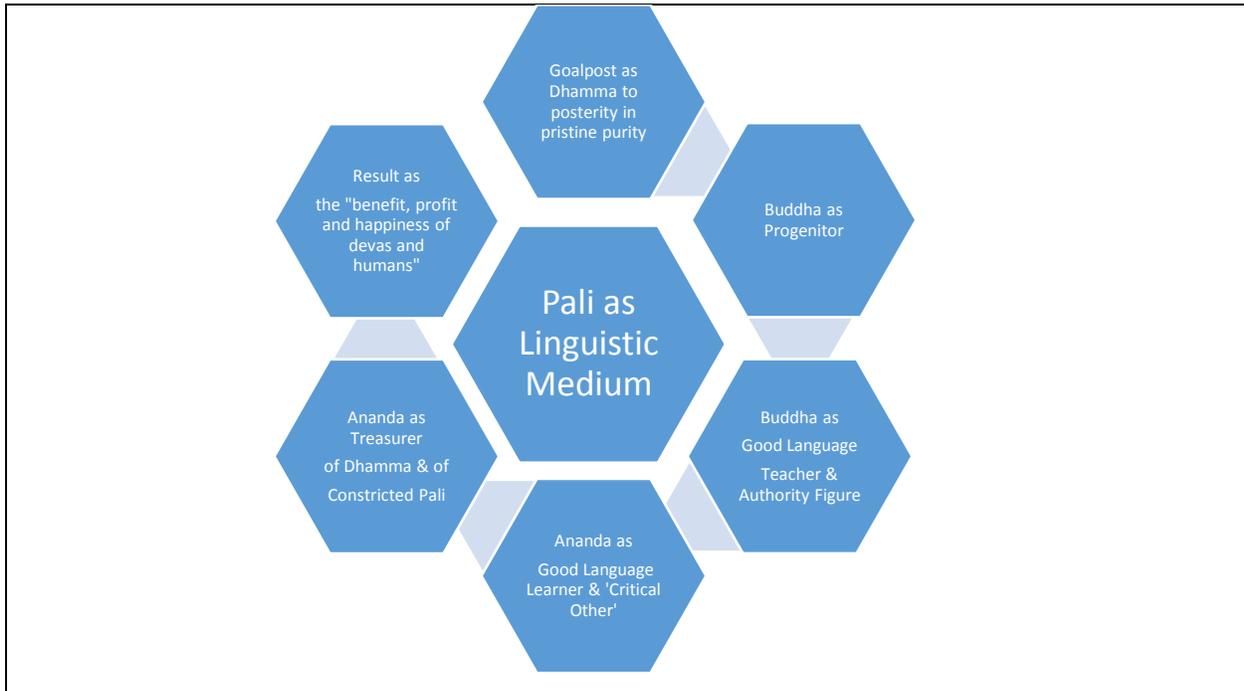


Fig. 1. Pali in a Conditioned Co-origination Paradigm

In this Figure, we place ‘Pali as Linguistic Medium’ at the centre (hexagon) since it is the topic of our inquiry, the rest of the hexagons conditioning or conditioned by it, directly or implicitly. We begin with the ‘goalpost’ (top centre hexagon) - Buddha’s expectation for the Dhamma to continue to posterity in pristine purity. This in turn puts the Buddha in three roles, the first as Progenitor (hexagon at R below). The other role, as in the hexagon below that, is ‘Good Language Teacher’ and ‘Authority Figure’.

It may be remembered that our conditioning cycle begins with the need to keep the Dhamma to posterity in pristine purity. We have also seen how the Dhamma comes to be bled as it spreads wider, going in the opposite direction of retaining the Dhamma to posterity in pristine purity. Hence the need to keep the newly created medium of communication close-fisted, in a restricted usage, explaining the characterization, ‘Authority Figure’.

¹²⁷ It may be noted that the term and concept we use here is *paticcuppanna* and not *paticcasamuppanna*, which I translate as ‘conditionally originated’ <*paticca*- ‘conditioned’ *sam*- ‘co-’ -*uppanna* ‘originated’. What we have is a linear relationship but no necessary reciprocity in reversal.

¹²⁸ It is to be noted that ‘need’ is to be distinguished from ‘want’, the latter associated with attachment while the former is not necessarily.

The new language constructed by the Buddha in turn conditions the need for a ‘Good Language Learner’, Ananda fitting the bill, as shown in the bottom hexagon. He is also the ‘Critical Other’, for without him, the benefit of the new language intended to preserve the Dhamma to posterity in pristine purity would not come to fruition.

What we find between the two hexagons, of course, is a reciprocity - Good Language Teacher calling for a Good Language Learner¹²⁹, and vice versa. Language is a two way street, as also in a teaching-learning situation. The best learning would be when the learner comes with enough learning skills to benefit from the qualitative level of the teacher. E.g., a kid will not understand what mom says at age 1. But by age 6, when one becomes a linguistic adult, the child will be able to understand her, but still any complex structures evading him. By teenage years, communication comes to hit a higher score since now both the grammatical structures as well as a sufficient relevant vocabulary have been reasonably mastered. Still, the language of science or literature or philosophy will be out of reach for the adolescent learner until and unless she is now studying science or literature or philosophy, at high school or university. At this point, the teacher will find the student able to grasp the content of the deeper concepts. Needless to say, the higher the quality of both the learner and the teacher, the higher the learning in a reciprocity.

Now the teacher-learner relationship under discussion is one that can be seen at a level beyond the ordinary as in a classroom situation. We have seen above the psychic dimension (*abhiññā*) in the Buddha in relation to both discovering the Dhamma as well as in discoursing it¹³⁰. We posit that it comes to be extended as well in the language learning context in what may be called a language ‘transplantability’, as e.g., in relation to Sona (above).

While still in beyond-the-norm psychic realm, we should perhaps not forget the possible ‘co-ambling genetic’ (to coin a phrase), meaning ‘genetic inheritance through samsara’, between the Buddha and Ananda. The joint morpheme ‘co-ambling’ seeks to capture the meaning of ‘*samsāra*’, literally, ‘flowing together’ (*saṃ-* ‘together’ + *sāra* (< sr- > sara-) ‘flowing’, ‘travelling’). As in the Jatakas, “Often [Ananda] is the Bodhisatta’s brother, son, father ...” (Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997, 163), also noting, not surprisingly, that he was also attendant. So it can be said that what is taught with psychic prowess would go on deaf ears unless the learner also comes with some level of psychic sophistication in receiving it, though certainly not at the level of the Buddha. So what is called for may be called ‘psychic matching’ (new concept).

What the corollary of Buddha being the ‘Good Language Teacher’ and Ananda the ‘Good Language Learner’ then speak to is the reciprocal conditioning .

Moving to the next hexagon (L up), the Buddha being a ‘good language teacher’ and the close-fistedness relating to the new language can be said to condition Ananda as the Treasurer of not only the Dhamma, but the constricted new language of Pali as well. Ananda having the capacity to being the attendant at both levels – serving both the Buddha and the Dhamma, and thus a confidant, too, can then be seen as a proximate condition that facilitates the close-fistedness. And the other facilitating condition

¹²⁹ This indeed was a project in the 1970’s at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, Canada, during my doctoral studies, although I have no details to share any more. However, it seems to be still alive in a modern context. See <https://oxfordhousebcn.com/en/the-10-characteristics-of-a-good-language-learner/>.

¹³⁰ We give another reference that covers the same ground: *imaṃ lokaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti* (DN 1 250 Tevijja sutta).

would be Ananda living in proximity, facilitating the posited psychic transplanting – of text, rule, correction, change of mind, etc.

Incidentally, it could be said that in keeping the newly minted language in the exclusive hands of the chosen few, the Buddha can be said to go against the current, given that language is a natural quality of being human. But it can also be said to be a contribution towards making Pali a practice in ‘excellent language’ (*sammā vācā*), though in a wider sense.

This then finally takes us back to the initial hexagon, Ananda in the doubled-up Treasurer role serving as the condition for the resulting "benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans" as per the Buddha’s expectations.

So we may then see the emergence of Pali as a *natural* concomitant of a cycle of conditioning.

3.2 Pali as Preventive Praxis in a Four Noble Truths Paradigm

If we were to look for another theoretical angle in support of the position that Pali was constructed at the hands of the Buddha himself, one could not think of a better analytical scheme than the Paradigm of the Four Noble Truths itself. Discovering the reality of suffering, and the basis of suffering, the Buddha was moved to act on it, to explore how it could be ended. Seeing the suffering that could and would result from the defiling of the Dhamma due to geolinguistic diversification and prakritic *deoriginalization* (to coin a verb)¹³¹, meaning ‘deviating from the original’ (taking ‘original’ as in *sakāya nirutti*), it should hardly be surprising, Dhammaically speaking, that the most natural *preventive* action in wisdom by the Buddha would indeed be to construct a common linguistic medium in which to carry the message of the Dhamma, the medium indeed recognized as the message, as captured by McLuhan 2500 years later. How else could the Buddha be sure that “... this holy life may continue and be established for a long time for the profit and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans” as in his words to Cunda (as above)?

Thus it is that in another theoretical detour, we can see in Fig. 2 below, the construction of Pali as ‘preventive praxis’ modelling after the Four Noble Truths (Col I): identification, diagnosis, prognosis and prescription (II)¹³²:

¹³¹ This is along the lines of an example like ‘demystification’.

¹³² See Mihita, 2019a, for the model of the Four Noble Truths as a Medical paradigm.

I	II	III	IV
Four Noble Truths	Analytical scheme	Naming in the context of Pali	Characterization
<i>Dukkha</i>	Identification	Dhamma bleeding	Defiling the Dhamma through communicative inefficacy, afflicting the disciples, laity and Devas, by obstructing access to the original words of the Buddha.
<i>Samudaya</i>	Diagnosis	Language bleeding	Teachings coming to be in a Tower of Babel of a geolinguistic diversification with increase of disciples.
<i>Nirodha</i>	Prognosis	Language standardization	Prognostication of a common tongue to stop the bleeding and usher back in healing.
<i>Magga</i>	Prescription	Constructing Pali	Developing a new language, latterly labelled Pali, but keeping it close-fisted.

Figure 2: Constructing Pali as Preventive Praxis ala the Four Noble Truths Paradigm

Dukkha (I) would be the ‘Dhamma bleeding’ (as under ‘Naming’ (col. III)), meaning the semantic, or conceptual, deoriginalization of the Dhamma, or as in the Characterization’ (Col. IV), “Defiling the Dhamma through communicative inefficacy, afflicting the disciples, laity and Devas, by obstructing access to the original words of the Buddha.”. The cause (‘origin’ (*samudaya*)), as in the Four Noble Truths, for this may be called ‘language bleeding’, meaning the linguistic deoriginalization: “Teachings coming to be in a Tower of Babel of a geolinguistic diversification with increase of disciples”. The ‘prognosis’ (*nirodha*), meaning the availability of a solution of ‘Language standardization’: “Prognostication of a common tongue to stop the bleeding and usher back in healing”. Finally the ‘Prescription’ (path (*magga*)) of ‘Constructing Pali’ (looking for history’s kindness to impose a latter day name on the innocent nameless solution), namely, “Developing a new language, latterly labelled Pali, but keeping it close-fisted.”.

Levman¹³³ notes how “if closely analysed, it [Pali] contains elements of both eastern, western, and northwestern dialects”. Who else but the Buddha would be conversant with such Prakritic variation? In constructing the new language, then, the Buddha could be seen to be seeking to accommodate as many a linguistic client as possible, by coming up with a ‘universal language’ (*lingua franca*) that would allow for a ‘linguistic unification’ that will help the Dhamma find its way as wide as possible to all four quarters of the land without getting bruised¹³⁴.

This then is that we seek to capture in Fig. 2 above, by way of another conceptual scheme supportive of our position that Pali was a construct of the Buddha. As noted above, the Buddha advises that when a claim is made by someone that he was repeating what he had from the Buddha himself, that it be

¹³³ Levman, 2016, 2.

¹³⁴ The inclusion of the indigenous language elements, with Munda and Dravidian associations (Levman, 2010, 59) in the language could also be seen as reflecting the Buddha’s ethical attempt to be inclusive of and cognizant of pre-Aryan history and contemporary reality.

“compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the discipline”. So how could this be done if the Sutta and the Vinaya were not in place in a common linguistic medium by this time?

This then brings us to the end of the additional positive arguments that Pali is indeed the construct of the Buddha, having in the earlier section advanced the negative argument that Pali was a post-Buddhian construct¹³⁵.

To revisit the scene, then, once the Buddha had come to construct a standardized language, it would have been the case that the discourses were repeated to Ananda by the Buddha in nothing but that freshly minted language. While the Buddha could have had the ability to communicate in several languages, there is no evidence that Ananda was anywhere near in that respect. One of the conditions asked of the Buddha by Ananda in agreeing to be attendant, as may be recalled, was that everything taught in his absence be repeated to him. Given that the Buddha had by now been teaching for nearly 20 years, in what language would the Buddha have ‘repeated’ them to Ananda if not in a standardized language? Would it surely have been in diverse Prakrits of the diverse geo-ethnic contexts of the given discourses? And so, wouldn’t it make sense that the repeating was in a standard language? Such an understanding also tells us that Pali would well have been already in place by the time the Buddha was approached by the two Brahmins who suggested that the Teaching be codified in a ‘Chando’, although, of course, this fact was totally unknown to them. This indeed may also explain the somewhat surprising reaction of the Buddha, reprimanding the monks, two faithful disciples, for an innocent suggestion made (see above).

3.3 Pali as *Lingua Dhammica*

It has been argued that Pali is no translation, but indeed the very ‘*lingua franca*’, to use the standard terminology, shaped at the hands of the Buddha himself. But it was no *parole* either, as is understood by the label, but a *le langue* (in the Saussurean characterization), defined as “a well-defined *homogeneous* object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts”. If we can see that the features of the Buddha’s linguistic construct don’t fit the definition of *lingua franca* as in these earlier senses, it doesn’t do any better in relation to the characterization given in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

- 1 a common language consisting of Italian mixed with French, Spanish, Greek, and Arabic that was formerly spoken in Mediterranean ports;
- 2 any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech, [an example being] ‘English is used as a *lingua franca* among many airline pilots’;
- 3: something resembling a common language, [an example being] ‘Movies are the *lingua franca* of the twentieth century—Gore Vidal’—¹³⁶.

The definition in the Cambridge Dictionary makes no better fit:

“a language used for communication between *groups of people who speak different languages*”, giving the example, ‘*the international business community sees English as a lingua franca*’.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ ‘Buddhian’ is as along the lines of Einstein > Einsteinian, to contrast it with the wider term ‘Buddhist’, meaning Buddhism in general or ethnocultural takings. This, however, is not the first time the term is used by the writer.

¹³⁶ <<https://www..com/dictionary/lingua%20franca>>.

¹³⁷ <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/lingua-franca>>.

So it is clear that the label *lingua franca* does not capture the nature of the language constructed by the Buddha. Characterizing Pali as a *koine*, Levman defines it as “an inter-dialect or interlect form with all the principal dialect differences removed and homogenized for ease of communication across dialect boundaries. ...”¹³⁸. While to that extent the Buddha’s construct, as characterized by him and others, seems like a good fit, it fails when it comes to the dictionary definition, “any language that is used by speakers of different languages as a common medium of communication; a common language” (OED). By contrast, we have sought to maintain that the language constructed by the Buddha was of a constricted nature. While it comes closer to fitting Geiger’s characterization, “... a language of the higher and cultured classes..”, it falls short of qualifying under a *koine* characterization in that it was open only to those with membership in the single higher class, namely the Sangha, very distinct from the masses. So again, our eyes come to be directed elsewhere.

Now we can be sure that Pali was a construct based in Prakrits, as per Levman above, reflecting the language features of the four corners, so to speak; and to that extent, it may be called a *Sanskrit*, taken in its literal sense of ‘well constructed’ (*sans* + *krt*). But again, while Sanskrit reconstructed by Panini comes to be spoken by several elements in society, from royalty to Brahmins and put to varied uses, from religion to theatre (as above), the Buddhian construct comes to be utilized only by an ‘elitist’ group, namely the Sangha, venerated by the masses. In that sense it is a ‘High Prakrit’, as in a diglossic context of, e.g., High Arabic and Low Arabic. So in contrast to *Sanskrit*, it may be characterized as, are you ready, an *Ucchakrt!* Ha ha ha!!,

However, our *Ucchakrt*, as noted, being of a restricted usership, and the label *lingua franca* and *koine* as earlier not fitting the bill either, we are left high and dry, looking for a new label to moisten the parched lips!

So how about, *Lingua Indica*, a clear back-formation from *Lingua Franca*? It first captures the idea that the given new language was born in the specific geospiritual context of India. Implicit in it is also that it is a ‘common language’, since it combines the linguistic features of the Prakrits of the four quarters. So it seems a good fit, also because in diachronic linguistic terms, it is not unrelated to the proto-Indo-European family of languages in the context of which the label *lingua franca* emerged, Indic being a branch, a daughter emanation, of the same proto-Indo European of which French and Germanic, e.g., are, too. Morphemically, it retains the final vowel as in *franca*, giving us *indica* (the language group) *Indic* + *a*)¹³⁹.

However, the label *Lingua Indica* fails when it comes to be in relation to the sociolinguistic concept of ‘Language Register’¹⁴⁰, meaning a particularistic language usage by a given sub-group of language users. We may take the examples of farmers, fishermen, academics, etc. whose language could be very different from each other, both phonologically and morphosemantically. “There are five language registers or styles. Each level has an appropriate use that is determined by differing situations. It would certainly be inappropriate to use language and vocabulary reserved for a boyfriend or girlfriend when speaking in the classroom. Thus the appropriate language register depends upon the audience (who), the

¹³⁸ Levman 2016, 3.

¹³⁹ cf *Epigraphia Indica*, *Epigraphia Zeylanica* (sometimes *Epigraphica Ceylonica*).

¹⁴⁰ Halliday, 1973.

topic (what), purpose (why) and location (where).”¹⁴¹ And we have opined that the Buddhian construct was determined primarily by ‘purpose’ and ‘topic’, and for use by a circumscribed usership (audience), though ‘location’ would be irrelevant, given that the Dhamma is ‘timeless’ (*akālika*). The Buddhian construct could be characterized as a ‘formal-static register’ combining, in a novelty, the first two¹⁴², to do justice to a unique linguistic register. A ‘Static Register’ is a “style of communications RARELY or NEVER changes. It is “frozen” in time and content. e.g. the Pledge of Allegiance, the Lord’s Prayer, the Preamble to the US Constitution, the Alma Mater, a bibliographic reference, laws” [caps as in original], while a ‘Formal Register’ is used “in formal settings and is one-way in nature. This use of language usually follows a commonly accepted format. It is usually impersonal and formal. A common format for this register are speeches. e.g. sermons, rhetorical statements and questions, speeches, pronouncements made by judges, announcements”.

So while *Lingua Indica* could be an improvement over *lingua franca*, capturing the sociolinguistic context, it nevertheless has the associations of a language *spoken* across the land, and hence being for mass communication. But we have taken the Buddhian construct as being constrictive in terms of usership. This then is precisely where the alternate label *indica* lags behind.

We have seen, critically, that the novel construct relates to a specific content area, namely the **Dhamma**, and for use by a specific identified social group, rendering it a specific Register. But it is a ‘cross-language’ since the users come from all varieties of linguistic backgrounds of India. So a more fitting label would be **Lingua Dhammica** (*dhammica: dhamma > dhammic > dhammica*¹⁴³), happily not failing either to catch *Lingua Franca* and *Lingua Indica* by the tail, so to speak! As noted, the Dhamma is discovered in *abhiññā* ‘psychicality’, a quality undoubtedly associable with the new language, as we recall the psychic connection between the Buddha and Ananda in the linguistic experiment of constructing, teaching and learning. It also captures the association of the Buddha with the language, given that the Dhamma stands for the Buddha. Asked to name a successor, the Buddha identifies the Dhamma (along with the Vinaya) to be his replacement. So Dhammica then symbolically stands for the Buddha as well, serving additionally as a continuing reminder as to who the author of the new language is as argued for here. It is also, in McLuhanistic terms, the medium for the transmission of the message of the Dhamma, rendering it a ‘Dhammatransmitter’.

Lingua Dhammica may then be defined as ‘*the non-spoken language register and Dhammatransmitter constructed by the Buddha in psychic wisdom for the specific purpose of preserving the Buddhadhamma to posterity in its pristine purity and to be used in a closed fist by a spiritual elite but to be opened up eventually across the globe in due course under appropriate conditions*’. So there! But unlike ‘Chando’, associated with the Vedas, there would be no ‘holiness’ attached to it, the secretive nature being to stop it from undergoing the changes that would be inevitable resulting from everyday use¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴¹ Montano-Harmon, M. R. “Developing English for Academic Purposes” California State University, Fullerton: < <http://genconnection.com/English/ap/LanguageRegisters.htm>>.

¹⁴² The five identified Registers are ‘Static’, ‘Formal’, ‘Consultative’ ‘Casual’ and ‘Intimate’ (Montano-Harmon).

¹⁴³ Grammatically speaking, of course, the abstract form of *dhamma* would be *dhāmmika*. But for reasons of ease of pronunciation, allowing it also easy entry to common parlance, the length is dropped. The –k- gives way to –c- in parallel with the historical use. See fn 137 above.

¹⁴⁴ “Tradition has it that humans did not compose the revered compositions of the Vedas, but that God taught the Vedic hymns to the sages, who then handed them down through generations by word of mouth. Another tradition

Indeed our new label, honouring the geocultural origins and respectful of history, captures the modern day reality far, far better than the label *Lingua Indica* with its exclusive association of India. Pali is no longer the exclusive ‘language of India’ but a world language, making its presence in the four continents – south, north, east, west, interestingly reflecting the very nature of Pali, reflecting as it does the features of the linguistic varieties of the four quarters (as above). The new label can also be said to enrich the English language, and multiculturalize academic discourse as well as widen the conceptual world.

3.4 Emergent Phases of Pali Usership

Immediately following his Enlightenment, the natural question that sprung in the Buddha’s mind was if there would be anyone who would understand his insights gained in deep wisdom. Upon visiting the *pañcavaggiya* bhikkhus, this concern comes to be quickly allayed. Here were now five seekers who immediately benefit from his wisdom and compassion, with 55 others – Yasa and his group, joining the ranks not much later.

So now when there came to be 60 Arahants, the Buddha’s interest was to get the word around to a wider circle. His Teachings were safe in their hands, and in no danger of misinterpretation. But when each Arahant goes in each direction, with no two of them going in the same direction, as per the Buddha’s instructions, the sixty directions would have brought the first challenge of interpretation, since now the monks came to be of not only different geographic and linguistic backgrounds, but intellectual levels as well. However, since the Arahants brought the aspirants from the distant areas for ordination to the Buddha, there was still no threat to the understanding of the Dhamma, since the Teachings came directly from the Buddha’s own lips.

However, when each of the Arahants were next allowed to do the ordination themselves, the semantic bleeding could have had its earliest beginnings. The new recruits were now hearing the Dhamma from the Arahants who could well have begun to *explain* the Dhamma in the mother tongue of the recruits, either after citing the Buddha in his own words, or in lieu, as e.g., we see it happening today. Teachers from traditions in which the Tipitaka is available, i.e., in Pali, Chinese, Tibetan or Sanskrit, been written in the four traditional languages¹⁴⁵, may still likely quote the Dhamma as in the written versions. But those in countries such as Japan, Vietnam, Mongolia or even India where Pali has died out, may give the Teachings in translation. When we come to the West, while the Teachers themselves will have come with training in one or more of the traditional countries, it is rarely that the Dhamma is even quoted in a traditional language, a retreat setting, e.g., offering merely a Homage, but even that not unlikely in the language of the west. So when the laity come to talk about the Dhamma, it will be practically exclusively in their own language.

This then can be said to signify the stage when the Buddha’s focus would have shifted from having more disciples to having the Dhamma preserved to the future in its pristine purity, with the initial thoughts of having a standardized language taking root in his mind at this very point in time. Given his new personal motto of ‘That which I come to understand, that I do’ (see above), he would have set about taking a close look at the language contexts he encounters and taking the first steps in constructing the new

suggests that the hymns were "revealed," to the sages” <<https://www.learnreligions.com/what-are-vedas-1769572>>, downloaded Sept 08 2019.

¹⁴⁵ We add Hybrid Sanskrit here to the list in which exists an incomplete version of the Tipitaka.

language, and over time, putting in the finishing touches as well coming up with a brand new language, the process continuing in isolation.

However, the pragmatist in him could be said to have waited for the right time, the opportune moment, to take the next step. And indeed, every single Vinaya rule thus comes to be at the ‘right time’, that is, in response to a context that calls for it, and not any time earlier.

The right time for taking the next step could then be said to be when, some years later out of 20 or so, Ananda appears on the screen. In his *abhiññā* of reading the minds of others (*paracittavijānana*), it can be said how, as above, Ananda comes with the required skills of not only attending on him regarding his personal needs, but also the *linguistic needs* of the *Dhamma*, towards posterity, additionally seeing in his futuristic *abhiññā* Ananda outliving him. This can then be said to be when the next phase - take off phase, can be said to set in, trying out the new linguistic product on Ananda, possibly resulting in a modification here and there, though with no drastic changes.

Now while the Buddha could have undoubtedly handled the task of creating the new language single-handedly, it is also possible however that it was not *finalized* until finding a suitable student. This may have been for pedagogical reasons. Involving Ananda in the very process of constructing the language, at the mature age of 55, could allow him the insights behind the grammar, vocabulary and the nuances of the new language, sharpening his related skills, than learning an already existent language. The privilege Ananda had been allowed of checking things out with the Buddha in case of any doubts, as well as living in proximity would have certainly been facilitative. If Ananda had already come with the language learning strengths, the participatory process could well have strengthened them, making Ananda even a better language learner and the lead hand in both the construction and continuing it to posterity. And in this very process, Pali would have got into shape, not denying the possibility, however, that on occasion, the Buddha may have made alterations.

However, we do get some evidence that Pali had come to be in place in the early stages of Ananda becoming the multi-attendant. It is Ananda who brings Cunda to the Buddha to report to him about the dissensions in the ranks of the Nathputta disciples. This clearly tells us that by this time, Pali was in place.

Maintained through the *bhāṇaka* tradition – new sangha recruits assigned to commit to memory the Dhamma depending on their ability, some becoming ‘long reciters’ (*dīgha bhāṇaka*), others ‘middle length reciters’ (*majjhima bhāṇaka*), etc., the new medium of learning comes to be carried over to the Second and the Third Councils, when it next comes to be taken to Tambapanni (present day Sri Lanka) in the 3rd c. BCE. Finally when the Dhamma comes to be committed to writing in the island in the 1st c. BCE, it comes to be formally codified, now finding a safer haven. Finally, the Buddhist construct gets a higher visibility seven centuries later when Buddhaghosa names it *magadhabhāsā* (as above).

These then can be said to be the phases, and the process, leading up to the final emergence and the use of Pali as the *Lingua Dhammica*, beyond the closed fist. Still, of course, it comes to be close-fisted, not for reasons that compelled the Buddha’s hands, but simply because only students of Pali, be they Sangha or scholars of whatever background, as e.g., Rhys Davids, the first to present the Canon in the IPA, would be using it.

3.5 Why the Label ‘Pali’ not in Texts

If Pali was indeed generated by the Buddha, as claimed here, why has the name of the language been unknown, with no reference to it in the Canon?

To begin with, we may note that this is no different from the label ‘Sanskrit’ not appearing up to the time of Panini, when “It came to be called Sanskrit ..., a term not found in the older grammarians”, “but occurring [first] in the earliest epic, Ramayana.”¹⁴⁶.

Not going public with the language constructed may also be said to be a matter of taking a leaf off Brahminism. Vedic Sanskrit was always in the exclusive hands of the Brahmin teachers, which is exactly how Brahminic teachings, as we see in the Vedas, came to be retained in its pristine purity. But of course, unlike in Brahminic teachings, the Buddha assigns no holiness to language, taking it, like every other phenomenon, to be in constant change. However, it can be said that the example of Brahminism would not have gone unnoticed.

We may raise another question. Did *any* language spoken at the time for that matter have a name? We have noted that the name Sanskrit appears only later. Are not the names, or labels, such as Gandhari, Kharoshti, Kosalan, Maghadan, etc. the constructs of modern day scholarship, just as the constructs, ‘proto-Indo-European’, ‘Proto-Indic’, etc., are?

However, Pali may not have had a name for yet another reason. To label is to draw attention, to draw attention is to raise visibility, to raise visibility is to be put to use, to be put to use is to result in embellishment and vulgarization, “defiling” the language, as complained by the two Brahmins who makes the case to the Buddha.

All these may explain why the language has remained nameless. Of course, to add a Dhammaic thrust, having no name could be said to be reflective of the teaching of asoulity (*anattā*) as well – action but no actor.

4. Closing In

4.1 Overview

We began our paper by accepting, as a working hypothesis, the current scholarly thinking that there had come to be a *Lingua franca* quite early, and Pali was a ‘translation’, or ‘formalization’ of it in *later* times. But next by way of showing how the historical contexts provide no evidence for such a conclusion, we go on to advance positive evidence that Pali is indeed the construct of the Buddha, around the 20th year of his Teaching. It comes to be characterized as an ‘Ucchakrt’, given that it was used for a higher use as contrasted with the Prakrits, the languages used in society.

Towards this, we first identify the three conditions that would speak to it – Dhammaic call, the qualities the Buddha brings to the table, the last identified as ‘Authority Figure’ and the multi-talented Ananda as ‘critical other’. In the course of the exploration of this last qualification, another critical point is made relating to the newly constructed language. And that is how, from the very beginning, Pali was maintained as a non-parole, i.e., unused for speaking, but only for the transmission of the Dhamma, and how its usership comes to be restricted to an inner circle beginning with Ananda, but then gradually expanding it to the Chief Disciples and a few others such as Kassapa, and eventually the entire ordained community, both male and female. Next we advance two conceptual schemes in theoretical support of our stance, taken on the basis of Canonical evidence, drawing upon two of the Buddha’s central teachings - Conditionality and the Four Noble Truths.

¹⁴⁶ Macdonell, 1990, 18.

The primary topic completed, we next explore three related issues. In the first, we make the case for labeling the nameless language constructed by the Buddha as the *Lingua Dhammica*, going past *Lingua Indica*. Next we deal with why the Label ‘Pali’ is not in Texts, and finally come to the issue of the Emergent Phases of Pali Usership.

We then unequivocally posit that Pali was the construct of the Buddha, towards the successful continuity of what may be called his *Dhammadom* (*new coinage*)¹⁴⁷.

The sum argument would be as follows:

1. The Buddha’s Teachings are vast (as in Ananda’s words, 84000, to give the Canonical count).
2. Buddha’s interest was to ensure that the Buddhavacana be preserved in its originality (*sakāya niruttiyā*).
3. He also names the Dhamma, and no human teacher, as his successor, after his passing away.
4. Buddha is fully cognizant of how translations could distort the original.
5. He is also cognizant of how spoken language comes to be subject to natural change.
6. Hence he makes the decision to
 - a. have an exclusive language for the conveyance of the Dhamma;
 - b. create such a language by himself, given that none has been named to carry the mantle after his passing away; and
 - c. keep the new language under wraps, limiting the newly created language to an inner circle in a closed fist (just as a new born baby would be protected by the mother with her life).
7. He picks Ananda as the Critical Other to transform his vision into reality.
8. Thus emerges Pali as the *Lingua Dhammica* as the medium of the message of Buddhadhamma.

So there!

4.2 On Methodology

At the end of this long journey, there may still be certain reservations in some quarters. Associating the Buddha with a mundane type activity like constructing a grammar, e.g., may be discomfoting to some. But, doing an in depth study of the *Aggañña Sutta*¹⁴⁸, it was in surprise that this writer got the sense that the Buddha may have been the originator of the Embedded Story genre, the post-Buddhian *Pancatantra*

¹⁴⁷ Re this new coinage, cf. kingdom. While the Buddha was certainly the wisdom and the compassion behind the Buddhist tradition as it has come to be today around the world, it was never a case of it being in his name. It was all in the name of the Dhamma. Hence *Dhammadom*, and not ‘*Buddhadom*’.

¹⁴⁸ D III 27.

being the exemplifier. It was indeed with surprise then that he was to discover the *Pāṭika Sutta*¹⁴⁹ providing the model for the Embedded Story structure¹⁵⁰.

Another language related creativity of the Buddha relates to literature, the Canon filled with metaphor, poetry, short fiction and even the dramatic element. And it was that which prompted this writer's article, "The Buddha Launches Literary Realism"¹⁵¹.

So then, Buddha taking on a project of constructing a language may be seen as yet another language related praxic effort on his part to help the world benefit from his discoveries.

And then there is the well-intentioned Praktic scholar in you who will naturally ask, "But where is the linguistic analysis I was waiting for?"¹⁵². It is readily granted that missing in this study is what may be seen as a critical element, namely a linguistic analysis. But we would argue that such an analysis makes no contribution to our intended goal of identifying the author. It is the considered humble view, but entailing no 'view attachment' (*diṭṭhi taṇhā*), of this Crintfreeth (Creative Interdisciplinary Free Thinker), that no amount of linguistic analysis would bring us any closer to identifying the author of Pali. Now if the claim in the present paper had been that Buddha created a language that is totally unknown, then, yes, an indubitable component would be such an analysis. But what we are talking about is Pali, the linguistic structure of which is well known, on its own as well as comparatively, in relation to both Prakrits as well as the more formal Sanskrit. Hence it is our considered position that a linguistic analysis would add nothing more.

By way of an analogy, no amount of analysis of a painting would tell us whether a work is by Picasso, Michelangelo or the well-known painter in contemporary Sri Lanka George Keyt or a member of the well-known Group of Seven in Canada. The Theory of Relativity emerged in the context of Newtonian Physics. An analysis of each of them, independently or comparatively, will tell a physicist the relative strengths and failures of the two theories. But again, that would still not tell us who the author of the new theory is. Had Einstein not provided the external evidence by writing a paper under his name, no amount of analysis and a going deeper and deeper into the theory would tell us that he is the brain behind. Likewise, the authorship of an ancient text would not be known just by only studying the work internally,

¹⁴⁹ D III 24.

¹⁵⁰ See Sugunasiri, 2014, 235-240 for the Model.

¹⁵¹ Sugunasiri, 2017.

¹⁵² Though not directly related, this reminds me of a similar comment made by a reviewer, the late Chelva Kanaganayakam, the University of Toronto English Professor, of my novel, *Untouchable Woman's Odyssey*:

Typically, epics need climactic moments. With all their digressions and repetitions, epics tend to move towards a culminating point, a battle, an epiphany, or a union of one kind or another. This novel does away with that technique. The lives of ordinary people do not necessarily involve melodramatic moments. I must confess that when I first read the novel, I waited and waited for a dramatic turn of events, but that did not happen. The novel works so well, not in spite of that, but because of that. Since there is no single moment to draw our attention, we are struck by the entire canvas, by all those moments that cohere and lead to a unity of vision.

(Kanaganayakam, 2012)

if authorship is not mentioned in the Colophon or there is another work by the same author showing similar features.

The proof of the pudding, of course, is in the eating. The field of Prakrits has been the subject of many a critical linguistic analysis by scholars around the world for quite some time. But it has shed no light as to when Pali emerged and at whose hands, which is precisely what set this non-specialist on a path of discovery.

So, with apologies, case closed!

But, wait a moment:

“Progress in Science occurs when scientists think counter-intuitively” and “make radical departures from practised norms of thought”¹⁵³. And this is precisely what this study can be said to be – a radical departure, in uncharted territory, in an intuitive wisdom, going beyond a surface level understanding, taking into account the psychic and the genetic dimensions of the context as well, not touched with a pole in the academy. So I hope the new approach to the subject will help advance the cause of Buddhist studies, if minimally.

However, for those who still yearn for a linguistic analysis, you can be happy to see a bright ray of light on the horizon in the forthcoming work by the expert Bryan Levman, *Pali the Language: The Medium and Message*. And if one were interested in pursuing the differences between the *Buddhadhamma* expressed in Pāli and the *Buddhadhamma* expressed in other idioms, like Prakrit and Sanskrit,, happily again, there is a ready resource - *A Comparative Edition of the Dhammapada* by Anandajoti Bhikkhu¹⁵⁴.

4.3 Closure

This is not a paper I had ever envisioned working on, but fell on to my lap. I was not unaware that the origins of Pali is a knot waiting to be disentangled. And then one day, engaged as I was in my own research unrelated to the topic, the idea occurred to me, for no particular reason, that the language of the Canon had come to be in the time of the Buddha himself. Continuing with my other unrelated research, all of a sudden not long after, the idea occurred to me that perhaps Pali was no translation but emerged at the hands of the Buddha himself. And so it is that then I sought to explore the issue.

However, I come to it as no specialist in the field, meaning one with familiarity with the academic literature, my interest being merely to explore my hunch, and not to join as a tracker in the Prakritic forest of India of the Buddha’s time. Nor is it prove the point beyond a shadow of doubt, but to share with the reader my exploratory understanding.

But, for all my attempts at objectivity, possibly not unmarred by some creativity, it is readily granted that the proof offered that Pali indeed emerged at the hands of the Buddha may not be beyond a shadow of doubt, if that could ever be possible without any external evidence.

¹⁵³ Cited in Kafatos & Nadeau, 1990, 7. It may be of relevance to note that the title of their work is *The Conscious Universe*,, the concept of consciousness in the universe being a radical departure from conventional physics.

¹⁵⁴ The information on both is as kindly provided by Levman (email of Sept 26, 2019), although I am yet to access them.

At the very beginning, I respectfully invited you, in reading the paper, to first look for internal coherence only, i.e., whether there is *internal validity*. I hope it has helped and you are at the end of that exercise. Now I respectfully invite you to put on your Discipline hats, and re-read for *external* validity, to see if, how and how not what you have read in the paper fares with the norms of thought as internalized within the Discipline.

And, of course, it is up to you to take the point of view presented here to the Superior Courthouse of W - Wisdom, *ha ha ha!*¹⁵⁵

May you be well and happy! Metta!

¹⁵⁵ It is with gratitude I say that the paper has benefited much from Dr Bryan Levman, but specifically filling me in with contemporary scholarship on Indic Linguistics, as well as going over the paper and making comments. However, of course, the positions taken, interpretations, as well as whatever errors, omissions, etc., remain my responsibility.

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COINAGES (concept and / or word)

English

Buddhian

Co-ambling genetic

Crinfreeth (Creative Interdisciplinary Free Thinker)

Deoriginalization

Dhammadom

Dhammatransmitter

Gratitudinal

Lingua Dhammica

Lingua Indica

Praxic

Psychic matching

‘That which I come to understand, that I do’ (*yathā anubodham tathā karomi*)

Usership

Pali

Bhāsājananaka

Pālita Bhāsā

Yathā anubodham tathā karomi ‘That which I come to understand, that I do’

Sannivedandamma sārathī

Satthā bhāsānam

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