Speak Up

REVIEW OF ANUPRĀSA:
PRAKRIT POETRY VIS-À-VIS SANSKRIT POETICS

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Sanskrit and Prakrit are the two most ancient languages of India. Along with Pāli, these constitute the main sources of composite Indian culture as Sanskrit and Prakrit are the treasures of many branches of Indian learning. From the early phases of Indian history, Sanskrit and Prakrit were used by great *ācāryas*. There appeared to have been no discrimination between the use of these two languages among the scholars. The scholars have mutual respect for both the languages. Sanskrit scholars have appreciated Prakrit very liberally and the same holds true for Prakrit scholars about Sanskrit.

Rajaśekhara – a prominent *ācārya* of Sanskrit – praised Prakrit in the *Karpūramañjarī* –

> *purisā sakkaa-baṁdhā pāua-baṁdho vi hoi suumāro |*
>
> *purisamahi lāṇaṁ jettia mihantaraṁ tettiamimāṇaṁ ||*

Meaning: Sanskrit is harsh and Prakrit is soft, and there is as much difference between these two languages as there is between a man and a woman.

In another text, *Chappaṇṇayagāhāo*, the author emphasized to use both Prakrit and Sanskrit –

> *jo sakkayaṁ na yāṇai suvisuddhaṁ pāiyaṁ pi vottuṁ je |*
>
> *moṇaṁ tu tassa saraṇaṁ nīsaraṇaṁ ahava parisāe ||*

A person who does not know how to use Prakrit along with Sanskrit should either remain silent in the assembly or leave.

However, the phonology and morphology of Sanskrit and Prakrit have many variations. For example, *visarga* (:) is not found in Prakrit, and similar is the case with the consonant-ending words. One more tendency, which is seen in Prakrit literature, is the frequent use of prefixes beginning with *a, an, ava,* and *up*. Owing to this tendency, many words beginning with vowels have been coined in Prakrit which, in Sanskrit, begin with consonants.

One more rule relevant in this context is the different approach of Sanskrit and Prakrit towards *sandhi*. In Sanskrit, *sandhi* is mostly mandatory while in Prakrit *sandhi* rules are optional. It is apparent from the Hemacandra grammar where he provides a *sūtra* for this – "*padayoḥ sandhirvā*" (8.1.5). Whereas in Sanskrit poetics, not applying Sanskrit rules of *sandhi* is considered to be a demerit (*doṣa*) of poetry (*kāvya*), known *visandhi.*

Let us also look at a figure of speech to support the same argument. The figures of speech are two-fold which are *śabdālaṁkāra* (based on words) and *arthālaṁkāra* (based on meaning).

Arthālaṁkāra can be explained on the basis of Sanskrit poetics in Prakrit too. But the parameters of Sanskrit poetics with regard to *anuprāsa* (alliteration) – a type of *śabdālaṁkāra* – needs reconsideration.

The popular characteristic of *anuprāsa* given by Ācārya Mammaṭa in Kāvya Prakāśa is "*varṇasāmyamanuprāsaḥ*"where *varṇa* refers to both – vowel and consonant. According to Sanskrit poetics, repetition of consonants is considered to be alliteration while they do not consider vowels as *varṇa* and hence repetition of vowels is not considered as *anuprāsa*.

But in Prakrit, due to specific phonetic changes, repetition of vowels is seen which is not found in Sanskrit usages. In Sanskrit, words beginning with vowels are subject to *sandhi*. But in Prakrit, there is an abundance of words beginning with vowels, fulfilling the condition of *sandhi*, but *sandhi* is not found there.

In his commentary on Ruyyaka's *Alaṁkāra Sarvasva*, Jayaratha, says that if there is a repetition of words beginning with vowels, it should not be considered as *anuprāsa*. Jayaratha gives an example to support his view where '*i*' and nasal sounds are repeated:

iṁdīvarammi iṁdammi iṁdaālammi idiagaṇammi |

iṁdidirammi iṁdami joiṇṇo sarisasaṁkappo ||

But he himself asks not to consider it *anuprāsa*–

atra svarapaunaruktyasya cārutvābhāvānnālaṁkāratvaṁ

Jayaratha's comments might be correct from the viewpoint of Sanskrit, but not in the context of Prakrit as repetition of vowels is its regular feature. Thus, it is clear that in the light of nature and structure of language, poetics rules need to be reconsidered.

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