

Analysing the language of drama in the light of *Sāhityadarpaṇa*

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Abstract

The language plays a pivotal role in communication. Without the understanding of the language the communication is worthless. As the Drama is a medium of communication to the masses, it is very significant to know the language(s) of the drama and also about the proper use of it by the actors on the stage. This paper highlights the arrangements of the language(s) by various characters/actors during performance on the stage according to Sanskrit drama. It derives the main theme from the sixth chapter of *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha Kavirāja (a 14th Cent. Sanskrit rhetorician) and describes it accordingly.

Keywords: Language, Drama, *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, Viśvanātha Kavirāja

1.0.Introduction

The Indian mind has been developed a vast range of ideas and inculcated them in the forms of gens for the society. The ancient Ṛṣis visualised the various aspects of knowledge and inherited it in a wide range of time. All the genres which have a pivotal role in modern day society have its intra-ally relationship with ancient Indian knowledge system based on Sanskrit language. As it is a known fact that language is a medium to communicate one's emotions to another, it has a central role in socio-cultural activities of a society or a region or a country. Every creature has its own language like every region or country has its own. The communication can be many types such as verbal, literal, signal etc. In ancient time the drama was one of the chief cause of language communication. It not only provided immune to the language but also extended its role for socio-cultural socio-lingual ecosystem of our great land i.e. *Bhāratavarṣa*. Since the ancient time the dramas were performed in various parts of the globe in different occasions. They have composed in different languages and performed in different languages also. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni is considered as the source of the Indian drama and scholars of Indian dramaturgy wholeheartedly follows the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as far as the performance on the stage is concerned. But Viśvanātha has gone one step ahead to discuss some critical aspects of *nāṭya* arisen at his time. The Language, to be used by different characters, while performing the drama on the stage is one

among them. As we discuss about the language of drama, it is based on the opinion of Viśvanātha Kavirāja about the use of different languages by the characters of the drama while performance on the stage. He describes the language terminology in his work *Sāhityadarpaṇa* or the Mirror of Literature/Composition.

2.0.About Viśvanātha Kavirāja

Viśvanātha Kavirāja is one of the latest rhetoricians of Sanskrit who has given a new aroma to the study of Sanskrit poetics. Viśvanātha Kavirāja is well known by the scholars by his theory of the soul of the poetry as *vākyaṃ rasātmakam kāvyam* (a sentence with rasa can able to be called as *kāvya*). With this invocation he has given a fresh vive to the school of *Rasa* (*Rasasampradāya*). Viśvanātha born in 14th Century is the son of Candrasekhara Sarasvatī and grandson of Nārāyaṇa and also father of Anantadāsa. He is the moon in the *Kapīñjala* family of Odisha, which was highly regarded in Odisha at that time¹. He is also knower of 16 languages, which shows his linguistics view. His works include 1. *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (a rhetoric work), 2. *Candrakalānāṭikā* (a *nāṭikā*), 3. *Rāghavavilāsamahākāvya*, 4. *Pārvatīpariṇaya* (a *nāṭikā*), 5. *Kuvalayāśvacarita* (a *Kāvya* in Prakrit), 6. *Prasastiratnāvali* (a *Karambhaka* in sixteen languages), 7. *Narasimhaviṇaya* (a *kāvya* in praise of king Narasimha), 8. *Kāmsavadha* (a *kāvya*), 9. *Kāvyaṇṣādarpaṇa* (a commentary on *Kāvyaṇṣā* of Mammata)². His *Sāhityadarpaṇa* has many commentaries³.

3.0.Types of Dramas in Indian Context

Before introducing the central idea of the language of drama, let's have a look on the dramas as described in Indian context (based on Sanskrit literatures). In Indian context generally we use to utter the word *Nāṭaka* for drama. But the *nāṭaka* is one of the varieties of the greater portion of *rūpaka*. According to Viśvanātha Kavirāja there are 10 *rūpakas* and 18 *uparūpakas*. The *rūpakas* are: 1. *Nāṭaka*, 2. *Prakaraṇa*, 3. *Bhāṇa*, 4. *Vyāyoga*, 5. *Samavakāra*, 6. *Ḍima*, 7. *Īhāmṛga*, 8.

¹ The Wikipedia refers that Viśvanātha ascended his literary heights during the reign of two successive Gaṅgavaṃśī rulers of the then Kalinga – King Narasimha Deva IV and King Niśaṅka Bhānudeva IV. In absence of availability of exact dates of his birth and date the periods of their rulers (i.e. 1378 AD- 1434 AD) is assumed to be the time of Viśvanātha. http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viswanatha_Kaviraja

² *New Catalogus Catalogorum* Vol. XXX. p. 58.

³ For details of the commentaries, refer Acharya, Kumuda Prasad, (2015), *A Note on the Commentaries of Sāhityadarpaṇa*, pp. 102-111, Dimensions of Indian Culture, ed. by D. Patra and B.B. Mohapatra, Divya Prakashani, Bhubaneswar, 2015.

Anka, 9. *Vīthi*, 10. *Prahasana*⁴. Similarly the 18 *uparūpakas* are 1. *Nāṭikā*, 2. *Trotaka*, 3. *Goṣṭhī*, 4. *Saṭṭaka*, 5. *Nāṭyarāsaka*, 6. *Prasthāna*, 7. *Ullāpya*, 8. *Kāvya*, 9. *Preṅkhaṇa*, 10. *Rāsaka*, 11. *Samlāpaka*, 12. *Śrīgadita*, 13. *Śilpaka*, 14. *Vilāsika*, 15. *Durmallikā*, 16. *Prakaraṇī*, 17. *Hallīśa*, 18. *Bhāṇikā*⁵.

4.0.Prescribed Languages for Drama

The Sanskrit poetics or *Alaṅkāraśāstra* or *Sāhityaśāstra* defines rules for the *kāvya*s and the authors/composers are abiding by the rules while composing the *kāvya*s (both the *śravyakāvya*s and the *drśyakāvya*s). As far as the drama is concerned, it comes under the category of *drśyakāvya* (the *kāvya* which can be seen). In this context the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha Kavirāja is very much essential to understand the dogma maintained in composition of Sanskrit dramas in ancient period. It is a known fact that India is a multi lingual and multi cultural country. Our unity is observed in diversity also. Keeping in view of the multi lingua-franca of India the composers of the ancient time incorporated the theory of multi lingualism in Sanskrit dramas.

The following table highlights the feature of the languages to be used by different characters in the Drama⁶.

⁴ *nāṭakam-atha prakaraṇam bhāṇa-vyāyoga-samavakāra-dimāḥ/*
ihāmṛgāṅka-vīthyah prahasanam iti rūpakāṇi daśa// Sāhityadarpaṇa- 6/3.

⁵ *nāṭikā troṭakam goṣṭhī saṭṭakam nāṭyarāsakam/*
prasthānollāpya-kāvyaṇi preṅkhaṇam rāsakam tathā//
saṁ lāpakam śrīgaditam śilpakam ca vilāsikā/
dur mallikā prakaraṇī hallīśo bhāṇiketi ca//
aṣṭādaśa prāhur uparūpakāṇi maṇīṣiṇaḥ/
vinā viśeṣam sarveṣām lakṣma nāṭakavan matam// ibid. 6/4-6.

⁶ *puruṣāṅām-nīcānām saṁskṛtam syāt-kṛtātmanām//*
atroktā māgadhi bhāṣā rājāntah-puracāriṇām/
ceṭānām rājaputrāṇām śreṣṭhānām cārdha-māgadhi//
prācyā vidūṣakādīnām dhūrtānām syād-avantijā/
yodha-nāgarikādīnām dākṣiṇātyā hi dīvatām//
śabarāṇām śakādīnām śabarīm saṁ-prayojayet/
bāhlika-bhāṣodīcyānām drāviḍī drāviḍiṣu//
ābhīreṣu tathā-bhīrī cāṇḍālī pukkāsādiṣu/
ābhīrī śabarī cāpi kāṣṭhapātropajīviṣu//
tatha-ivāṅgarakārādau paiśācī syāt-piśācavāk/
ceṭīnām-apy-anīcānām-api syāt-saurasenikā//
bālānām ṣaṇḍakānām ca nīcagraha-vicāriṇām/
unmattānām-āturāṇām saiva syāt-saṁskṛtam kvacit//
aiśvaryaṇa pramattasya dāridryopadrutasya ca/
bhikṣu-valkadharādīnām prākṛtam saṁ-prayojayet//
saṁskṛtam saṁ-prayoktavyam liṅgiṇīṣūttamāsu ca/

Sl. No	Name of the Language (1)	To be used by the character of (2)
1.	Sanskrit	Higher and middle class male characters ⁷ Noble woman, hermitesses &c. and also according to some by a queen, a minister's daughter and a courtesan ⁸ . Occasionally- The following characters can use Sanskrit occasionally in order to set off their wit. A woman (in general), a female friend, a boy, a courtesan, a gambler, a nymph ⁹ .
2.	Saurasenī (a variety of Prakrit)	Higher and middle class female characters ¹⁰ Higher and middle class Female attendees, boys, eunuchs, astrologers, mad, diseased men (characters starting from boys to diseased men can sometime use Sanskrit) ¹¹
3.	Mahārāṣṭrī	Higher and middle class female characters ¹²
4.	Māgadhī	Those characters stays in the inner apartments (antaḥpura) of the King ¹³
5.	Ardhamāgadhī	Ceṭa, Prince, Business class ¹⁴
6.	Prācyā (language used in Gauḍadeśa)	Vidūṣaka ¹⁵
7.	Avantijā	Gamester (Dhūrta) ¹⁶
8.	Dākṣiṇātyā (Vaidarbhī)	Warriors, citizens, gamblers ¹⁷
9.	Śābarī	Śabara and Śaka (actors performing acting of these characters) ¹⁸

*devīmantrī-sutāveśyāsvapi kaiścīt tathoditam//
yad deśyaṃ nīcapātraṃ tu tad deśyaṃ tasya bhāṣitam//
kāryataś cottamādīnām kāryo bhāṣāvīparyayaḥ//
yoṣīt sakhībālaveśyā-kitavāpsarasām tathā/
vaidagdhīār-tham pradātavyam saṃskṛtam cāntarātārā// ibid. 6/158-169*

⁷ *ibid.* 6/158

⁸ *ibid.* 6/167

⁹ *ibid.* 6/169

¹⁰ *ibid.* 6/159

¹¹ *ibid.* 6/164-65

¹² *ibid.* 6/164-65

¹³ *ibid.* 6/160

¹⁴ *ibid.* 6/160

¹⁵ *ibid.* 6/161

¹⁶ *ibid.* 6/161

¹⁷ *ibid.* 6/161

¹⁸ *ibid.* 6/162

10.	Bāhlika	People of northern parts ¹⁹
11.	Drāviḍa	People belong to Drāviḍa region ²⁰
12.	Ābhīrī	Cowherds (Ābhīra) ²¹
13.	Cāṇḍālī	Cāṇḍālas and others ²²
14.	Ābhīrī & Śābarī	Who work upon wood and leaves; also used by Charcoal-makers ²³
15.	Paiśācī	Piśācas ²⁴
16.	Prakrit	Mendicants, ascetics et. al. ²⁵
17.	Country language	Low person. The higher and middle class characters can change the language according to their usability ²⁶ .

5.0. Conclusion

The column no. 2 of the above table indicates the characters who supposed to work in a drama according to the context and plot of the drama and the column no. 1 shows the language(s) to be spoken used by these characters while performing their performance on the stage. These very characteristics manifest the multi lingual diversity of ancient India. Each and every language used at that time had got equal opportunity and status with accordance to performance of dramas. There are many more texts on the aspects of drama and the Sāhityadarpaṇa is one among them. Some of the facets have been presented in this paper with a hope to crunch the thirst of the scholars of dramaturgy.

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¹⁹ *ibid.* 6/162

²⁰ *ibid.* 6/162

²¹ *ibid.* 6/163

²² *ibid.* 6/163

²³ *ibid.* 6/163

²⁴ *ibid.* 6/164

²⁵ *ibid.* 6/166

²⁶ *ibid.* 6/168

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