

Assesment of Phonetic Distinctions Between Vedic and Classical Sanskrit Words

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Abstract:

Although the pronunciation of the Vedic words are very similar to the classical pronunciations, there variations in those rules from place to place, time to time, and people to people. Sometimes this change is absorbed by the new scriptures and sometimes it is rejected. Sometimes new practices are adopted. In this context, it can be said that in some areas of Sanskrit literature, the root sounds of Sanskrit words have changed during the course of lingual changes. It can be seen that the sounds in the Vedas were used according to a certain rule according to which the sounds were prevalent. But those phonemes have been narrowed down to some extent in classical Sanskrit literature. There are several questions come to mind. When, How, Why the changes come to existance . Deep research can only clarify the issue.

Key Words: Phonetical Distinction; Vedic Sanskrit words; Classical Sanskrit words

Introduction

Phonology carries great significance from the point of view of linguistics. The semantics of a language bears separate importance from phonology. If we look

at Sanskrit literature, the necessity of phonetics is even more significant. If we look at the Vedic Sanskrit literature among the two categories of Sanskrit literature, we find that the study of Vedic literature according to specific sounds was prevalent. We find some scriptures prescribing the pronunciation of this sound. Like *siksha* in *Vedanga* literature, this *Vedanga* is the best example of this genre. In this *Vedanga*, the fundamental nature of Sanskrit sounds is beautifully specified. But unfortunately somewhere in two generations of Sanskrit literature root sounds have been changed. What are the causes behind this matter we shall explore here with three examples.

We find a mantra in Rigved's *śākalasamhitā*. Namely - Mahā Indro Nṛvadā (*Rgveda 6.19.1*). There in the Samhita text of this *mahān* pada, the pronunciation *mahā* was prescribed. and the preceding vowel has been converted into a nasal. If we look at the pronunciation process here, it is clearly understood that the nasal letter is affecting the pronunciation of the vowel 'ā'. That is why the nasal letter is defined in the definition of *raktasañjaka* in the view of *Prātiśākhya*. According to the *sūtra*: "lopaparephasmabhabe pūrvastatsthānadanunasikaḥ svarah" (*Prātiśākhya 4.80*) the preceding vowel of 'n' is a nasal sound. That is, here n- this nasal is giving up its unique character and transferring nasality to the preceding vowel.

But when the word *mahā* drops its form when it comes to classical Sanskrit, the same word is read as *mahān*. That is, in classical Sanskrit literature n consonant has abandoned its original form and adopted nasality distinctly. In other words, in classical Sanskrit literature, the deficiency in the process of influencing the pronunciation of vowels before nasals is observed. It is

probably for this reason that two definitions of nasal characters are observed in the Samhita text. namely *anunāsika* and *raktasañja*.

Thereafter the term *Karhi* is found in both Vedic Sanskrit literature and Classical Sanskrit literature also. Now this term is being discussed from the point of view of linguistics. This verse is found as part of this *mantra* in the *R̥gveda*. Namely: *yadyadya karhicit (R̥gveda 8.73.5)*. Here the word *karhi* is pronounced *kar (ṛ) hi* as in the *Samhita* texts and the duration of the syllable produced in the pronunciation is half the length of the syllable. According to *R̥kpratisakhya*, this *ṛ-varṇa* is called *svarabhakti*. According to *R̥kpratisakhya*, if a *ref-varṇa* is preceded by a vowel and if there is a consonant, then there is an additional ‘ṛ’ character comes after the *ref-varṇa*, then that character is called *svarabhakti*. According to the *R̥kpratisakhya Sūtra*: “*rephāt svaropahitād vyañjnodayād rvarṇa svarabhktiruttaro*” (*R̥k Prātiśākhya 4.80*) this vowel is lengthened. In this example, the duration of the *ṛ-varṇa* is also lengthened due to the presence of the aspirate ‘h’ after the *ref-varṇa*.

But if we look at the phonetical application of the term comparatively in classical Sanskrit literature, it is clearly understood that *ref-varṇa* is pronounced in the cerebral position. In this context Panini has given the *sutra*: “*tulasyaprayatnam svavarṇam*” (*Aṣṭādhāyī 1.1.8*). According to Panini's decision, there is no reference to the arrival of *svarabhakti* in the pronunciation of the *ref-varṇa*. After analyzing this example, it appears that the Vedic *Samhitā* texts preserved the principle of the phonology of the *padas* during the chanting of the *mantras*. In classical Sanskrit literature, the originality of those terms has been disturbed in almost many places.

Next, we shall do a comparative linguistical analysis of a Vedic verb. The verb *īḍe* is found in the opening mantra of the early *sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda*. Part of the mantra is: “*agnimīḍe...*” (*Ṛgveda 1.1.1*). Here the consonant ‘d’ is sitting between two vowels. A clue is found in *Ṛkpratisakhya* in this context (*Ṛkpratisakhya 1.52*). According to this sūtra if the ‘d’ consonant is sitting between two vowels then his pronunciation will be different. Here in the context of pronunciation, the influence of the guttural cannot be observed in the same way as the effect of the cerebral.

Now in Vedic Sanskrit literature *īḍe* - with this term is found in classical Sanskrit literature also. The phonological judgment of this term clearly shows that the pronunciation of the ‘d’-letter in this verb was mainly dominated here by the guttural. But in classical Sanskrit literature, *d-varṇa* is pronounced in the cerebral position according to Panini's rule, abandoning the primacy of the guttural position in its pronunciation. Panini has given sutras on this subject: “*tulasya prayatnang savarnam*” (*Aṣṭādhāyī 1.1.8*) . From this point of view, it can be said that there has been a change in the original sound form of d-kar in classical Sanskrit literature.

Conclusion

After the linguistic analysis of the three examples, if we now come to the evaluation of the research paper, the judgments that appear before us are as follows.

- From a linguistic point of view, perhaps due to the natural evolution of the language, the form which was the original form of sound in the

Vedic language has been partially or completely changed at some places in the secular Sanskrit literature.

- Karhi - An analysis of this pada reveals that the mid svaragam observed in the pronunciation of the padas in Vedic Sanskrit literature tends to disappear in the pronunciation of those padas over time. From this, it is assumed that the Vedic word gradually abandoned its phonetic ideal.
- In some cases, the accentuation changes of the varnas are of great significance in the context of the phonetic transformation of Vedic words in classical Sanskrit literature.

- Nowadays, some people express doubts about the effectiveness of Veda Mantra. It may be said here that in some cases the deviation of the sound of the Vedic words from their original form may be a possible cause.