

Comparative Study of Prakrit and English Language

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Abstract— Through this research paper, we will know about the similarities and differences in the said two languages that originated in separate origins in different time periods. In some aspects both are seen in completely different forms such as script, word formation, sound, etymology etc. Keeping in mind the many diversities, an attempt has been made for analyzing these two languages by placing them on the same scale.

Index Terms— Voices, Tenses, Verbs, Sattak, Muktak

I. INTRODUCTION

Prakrit was the regional language of the Middle Indo-Aryans which came to Bharat around 2500 B.C. The Prakrit literature consists mainly of religious Prakrits, literary Prakrits, dramatic Prakrits, inscriptional Prakrits and grammar Prakrit. Prakrit was used in works that included praising the kings and ministers. In addition, it was used for writing inscriptions, works of administration, religious doctrines, plays, and songs. Certain features of Prakrit can also be observed in the Vedic texts such as *Rigveda* and *Arthveda*.

The Indian subcontinent inhabited different kinds of communities with different cultures and languages. Some of them were Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Iranian, Austro-Asiatic, and Tibeto-Burman. The Indo-Aryan language may be divided into three types: Old Indo-Aryan, Middle Indo-Aryan and the New Indo-Aryan.

The Old Indo-Aryan language existed from 1500 BCE to 500 BCE and consisted of Vedic and Classical Sanskrit languages. The Middle Indo-Aryan language existed from 600 BCE to 1000 CE. During this time Prakrit language emerged as the language of masses. Later on, with passage of time and due to geographical diversity of Bharat, different forms of Prakrit language were developed such as Shaurseni, Ardhamagadhi, Maharashtri Prakrit, Paishachi, Pali.

English is a West Germanic language that originated from Ingvaenic languages brought to Britain in the mid-5th to 7th centuries AD by Anglo-Saxon migrants from what is now northwest Germany, southern Denmark and the Netherlands. A significant subsequent influence on the shaping of Old English came from contact with the North Germanic languages spoken by the Scandinavian Vikings who conquered and colonized parts of Britain during the 8th and 9th centuries, which led to much grammatical simplification. The Anglian dialects had a greater influence on Middle English.

After the Norman conquest in 1066, Old English was replaced, for a time, by Anglo-Norman (also known as

Anglo-Norman French) as the language of the upper classes.

This is regarded as marking the end of the Old English or Anglo-Saxon era, as during this period the English language was heavily influenced by Anglo-Norman, developing into a phase known now as Middle English. Middle English was spoken in the late 15th century. Early Modern English – the language used by William Shakespeare – is dated from around 1500.

A huge literature in both languages has been found. While the inscriptions in Prakrit language reveal the information and culture of the kingdom of ancient kings, the English language reveals new culture and thinking. Focusing on this, a comparative study of both the languages is being done in this research paper.

II. ETYMOLOGY

Venturing into the labyrinth of time, Prakrit's origin stems from the *Chaandas* (Vedic Sanskrit) used in ancient Indian scriptures. Prakrit, meaning 'natural' or 'ordinary' emerged as the language of the masses [1].

The word "English" is a corruption of the word "Anglish" — or the "Language of the Angles", one of the Germanic tribes that, along with the Saxons and the Jutes, invaded and colonized Britain from the 5th century after the Romans left. The Angles were called that because the place they came from—the Jutland peninsula—was shaped like a fish hook. The noun "angle" was derived from the Indo-European word "ank" meaning "to bend" and the word "angle" entered the language in the Old English period.

III. GRAMMAR

A. Orthography

Orthography is concerned with how humans record language in writing. It is also concerned with the relationship between what is written and what is spoken and conventions of punctuation.

Prakrit alphabet has 8 vowels and 29 consonants while English has 5 vowels and 21 consonants.

Punctuation

English punctuation (14) is as follows: period, comma, apostrophe, quotation, question, exclamation, brackets, braces, parenthesis, dash, hyphen, ellipsis, colon, semicolon. Prakrit punctuation is as follows: quotation, question, exclamation, dash.

Word Formation

In English a word may ends with consonant or vowel. Ex- Cha+i+r(chair), c+la+u+se(clause), g+la+d(glad). But in Prakrit all words end with vowels only. जैसे - मा + अ(माआ), द् + ए + व् + अ(देव)।

B. Tenses

In English, there are three main tenses and they are each further divided into four sub forms, which sum up to twelve in all. Prakrit language considered only four tenses [3]. (*varmaan kaal, bhootkaal, bhavishay kaal, vidhi evm agya kaal*).

C. Verbs

Verb is a word or group of words that is used to depict that something happens or action representing words are verbs. Prakrit classified the verbs into two categories- transitive verb (requires an object to express a complete sense) and intransitive verb (doesn't require an object to express a complete sense). Ex- 1. Woman walks. (*here woman is a subject and walks is an intransitive verb*) Ex- 2. Children write letters. (*here children is a subject, write is a transitive verb and letters is object*).

English has a list of verbs- Action verbs, Stative verbs, Transitive verbs, Intransitive verbs, Linking verbs, Helping verbs (also called auxiliary verbs), Modal verbs, Regular verbs, Irregular verbs, Phrasal verbs, Infinitives verbs.

D. Homophones

Homophones are words that have the same pronunciation with different spellings. There are many such words in English like- by : bye, waist : waste, week : weak etc. But Prakrit is so rich in this contest that every word has a different pronunciation. Means no two words pronounced with the same sound having different spellings.

E. Indiciable Words

Those words which always remain unchanged in all tenses, genders and inflections. These words are used extensively in both the languages and could be grouped in 5 categories.

Category	English	Prakrit
Adverb	Slowly	सणिअं
	There	तत्थ
Post or Preposition	With	सह
	Outside	बहिं
Conjunction	And	च
	Or	अहवा

Interjection	Alas	हाँ
	Ah	खु
Emphasis	Also	वि
	So	अओ

F. Voices

The form of the verb in which it is known that the basis of its use is the subject, object or emotion is called voice. English: there are two types of voice i.e. Active voice and Passive voice. The sentence in which the subject is prominent is known as active voice. A sentence in which the object is dominant is known as passive voice.

Example: Active Voice: The lion roared.

Passive Voice: Article is written by Rohan.

Prakrit: there are three types of voice. Active voice, Passive voice and Impersonal voice [2], [3]. Concept of active and passive voice is the same as English. Voice is known as impersonal when emotion is prominent.

Example: Active Voice: अहं गामं गच्छामि। (I went to Village)

Passive Voice: मए गामो गच्छीअइ। (Village was visited by me).

Impersonal Voice: मए हसिहिदि। (Laughing was done by me).

G. Prefixes and Suffixes

Both the languages are rich in the usage of such words that are prefixes or suffixes. A prefix is a word part added to the beginning of a word and A suffix is a word part added to the end of a word that changes the word's meaning. In English Prefix are used such as "Un", "Im"—Unemployed, Impossible; In Prakrit Prefix are used as "वि", "सु"— विसुद्ध, सुपेक्खा Suffixes in English are used to define the tense also such as "ed" for past tense – walked, "ing" for continuous tense walking. Similarly Suffixes in Prakrit are known as *Pratyay* which are used to denote tenses as well as certain activities also. For present tense— "दि, सि, ह आदि", चलदि; should – अच्चं/ दच्चं, चलिदच्चं etc is used.

H. Prepositions

In the English language, A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, spatial relationships, or to introduce an object. Some examples of prepositions are words like "in", "at", "on", "of", "to", "for" etc.

But in Prakrit language instead of using prepositions in sentences, *vibhaktis* are used i.e changes are made in the noun or pronoun to depict the same expressions. Such as "in" will be depicted by seventh vibhakti in Prakrit. Eg- सो गामे वसदि। He lives in a village.

IV. LITERATURE

To understand the richness of any language, reviewing its literature plays a vital role in this. Both Prakrit as well as English have huge diversity in this category, whether it's religious, spiritual, poems, dramas, plays, fiction, historical and much more forms a part of these languages. In this section Literature of these languages are divided in four different time periods to have conceptual knowledge of that era.

A. 2000 BCE To 600 BCE

During this period Prakrit was the common language of the masses and it had been developing as a vernacular language. Lord Mahavir and Lord Buddha have considered using this language to preach their teachings for spiritual enlightenment and maximum public welfare. During this period no written literature was recorded.

B. 600 BCE To 400 CE

This is known as first era Prakrits. Prakrit language didn't remain confined to religious gatherings only but also became part of King's courtyard as well as cultural presentations also. (1) Many kings chose this language to convey their message to the general public and certain moral messages were also engraved. Inscriptional Prakrit- famous edicts of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, who reigned 269–232 BCE. Ashoka got his religious scriptures engraved in this language and Kharavela got the Hathigumpha inscription in this language, (2) Prakrit of Dhammapada dates back to around 200 BCE found in Khotan, China (3) Niya-Prakrit engraved was found in Turkistan, China which is written in Prakrit language similar to Ancient Prakrit. (4) Prakrit of ancient Jain sutras. First written text available in this language is '*Kashyapahud*' written by Acharya Gunadhara in 1st Century BCE. Another text available *Shatkhand-agam* written by Acharya Pushpdant and Acharya Bhutbali in 73CE to 87CE. These manuscripts include religious and spiritual teachings, cultural manifestation at that time as well as certain mathematical terms such algorithms, infinite paradox are also mentioned. (5) Prakrit used in *Ashvaghosh's* plays dates back to 100CE. (6) *Tiloya-Panatti* or Trilokaprajnapati is one of the earlier Prakrit texts on Jain cosmology composed by Acharya Yativrshabha who belonged to 4-5th century CE. The work has a total of 5677 verses divided into 9 chapters which covers the topic such as The Entire Universe (Loka), The World of Humans, The World of Sub-human species - plants, animals, insects, etc [1].

C. 400 CE To 1000 CE

This was the time period in which Prakrit language flourished in all the categories of literature. Pravarasena's *Setubandha* (or Ravanavaho), a fifth-century composition and the first Mahakavya in Prakrit. Poems in the form of *Muktak* were also written such as *Gahasattsai* written by Kavi Haal and *Vajjalagam* written by Muni Jaivallabh. *Gaudavaho* is an 8th-century Prakrit-language epic poem by Vākpātirāja. *Kuvalaya-mālā* is a 779 CE Prakrit-language novel written by the Jain monk Uddyotana-sūri. Dramas were also written during this period such as *Karpuramanjari* is an experimental drama written in shauraseni prakrit around 900 CE by Mahakavi Rajashekhara. Transition of Prakrit to Apbhraṃsh began in this period, certain poets chose this language for writings as well. Mahakavi Swyambhudev in 8th century CE wrote *Ritthanemichariu* and *Pauma-Chariu*.

Old English literature, or Anglo-Saxon literature, encompasses the surviving literature written in Old English

in Anglo-Saxon England. These works include genres such as epic poetry, hagiography, sermons, Bible translations, legal works, chronicles and riddles. In all there are about 400 surviving manuscripts from the period. Beowulf holds a special position in Anglo-Saxon literature. With Cynewulf, Anglo-Saxon religious poetry moves beyond biblical paraphrase into the didactic, the devotional, and the mystical. Bede, who wrote his Ecclesiastical History in AD 731, writes of invasion by Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The poem, *The Dream of the Rood*, was inscribed upon the Ruthwell Cross. Two Old English poems from the late 10th century are *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* have a religious theme. [4]

D. 1000 CE To 1600 CE

The North Arvachain era or Apabhramsha era is from 1000 CE to 1600 CE. In this era, Prakrit languages of different regions came into existence. In the 12th century Acharya Hemachandra composed the *Dwashraya Kavya* based on daily routine of king Kumarpaal. Supaasnaah Chariyam was composed by Lakshan Gani in 1199 CE. Mahavir Chariyam (1141CE) is based on Lord Mahavira, last tirthankar of Jain Sect. Abdur Rahman (Multani poet) in 12th century who penned the epic romance Sandeśārāsaka in Apabhramśa. Padmanābha wrote Kanhadade Prabandha in 15th century.

This is a time period in which English writings took a pace and literature began to be written in all categories. At the end of the 12th century, Layamon in Brut adapted the Norman-French of Wace to produce the first English-language work to present the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It was also the first historiography written in English since the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* (about 1393) is believed to be the first published book written by a woman in the English language. [4]

Medieval Theatre- Medieval mystery plays focused on the representation of Bible stories in churches as tableaux with accompanying antiphonal song.

Poetry- Edmund Spenser (c. 1552–1599) was one of the most important poets of the Elizabethan period.

Drama- Among the earliest Elizabethan plays are *Gorboduc* (1561) by Sackville and Norton, and Thomas Kyd's (1558–1594).

E. 1600 CE To TILL DATE

Drama- *Chandleha* is a satak written by poet Rudradaas in 1660CE. *Anandsuri* is also drama written by poet Ghanshyaam in 18th century. Another satak *Sringaar Manjri* written by poet Vishveshwar prior to 18th Century is fictional drama [1]. At present prakrit language is used by certain Jain monks for spreading the message of religious and spiritual upliftments such as *Titthayar Bhavna* by Muni Pranmaya Sagar ji and *Vayansaar* by Acharya Sunil Sagar ji.

John Milton, one of the greatest English poets, wrote at this time of religious flux and political upheaval. Milton is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667). Among British writers in the 1940s and 1950s were poet Dylan

Thomas and novelist Graham Greene whose works span the 1930s to the 1980s, while Evelyn Waugh, W.H. Auden continued publishing into the 1960s.

Many works published in the twentieth century were examples of genre fiction which includes the crime novels, spy novel, historical romance, fantasy, graphic novel, and science fiction. The first Hannay novel, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, was made into a famous thriller movie by Alfred Hitchcock and J.K. Rowling wrote the highly successful Harry Potter series. Best-loved children's novels include Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, James and the Giant Peach, The Witches, Fantastic Mr Fox and The BFG.

V. EVOLUTION

English as we know it today came to be exported to other parts of the world through British colonisation, and is now the dominant language in Britain and Ireland, the United States and Canada, Australia, New Zealand and many smaller former colonies, as well as being widely spoken in Bharat, parts of Africa, and elsewhere. Partially due to the influence of the United States and its globalized efforts of commerce and technology, English took on the status of a global lingua franca in the second half of the 20th century. The evolution of English can be seen in the fact that today it is spoken by about 372 million people around the world or we can say that it is the most spoken language. The English language is mostly used in America, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Bharat, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore and many other countries of the world.

On the otherhand Prakrit has evolved into many different vocal languages respective of their region/state such as-

Maharashtri Prakrit paved the way for Marathi, Shauraseni Prakrit laid the foundation for Hindi and Punjabi, and Magadhi Prakrit evolved into Bengali, Assamese, and Oriya. Many vernacular languages still carry traces of Prakrit in their lexicon, grammar, and phonology.

Prakrit also left its imprint on the languages of Southeast Asia. It greatly influenced Sinhalese, the language of Sri Lanka, and even the languages of ancient Indo-Malayan kingdoms, revealing the far-reaching impact of Prakrit.

VI. CONCLUSION

By studying this paper, we are able to learn the tremendous contribution made by both the languages towards society showcasing how the cultural thought process and lifestyles of people evolve from time to time. We have observed that in Prakrit language the writing process began much earlier in 1st Century BCE and inscriptions are found dated back to 1st century CE. In context, writing in Ancient English began in the 5th Century CE. During the period of 200 CE to 1000 CE all the genres of literature are found in Prakrit language such drama, poems, war stories, kings and their kingdom depictions, romance love stories, mathematical equations,

cosmology, biology, botany, inscriptions, fictional stories as well and much more. But English literature was still confined to mainly war stories, religious poems. English literature started to flourish in around 1500CE after world war I and interest of the general public started to grow in every genre such as theatre, suspicious novels, comedy, fiction, romance, war stories, mathematicians, human evolutions theories, geography, cosmology and much more. Though writing in the Prakrit language started to decline because of the evolution of new vocal languages but English language still enjoys the mainstream language for writing literature of any genre and is the most widely used language on this Earth.

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