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ALEXANDRA R. ZINOVYEVA

HETEROGLOSSIA AND CODE-SWITCHING  
IN ŚŪDRAKA'S MR̥CCHAKAṬĪKA: WHY DOES THE  
THEATRE DIRECTOR SPEAK DIFFERENT LANGUAGES?

**Abstract**

The present article offers an analysis of the phenomenon of heteroglossia in Indian theatrical tradition making an example of cues of the *sūtradhāra*, the Theatre director, in the *prakaraṇa* of Śūdraka known as “*Mr̥cchakaṭika*” (“The Little Clay Cart”). Heteroglossia is a phenomenon present in many theatrical traditions of the world. It consists of a differentiation between mainly two linguistic registers: “high” and “low”, sacred and profane, which are usually aligned with the speech of individual play characters. Heteroglossia frequently originates from the necessity to explain the “high” language or dialect with the “low” one. It is especially developed in Indian dramatic tradition, through a well-seen differentiation between “high”, or literary Sanskrit language used by high-class “twice-born” characters and a number of Prakrits spoken by women, children and low-class personages. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* regulates thus the use of Sanskrit and Prakrit depending on the speaker.

The figure of the *sūtradhāra* represents an exception to the rules established in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, since, being a functionary of the theatre, rather than a character of the play, he speaks not only one language but both Sanskrit and Prakrit. In the play *Mr̥cchakaṭika* of Śūdraka we observe three registers of speech in use by the *sūtradhāra*: high (Sanskrit in the verses dedicated to the author of *prakaraṇa*), medium (Sanskrit in the conversations with the

honourable spectators) and low (Prakrit in the dialogues with the wife-actress and the uneducated Brahmin Maitreya, a friend of the main character Cārudatta). It needs to be especially noted that the Theatre director explains his own change of the language from Sanskrit into Prakrit with the words: “Because of life circumstances and [rules of] staging I’ve transformed myself into a Prakrit-speaker” (*kāryavaśāt prayogavaśāc ca prākṛtabhāṣī samvṛttah*). Based on a particular reading of the two Sanskrit terms *kārya* (life circumstances) and *prayoga* (staging) as issuing from dramatic theory, we claim that Śūdraka intentionally provides the *sūtradhāra* with an interpretative key to his code-switching.

Keywords: Heteroglossia, code-switching, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, *Mṛcchakaṭīka*, *prakaraṇa*, *sūtradhāra*, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Śauraseni, Māhārāṣṭrī, Prācyā, *kārya*, *prayoga*

## 1. Heteroglossia in Sanskrit Drama

It is well known that in the Indian dramatic tradition different languages are appropriate to certain characters. The high-class “twice-born” characters use “high” literary Sanskrit, while women, children and low-class personages speak a number of Prakrits.

Our attention to code-switching in Indian dramatic tradition has been caused by a phenomenon observed in many theatrical traditions. This is a presence of at least two registers of speech, variously distinguished into “high” and “low”, sacred and profane, metric and prosaic, solemn and ordinary, archaic and modern etc. in the language of early theatrical performance all over the world. The oppositions enumerated above are mainly expressed through contrasting different languages and dialects. Following N. Braginskaya we shall call it “heteroglossia”<sup>1</sup>.

Heteroglossia may be regarded as a phenomenon akin to code-switching, a term well known in sociolinguistic studies,

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<sup>1</sup> See Braginskaya, N.V. *Kultura interpretacii do nachala Novogo Vremeni*. Moscow: ID GU VSHE, 2009.

which can be defined as “the mixing together of two (or more) languages”<sup>2</sup>, or, more precisely, to the “alternational”, or intersentential<sup>3</sup>, prototype of it. On the other hand, the term “heteroglossia” does not coincide either with “diglossia”, the term introduced by Charles Ferguson and defined by him as “one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a different role to play”<sup>4</sup>, or “multilingualism”<sup>5</sup>. Its main difference from ordinary code-switching is its alignment with individual characters in a play. Heteroglossia encompasses the comparatively narrow field of the ancient and/or traditional theatre, but can be seen to rise again in times and societies closer to us. For instance, in Russian classic comedy of the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century noble characters would speak the literary Russian language of the corresponding epoch, and the “low” linguistic register would be reserved for villains, in correspondence with the so called “theory of three *shtil* (‘styles of speech’)” of M.V. Lomonosov<sup>6</sup>.

Returning to heteroglossia in the Indian dramatic tradition, it is necessary to note that in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which includes materials considered to be earlier than the extant Indian dramas (approximately between 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD), the author prescribes Sanskrit language for educated people, for those who are going to become priests, for kings, courtesans, and craftsmen:

*parivrāṇmuniśākyeṣu cokṣeṣu śrotriyeṣu ca |*  
*śiṣṭā ye caiva liṅgasthāḥ saṃskṛtaṃ teṣu yojayet ||*  
 NŚ 17.38 ||<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lleó, C. ed. *Interfaces in Multilingualism*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Winter, D. *An Introduction to the Contact Linguistics*. Malden, Mass, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Huebner, T. ed. *Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Papers on Language in Society, 1959 – 1994. Charles A. Ferguson*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Both terms are to be applied to oral communication in everyday life; one denotes the usage of exactly two languages or dialects (Huebner, T. ed. *Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Papers on Language in Society, 1959 – 1994. Charles A. Ferguson*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ), another - the usage of multiple languages (Komorowska, H. ed. *Issues in Promoting Multilingualism. Teaching – Learning – Assessment*. Warsaw: Foundation for the Development of the Education System, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Makogonenko, G. P. ed. *Fonvizin, D. I., Radishhev, A. N. Izbrannoe*. Moscow, 1984.

<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (=NŚ) is given as in the edition by Kavi.

“For the religious mendicants, followers of Buddha, for the pure learned Brahmins, the educated ones, or for the religious students, Sanskrit is appropriate.”<sup>8</sup>

*rājñyās<sup>9</sup> ca gaṇikāyās ca śilpakāryās tathaiva ca |  
kalāvasthāntarakṛtam yojyam pāthyam tu saṃskṛtam ||  
NŚ 17.39 ||*

“And also for queens, courtesans and female artists in different times and situations Sanskrit recitation is appropriate.”

In a similar manner, the famous textbook regulates the usage of Prakrit as follows:

*etad eva viparyastam saṃskāraṅavarjitam | NŚ 17.2a |  
“[So] this (i.e. Prakrit) [should be known as] reversed,  
free from correctness and elegancies”.*

*trividham tac ca vijñeyam nāṭyayoge samāsataḥ |  
samānaśabdam vibhraṣṭam deśīgatam athāpi vā || NŚ 17.3 ||  
“And it (i.e. Prakrit) should be known in a summary  
manner in connection with the dramatic representation,  
as being of three kinds: [that consisting of] words  
common [with Sanskrit], [that having] corrupt words, or  
[that with the words of] indigenous origin”<sup>10</sup>.*

*bhāgavata tāpasonmatta vālanīca grahopasṛṣṭeṣu |  
strīnīcajātiṣu tathā napuṃsake prākṛtam yojyam || NŚ 17.37 ||  
“Amongst holy ascetics, those possessed by demons of  
lower order, women, [people belonging to] low castes  
and eunuchs, Prakrit is appropriate”.*

<sup>8</sup> Here and below, if not otherwise specified, the translations from Sanskrit, Prakrit and Hindi are ours.

<sup>9</sup> The other edition has *rājñās ca* – “for kings”: [http://sanskritdocuments.org/all\\_pdf/naty17.pdf](http://sanskritdocuments.org/all_pdf/naty17.pdf), but we tend to accept the more authoritative edition of Kavi.

<sup>10</sup> L. Nitti-Dolci also suggests that the adjectives “*samāna*”, “*vibhraṣṭa*” and “*deśī*” should be understood as the equivalents of three categories of words by the names *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśya*. – Nitti-Dolci, L. *The Prākṛita Grammarians*. Delhi, Varanasi, Patna, 1972.



Besides, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* contains linguistic prescriptions regarding different types of Prakrits linking them with certain social groups:

*prācyā vidūṣakādīnāṃ dhūrtānam apy avantijā |*  
*nāyikānāṃ sakhīnāṃ ca śūrasenyavirodhinī || NS 17. 52 ||*  
“*Prācyā* is [the Prakrit of] buffoons (*vidūṣakas*), and *Avanti* (*Avantija* – “the Prakrit born in Avanti”) is [the Prakrit of] other cheats; Śaurasenī is not the enemy of heroines and playmates.”

Furthermore, a medieval treatise on Indian aesthetics written, according to P. V. Kane<sup>11</sup>, before 1384 and based on the ideas of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha Kavirājā, also mentions in its 6<sup>th</sup> chapter on the division of languages the usage of Sanskrit and Prakrit:

*atha bhāṣāvibhāgaḥ*  
“Now the division of dialects.”<sup>12</sup>

*puruṣāṇāṃ anīcānāṃ saṃskṛtaṃ syāt kṛtātmanām ||*  
SD 6.158b ||  
“Men not low, and educated, must speak the Sanskrit.”

*sorasenī prayoktavyā tādrśīnāṃ ca yoṣitām | SD 6. 159 b |*  
“Women similarly circumstanced are to speak the Śauraseni dialect.”

*prācyā vidūṣakādīnāṃ dhūrtānām syād avantijā |*  
SD 6.161a |

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<sup>11</sup> Kane, P. V. *History Of Sanskrit Poetics*. Delhi, 1971: “A ms. of the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* deposited at Jammu is dated in the Vikrama year 1440, i.e. approximately 1384 A. D. From this it may be safely concluded that the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* was composed at some time earlier than 1384 A. D”.

<sup>12</sup> The text of the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (=SD) follows the edition of Ballantyne J. R. & Pramadā Dāsa Mitra. *The Sāhitya-Darpaṇa or Mirror of Composition of Viśvanātha. A Treatise on Poetical Criticism*. Calcutta, 1875 and Viswanath Kaviraja. *Sahitya Darpana. A Treatise on Rhetorical Composition*. Published under the authority of the General committee of Public Instruction. London: Education Press, 1828. Here and further translation by J. R. Ballantyne and Pramadā Dāsa Mitra.

“The Prācyā is the dialect of the cheats, Vidushaka and others.”

Surely, there is a pragmatic aspect in the way that Sanskrit and Prakrit are represented in the drama. Not only have the prescriptions of ancient treatises played their role here, but a linguistic reality of India as well. The so called ‘twice-born’ and educated people spoke Sanskrit in Indian society, and all the other classes and social groups would use various colloquial languages.<sup>13</sup> As we can see in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*,

*dvividhā jātibhāṣā ca prayoge samuddhrtā |  
mlecchāśabdopacārā ca bhāratam varṣamarśitā ||NŚ 17.28 ||*  
“And the common language [used] in the theatrical performance is drawn well out of two specialties: it is supplied with words of Mleccha dialects and is based on the usage of India”.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, theatre languages and the languages of communication in everyday life are not identical: Prakrits used in a play do not represent the colloquial languages in their pure form; they are derivatives of the literary Prakrits prescribed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.<sup>15</sup>

The texts of ancient Indian dramas mostly follow the prescriptions mentioned above. In his classical work, S. Lévi described the diversity of the dialects as prescribed in the treatises and as actually found in the plays.<sup>16</sup> The famous

<sup>13</sup>Vertogradova, V. V. *Prākṛity*. Moscow: Izdatel'skaya Firma “Vostochnaya literatura” RAN, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> See also: Nitti-Dolci, L. *The Prākṛita Grammarians*. Delhi, Varanasi, Patna, 1972.

<sup>15</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>16</sup> «En principe, les femmes ne parlent pas le sanscrit. Maitreya, le bouffon de la Mṛcchakaṭīka, cite comme un comble de ridicule la femme qui parle sanscrit: "Comme une génisse à laquelle on vient de passer une corde dans les naseaux, elle fait sou son" (acte III init.). Pourtant celles qui se sont élevées par leurs austérités et leur science audessus de leur sexe emploient le sanscrit. Tous les personnages parlant prākṛit peuvent également à l'occasion s'exprimer en sanscrit (*saṃskṛtam āçṛitya*), mais il faut que ce changement de langue soit justifié. Le plus élevé des prākṛits, celui qu'emploient couramment les femmes de haut rang, est la Çaurasenī: l'héroïne et ses amies et toutes celles en général qui sont nées dans les limites du territoire Ārya, entre l'Océan Oriental, l'Océan Occidental, l'Himālaya et

*prakaraṇa* by Śūdraka, «*Mṛcchakaṭika*» (“The Little Clay Cart”), to which Lévi refers, switches the linguistic codes in a remarkable way. S. Lévi enumerates seven different dialects, and this is more than what can be found in any other of the surviving ancient Indian dramas.<sup>17</sup>

Our special interest is aroused by this drama, because being a paragon of the prescribed heteroglossia, it seems to deviate from the common rules at the same time.

In his important study of Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika*, the Russian scholar V.N. Toporov emphasizes the fact that this play not only destroys typical ideas of the non-Indian reader by the usage of different languages, but it occupies a special place even in the repertoire of Indian classical theatre, where the mere fact that different characters use their “own” languages” does not really provoke surprise. V.N. Toporov stresses a unique semiotic richness of the drama saturated with word play and code alternations of different kinds which appeal to the linguistic feeling of the spectators – and also discusses the multilingualism of the characters of the play as a means for their social, educational, and sexual characterization.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, there are two more characters in the «*Mṛcchakaṭika*», other than the theatre director, who speak more than one language. They are the hetaera Vasantasenā, who is an educated person, and a parvenu named Saṃsthānaka who attempts to seem more refined than he actually is. This exception to the rule defining a

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le Vindhya, quelle que sont leur condition, s'expriment dans ce dialecte». Lévi, S. *Théâtre Indien*. Paris, 1890.

<sup>17</sup>« C'est la *Mṛcchakaṭika* qui présente la plus riche variété de *prācrits*; il suffit d'en indiquer la répartition dans cette pièce pour prouver l'accord de la théorie avec la pratique. Le directeur, la comédienne, l'épous de Cārudatta, la courtisane Vasantasenā, sa suivante Madanikā, la mère de Vasantasenā, l'esclave Karnapūraka, domestique de la courtisane, Radanikā, servante de Cārudatta, le prévôt, le greffier parlent la *çaurasenī*. Vīraka et Candanaka, les deux officiers de police, parlent l' *Avantikā*. Le bouffon s'exprime en *Prācyā*. Le masseur Saṃvāhaka, l'esclave du Çakāra, Kambhilaka esclave de Vasantasenā, Vardhamānaka, esclave de Cārudatta, Rohasena, fils de Cārudatta, emploient la *Māgadhi*; le Çakāra parle la *Çākārī*, les deux Caṇḍālas, la Cāndālī, le patron de tripot Māthura et le joueur parlant la *Ḍhakkī*. Les autres, le brahmane Cārudatta, le bel'esprit, le berger-roi Āryaka, le brahmane voleur Çarvilaka pralient sanscrit » (Lévi, S. *Théâtre Indien*. Paris, 1890).

<sup>18</sup> Toporov, V. N. *Drevneindijskaya drama Shudraki “Glinyanyaya Povoзка”*. *Priglasenie k medlennomu chteniyu (Śūdraka's “The Little Clay Cart”, an Ancient Indian Drama (Invitation to slow reading)*. Moscow, 1998.

character through his/her proper dialect only confirms it: both Vasantasenā and Saṃsthānaka, the former by right, the latter by wrong, pretend to a higher position. But the *sūtradhāra*, the theatre director, represents a further development in the application of the rule of one-language-for-one-character, as he uses more than two languages: both his Sanskrit and his Prakrit are variable.

## 2. Code-switching of the *sūtradhāra*, its peculiarity and function

### 2.1. *Sūtradhāra*'s stylistic registers

Our aim is now to describe the peculiarities of the *sūtradhāra*'s code-switching and to understand its function. One may distinguish three stylistic registers of speech and designate them with familiar European terms 'high', 'medium' and 'low'. We correlate the switching between the dialects with three "registers" of speech, which matches, as we claim, the intention of Sanskrit treatises.<sup>19</sup> The "high register" corresponds to the Sanskrit of glorification and verses. By "medium register" we imply "prosaic" Sanskrit with a mixture of colloquial expressions used with the purpose of establishing contact with the audience. The "low register" is represented by various Prakrits, used in order to communicate with the *sūtradhāra*'s wife and the *vidūṣaka* Maitreya.

In the prologue (*nāndī*) to the «The Little Clay Cart» we observe all the three registers, high, medium and low, being used by the *sūtradhāra*. At the beginning of the prologue, after the introductory prayer, the *sūtradhāra* appeals to the public using colloquial Sanskrit, which corresponds, in our scheme, to the "medium" register.

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<sup>19</sup> See also our publication: Zinov'yeva, A. R. "Geteroglossiya v "Glinyanoi povozke" ("Heteroglossia in Śūdraka's Mṛcchakaṭīkam"), *Materialy chtenij, posvyashhennyx pamyati professora Iosifa Moisevicha Tronskogo. Indoevropskoe yazykoznanie i klassicheskaya filologiya – XV, 20 - 22 June 2011*. St. Petersburg, 2011. Pp. 186 – 193.

Sanskrit text	English translation
<p><i>alam anena parīṣatkutūhalavimardakāriṇā parīśrameṇa   evam aham āryamiśrān praṇīpatya vijñāpayāmi – yad idaṃ vayaṃ mṛcchakaṭīkaṃ nāma prakaraṇaṃ prayoktuṃ vyavasitāḥ  </i></p>	<p>Enough of this tiring [boredom], destroying curiosity of assembly [of the spectators]. Thus I, bowing before the honourable [spectators], announce that we decided to present on stage this <i>prakaraṇa</i>, known as <i>Mṛcchakaṭīka</i>.</p>

The «high» (epic) register is present in the verses that glorify the author of the *prakaraṇa*, Śūdraka. It is evident that this part of the play had been added after Śūdraka's death, although its anonymous author kept close to the style system of the play. The verses are written in high style and resemble the glorification of the epic king (tradition attributes to Śūdraka a royal origin).

Sanskrit text	English translation
<p><i>dvīradendragatiś cakoranetraḥ paripūrṇendumukhaḥ suvīgrahaś ca   dvijamukhyatamaḥ kavir babhūva pratītaḥ śūdraka itī agādhasattvaḥ    ṛgvedaṃ sāmavedaṃ gaṇitam atha kalāṃ vaiśikīṃ hastīśikṣāṃ jñātvā śarvaprāsādāhya apagatatimire cakṣuṣī copalabhya   rājānaṃ vīkṣya putraṃ paramasamudayena aśvamedhena ceṣṭā labdhvā cāyuhḥ śatābdaṃ daśadinasahitaṃ śūdrako 'gñiṃ praviṣṭaḥ   </i></p>	<p>possessing the walk of the king of the elephants, having the eyes of [the bird] <i>chakora</i> with the face similar to the full moon and slim figure, Śūdraka, man of great intelligence, is known as the best one amongst the twice- born poets; having studied <i>Ṛgveda</i>, <i>Sāmaveda</i>, mathematics, the art of hetaeras and taming elephants, and having pleased Śarva with the sacrifice, having again become the sight lost in blindness, having seen the son becoming king, having undertaken <i>aśvamedha</i> with complete success, having reached the age of 110 years, Śūdraka entered into the fire.</p>

<p><i>samaravyasanī pramādaśūnyaḥ kakudaṃ vedavidāṃ tapodhanaś ca  paravāraṇabāhuyuddhalubdhaḥ kṣitipālaḥ kila śūdrako babhūva  </i></p>	<p>Śūdraka entered into the fire.  Zealous in the war, free from carelessness, the chief of Vedic scholars and rich in asceticism, who loved fighting hand to hand with the enemy elephants, – Śūdraka was the protector of the Earth</p>
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The brief anticipation of the content of the *prakaraṇa* is written in a similar style:

Sanskrit text	English translation
<p><i>avantipurāṃ dvijasārthavāho yuvā daridraḥ kila cārudattaḥ  guṇānuraktā gaṇikā ca yasya vasantaśobhā iva vasantasenā   tayoḥ idam satsuratotsavāśrayam nayapracāram vyavahāraduṣṭatām  khalasvabhāvam bhavitavyatām tathā cakāra sarvaṃ kila śūdrako nṛpaḥ  </i></p>	<p>[living] in the city of Avanti, a young but poor merchant Charudatta, and, delighted by his virtues, hetaera Vasantasena, similar to the beauty of spring; the noble behavior of them both – the “base of the blossom of happy love”, the villainy of court case, the nature of villain, the Necessity – that all depicted the king Śūdraka</p>

The words of the *sūtradhāra* about the actors missing on the stage are given in prose and medium register, but they are accompanied by a maxim in verses representing the high register:

Sanskrit text	English translation
<p><i>śūnyeyam asmat sangītaśālā! kva nu gatāḥ kuśīlavāḥ bhaviṣhyanti? ām jñātam (“medium” register)</i></p> <p><i>śūnyam aputrasya grhaṃ ciraśūnyam nāsti yasya saṃmitram  mūrkhasya diśaḥ śūnyāḥ sarvaṃ</i></p>	<p>Our stage is void. Where have they gone, the actors? Oh, I know!</p> <p>The house of a person who does</p>

<p><i>śūnyaṃ daridrasya</i>   ("high" register)</p>	<p>not have a son is empty, [the house] of the one who does not have a friend is empty at all times, for the fool the cardinal directions are empty, everything is empty for the poor.</p>
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The *sūtradhāra* is talking about the stage that is presently void, but his maxim refers to emptiness in general. Thereby the cue that is said in prose and that describes momentary circumstances is commented on in the high style of *śloka* with the reference to the general idea. This juxtaposition looks, however, comical, since at this point the *sūtradhāra* resembles a reasoner rather than a common stage manager.

Below we will trace a third instance, where a similar content is rendered in different dialects. We will try to show that in Indian drama this is not an exception but a recurrent technique.

The medium register in the passage below is used in the conversation with the spectators. The speech is in Sanskrit but includes words expressive of common situations, making the manner close to the colloquial one:

Sanskrit text	English translation
<p><i>anena cirasaṅgītopāsanena grīśmasamaye pracaṇḍadinakarakiraṇocchuṣkapuṣka rabījam iva pracalitātārike kṣudhā mama akṣiṇī khaṭakhaṭayete   tadyāvad grhiṇīm āhūya pṛcchāmi, asti kiṃcīt prātarāśo na veti   eṣo 'smi bhoh!   kāryavaśāt prayogavaśāc ca prākṛtabhāṣī saṃvṛtṭah  </i></p>	<p>Because of this long service of theatrical performance, as if at the hot time, dry from raging rays of the sun, when the seed of the blue lotus cracks inside the anxious pupil (of the eye), my eyes crack out of hunger. That's why I, having called the hostess, shall ask whether there is anything to eat. Here I am! Because of the life practice and the rules of staging I am transforming into a Prakrit-speaker.</p>

Here the *sūtradhāra* reveals his low, “everyday” personality: coarse expressions penetrate into his speech, and he will repeat them with slight changes – but then in Prakrit, while talking with his wife-actress. The third column in the table below is added in order to demonstrate to what extent the reverse translation from Prakrit into Sanskrit is close to the original Sanskrit speech of *sūtradhāra*. The reverse translation, the so called *chāyā*, was made in the late Middle Ages and inserted into the text of the drama:

Cues in Sanskrit (before the conversation with the wife)	Phrases in Prakrit (conversation with the wife)	<i>Chāyā</i> - Sanskrit (reverse translation of the sentence in Prakrit)
<i>anena ciraśaṅgītopāsanena</i>	<i>ciraśaṅgīdovāśanena</i>	<i>ciraśaṅgītopāsanena</i>
<i>kiraṇocchuṣkapuṣkarabīja m iva</i>	<i>sukkhapokkharāṅālāiṃ</i>	<i>śuṣkapuṣkaraṅālānīva</i>
<i>kṣudhā mama akṣiṇī khaṭakhatayete</i>	<i>me bubhukkhāe milāṅāiṃ aṅgāiṃ</i>	<i>me bubhukṣayā mlānāni aṅgāni</i>
<i>tadyāvad grhiṇīm āhūya pṛcchāmi</i>	<i>tā jāva gehaṃ gadua jānāmi</i>	<i>tadyāvad grhaṃ gatvā jānāmi</i>
<i>asti kiṃcit prātarāśo na veti</i>	<i>atthi kiṃ pi kuḍumbiṇīe uvavādidam ṇa vetti</i>	<i>asti kim api kuṭumbinyā upapāditam na veti</i>

The Prakrit used by the *sūtradhāra* in the conversation with his wife has features of *Śaurasenī*, namely the voicing of consonants in intervocalic position. As we have seen above, *Śaurasenī* Prakrit is usually reserved for women in the classical Indian drama. Nevertheless, in this case we are not dealing with the pure *Śauraseni*, since the dialect in question also has some features of *Māhārāṣṭrī* Prakrit<sup>20</sup>, such as the total dropping of the intervocalic consonants evident in some positions.

While speaking to other characters of the play, the *sūtradhāra* uses a different kind of Prakrit, the *Prācyā*, as in his

<sup>20</sup> Vertogradova, V. V. *Prakṛity*. Moscow: Izdatel'skaya Firma “Vostochnaya literatura” RAN, 2002.



conversation with the *vidūṣaka* Maitreya (the jester, the friend of the main character of the *prakaraṇa* Charudatta).

## 2.2. Sutradhara's introspection of his strategy of code-switching

It is worth noting that the theatre director explains his own code-switching from Sanskrit to Prakrit as follows: *kāryavaśāt prayogavaśāc ca prākṛtabhāṣī samvṛttaḥ*. Using two terms that we identify as basic to the Indian theatrical tradition, namely *kārya* and *prayoga*, he interprets at the same time his future words, which he will utter in the Prakrit language. But what is the function of this utterance?

From the columns above it is evident that the *sūtradhāra* conveys the same content in two languages: he anticipates the talk with his wife in Sanskrit and then speaks to her in Prakrit. The duplication of the same content in both the high and the low language is a trivial example of code-switching. But in the literary drama the technique which presumably used to have a pragmatic sense (namely to comment, to “translate” an unclear ancient text for the listener) acquires a completely transformed meaning.

The spectators of Śūdraka presumably understood Sanskrit. In order to please his educated audience, Śūdraka introduces the wife of the *sūtradhāra*. Being an actress, a figure of theatre and not a character of the play, she plays the part of an ignorant spectator. It is for her sake that the *sūtradhāra* repeats the same contents in the colloquial language. But before lowering the register, the *sūtradhāra* translates the content of his further discourse for the honourable public, not from Sanskrit to Prakrit, but vice versa. This order, first Sanskrit, then Prakrit, remains traditional.

In order to better understand the nature of *sūtradhāra*'s code-switching, let us now examine the terms “*kārya*” and “*prayoga*”.

It is not easy to adapt to our context the general meanings of “*kārya*” given in Otto Böhtlingk's and Rudolph Roth's Sanskrit-

Wörterbuch: Vorhaben, Geschäft, Beschäftigung, Angelegenheit, Sache, gerichtete Sache.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the translation of the line under discussion done by Arthur William Ryder would fit the context well: “Both the particular occasion (*kārya*) and the general custom (*prayoga*) demand that I speak Prakrit”<sup>22</sup>. However it is still not satisfactory because of the absence of other contexts where *prayoga* would mean “custom”.<sup>23</sup>

We consider *kārya* as a word that designates life circumstances (in both the narrow and broad sense). This interpretation is partially confirmed by two Indian traditional commentaries. One is a Sanskrit commentary on the Bombay edition of “*Mṛcchakaṭika*”<sup>24</sup> and the other one is the Hindi commentary on the Benares edition of the play.<sup>25</sup> The conversation with women is held exactly in Prakrit and both commentaries, in order to confirm this rule, quote the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharana* of Bhojadeva, a treatise on Sanskrit grammar for poetic and rhetorical compositions: *strīṣu nāprākṛtam vadet* – “One should not talk to women in non-Prakrit”<sup>26</sup>.

The medieval commentator Prithvidhara, whose commentary is published in the Bombay edition of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, explains how to understand *kārya* in this context: *kāryaṃ bodhyāyāḥ striyo jhaṭiti jñānam | yad ucyate* – “*strīṣu nāprākṛtam vadet*” – *iti sukumāratvena suprayogatvam*

<sup>21</sup> See Böhtlingk, O. & Roth, R. *Großes Petersburger Wörterbuch. Bearbeitet von Otto Böhtlingk und Rudolph Roth. Theil 2.* St. Petersburg, 1881.

<sup>22</sup> Ryder, A. W. & Lanman, Ch. R. *The Little Clay Cart: A Hindu Drama Attributed to King Shudraka.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Published by Harvard University, 1905; Sanskrit words in brackets are mine.

<sup>23</sup> Böhtlingk, O. & Roth, R. *Großes Petersburger Wörterbuch. Bearbeitet von Otto Böhtlingk und Rudolph Roth. Theil 2.* St. Petersburg, 1881.

<sup>24</sup> Śrīśūdrakaviracitaṃ *Mṛcchakaṭikam. Nārāyaṇ Rām Ācārya “Kāvyaṭīrtha” Iyetaiṣṭippanyādibhiḥ samalamkṛtya saṃsodhitam.* Mumbai, 1950.

<sup>25</sup> *Mahākaviśūdrakapraṇītam Mṛcchakaṭikam. Savimarśa 'bhāvaprakāśikā' saṃskṛtahindīvyākhyopetam.* Vārāṇasī, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> See the complete *ardhaśloka*: “*na mlecchitavyam yajñādaṃ strīṣu nāprākṛtam vadet |*” – “it is not appropriate to speak indistinctly at the beginning of the *yajña*; one should not talk to women in non-Prakrit”. - *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharanaṃ. Śrīnārāyanadaṇḍanāthaviracitayā Hṛdayahārinyākhyayā vṛtyā sametaṃ. Rāvataramahārājaśāsanena prakāśitam.* Trivandrum, 1935 – 1938.

*prākṛtasya* |<sup>27</sup> – “You should understand the connotation of the word *kārya* as “as soon as you start a conversation with a woman”. As it is said: “One should not talk to women in non-Prakrit” – thus, the Prakrit is well-used [here] because of [its] tenderness”. Whether tenderness is of importance here or not, it is not our question now; we observe the tendency of a traditional scholar to interpret dialects as stylistic models.

The compiler of another traditional commentary on the Benares edition of the play, Jaishankarlal Tripathi, regards *kārya* as “a conversation with [one’s] wife”: “Here *kārya* means “talking to the wife”, and not the *kārya* of drama. Because “one should not talk to women in non-Prakrit” (*strīṣu nā prākṛtam vadet*), the male character must talk to women in the Prakrit language – this is the rule.”<sup>28</sup>

As for *prayoga*, Tripathi asserts that “the *sūtradhāra* becomes a Prakrit speaker in order to conform to his role at the moment. As soon as the *sūtradhāra* has to play the poor man, he starts speaking the language of common people, which is Prakrit.”<sup>29</sup>

In other words, the *sūtradhāra* “talks to his wife” (*kārya*) playing the part (*prayoga*) of a poor man, who speaks Prakrit in “ordinary life circumstances”. The *sūtradhāra*’s words in his dialogue with the wife-actress “*ajje! atthi kiṃ pi amhāṇaṃ gehe asidavvam na veti*” (Sanskrit. *ārye! asti kim apy asmākaṃ gehe*<sup>30</sup> *’śitavyaṃ na veti*)”<sup>31</sup> – “wife, is there anything eatable at our home”, and the following dialogue, are designed to show the poverty of the theatre director: *kiṃ amhāṇaṃ gehe savvaṃ*

<sup>27</sup> Śrīśūdrakaviracitam Mṛcchakaṭīkam. Nārāyaṇ Rām Ācārya “Kāvyatūrtha” Ityetaiṣṭippanyādibhiḥ samalamkṛtya saṃśodhitam. Mumbai, 1950.

<sup>28</sup> *yahāṃ’apnī bhāryā ke sāth vārtā karnā kārya hai na ki nāṭak kā kārya. kyomki “strīṣu nā prākṛtam vadet”, puruṣ patr ko striyoṃ se prākṛt bhāṣā meṃ vārtā karnī cahiye, yah niyam hai. - Mahākaviśūdrakapraṇītām Mṛcchakaṭīkam. Savimarśa ‘bhāvaprakāśikā’ saṃskṛtahindīvyākhyopetam. Vārāṇasī, 2002.*

<sup>29</sup> “nāṭak meṃ jo abhinay karnā hai, tadanusār sūtradhār ko ek nirdhan vyakti kā abhinay karnā hai ataḥ sāmānya jan kī bhāṣā prākṛt ke mādhyaṃ se hī bolnā ucit hai” – ibid.

<sup>30</sup> The prakritism “*gehe*”, not very typical for Sanskrit texts, but found also in medieval Sanskrit *bhakti* poetry, such as “*Bhaja Govindam*” of Shankaracharya, is present in the text of the *chāyā* of the “*Mṛcchakaṭīkam*” itself.

<sup>31</sup> Śrīśūdrakaviracitam Mṛcchakaṭīkam. Nārāyaṇ Rām Ācārya “Kāvyatūrtha” Ityetaiṣṭippanyādibhiḥ samalamkṛtya saṃśodhitam. Mumbai, 1950.

*atthi? ādu parihasasi?*<sup>32</sup> (Sanskrit. *kimasmākaṃ gehe sarvam asti? athavā parihasasi?*) – “What, [truly] is there everything at our home? Or are you laughing [at me]?”

Thus, the complete translation of the phrase containing *kārya* and *prayoga* might be: “For the sake of [life] circumstances and the rules of staging, I transform into a Prakrit-speaker”, or: “Both the [life] circumstances and the part urge me to transform into a Prakrit-speaker.”

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* confirms our understanding of the term *prayoga* as “the rules of staging”. Chapter 4 of this treatise is dedicated to the description of the *karaṇas*, basic units of dance, and contains in the beginning the following request:

*ājñāpaya prabho kṣipram kaḥ prayogaḥ prayujyatām*<sup>33</sup> - “announce quickly, oh Mighty one<sup>34</sup>, how the rules of staging are to be used”. And in the closing chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* an eloquent verse is present:

*na tathā gandhamālyena devās tuṣyanti pūjatāḥ |  
yathā nāṭyaprayogasthair nityam tuṣyanti maṅgalaiḥ ||*  
NŚ 37.29 ||

“The worshipped gods do not enjoy garland as much as they always enjoy the auspicious [things] residing in the staging of a play”.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the dialogue of the *sūtradhāra* with his wife represents, in the terms of linguistics, the example of both the situational (*kārya*) and metaphoric (*prayoga*) code-switching. As regards the situational code-switching, Gafaranga describes it as “a strategy for negotiating a shift in specific aspects of the speech situation”, and the Sanskrit term “*kārya*” corresponds quite exactly to this definition. As for the metaphorical code-switching, it is described by Gafaranga as “language alternation... used to communicate meanings other than ideational by drawing on the

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>33</sup> *Nāṭya Śāstram of Bharatmuni. Caturtho 'dhyāya* . 1989: Vol. 1, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Used here as the epithet of Shiva.

symbolic value of the language switched to”<sup>35</sup>. The Sanskrit word “*prayoga*” can be considered a kind of equivalent to the linguistic concept “metaphorical code-switching”.

### 3. Summary and Conclusions

On the basis of the linguistic analysis of the cues of the *sūtradhāra* in the *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Śūdraka and their correspondence with the prescriptions of ancient Indian dramatic treatises, it is possible to conclude that the theatre director speaks:

1. Sanskrit in the medium register, in conversations with the honourable public (*āryamiśrāḥ*).
2. Sanskrit in the high register while glorifying the author of the *prakaraṇa* Śūdraka and while talking “philosophically”.
3. Prakrit of two kinds, namely *Śaurasenī* and *Prācyā*, while the *sūtradhāra* communicates with ordinary people.

The *sūtradhāra* explains his own change of language from Sanskrit to Prakrit by the formula: *kāryavaśāt prayogavaśāc ca prākṛtabhāṣī samvṛtataḥ*, using two terms we have identified as finding reference in the Indian theatrical tradition – *kārya* (“life circumstances”) and *prayoga* (“staging”), – giving at the same time the interpretative key to understand his further words spoken in the Prakrit language.

Taking into account the peculiarities of the play, we conclude that in the *Mṛcchakaṭika* Śūdraka keeps close to the linguistic prescriptions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but the different languages used by the *sūtradhāra* aim at identifying not the theatre director as a character, but his interlocutors and intentions.

The *sūtradhāra* is thus different from the other characters of the play: he does not participate in the action but incarnates

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<sup>35</sup> Ayer, P., Wei, Li. ed. *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication*. Göttingen, 2007.

theatricality itself. He shows in what kind of a life situation, namely conversation with one's wife, and in what kind of part, namely the poor man, he has to transform into a Prakrit-speaker. He thus illuminates the very principle of code-switching and personifies it in its double function. Indeed, "life circumstances" sound very much like a trigger for the situational code-switching, whereas "rules of staging" are a direct reference to the metaphoric code-switching. The metaphor here is: "I speak Prakrit, therefore I am like a poor man, you should give me to eat": the theater director "transforms" into a poor man somehow against the expectations of the spectators, thus, the "co-occurrence expectations"<sup>36</sup> of the public are being "violated".

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<sup>36</sup> Gumperz, John J. *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. See also: Ayer, P., Wei, Li. ed. *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication*. Göttingen, 2007.

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### **List of abbreviations**

NŚ = *Nāṭyaśāstra*

SD = *Sāhityadarpaṇa*