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Different views on vyañjana

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Abstract

Among the different śabda - vyāpāras or the functions of a word to convey the sense, vyañjana is the third category of relation of word and meaning. This tertiary power of word is also known as suggestion. Writers on poetics (Rhetoricians) and Grammarians accept this third type of word relation in the form of Vyañjana (Suggestion) and it is entirely different from Śakti (Abhidha) and Lakṣaṇa.

Keywords: Rhetoricians, grammarians, śakti, lakṣaṇa, ālamkārikas.

Introduction

Among the Ālamkārikas, Ānandavardhana was the first who shed light on the existence and of this suggested sense. In poetic world, before Ānandavardhana, the earlier poetics like Bhāmaha and Dandin were although aware of a meaning other than the primary; but they did not try to explain about this suggestion or how it differs from the primary and secondary meanings.

In the opinion of Ānandavardhana, this unexpressed or suggestive meaning is the essence of poetic language and to show this meaning, he established the doctrine of Dhvani^[1]. In his opinion, Suggestion (Vyañjana) as a type of word relation which facilitates the reference to a distinct sense when the other word - relations namely, denotation and indication fail to do so^[2].

Vyañjana (Suggestion) as a type of word- relation stands for such meanings of words as are neither directly nor indirectly related to them. It differs from abhidhā, because abhidhā is incapable of causing another comprehension which is unconventional. The sentence 'Ganagāyām ghoṣah' can express only its primary meaning ie 'a hamlet in the Ganges. As a hamlet cannot exist in the stream lakṣānavṛtti comes in 'Gangataṭe ghoṣah'. This extension of the meaning enables one to feel the qualities coolness and holiness of Ganges. This is the motive (Prayojana) of the speaker. This motive is not comprehended through abhidhā due to the absence of convention. So here a third vyāpāra ie Vyañjana has to be accepted^[3].

Importance of Vyañjana

In the famous example "If you have to go, O dear, do go, may your ways be auspicious. My birth too would occur in the place where you go". Here the death of the beloved is conveyed only through the suggestion and other word relations such as denotation (Abhidha) and indication (Lakṣaṇa) fail to convey the same.

From the above example, we can see that the intended sense 'You should not go leaving me behind since in your going my death would occur' cannot be conveyed by the other relations.

In this way the Rhetoricians pointed out the importance of suggestive meaning.

Vyañjana has the capacity of suggestiveness which differs both from abhidhā and lakṣaṇa. This is the another importance of vyañjana that it can carry different suggestions in different situations.

For eg:- The sun has set.

The primary meaning of this sentence, is quite clear and it means sunset pure and simple. If this sentence is intended to carry a figurative meaning, it may mean 'a glorious man has died' - This is the secondary meaning (Lakṣyārtha).

But here it is possible that the same example has a third kind of meaning viz - The sun has set. This proposition may carry different suggestions to different persons in different contexts^[4].

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To a student, this sentence may mean that it is high time to close up the studies. But to a herds man, it may mean that it is time to drive cattle home. Such kind of meaning as suggested by a sentence is known as vyañgyartha or vyañgya and the function of the word involved in the language is said as vyañjanā.

Vyañjanā is associated with a richness and complexity which is far beyond the reach of Abhidhā or Lakṣaṇā. This, therefore, may be regarded as the reason for accepting 'dhvani' as the yerdstick for judging the genuine from the fake and the best from the lowest forms of poetry^[5].

According to Mammaṭa, the best poetry is that in which the suggested sense dominates the expressed sense; in the poetry of the second category, the suggested sense balances the expressed sense and in the poetry of the third category, there is no suggested sense at all. So he calls the best poetry as dhvani kāvya, the Kāvya of the second category is called guṇībhūta vyañgya and the lowest kāvya is citra-kāvya^[6].

Mammaṭabhata also establishes the existence and importance of vyañjana vyāpāra in poetry. According to Mammaṭa, the more suggestive work of art is the greater it is. In other words, the greatness of a work of art varies directly with the quantum, of suggestiveness in it.

According to Ānandavardhana^[7], the suggested sense or the implied sense which resides in the words of great poets is like the grace of a beautiful lady and this grace is quite different from the beauty of individual limbs or external charm.

The writers on poetics were interested in this third type of word- relation viz - vyañjana as they contributed to the enhancement of the poetic beauty. They also hold that this to be the most important aspect in the experience of aesthetic enjoyment; and they have a special regard for the suggestive functions as a unique characteristic of all great poetry and called it the essence of poetry.

Ācāryas from Ānandavardhana down wards made out strong case for the recognitions of suggested sense and the suggestive function as fulfillment of the literal sense and the denotative function; which they regarded as the starting point of all poetry. This suggested sense along with Vibhāvas, Anubhāvas become vivid and aesthetically satisfying. An emotional situation is an extremely delicate matter and it requires an equally delicate medium for conveying it and suggestion is undoubtedly such a delicate medium.

Definition of Vyañjana

In the opinion of Visvanātha, when the abhidha (ie the primary potency of a word) has performed its function and the vacyantha (Literal Meaning) is known it gives rise to an implication which is known as Vyañjana or the verbal function which comes into play over and above the other two functions, Abhidha and Lakṣaṇā, is Vyañjana with a new meaning and it belongs to both word and meaning and other allied facts.

Ie Viratāsvabhidhādyaṣu
yayārtho bodhyate paraḥ
Sā vṛttir Vyañjanā nāma
Śabdasyarthādikasya ca^[8]!

Like Ānandavardhana^[9], he holds this power to reside not only in words, but in their meanings as well. Mammaṭa, does not define Vyañjana directly. He says in Kāvya prakāśa.

Yasya pratītimādhātum Lakṣaṇā samupāsyate
phale śabdaikagame, tra Vyañjanānnāparā kriyā^[10]

Which means that - In regard to that intended idea for bringing about the cognition where of one has recourse to Lakṣaṇa, and which is cognisable through the word only, the function of the word can be none other than suggestion.

Ānandavardhana's definition is implied in this verse^[11] So, rathastadvyaktisāmarthyayogīśabdaśca kaścanayathataḥ pratyabhijne yau tauśabdārthay mahākaveḥ.

Which means that - The meaning and the words which possess the power to convey the meaning which is not easy to discover are suggestors (vyañjana) and the power which operates in conveying the meaning is called the tertiary power of the word.

According to Nāgeśa and Appayyadīkṣita that power is called vyañjana which can impartially deal with primary meaning and that which goes beyond.

Grammarians hold that suggestion is an impression originated from the imagination and also the knowledge of poetic cleverness etc. ie vaktādivaiśiṣṭya jñānapratibhādyudbhūdaḥ samskāraviśeṣaḥ

Conclusion

Thus, whether the suggestion is to be included under denotation etc. or not, the same is a powerful word relation or function which facilitates the conveying of an exceptionally charming and poetic sense.

References

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5. Prof.Angraj Chaudhary; op.cit.p.133.
6. Kāvya prakāśa Ullāsa I Kārikā 4-5.
7. Dhvanyālokam; p. 14.
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9. Dhvanyālokam; Locana; p. 27.
10. Kāvya prakāśam.2.14.
11. Dhvanyālokam.1.8.