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*Study of Bilingualism in *The White Tiger* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist**

Abstract

The present article deals that bilingualism is when two languages to come into contact. It focuses on the doctrines which are required to take an account of how people mix language in creative writings. It encompasses the complex phenomenon of the Nativization and Englishization which is studied in some details. The present study aims to analyze and categorize in terms of different processes involved in Nativization. The focus is on when and why the speaker or writer feels the need to mix lexical items and linguistic features of two different languages in a sentence, how a speaker handles these languages simultaneously and what crucial features are needed in mixing. The study of bilingualism proves extremely beneficial, especially when the reader and writer are from different socio-cultural background. In cross-cultural communication people have to switch to other language on demand of the situation ie when the equivalent word in target language does not reflect the same meaning that is conveyed in the mother tongue or for assigning a precise socio-cultural sense.

Keywords bilingual, cultural, nativization, semantic, variety.

1 Bilingualism: concepts and definition

The distinctiveness of literature in the non-native varieties of English has broadened the appeal of English studies. The term *contact literature*, an extension of *contact language*, contains the

seeds of Bilingualism and refers to the literatures in English written by users of English as an additional language to delineate contexts which generally do not form part of what may be labelled as the traditions of English literature. *Thus contact literatures have several linguistic and cultural faces: they reveal a blend of two or more linguistic textures and literary traditions, and they provide the English language with extended contexts of situation within which such literatures may be interpreted and understood.*¹ The majority of such studies as explore bilinguals' writing have been carried out on literary work by non native authors. The linguistic variations, in both the novels, can be explained by the linguistic and social conditions in which the writers operate. The variation in their texts from the idealized norm can be viewed as a meaningful deviation or creativity.

The Language contact leads to bilingualism. The term bilingual or bilingualism is applied to situations where more than one language is involved. Bilingualism begins at the point where the speaker of one language can produce meaningful utterances in the other language. *Bilingualism as a term has open-ended semantics.*²

Bloomfield defined bilingualism as *native-like control of two languages*³, while Mackey defined bilingualism as *the alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual*⁴. Haugen proposed *the point where a speaker can first produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language.*⁵ Thus, these definitions range from Bloomfield's rigorous expectations of totally balanced bilingualism to Mackey's and Haugen's looser requirements of mere ability or the practice of using two languages.

The quality that English language contains in India and Pakistan as well is the nativization that one expects to find in multilingual, multicultural contexts. The innovations occur in all levels of the language, from phonemic inventory through semantics and discourse, and may be classified

in ways that are familiar in the sociolinguistics of language change. The multilingual nature of the Indian and Pakistani context gives rise to complexities far beyond those in data from monolingual situations.

Adiga comes from Chennai and his mother tongue is Kannada. Kannada is the language spoken in Karnataka, on the Indian west coast. English is the second language for many Indians, not Hindi, which is the Indian official language. Hindi is the third language for many Indians; Harrison points out that, *in parts of Southern India, the use of Hindi is considered more colonial than the use of English.*⁶ By more 'colonial', Harrison refers to the fact that Hindi is very far removed from their own languages in the south, and it is 'forced' upon them from the national government many hundred miles away. London-based Hamid was born in Lahore. His mother tongue is Urdu. Like his protagonist, he attended Princeton University and worked for several years as a management consultant in New York. Unlike Changez, he also studied at Harvard Law School, worked as a freelance journalist in Lahore. So language contact is inevitable and it leads to bilingualism. In both the novels there are bilingual speeches involving code switching or code mixing. Both the authors are from the same generation and it will be interesting to analyse their use of nativized English.

2. Nativization and Englishization

The English language is going through the natural processes of nativization of sounds, vocabulary, grammar and conventions of using language to perform various acts. The nativized variety is what is being used in everyday life, in media, and in other domains of national life.

Along with the process of nativization of English, the process of English influencing the local languages continues, which has been termed ‘Englishization’.

The effective communication using world Englishes depends on the awareness of *nativization* of English and *Englishization* of the languages in contact with English. *Nativization refers to the adaptation of English in particular social-cultural settings, and leads to qualifying descriptors such as ‘US English’, ‘Indian English’, ‘Singaporean English’, and so on. Englishization refers to the manifest influences of English on other languages in a given repertoire; levels of languages from pronunciation through literary genres may be affected in discernible ways. The phenomenon is of concern to some purist observers, a matter of increasing the flexibility of codes of communication to others.*⁷

The cultural context affects language use and this reflects in the colonial writings. As Alatis and Lowenberg concisely have put it *Nativization brings forth a new variety of English, and Englishization causes changes in the native language.*⁸ Both processes are triggered by language contact and the natural inclination in users to mould the medium to express relevant contextual realities.

Texts are nativized — given their regional, national and local characters — by the appeal to such *multinorms of styles and strategies* in each *distinct context of situation.*⁹ Contextual nativization is illustrated by the passage cited below. Any text must bring into account its context of setting — place, time and participants. Cohesive devices are also nativizing characteristics of texts, having to do with lexical choices and grammar. The following passage from *The White Tiger* evokes India, and refers to the Indian women names;

*My aunts—Rabri, Shalini, Malini, Luttu, Jaydevi, and Ruchi—kept turning around and clapping their hands for me to catch up to them.*¹⁰ (*The White Tiger* 16)

Nativization affects the structure of language (e.g., sound system and rhythmic patterns, vocabulary and sentence structure) and use of language (e.g., conventions of speaking and writing). It is the process of nativization that is responsible for the differences manifest in pronunciation, lexicogrammar and literary creativity among various Englishes.

'It's not piJJA. It's piZZa. Say it properly.' (*The White Tiger* 154)

*It is excellent, no?*¹¹ (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* 15)

Rhetorical strategies are a salient feature of text-nativization, including the use of *contextually appropriate figures of speech*.¹² India-evoking expressions, for example, are *Like eunuchs discussing the Kama Sutra, the voters discuss the elections in Laxmangarh.* (*The White Tiger* 98), *'Look at the snob! He's even dressed like a maharaja today!'* (*The White Tiger* 157)

Second, the direct reflection of *rhetorical devices for contextualizing and authenticating speech interaction*¹³ help in nativization of a text.

We live in a glorious land. The Lord Buddha received his enlightenment in this land. The River Ganga gives life to our plants and our animals and our people. We are grateful to God that we were born in this land. (*The White Tiger* 34)

Third, *transcreating proverbs and other idioms*¹⁴ (more than just 'translating' them) sets the text in its cultural framework. Adiga uses these devices in his characters' discourse as *I remember swinging my hands and singing, 'Shiva's name is the truth!'* (*The White Tiger* 16) Shiva is the Hindu god and Balram invokes him which reminds India proverb – 'Satyam Shivam Sundram.'

... the ruins proclaim the building was beautiful. (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* 144)

Fourth, *culturally dependent speech styles*¹⁵ are utilized, to set narrative and conversation in a particular cultural context and to depict that context authentically and convincingly to the reader.

I looked at the magnetic sticker of the goddess Kali—who is a very fierce black-skinned goddess, holding a scimitar, and a garland of skulls. (The White Tiger 135)

In the quote below who needs beyond text help to know the connotation of the phrase *my country*.

I should have been ecstatic, but earlier that week armed men had assaulted the Indian parliament, and instead of celebrating my good fortune, I was confronting the possibility that soon my country could be at war. (The Reluctant Fundamentalist 121)

The present study of nativization aims to analyze and categorize in terms of following processes:

2.1. Transfer

The process of transfer involves the transfer of contextual units that are not elements of the target language, for example, the caste systems in India or religious taboos. Transfer is the most important process in *The White Tiger*. It seems impossible to convey the Indian way of life without transferring the social, cultural, and religious elements from Indian culture. The transfers discussed below show the collectivity of Indian society, the importance of seniority (in terms of age and/or position), politeness, and humility.

Transfer of cultural elements (using kinship term with names). The author uses this strategy not only when he introduces his family members for the first time but throughout the story. Consider for example:

A hand stirs me awake...I shake my brother Kishan's legs off my tummy, move my cousin Pappu's palm out of my hair, and extricate myself from the sleepers. (The White Tiger 21)

Mr. Vikram Halwai, rickshaw-puller—thank you! My father was a poor man, but he was a man of honour and courage. (The White Tiger 23)

My ex-employer the late Mr. Ashok's ex-wife, Pinky Madam, taught me one of these things... (The White Tiger 3)

Mukesh Sir, the Stork's other son—got into the front seat and gave me orders. (The White Tiger 62)

My cousin-sister Reena got hitched off to a boy in the next village. (The White Tiger 36)

In the discourse in India, generally in oral and at times in written, it is preferred that relatives and family members are addressed and referred to by kinship terms with names, however repetitive this might sound at times. The purpose is to show respect and good manners. For the same reason, the characters in *The White Tiger* often use kinship terms in addressing their acquaintances or even strangers.

2.2 Translation

Translation from Hindi or Urdu into English is very common in both the novels. Both the authors pattern their English structure after that of their native language. This process may result in a different collocation from native English writing. The translation may be rank-bound and rank-changed. Rank-bound translation means the formal items of the first language are translated at the same 'rank' into the target language (e.g., a compound noun remains a compound noun) and rank-changed translation means the formal items of the first language are translated at different ranks into the target language, which can be higher and lower ranks. (e.g., Hindi or Urdu sentences are being reduced to a noun or a noun phrase in English).

My aunts and cousin-sisters gathered around her. (The White Tiger 28)

The *cousin-sisters* is a classic example of the mother tongue interference ie Hindi. One can not find the word *cousin-sister* in any English dictionary.

Now, our schoolteacher was a big paan-and-spit man...(The White Tiger 29)

The phrase *a big paan-and-spit man* is a translation for a man who is habitual of chewing betel leaves and spits anywhere.

He had eaten up the rickshaws and the roads. (The White Tiger 25)

It is a way how people speak English in India. No one can eat a rickshaw or road but it is translated to show exploitation.

So: I'm closing my eyes, folding my hands in a reverent namaste, and praying to the gods to shine light on my dark story. (The White Tiger 9)

The phrase *to shine light on my dark story* is the translation of the phrase 'prabhu mere andhakarmay jeevan me uujala bhar do.'

We admired his bus-company-issue khaki uniform... (The White Tiger 31)

The phrase *bus-company-issue khaki uniform* indicates the way how people speak English in India. This phrase is the translation for an uniform of khaki colour issued by a bus company.

Ten minutes later, I smelled the steel man's sweat and heard footsteps. (The White Tiger 227)

The phrase *steel man* is the translation of the man who works in steel.

"It's beautiful," she said, meeting my eyes. (The Reluctant Fundamentalist 28)

The phrase *meeting my eyes* is the translation of gazing at my eyes.

... she went on, her condition has come back. (The Reluctant Fundamentalist 110)

The translation *her condition has come back* is made to indicate that she re-suffers from the same illness.

Working in a tea shop. Smashing coals. Wiping tables. Bad news for me, you say? (The White Tiger 38)

Again these above sentences show a trailer how people in India use English language without a finite verb or ask questions without the subject and verb inversion in their routine discourse.

2.3 Shift

This process involves using the fixed collocations or idioms from the native culture into the target language. Generally this type of collocations or idioms does not establish formal equivalence as in translation.

But lizards...each time I see one, no matter how tiny, it's as if I turn into a girl. (The White Tiger 28)

...he liked to dip his beak into their backsides, so they called him the Raven. (The White Tiger 25)

You can't expect a man in a dung heap to smell sweet. (The White Tiger 33)

2.4 Hybridization

Hybridization entails the combination of lexical items from two or more languages for a compound formation (in this case, lexical items of English and Hindi).

The drivers were waiting near the parking lot of the hotel, in their usual key-chain-swirling, paan-chewing... (The White Tiger 200)

A paan-maker sat on a wooden stall outside the gaudy blue door of a brothel... (The White Tiger 250)

I charged into the paan-seller. (The White Tiger 251)

I threw the potato vada at his feet. (The White Tiger 205)

2.5 Lexical borrowing

Fifth, lexical borrowing is used when the target language lacks a lexical item with the same semantic interpretation.

SHAKTI WHITENER WITH CHARCOAL AND CLOVES TO CLEAN YOUR TEETH ONLY ONE RUPEE FIFTY PAISE! (The White Tiger 150)

I put coals in his hookah. (The White Tiger 59)

Bits of beedis, shiny plastic wrappers, punched bus tickets, snippets of onion, sprigs of fresh coriander floated on the black water... (The White Tiger 265)

I'm closing my eyes, folding my hands in a reverent namaste, (The White Tiger 9)

'Very tasty sweets. Gulab jamuns, laddoos, anything you desire,' I said. (The White Tiger 65)

I will have the same, and perhaps a plate of jalebis as well. (The Reluctant Fundamentalist 6)

"Jenaab," I replied, bowing my head, "do you never go home?" (The Reluctant Fundamentalist 39)

...wore a starched white kurta of delicately worked cotton over a pair of jeans. (The Reluctant Fundamentalist 48)

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- ¹³ Kachru, *The Alchemy of English*, 167.
- ¹⁴ Kachru, *The Alchemy of English*, 167.
- ¹⁵ Kachru, *The Alchemy of English*, 167.