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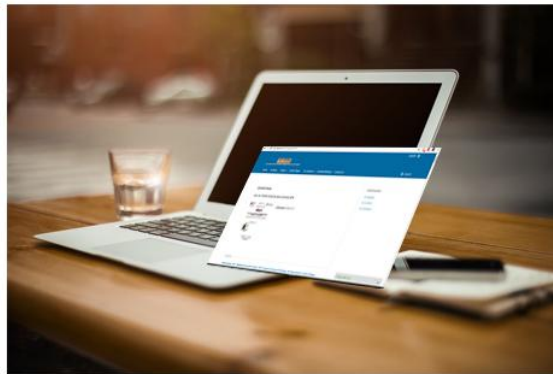
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Chutnification in *Difficult Daughters*

Abstract

The new millennium is undoubtedly proving to be the dawn of a reversal of history. Globalization has made the English language geographically and culturally close. We have enhanced and moulded the language to the requirements of our setting. 'Chutnification' of English is the new 'mantra' of the day. The process of chutnification is widespread not only among the lay users but also by writers of Indian English, more specifically, by writers of Indian English fiction, as the language gets set in newer moulds. Truly, the Indian Language has 'chutnified' and 'Indianised'. More-or-less, all the post-colonial writers tried this in some way or other. Manju Kapur is one among them. Manju Kapur's novel is full of instances of Indianisation of vocabulary, loan translation, use of repetition and linguistic creativity with regard to Indian English. She voices her joys and hopes by using colourful words of informal Punjabi and creates a wonderful cultural milieu for her novel. The source of high readability can also be accounted for in terms of the Manju Kapur's use of code-switching and code-mixing devices. Here we have attempted to discover the use of chutnification in *Difficult Daughters*.

Keywords: Code-switching, Code-mixing, Indianisation

Chutnification in *Difficult Daughters*

The new millennium is undoubtedly proving to be the dawn of a reversal of history. Globalization has made the English language geographically and culturally close. Further, speaking for Indians in South Asia and elsewhere, we have enhanced and moulded the language to the requirements of our setting. Publishers and lexicographers the world over now need to cater to an entirely new set of Indian savants in India coupled with vast numbers of South Asian, Diaspora, NRIs and ABCDs for whom the English language is the new mother tongue. In such a situation, the Indianisation of the English language is inevitable. Today, more and more vernacular and regional words are being incorporated into the English language.

‘Chutnification’ of English is the new ‘mantra’ of the day. Chutney is an ancient way of preserving seasonal fruits or vegetable so that it could be tasted all the year round. But, the spices and minerals that are used in preserving it eventually kill the actual taste of the preserved vegetable or fruit. It starts having its own smell/taste and ends up in our daily meals either as a side-dish or as a dessert. The process of chutnification is widespread not only among the lay users but also by writers of Indian English, more specifically, by writers of Indian English fiction, as the language gets set in newer moulds. It was Salman Rushdie, who coined and used this term in his novel *Midnight’s Children* for the manner in which history gets presented. Truly, the Indian Language has ‘chutnified’ and ‘Indianised’. More-or-less, all the post-colonial writers tried this in some way or other. Manju Kapur is one among them.

Manju Kapur’s novel is full of instances of Indianisation of vocabulary, loan translation, use of repetition and linguistic creativity with regard to Indian English. She voices her joys and hopes by using colourful words of informal Punjabi and creates a wonderful cultural milieu for her novel. An example of this linguistic creation can be witnessed in the devotion with which the native Punjabi extols the soul-satisfying virtues of butter and lassi:

The milk had a thick layer of malai, yellow, not white, like nowadays.
And when food was cooked, ah, the fragrance of ghee!
At this point, words fail them.
I had grown up on the mythology of pure ghee, milk, butter, and lassi,

and whenever, I came to Amritsar, I noticed the fanatical gleam in the eyes of people as they talked of those legendary items. Perhaps, if I could have shared that passion, the barriers of time and space would have melted like pure ghee in the warmth of my palm. (4)

The source of high readability can also be accounted for in terms of the Manju Kapur's use of code-switching and code-mixing devices. Here we have attempted to discover the use of code-switching and code-mixing in *Difficult Daughters*. A thorough investigation of the use of these devices reveals that Manju Kapur has used them extensively at the lexical and syntactical levels to express herself in a better and satisfying way. Her use of these devices seems to be administered sometimes by the non-availability of an equivalent word in English and at other times to make the context or narration more realistic. In the sentence, "A woman's shaan is in her home" (13), Kapur's choice of 'shaan' instead of 'pride' ends this expression a homely and realistic touch. Her use of Hindi/Punjabi words represents a huge area of experiences, but it is remarkable that these Hindi/Punjabi words are mostly concrete ones as opposed to abstract ones.

The following list of words used by Kapur not only refers to a wide range of her experiences but also shows that she is trying to make all the details of the novel sensible to increasing the readability of the novel: Food – Dahi, Chutney, Khas, Dal, Pakora, Morra, Paneer, Lassi, Mali, etc.; Place – Dharamshala, Gully, Ghat, Kothi, etc.; Profession – Chowkidar, Bania, Munshi, Pundit, etc.; Events – Shadi, Chouth, etc.; Relation – Bade Pitaji, Baoji, Bhai, Maji, etc.; Dress – Dhoti, Dupatta, Kameez, Pyjama, etc.; Utensils – Katori, Thali, Patila, etc.; Reduplication – Bas-bas, Shor-shaar; Religious Invocation – Allah-o-Akbar, Har Har Mahadev; Adjective – Shaan, Gandi, etc.; Exclamation – Aree wah, Bap re, Hai re, etc. Therefore this suggests that Manju Kapur switches code on various levels.

Further, she uses this device in expressing agreement, affirmation and consent. The following two extracts show the agreement between the two speakers:

- (i) 'What a lovely place to be finally laid to rest!'
'Hoon,' said Virmati absently who saw nothing so remarkable about the gravestones. (176)
- (ii) At the doorway she (Kasturi) turned back once to say, 'Indu, ... use the fresh butter in the doli, the old one is for ghee.'
'Han,' said Indu ... (74)

Here an agreement has been shown by the use of words like hoon and han.

Kapur extends the use of code-mixing to phrases and sentences also like,

- (i) “puris and parathas wrapped in Britannia-bread waxed paper” (2)
- (ii) “aalu ki sabzi in mithai boxes” (2)
- (iii) “They ... skirted the zenana aangan” (180)
- (iv) “... and pull her sari pallu” (213).

In these examples, we get excellent use of code-mixing. To illustrate, expression number (i) shows how two Hindi words (puris as well as parathas) have been combined with the help of an English conjunction, ‘and’. Further, in (ii) two phrases (like aalu ki sabzi as well as mithai boxes) are connected with the help of an English preposition, ‘in’. In fact, the whole noun phrase in (ii) can be further subdivided into a Noun Phrase (aalu ki sabzi) and a Prepositional phrase (in Mithai boxes).

Looking closely at many code-mixed noun phrases in *Difficult Daughters*, we notice that the Hindi/Punjabi words sometimes are used as headwords (e.g., sweet morabbas in huge jugs), sometimes they are the constituents of a post modifier (e.g., four varieties of barfi) and at times they are used as a headword as well as the constituents of a post modifier (e.g., sherwats of kewara). Thus, the code-mixing device gives a great freedom to the author to use native words in plenty and consequently make English nativitised significantly.

A lot of local expressions with a flavour of local culture and customs also make the novel lucid. Some examples are cited below:

- (i) Hai re, beti! (13)
- (ii) He is ill, he is sick, he has fainted, hai re, hai re. (78)
- (iii) Come here beta. (202)
- (iv) Mornings, toast and milk. Lunch dal, rice, chappati, vegetable, dahi, sometimes a sweet dish, for tea, pakora or mathri, for dinner, dal, sabzi, sometimes with paneer, rice, chapatti. (108)

To conclude, we may say that the novel is brilliant not only because it is about female desire and entrapment, about conciliation and fulfillment but also because of its great lucidity triggered by Kapur’s use of code-switching and code-mixing devices. In addition, Manju Kapur’s sincere effort to make the novel realistic also makes the text highly clear and readable.

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