

Indigenization of English Language in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*

* Dr. Muhammad Shakil Ur Rehman, PhD Scholar

** Dr. Ihsan Ullah Khan, Assistant Professor (Corresponding Author)

*** Dr. Abdul Karim Khan, Assistant Professor

Abstract

The study employed the theoretical approach of indigenization by Kachru in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*. Indigenization is one of the fundamental components of decolonization adopted by post-colonial linguists to familiarize a local language in a race against the dominant language of colonizers (Kilickaya, 2009). Through this tool of indigenization, post-colonial writers and more specifically, Ahmed Ali represented the native culture, flora, and fauna of the sub-continent in the selected work to bring about a reconciliatory approach between the languages of the colonizer (English) with the language of inhabitants of the sub-content (Urdu). Therefore, the novelist indigenized the English language by weaving and embedding indigenous figures of speech, local terminologies, idioms, proverbs, and translation of compacted concepts of English and Urdu languages into each other in an endeavor to combat with the western thought. Hence, the article delves into the novel to unfold the multicultural reconciliatory approach that is possible only at the time when the voices of the indigenous language and culture are accommodated by the dominant language and culture of the colonizers. Arguably, the portrayal of reconciliation of the two languages and cultures in the sub-continent during the rule of the British in the novel may introduce a more pluralistic approach to survive in the modern world of globalization. The findings may help reach a better understanding between an indigenous language and an international language in the same culture in which local culture and language get equal manifestation.

Keywords: Indigenization, Local Contextualization, Impact of Local Languages, Sub-continent, Socio-cultural Manifestation, Reconciliation, Decolonization.

Background to the Study

The study aims at exploring the indigenization of the English language in *Twilight in Delhi*. It is a critique of the impact of indigenous key languages, more specifically, Urdu on the English language. Post-Colonial writers represent their own native culture in their works through indigenization. Like other renowned Post-colonial figures like Chinua Achebe, Ahmed Ali indigenizes the English language by embedding local language terminologies, proverbs, translated cants etc. in his novel in an attempt to depict culture-specific realities such as indigenous foods, dresses, games, flora and fauna, and other local customs.

In the same vein, Kehinde (2008:76) says:

Many postcolonial writers are trying to overturn the assumptions of cultural and racial inferiority imposed by the colonizers and foolishly accepted by the colonized. Therefore, the nativization of the English language in postcolonial texts is a means of 'teaching' the colonizers that there is nothing disgraceful about the culture and traditions of the colonized.

It identifies the socio-cultural areas in which Lexical items are used. Besides, it discusses the socio-cultural meanings of selected proverbs, idioms, and metaphors used in the novels under examination. The selected novel is considered one of the key works in the sub-continent fiction portraying socio-cultural and ideological aspects of society prevalent at that time. It is one of the peculiar traits of the focused work that it mirrors the local languages and their impact on the language of the British – the ruling elite in the sub-continent at that time.

* Qurtuba University of Science and Technology, Peshawar Email: shakeelhissam1@gmail.com

** Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Science and Technology Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Email: ihsanlakki@yahoo.com

*** Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Science and Technology Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Email akarim.khan@yahoo.com

It, therefore, might be an addition to the existing zone of knowledge on the concerned area because much of the work has been done to explore the Impact of International language i.e. Urdu on local languages. The Paper contends that in the culture of Multilanguage, it is reciprocal for all languages to impact and be impacted by each other. English is, now in modern globalization in which distances have been shrunk, no more the language of one nation or country. Now there is the hybridization of cultures, traditions, norms, and languages. Gils Dorf mentions this, "English is of course multiple English in the world today" (367). English is used by various communities and people of different ethnicities, then code-switching and mixing and new canons of literary creativity can be found in multilingual and multicultural contexts are part of the heritage of world Englishes. As is discussed by Kachru, a language may be considered transplanted if it is used by a significant number of speakers in social, cultural, and geographical contexts different from the contexts in which it was originally used. "A translated language is cut off from its traditional roots and begins to function in new surroundings, in roles and new contexts" (30).

Pakistani English is becoming very significant in the contexts of another local neighbor Englishes like Indian, Chinese etc. It is placing itself as an independent entity and is a co-official status in the country. Its substantial role can well be understood by the fact that the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is codified in English. The process of localization is rapidly undergoing in literature and the discourse of the educated class of Pakistani society. The impact of the Urdu language on the lexical level has been in Pakistani English. Certain lexical items may show a shift from their original standard British English usage to Urduised meaning (Tallaat, 1993).

About the author and the novel selected for the study

Ahmed Ali (1910-1914) is a conspicuous literary voice among progressive writers in the sub-continent. Being a prolific artist, he was dedicated to seeing the betterment and boost of social life and it was his true commitment and recognition to the progressive movement which is truthfully represented in his art. He is renowned for his poetry, worldly acclaimed novels, translation of Urdu poetry like Ghalib's into English, and his translation of the Holy Koran etc. His critical voice about T.S Eliot cannot be overlooked to mention here. It was due to Ali's literary contribution that he got his works acquainted with modernistic, Freudian and Marxist, thoughts in Asian fiction. He wrote both in Urdu and English and created several internationally recognized works. It brought him immense recognition and fame from the Asian and the Western world equally. Simultaneously, he is deemed a big talent as a poet, a critic, a short story writer, a scholar, a diplomat, and a translator. He started his early education by learning of the Quranic recitation at the tender age of almost five. He was fortunate to be a student of Aligarh Muslim University where he was taught English poetry by Eric C. Dickinson. During that period he penned down his first poem in English in the university journal in which he was enrolled in. His first creation paved the way for his next- short story titled "When the funeral was crossing the bridge" in 1929 in the journal of Lucknow University.

Ali commenced his literary career at a younger age as a short story writer in the Urdu language of which he has an extensive command and grip. "Mahavatton ki ek rat" was his first short story in Urdu.

Twilight in Delhi

Twilight in Delhi is graded as one of Asian classic fictional works about which the author himself remarked in his interview with Carlo Coppola said that "All the greatest living critics of England at that time wrote the finest, most glowing reviews of it. They paid compliments to my English, to the lucidity of my style, the depiction of life which was so vivid" [Ahmed Ali, 1994, 20]. It is Ahmed Ali's first and historical work, its plot centers mostly on the Nihal family i.e. Mir Nihal and his family as they are to encounter fast prevailing clouds of change on the horizon of the sub-continent during the British rule. The novel has multifaceted thematic connotations. The winds of change have two symbolic significance; personal as well as national life is going to be impacted by the new change which may be difficult to digest. All the characters along with the pivotal character i.e. Mir Nihal seem to be in hot waters while confronting the impending change of socio-political life.

Mir Nihal laments the loss of pure culture by saying, "New ways and ideas had come into basing. A hybrid culture which had been nothing in it of the past was forcing itself upon Hindustan, a hodge-podge of Indian and Western ways" (Ali 5). The novel has alike thematic meanings as has been done by Anton Chekhov in his masterpiece i.e. The Cherry Orchard in which Layobov- the aristocratic and feudal family in Russia couldn't cope with new emerging change which ultimately led

to the disintegration and downfall of feudalism in the country. Similarly, the novel can be associated with the downfall of the Mughal Muslim civilization in India.

Research Questions

The article endeavors to find answers to the following research questions

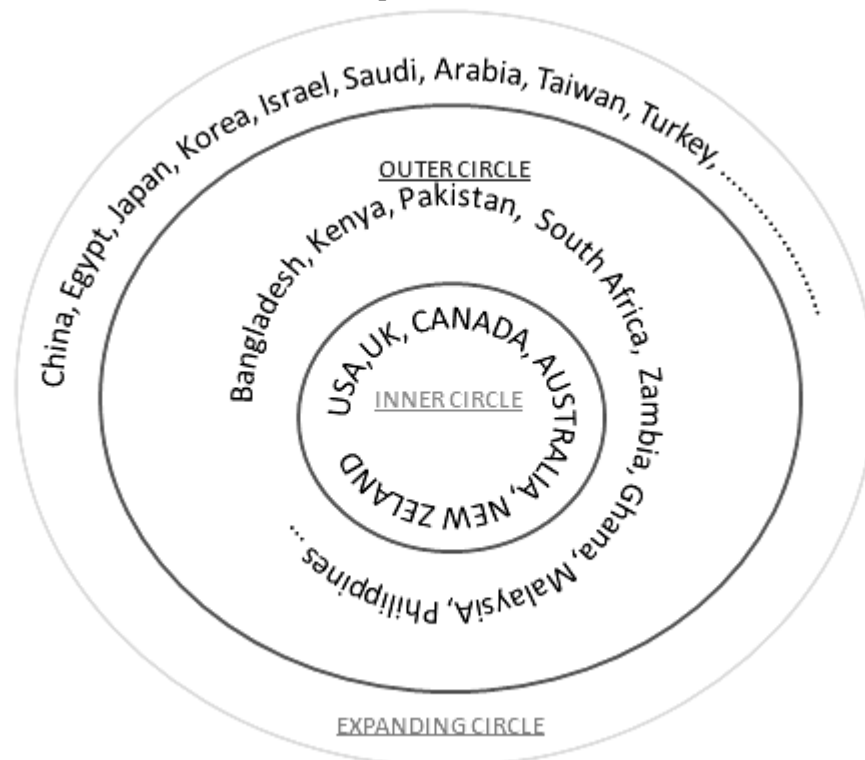
1. What is the significance of the Indigenization of language and culture for colonized masses?
2. Why the tool of Indigenization employed by the novelist in the selected novel is meant for a reconciliatory approach between the languages of the colonizers and colonized?
3. How to familiarize the local language against the dominant language of colonizers in the novel?
4. Can an international language be adopted in the contextualization of indigenous culture?

Research framework

The study is concerned with the indigenization of the English language through a literary portrayal of local culture by the novelist in the selected work. It is a qualitative research that follows a descriptive and analytical discussion of the novel in the light of the research framework conceived by Kachru with the name of concentric circles of the language. To better comprehend the use of English in different contextualization. Kachru (1997) used the circle that is further categorized into three, the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. The Inner Circle that is shown in the figure represents the traditional and historical base of native English-speaking countries like the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland.

While the Outer Circle represents the former colonization like India, Africa, Nigeria, the Philippines, Malaysia, Kenya, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. These are the countries where English is not a native tongue but it has undeniable historical and political background and significance.

The last is the Expanding Circle that comprised of the countries where English has no historical, political, and governmental background in the past but the language is used as a lingua franca and it is given a huge significance in their trade, foreign policy and academics etc., the countries in this circle are Russia, China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and Korea.



5. Figure 1. Concentric circle model (Adapted from Kachru (1997), (Kilickaya,2009,p.37)

Discussion and Findings

The novel *Twilight in Delhi* is replete with the metaphors, similes, and proverbs that are directly taken and translated from local languages, more significantly; there is an abundant mix of Urdu language. As the day starts with greetings when two people meet or interact. Their indigenous greeting

expressions show their respective native customs and language. Assalam-o-alaikum and Waalaikum Salam.

Interjections and expressions i.e., ghai! Oye! Are borrowed from the prevalent expression of local languages. As they are unlike expressions of *Oh goodness*, or *oh my God* when they confront wonder-struck situation. Here the characters in *Twilight in Delhi*, mostly parents or elders, use excessively the expression like e. g. Hai (08), hm (1), "shame on the Zebra" (29), this a cultural way of remembering their nears and dears. There are so many examples of native interjections used or native discourse which is switched to English Like, "Jee, can I help you carry something Jee? Can we get you something to drink, Jee? (45).

When a person gives alms and some money to the beggar, the blessings and praying of the beggar is entirely indigenous touch. "May God keep these and children alive, daughter, May he give you plenty...."(Ali 35). Similarly, when a sister, Begum Wahid expresses her feelings while consoling her brother, she says, "May God keep you happy and make the marriage a success" (Ali, 80). There is excessive use of maledictions and blessings in the novel but the study doesn't enlist more to avoid repetition.

Linguistics titles or terms:

There are epithets used which carry the negative and positive status of the person following title to the person granted by local socio-cultural usage. Like the term "Molvi" (51), this name is used for a person who has learned the Holy Quran by heart and who often leads the prayers. Qazi (78) has been used to denote the person who is known for giving justice. Sayyid is also another epithet or title which is taken totally from native contextual who is from the family tree of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). Similarly, the title of Pirji (202), Qawwal (47). Amma is used for mom, Abba is used for Papa etc.

Hybridity of Language

Lexical hybrid is another worth debating feature in the bookmaking English language indigenized. By borrowing and lending Urdu and English words into hybrid compounds, like the very title of the novel "Twilight in Delhi" that shows how much the novelist intends to take the recourse of both the languages particularly to express the linguistic idea with the flavor of the two languages and cultures. The instances of lexical hybrid can be enjoyed with relishing flavors of different cultures and languages in the novel – for example, "Jasmine garland" (03), "slab-proved streets" (06), "Shirazi Pigeons" (12).

Borrowed vocabulary through Translated extracts of Urdu Language into English

The novelist uses markedly and exquisitely the conceptual discourse of the native language i.e. Urdu into English. The novel commences with the translated piece of figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic poetry of Hafiz – one of the key poets of the sub-continent. The very lines align with the major theme of the novel,

The night is dark, the waves rise mountains high,
And such a storm is raging!
What do the pedestrians know my plight moving?
Upon the shore that's safe and dry? (Ali Part 1)

What an extraordinarily been conveyed the notion of bygone days of the glory of the Muslims in the subcontinent by the translation of the reputed lines of the last prince Poet of Mughal Empire i.e. Bahadar shah Zafar,

I'm the light of no one's eye,
The rest of no one's heart am I,
That which can be of use to none
-A handful of dust am I (3).

Depiction of Indigenous culture through Indigenized English

As the begging is the profession which goes on in the sub-continent without any check, in the excess of so many other competitors, beggars adopt new ways and technique to catch the attention of generous people. Similarly, there is another, a flower seller who stimulates people through his song as is narrated here, it depicts quite Indian culture, "Belated flower vendor sells Jasmine in a sing-song voice putting one hand on his ear" (Ali 6).

Next is the word "Hubble-bubble" which is meant for native tobacco pipe used for smoking in the region, "Ghafoor filled his hubble-bubble and began to smoke in a self-satisfied way" (69). Similarly, the native word "Huallbaloo" is used for chaos and commotion. "In the hullabaloo of a

wedding, no one as yet had any food with exception of the men who had been entertained to a feast at Mirza Shahbaz Baig's"(174).

Conclusion:

Thus, the study concluded that Ahmed Ali, a renowned post-colonial author, considered it inevitable to let English be indigenized and impacted by the local language- Urdu for representation and accommodation of indigenous culture of the sub-continent. Although *Twilight in Delhi* is penned down in the language of colonizers, yet the discourse and language used in the novel is more indigenous and sub-continental in nature than the standard British English. It has the dominant flavor of Urdu, its indigenous proverbs, idioms, cants, hybrid vocabulary, and translated poetry that is borrowed and imbedded from the Urdu language into the English language that was once the most prevalent in the sub-continent during the British rule. The research identified that the approach and style employed by the novelist is intended to familiarize the local culture and language at an advantageous stage in comparison to the overriding culture and language of the British in the sub-continent.

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