
Implications of Linguistic Hybridization and Appropriation in Khushwant Singh's Short Story "A BRIDE FOR THE SAHIB": A Postcolonial Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract

The present research attempts to point out how a postcolonial text has become a field of intense enquiry to locate the centre envisaged/ created by Euro-centric cultures or societies and how Khushwant Singh, as a postcolonial writer has put his efforts to de-centre the colonizer's imposed identity and culture by appropriating the foreign language by using various ways in number of his works. The concept of "the Others", their need to search and struggle for identity have become an omnipresent phenomena and apart from this, here the hegemonic relationships as well the cross cultural clashes not only between the two different societies i.e. the colonial and colonizer but also within a society is also taken into account. At the same time, the key concepts of linguistic determinism, abrogation, hybridization, ambivalence and appropriation devices are given consideration. The present research incorporates two linguistic models of language use propounded by Braj B. Kachru and Bill Ashcroft et al. to see how Khushwant Singh has deliberately appropriated a foreign language suited to the culture, theme, characters, contexts etc. by glossing, translation, using untranslated words, syntactical fusions, neologism, calques, proficiency levels in the uses of English and englishes according to different class, culture and society, code mixing and code switching etc. to point out the postcolonial issues in the most authentic and impressive manner.

Keywords: Postcolonial stylistics, abrogation, ambivalence, hybridization, and appropriation devices.

Postcolonial literature is generally considered a kind of literary opus that is written by the writers of former colonies under the colonial effect even after the political independence of their countries from the clutches of colonial powers. Their writings generally exhibit a sense of anxiety/ tension when they deal with the effect of cultural clashes and colonial language. Apart from this, colonial powers' attempt of creating of natives' identities as well as their cultural representations is considered a powerful tool for practicing and exercising power on the subordinates even after their independence which is discernible in number of the works of postcolonial writers such as Khushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, Raja Rao etc. When dealing with the language part/ aspect, we can find a sense of ambivalence and abrogation which are the terms propounded by Homi Bhabha in his critical essay "Orientalism". The sense of ambivalence is aroused by the twin feeling of acceptance and denial which further leads to the sense of abrogation towards the foreign language which the post colonial writers find incapable of their expressions as they find colonial language as a hindrance

when dealing with the native themes because of the absence of the suited vocabulary/ expressions. Thus, here linguistic determinism comes to the scene and marks the colonial language as a controller of natives' thought structure when it is forcefully deployed on them by the colonial powers. This finally leads to the linguistic hybridization and appropriation. It is so because when the post colonial writer uses the colonial language very creatively as well as very innovatively suited to thought structure, themes and expressions, he/she tends to express the cultural meaning in foreign language. Sometimes, a postcolonial writer uses neologism and then mixes this with the foreign words which mark a unique representation of the cultural identity as well as various themes and it leads to the appropriation of the language which is finally considered a new kind of language for specific use. So, in this way, we can call this appropriated English as English. In case of English, the process follows the process of adopt, adept and adapt where in the first process, a person starts using English, then in the second phase, he/she gets mastery over it and finally in the last phase, the language is modified by its specific use by adding/ modifying cultural/ local words in the target language suited to the context of the text. Thus ambivalence, linguistic determinism, abrogation and appropriation are considered the part and partial of the postcolonial literature. Parmod K. Nayar defines postcolonial theory as "a method of interpreting, reading, and criticizing the cultural practices of colonialism, where it proposes that the exercise of colonial power is also the exercise of racially determined power of representation" (154) and attempts are made "to reject the claims to universalism made on behalf of canonical western literature and seek to show its limitation of outlook, especially its general ability to emphasize across boundaries of cultural and ethnic difference" (Barry 192). Earlier postcolonial theory was only concerned with the colonization / domination of one country by the other but now its horizon/ scope has widened and deals with the "colonization of any kind, not only between societies, but also within societies, such as colonization of women by men (patriarchy), or of one class or race or caste by another, or of one region within a country by another, or of the rural and the suburban by the metropolitan, and so on" (Sriraman 26).

So after postcolonial aspect, we can move towards stylistics which is generally considered a study of style whereas the style is considered a dress of thought or the manner of expressions in which there is a kind of inseparability of manner and matter. Style is generally the way of using a language in a given context for a specific purpose. Earlier stylistic analysis was only concerned with the usage of literary and linguistic aspects for the interpretation and the analysis of a literary text in order to focus on the language of the text and there was not given any importance to the context which is now jeopardized by the pragmatic theories. There is a great shift from linguist means to the factors which mark the meaning of the text within social context. Carter and Simpson's edition of essays, *Language, Discourse and Literature: An Introduction to Discourse Stylistics*, too points out that stylistics is not only bound to the language of the text but rather its scope is beyond the "level of the sentence or single conversational exchange" and it is concerned with examining "those broader contextual properties of text which affect their description and interpretation" (14). Thus stylistics is considered an "exploitation of all the resources of a language" (Sriraman) and according to Peter Barry, stylistics is "a critical approach which uses the methods and

findings of the science of linguistics in the analysis of literary text ... its aim is to show how the technical linguistic features of a literary work, such as the grammatical structure of its sentences, contribute to its overall meanings and effects" (196).

The postcolonial stylistic analysis deals with the postcolonial issues/ themes by constantly look at the linguistic means for the interpretation and analysis of a literary text by the employment of several devices of appropriation and linguistic hybridization. Varieties as well as the proficiency levels in using the English and englishes by the native and non-native speakers or the high and low class speakers present both the cultural differences and resistance that mark the postcolonial condition in an authentic and impressive manner.

The present short story "A BRIDE FOR THE SAHIB" is rich in the very creative use of linguistic hybridization as well as the appropriation devices along with the use of varieties of english and the proficiency levels in the uses of englishes by the non natives suited to the various postcolonial themes/ issues such as cultural differences, cultural clashes, identity creation and representation in an impressive way.

At first, we look at the untranslated words used in the short stories. The word *SAHIB* in the very title "A BRIDE FOR THE SAHIB" marks the use of distinct Hindustani culture in pronouncing an officer of higher rank during British Raj. It is the best use of interlanguage aspect where an untranslated word marks the inclusion of distinct cultural phenomenon . Apart from this we have wide range of untranslated words such as "Chaprasis", "Mez par", "namastes", "vedas", "Ma", "Pandit", "Mem Sahib", "lao", "bidi", "Arey", "Khas", "salaaming", "mascara", "*chota hazri*". "*pardah*". Here, these untranslated words are taken from Hindi language and mark the distinct and impressive inclusion of cultural identity or representation throughout the text. This inclusion also marks the intercultural and interlanguage effect of both Indian and British cultures as well as Hindi and English languages which provide the authentic impression and Indian sense running through the lines. Here we find a sense of attachment in foreign language by the inclusion of Hindi vocabulary.

Glossing is a powerful device of linguistic hybridization and appropriation where the use of additional information of a particular or specific word is given in the text such as "*Mez Par* - on the table", "*Wog* - a westernized oriental gentleman", "the black-faced, red-tongued goddess, *Kali*" where the mark of Hindi and English language is exhibited by providing a simplified explanation of a word. It is pointed out from the authorial point of view that there is only one specific meaning with the word and here the reader is prohibited to guess the other meanings. But in case of untranslated words, we find a sense of freedom in guessing the particular cultural meaning from the discourse of the text which helps in identifying as well as understanding the cross cultural contexts.

Next we have translated words and expressions or we can call them calques. They add the flavour of native culture expressed in foreign language. Here we have the expression "Heavens won't fall" which is simply a literal translation of a Hindi expression which means "there would not be much loss". The expression "My God" is also a typical case of Hindi expressions which means "oh! God" in English. The expression "round and round in Sen's head" also considered the perfect example of calques literally translated from Hindi to

English which means "contemplation". the expression "run away" is also used from the point of view of Hindi language which means "being spared" in English adding cultural intensity to the context. Apart from these, we also have the calques such as "cow-protectors", "chewers of betel leaves", "not touch(ing) a bottle of alcohol" etc. filling the sense of Hindustani culture in the foreign language.

Neologism which means coining a new word is another powerful tool of appropriation as well as of linguistic hybridization. here we can find many instances of neologism which the writer has used to add local cultural flavor to the text suited to the context. It works out either by adding suffixes or prefixes in the existing words of English or in the words of literally translated words of Hindi or by making a new expression which is the result of a creative translation of the expression of the local language. As an example of neologism, we have the word "namastes" which is in plural form of untranslated word "namaste" equivalent to "Hello" of English. Here the neologism process is shown as

namaste + s = namastes

Hindi untranslated greeting + English suffix -s = Neologism

Next we have "un-Indian Indian" which is used to denote a "Wog- a westernized oriental gentleman". Its representation can be shown as

un-Indian Indian

English prefix un- + English Noun = Adjective (un-Indian)

Adjective + Noun = Neologism (un-Indian Indian)

It is same in case of the word "Chaprasis" means peons and it is worked out by adding the plural suffix to the Hindi untranslated word and thus forces to the linguistic hybridization and thus finally works towards appropriating the foreign language according to the discourse of the text. This can be shown as

chaprasi + s = chaprasis

Hindi untranslated noun + English suffix -s = Neologism

the expression "Heavens won't fall" is the perfect example of neologism where Indian expression is beautifully merged and used along with the English words presenting the best case of hybridization as well as the inclusion of two different cultures which finally becomes what is termed as interculture. "khas fibre" is another example of morphological derivation in which two words of different languages are used in a way that the first word is an untranslated adjective of Hindi language and the other word is a noun of English language. It can be represented as

khas fibre

Hindi untranslated adjective + English Noun = Neologism

Sometimes, in the process of neologism, the suffix -ing is joined with the untranslated verb of Urdu language as in the case of "salaaming" which means "saluting". This process of neologism can be shown in the following way:

salaam + ing = salaaming

Urdu untranslated verb + English suffix -ing = Neologism

Now we have come syntactic fusion where the writer's particular way of handling the syntax as well as lexis for the conveyance of the culture specific thoughts/ ideas result in the invocation of hybridized and appropriated language where there is a kind of fusion of lexis and syntax of author's own language with the syntax and lexical forms of English and thus it helps the author to assert his/her unique cultural identity and voice along with the presentation of several cultural issues and clashes not in the foreign language but in the appropriated language. Here we can see that the author has mostly used simple sentences which are short and informative. There is inclusion of both direct and indirect speeches. But at some places, we have free direct and indirect speeches which make the balanced control of the authorial tone as the narration is started in the third person point of view and marks the authorial tone but then the omniscient narrator makes a shift where free direct form of speech is used which prohibits the authorial tone and gives freedom to the characters in the assertion of their voice/ feeling making the dialogue more authentic and real. There is a kind of syntactical mixture of Hindi in English as in "Alright Ma", "Hey, spittoon *lao*", "Arey he is a Sahib, a big Sahib". Apart from this, we also have dialects as well as idiolects which add the regional and social class specific lexical items in the syntax. The regional effect of the dialect is reflected when the writer talks about the pronunciation of the South Indians who speak "eight as 'yate', an egg as 'yugg', and who always stumbled on words beginning with an 'M' I want Yum Yum Yumeer, Yumpee (I want M.M. Amir M.P.)" (Singh 15). In case of the Bengalis, the writer has also presented a unique way of using syntax and lexis as they add an "airy 'h' ... after a 'b' or a 'W' or an 's'. A "virgin" sounds like some exotic tropical plant, the "vharjeen," "will" as a "wheel," and the "simple" as a "shimple"" (15). Syntactical and lexical fusion marks the class and cultural differences. Class difference is presented by using both faulty and accurate pronunciations as in the beginning of the story the Superintendent of the clerical staff welcomes and congratulates Mr. Sen for his newly marriage as "Saar, ... Whee came to wheesh your good shelp long liphe and happinesh." whereas Mr. Sen speaks as "If that is all, ... we can get back to our work. I thank you gentlemen, for your good wishes" (8). Here, regional difference is presented in the speech of Mr. Swami who fancied his knowledge of English idiom. For example, he says, "Eh, you Sen, you are a dark harse. By God, a pitch black harse, if i may say so.... 'By God'. I said. 'I must get the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth right from the harse's mouth - the dark harse's mouth.'"(14). The inclusion of regional dialect in the standard English creates a new kind of syntax marking the area of cultural differences and clashes which is shown in case of Kalyani's speech in Bengali accent as she asked her husband, "Do you want to shit inshide or outshide? The deener ees on the table." (20). After listening to these sentences, Mr. Sen becomes passive towards her and starts thinking of his past life as well as of his current reputation which he thinks was going to be tarnished because of the accent of his wife. So he starts living a secluded life despite of thinking and caring of his wife's emotions. As being a Wog, he faces a cultural dilemma and resists himself on linguistic grounds which at last becomes the reason for the suicide of his wife. On his wife's place, apart from the accent, she

commits only one crime that is considered a linguistic sin as she writes an address on an envelope as a suicide note for his husband as

"To,

Mr. S. Sen, Esq." (33)

As it is ungrammatical to use both Mr. and Esq. at the same time to address a person.

So at last, we can say that both syntactical and lexical levels are the areas where the writer has worked on for making a new kind of language suited to the culture, theme, and to the various characters belonging to different class and regions which make the language highly hybridized and appropriated as the inclusion of two different cultures and languages which in turn results in a new specific medium for the expression of cultural inclusion or differences or the clashes or the creation and representation of identities.

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