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## Appropriation of English Language in Pakistani English Fiction with Reference to *The Scatter Here is too Great*

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### Abstract:

Pakistani English fiction writers being in bilingual context experiment with their writing by giving equal representation to local and global languages. The current study aims to explore language appropriation strategies adopted in the selected novel. The creative style of code-mixing and code-switching is explored in contemporary Pakistani English fiction. The novel *The Scatter Here is too Great* (2013) by Bilal Tanweer is selected for the study. The writer belongs to younger generation of upcoming English fiction writers. He communicates effectively from local to global literary market through appropriation of language. Code-mixed words are those which do have alternative equivalent words in the host language but familiarity with cultural connotation makes the author to use indigenous expression. Urdu is a national language of Pakistan while English is used for official purpose, business, trade, law, and education; both the languages have close ties with one another that is reflected in contemporary Pakistani English fiction. The current research is qualitative and descriptive. This study will develop understanding of current trends of linguistic experiences made by Pakistani writers with reference to code-mixing and code-switching in the selected novels. The text of the novels is systematically analyzed by the method of textual analysis.

**Keyterms:** Language appropriation, Standard English language, Code-mixing (CS), code-switching (CM), Pakistani English fiction, bilingualism

**Introduction:** Language is a tool used by human beings to produce meaningful discourse as quoted in research article titled *An Analysis of Code Switching used by Facebookers*, "Language has an important role in human life and has several usages for human as a means of communication and interaction in community life." Pakistan has a multilingual context, where Urdu is the national language while English an official language. Other than these prominent languages there are local languages specified to regional affiliations. English was brought into

Pakistan due to colonization, later on it spread due to its global importance. Now English has become the language of law, business, trade, education, science, arts and fiction. One of the categories of fiction is novel that is greatly influenced by English language. Novel is a fictitious prose that comprises of singles or more than one story in which there are certain characters assigned their roles. Pakistani English fiction writers are from bilingual context, reflecting the influence of their indigenous language on English. In a discourse language mixing is divided into two types on the basis of structure i.e. Code mixing and code switching. These are the strategies that show efforts by the authors to connect their local identity with the global world. Pakistani fiction writers are using language to express their intended meaning to local and global readership. They appropriate the standard English language by code-switching and code-mixing to Urdu according to the need of expression. Code may be smaller unit i.e. morpheme and may be the entire language as one word of Urdu language is also code as well as whole of language. The inculcation of code-switching and code-mixing from English to Urdu and vice versa comes naturally to the people of Pakistan. Code-mixing and code switching are the techniques to generate easy understanding. Bilingual speech community switches and code mixes as per its ease as Fishman in his research *Who speaks what language to whom and when?* states that bilingual decide, “what language [to use] to whom and when...” (Fishman, 2000). The emergent English fiction writers of Pakistan are dealing with a number of contemporary issues in their novels like politics, terrorism, gender discrimination, corruption, insecurities and fear in a natural style where CS and CM are embedded quite naturally. A detailed study of Pakistani novels show that code-mixing and code-switching is a commonly occurring phenomenon in the speech acts of the characters. This innovative style shows the command on the part of authors on different languages.

The current research paper aims to trace code-mixing and code-switching in the selected Pakistani English novel. The Pakistani novel *The Scatter Here is too Great (2013)* is selected for the study. The novel is about local culture, society, norms, traditions, politics, terrorism and spiritualism with specific reference to Karachi, one of the main cities of Pakistan. It comprises of short stories, each story discloses a different angle of local Karachi with its fears, insecurities, problems, terrorism, politics and issues. The novel manifests innovative writing style with appropriation of English language by author. The present study will explore code-switching and code-mixing in the novel. The date is analyzed on the basis of Hoffman’s theory. The characters

of the novel reside in Karachi, Pakistan and generate discourse comprising of local words through code switching and code mixing. Bilal Tanweer is a novelist, poet and translator. He is a fullbright scholar who did his MFA from Columbia University. He was nominated for Granta's 'New Voices for 2011, and received 2010 PEN translation grant.

The current research is carried systematically through sections i.e. introduction, literature review, analysis and conclusion.

### **Literature Review**

Bilingualism emerged in Pakistan in 19<sup>th</sup> century due to colonization of britishers, languages came in contact with one another. 'The phenomenon of people having more than one code (language) is called bilingualism or multilingualism (Wardough,1986 : 101).' The worth of English language has been increased in Pakistani context due to its status of international language. 'The strength of English language is obvious in Pakistan because a majority of common intelligentsia and elitists not only switch from Urdu to English in the present time in order to create a special impact but also the writers do this in their works as well.'(2015; 13506) English is appropriated by the Pakistani English fiction writers according to their need of generating meaningful discourse. The strategies of code-switching and code-mixing are used for one another at times by different scholars. These strategies are linked to bilingualism; bilingual is a person who can communicate in both primary and secondary language to a certain degree. According to Spolsky bilingual is 'a person who has some functional ability in the second language'. (1998, p.45). Hamers and Blanc (1987 : 45) define bilingualism as "the state of a linguistic community in which two languages are in contact with the result that two codes can be used in the same interaction and that a number of individuals are bilingual". 'It is claimed that code-switching and code-mixing being two significant linguistic phenomena are most common and prevalent ways of interaction among bilinguals.'(Rizwan. Akhtar 2015;13506)

Code-switching performs different functions in a bilingual speech community. Code is a system of communication used by people to convey meaningful discourse. Ronald Wardough maintains that a code can be defined as "a system used for communication between two or more parties used on any occasions. (1986:101).' It performs linguistic function by transmitting the necessary knowledge to the readers by a short cut method. Code switching and code mixing show solidarity

with the local audience and provokes its global understanding. Asma Mansoor in her research article titled *Protean Power Structures and the Problematic Standing of Post-9/11 Pakistani Fiction in English* says ‘Pakistani fiction in English thus emerged with the message that was essentially Pakistani but was targeting both a local as well as a global audience.’(Asma Mansoor 2013: 119). It is a reflection of emotional sensibility of the writers for themselves and for readers. Moreover these strategies cater literary creativity of the authors.

According to Wardhaugh (2005, p.98) some functions of code switching are of convenience, clearer expression, intimacy, solidarity with listeners and choice of topic, which vary according to different situations.’ (quoted in Numl Journal 2008. Vol 8).

Bokamba is quoted in research article titled *Code-Switching and Code-Mixing: Style of Language Use in Childhood in Yoruba Speech Community*:

Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event... code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand.(2006:91).’

Code-mixing in a discourse reflect the inclusion of two or more languages on intrasentential level, while code-switching on intersentential level. Prasad (2008: p.242) considers code mixing as “linguistic cocktail” which involves “a few words of one language and a few from others, and again a few words from the former and a few from the latter and so on, mix up” .

Hoffman states that ‘code mixing is the switches occurring within a sentence, code switching is the changes over sentences (1991:104).

According to Treffers-Daller (1993: p.243) code-mixing can be defined as “the interaction between the grammars and the lexicons of two languages”.

Modernization, globalization, self identity, clarification and group identity are some other reasons to use these strategies by writers.

**Research Questions:**

1. To what extent English language is transformed in the novel *The Scatter here is too Great* through code-switching and code-mixing?
2. How the culture, tradition and religious connotations are reflected in the text through words?

**Research Methodology**

The research is descriptive, organized, and systematic with qualitative approach. The theory of Hoffman is applied on the text to extract code-switching. According to the theory the text is analyzed to trace different types of code-mixing and code-switching, moreover the words are related with context to find their social, cultural and traditional meanings.

**Analysis of Data**

The present study falls under the category of qualitative research. The novel is selected on the basis of two research questions. Textual analysis is done in order to trace the code mixed and code switched discourse. Moreover it is explored that how through appropriation of language the writer connects local readers with the global ones while at the same time giving ample information of local tradition, religion, social and cultural status of Karachi. The words which reflect deeply embedded tradition and the culture of local society give an understanding of people of Pakistan. The novel *The Scatter Here is Too Great* is examined under following categories:

1. Code-switching
2. Contextualized Code-mixing
3. Code-mixing

**1. Code-switching:** There are following types of code-switching according to the theory given by Hoffman.

**a) Inter-sentential CS:** Code switching. between the sentences (inter-sentential code switching) from Urdu to English is traced in the novel as;

‘Her little brother shouted, ‘Oye! Kya karta hai!(130). The example shows that character switch from English to Urdu in speech event.

### **b) Emblematic switching**

This type of code switching involves inculcation of exclamation, phrases and tags from one language to other as in the novel *The Scatter Here is too Great*, Why here? Duck! Hunh?I shouted at her.(38). In this line the character shows his disgust.

He looked at him straight in his eyes, ‘What did you say? Haan? You find this very funny, haan, funny, haan?(15).’ The code-mixing of these words of exclamation show the natural expression of locals of Karachi.

Abay O rowdy idiots! Listen.(25). ‘You jerked off your ink pen when you were close enough-pha! You stunned them.’(35). ‘Hai, hai Allah, hai Allah....(62).’ ‘Sadeq tapped me on the shoulder, ‘oye, want to have a coconut? (76).’ ‘Abay, it is not about two rupees of five rupees,’ he said.(77).’ ‘Your bag matches my shirt-huee huee! He said.(78).’ ‘Hmm...’ I nodded.(78).’ ‘Hahaha! Five times! Fox! Hahaha! (83).’ Ho ho! Here he comes.(85). Words ‘Abay O, pha, Hai, Oye, hahaha and ho ho show the common occurrence in language of bilingual.

## **2. Contextualized CM:**

‘Some words do not have equal alternative words in English, here writer uses indigenous language. ‘Just like Urdu does not have words for television, computer, engine, machine, tractor, thrasher, necktie, drawing room etc.’(Sltana 2008, vol.8) These words have cultural connotations and cannot be understood accordingly in other language. Bilal Tanweer feels real lexical need with the words of Urdu which do not have proper alternatives.

### **a) Religious/ spiritual affiliation:**

“Your mother is moaning, ‘Ya Allah, Ya Allah.” In this ‘Ya Allah shows Muslim belief on Creator that how they in every situation remember Allah, its English word is God but normally it is not used.

“I don’t know why you say they were Gog and Magog but I can tell you that this city is dying.(156).” The story of Gog and Magog is religious story that can be understood by Muslims only.

‘Seven other kids assembled in a loose semi-circle to read the Qur’an (50).’ The Qura’an is the name of holy book of Muslims and they have strong spiritual and religious belief in it. The English alternative of Quraan is Holy book which can be used for any holy book and not specifically Quraan, author of the novel Bilal does not use the alternative word. ‘Inshallah, things will get better.(148). I have been reciting ayat-al kursi continuously.(149)’ Here comes the real lexical need because words Inshallah and ayat-al kursi do not have equal words in English. ‘

### **b) Literary Creativity:**

In order to generate an understanding writer uses local phrases, idioms and slogans etc some times as it is or through literal translation. This technique provokes interest in the reader as well as ensures impressive literary style of the writer. Pakistani novelists use CS & CM strategies as a conscious effort with a purpose. CS and CM strategies are not due to the mental confusion of the writers but it portrays a natural local setting of Pakistan. Often writers are caught in situations where only cultural idioms can serve a better explanation. That becomes easy to understand for local readers due to their cultural awareness.

### **c) Cultural Connotation:**

Words like baba, amma, bhैया, nani, sukhansaz, have cultural connotation with reference to Pakistan. Some other examples in the novel are found. As

‘King rewards him by making him his vizier...(95), For the past week and a half, each evening had been spent in festivities of dholki.(144). Word ‘dholki’ does not have English alternative as it is a unique celebration at the wedding ceremony where in Pakistani tradition ‘henna’ is applied on the hands of bride and groom. Its literal translation into ‘wedding celebration’ will not reflect the local cultural connotation of the word ‘dholki’.

‘Somebody had suggested to my mother that it could be a jinn and that we should go see the Maulvi sahib.(146)’ The words Jinn and Moulvi sahib can be used in English as ‘geni’ and ‘religious scholar’ but then local meaning that is attached to the belief of people cannot be



conveyed properly. The local common man has strong belief on these words and their English words will leave them unsatisfied.

Array bhayya! Slow down'.(12), In Pakistani culture people are considered in a bond of brotherhood despite the difference of cast, creed and society, they usually address one another like brother, sister or aunt. This word 'bhayya shows the traditional contextualized bond between the people.

#### **d) Curse Words:**

Curse words are commonly used in street language of Pakistan. *The Scatter Here is too Great* is a novel about Karachi, a big city of Pakistan. The author Bilal Tanweer portrays the natural expression of common man of the street who use curse words to abuse. I said bad words to him and his father and his sister too. I said 'bhenchod' to him.(2013: 5) in this line the Urdu word Bhenchod shows the emotional approach of Karachiates. Bhen ka. It still hurts.(81), in this very line word 'bhen ka' shows the abuse. The setting of the novel is Karachi so curse words are very much contextualized while curse words in any other city of Pakistan would be different.

#### **e) Street Slang:**

The street language of a low class common man is used in the novel *The Scatter here is Too Great* like the words Array, haan, acha, hahaha, abay, oye, babaji show the common conversation.

#### **f) Hybridity:**

Hybridity is a technique used by Bilal Tanweer to create hybrid language consisting of both the languages. 'Oye chicken-saz! You crazy old man (2013:26),' 'They were in little eight-anna books.'(7)

#### **g) Wearables:**

'She wore a half sleeved yellow kameez'.(31) The word kameez has English equivalent as shirt but writer uses it to familiarize the concept with local readers. Kameez is the word that is used as a traditional long shirt worn by females of Pakistan while shirt is not specifically for female; it is used for male also.

‘I’d had enough of the man in the lungī (32).’ ‘Both of us are in white kurta-shalwar (74).’

In the above examples words ‘kameez, lungī and kurta-shalwar are Urdu words used for wearable items

#### **h) Edibles:**

‘You like halwa? (108).’ The sweet is known as a sign of celebration in the context of Pakistan. Halwa can be translated into English but it cannot have a specific word, in Pakistan it is not just a sweet dish to eat rather it is sign of tradition and culture.

#### **i) Idioms/phrases:**

My mother said she wouldn’t go to work, ‘I will take care of him and will also get a talisman to ward off his evil.(144)’ The people of Pakistan people are superstitious, whenever something bad happens they abruptly associate it with fault in their stars, evil intention of their enemies or black magic. In the novel a character Akbar, a journalist by profession experiences terrorist attacks in Karachi and becomes extremely sick. His mother started believing that some evil person has casted bad eye on her son who was also about to get marry in few days. She says she will help her son to get out of the spell. She looks away from the realities and considers irrelevant options to cure mental and physical condition of her son. This phrase applies specifically to the context of Pakistani society where people believe on stories.

#### **j) Relationships:**

The word Amma, bhai, behan and baba are used frequently in the novel by author Bilal Tanweer, though these words do have equivalents in English as mother, brother, sister and father, but their use shows the emotional attachment of Pakistani people with these local words. These words reflect the simple life style where these words strengthen the relation. The people use these words for relation as a symbol of deep love and respect for one another. Some words are used to show status in the context of Pakistan like the word ‘begum’ is used for two purposes i.e. the wife of a landlord, or a graceful married women as ‘,So you wrote about your life and Noor Begum.(52)’. In this sentence this very word is used to show the graceful respectable lady. In English when someone is to address with respect it is done by using the word ‘sir’ but here we see in Pakistani context it is being used as o-sir-je(63) for show of extreme respect.

### 3. Code-mixing:

#### a) Intra-sentential:

Often both the English and Urdu equivalents are used by author to clarify the words; if not meaning then context is explained in a way to make sense of the words to global readers. Bilal Tanweer being bilingual writer clarifies his concepts in *The Scatter here is too Great* either by literally translating or explaining the concept.

**Translated:** For some reason, the house was named Patang that is, Kite.(30). ‘Outside the station, on the chowk! At the intersection! How many people?(166).’

**Untranslated:** It has delicious fruit cake: cheap. Chai, so strong.(79). In this sentence writer does not repeat Urdu word ‘chai’ rather he gives explanation that along with sweet cake

#### b) Involving a change of pronunciation:

‘He’s trailing a chant: Po-etry, hist-ery, pheel-aasaphy, diee-gest, fayy-shion, boooooks, all kinds, boooooks, boooooks!.’(74). These words are poetry, history, philosophy, digest, fashion and books. The writer Bilal modifies these English words into phonological structure of Urdu.

‘Our young intell-kachool!’(85). Due to influence of L1 the people they use L2 according to the framework of their own local phonology.

#### c) Intra-lexical code mixing:

The type of code-mixing where a word is changed within its own self. As ‘Asma Aapa’s stories had become strange (95).’ In the given line ‘aapa’ is an urdu word and with it ‘s’ is added to give sense of ‘sister’s’ but it is not used itself. The word shows that writer Bilal focuses on the relations on which Pakitani strongly believe like ‘Amma, baba, bhैया, aapa, khala etc. The specific local urdu word for every relation is itself an enjoyment. Another example is the use of urdu word charsi (drug addict) with ‘s’ of plural as ‘That while he went out and got drunk and recited poetry to a bunch of runaway charsis.(48). Other example is viziers, uchakkas(120) and Amma’s in the novel.

## Conclusion:

The above study shows that language appropriation in Pakistani English fiction serves to connect local with global world by conveying local meanings of languages through the strategies of CS and CM. Pakistani English novels are regarded as a true representative of local themes in a globalised world. The appropriation of standard English correlate positively for better understanding of the fiction. The study explored the novel *The Scatter here is too Great*, and found that the code-mixing and code-switching form a group identity. The words that are used reflect to their cultural, social and contextual meaning. The study shows that Pakistani English is another variety to existing world Englishes.

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