

Linguistic Transformation in Rohinton Mistry's Works



Engineering

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ABSTRACT

Diaspora refers to displaced people who have been dislocated from their homeland. This migration is measured as geographical, cultural, ethnic, historical and identical migration. It can be read as mental or physical migration. Language is a medium of communication. The movement away from the homeland affects the language and culture of a diasporic person. In the post colonial writings we can find the regional dialects, vernaculars and pidgin words. It can be called linguistic migration in Standard English. English language is used not only as medium of communication but also as a channel to impose power by the post colonial writers. Diaspora writer used the language with a different mindset, applying local metaphor and symbols in the language.

Rohinton Mistry a diasporic writer left for Canada to become a pop singer but became an Indo- Canadian writer. He expressed the mood of the characters through his language. It is obvious that English language at one hand universally adopted, modified accordingly and on the other hand presenting a scope for language ethnicity. Mistry in his works decolonized the language. In short one can say that there is a very deep investment in the link between language and culture. Therefore, replacement of Standard English language and frequent use of vernaculars and other native dialects in diasporic novels is representative of their shift from the origin point.

PAPER

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In the author's foreword to *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao insisted that Sanskrit and Persian, English remained "the language of our intellectual make up, but not our emotional make up (2000: vii). Rao also wrote that: "one has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that's one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of certain thought- movement that looks maltreated in an alien language (2000: vii). In a similar way, Mulk Raj Anand, one of the luminaries of this second generation, says in "Pigeon- Indian": " Even when Indians know English grammar, and have been used to speaking the alien tongue for long time, they tend to feel and think in their own mother tongue. Often, the native speech enters into the shell of the sentence in the foreign language (spring: 1982).

It is obvious that English is an alien tongue and its shape and structure is mildly altered by the inflections of the Indian vernacular. The words coined by diaspora writers such as terminal, subaltern, hybridity, migrancy, diaspora etc are not existed in the dictionary. Diaspora writer used the language with different mindsets, applying local metaphors and symbols in the language. Rohinton Mistry a diasporic writer left for Canada to become a pop singer but became an Indo- Canadian writer in English. He expressed not only the pain and grief of leaving his homeland but also dealt with a sense of alienation and search for identity in his works. Being a member of Parsi community he often worries about dwindling Zoroastrian religion. Though he is away from India for the last three decades, his memory about his birth place is fresh and reliable. Nilufer Bharucha remarks:

Rohinton Mistry's texts are at the micro level splendid celebrations of Indian English while at the macro level they faithfully capture the rhythms of the Parsi Gujarati idiom. Unlike earlier Indian English writers, Mistry does not use Indian English to

merely create a comic effect. He uses it consistently and naturally and thereby conveys its present status as one of the several Indian languages with its own distinctive phonetic and syntactic feature – a part of the phenomenon of global 'englishes'. This is a postcolonial mode of resistance offered by other contemporary writers too – like Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Upmanyu Chatterjee and Bapsi Sidhwa among many others.(2007: 40).

We can find a strong sense of Indianness in Mistry's works as he mixes Hindi along with Urdu, Gujarati and Parsi words. Mistry used native terminology so the Indian readers can correlate with his fiction as well as to create a sense of satisfaction. He wrote in italic the names of food and ethnic practices in his works. For example kutchoomber, dhansak (SLJ :18), Sapaat, sav- ganthia, fikko-fuchuk (SL J :35), Basmati. Masala (SLJ: 45), W C chawl(SLJ: 65), subjo(SLJ: 77), Sojjo soap, Paapud (SLJ: 65).

He used different addressing expressions of Hindi language in his works such as seth, goaswalla (SLJ; 26), yaar, sahibji, arre (SLJ: 65), Chaalo yaar (SLJ: 38), Bbu (A F B :108), Kucharavalli, tandarosti (SLJ:78). arrung-darrung, bhumda, nay bhooski(SLJ: 190)etc.

Mistry used a few Hindi words freely in his works and never provided with glossary for those words. For instance Bazaar, kusti, dustoorji, chowki (S L J: 39), Theek hai! Theek hai! Paani, Paani (S L J:59), Jaadu – Mantar (SIJ: 63), Dubbawalla (SL J: 72), Chumpee-maalish Tayel- maalish, maalish, (S L J:102), chhee- chhee (S L J:110), Pukka (S L J:114), Toba, Toba, meherbani (SLJ:73), chana-mumra (S L J:163) etc. We also come across a few Hindi abusive words in Mistry's works such as seth, salaal (S L J::33), morcha, goondas yaar (SL J: 39), mua lutch, Bay-sharam, chaamray chaamar(A F B :50), chenchhi, bhaiya, saali witch (SLJ:51), maader chod, golaas, golaas (SLJ:72), gandoo, saala (SLJ: 73). He also used slogans in Hindi language such as " Hindi-Chinee bhai- bhai(SLJ: 10), Nahi chalegi! Nahi chalegi Gully gully me shor hai !Congress party chor hai! (SLJ: 72), Gaaribi Hatao (AFB : 160).). Mistry used perfect Indian picture of mixed language style with an addition of Gujarati words such as *Sajjo soap* (SLJ:56), *punoti* (SLJ:198) from Punjabi.

Tehmul Lungara was one of the characters in the novel *Such a Long Journey*, who was physically challenged and spoke the words with stammering and with inappropriate pauses. He is portrayed as a childish person with manly desires. Mistry used

onomatopoeic words such as cluck-cluck-cluck(SLJ:28),tidick-tick, tidick-tick (SLJ:56). Thuuck-thuck, thuuck-thuck (SLJ:75) through this character. He gave space to a few words spoken by Tehmul with stammering and with inappropriate pauses, for instance GustadGustadvery strong GustadpleaseGustadallgonegonegoney.Money for rubbing fast fast fast fast. Nicenicefeelingall-gone (SLJ:204), ja-ja-just, m-mess- message, chirr- chirr chirr (SLJ:243)etc. It is obvious that through this character Mistry symbolically wanted to portray the physical and mental disturbance encountered by a migrated person. Mistry used typical Indian expression through repeated words as ice cold paan, sweet sweet paani (SLJ: 59) hot chai! Hot chai! (SLJ: 256). Big big words (SLJ:69). New new thong (SLJ :172). Mistake –bistake (SLJ:243). etc.

Mistry expressed the mood of the characters through his language. He expressed the frustration of the character by writing those words in block letters. For instance in the novel *Such A Long Journey* Shorab protested for cheering on his IIT success, and expressed his reluctance to join IIT by shouting ‘STOP IT’(SL J:48).

He used combined words such as good night- God bless you to show love and affection of parents in the novel *Such a Long Journey* when Gustad the protagonist of the novel recalled his childhood memory: how he was taken to Matheran when he was eight years old and how he spent two days at Central Hotel and how he was given fare well by his mother before he slept under the mosquito net by wishing him goodnight-God bless you (SLJ:241).

Mistry used songs with in the narrative to mark a difference. For instance Dinshawji sang in the novel *Such A Long Journey* “ Ghoosts to right to them/Ghoosts to left to them/ Ghoosts in front of them/Hungry and thirsty !”(S L J:47), or translation of a popular Hindi song “ Mere sapno ki rani kab aayegi tu’ as ‘ O Queen of my dreams when will you arrive’ (S L J :172) in the same novel we come across another Hindi song when Gustad was on his way to his house after meeting Ghulam Mohammed,

who instructed him to withdraw all the deposited money within three days, and he felt nostalgic after listening that melodious song i.e., ‘Sau saal pahle mujhe tumse pyar tha, mujay tumsay pyar tha, aajbhi hai, aur kalbhi rahayga...’ (S L J :205). These examples brought into light that diasporic writers make their own impact in writing self- expression in other tongue. Similarly in his other novel *A Fine Balance* one can find diversified use of English language. We find words from Hindi and English such as Okay Ji (A F B: 09), Haanji (A F B: 76), Achoot Haanji (A F B: 111), Tamasha (A F B: 5) Paanwalla” (S L J : 6) and Fekologist (A F B: 279). It shows that diaspora writings have plethora of neologism and it sets a new trend in English language writing, with a backdrop of postcolonial theory, diasporic writers too have a privilege of adopting and adapting English. It is obvious that Parsi community is above to extinct, so Parsi writers are more worried about their religion. They wanted to protect it in the alien language, so they are writing blended words in their works , which is one of the causes that they are failing to reach national acclaim.

Likewise, postcolonial novelist did multiple experiments on language in order to render the position of English language. It is obvious that the language is, at one hand universally adopted, modified accordingly and on the other hand presenting a scope for language ethnicity. Mistry in his works decolonized the languages. As an ethnic writer he represents his culture specificity through language. He left untranslated words in the text intentionally to convey the sense of cultural distinctiveness. Such a method not only represents the cultural difference but also gives upper hand to the discourse in interpreting cultural concept.

In short one can say that there is a very deep investment in the link between language and culture. Therefore, replacement of Standard English language and frequent use of vernaculars and other native dialects in diasporic novels is representative of their shift from the origin point. The displacement in the language reflects the position of the migrated subjects.

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