




UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE VIA LINGUISTIC LENSES: THE EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE APPROPRIATION STRATEGIES IN TARIQ RAHMAN'S MAMOON JI

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| KEYWORDS | ABSTRACT |
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| Language Strategies, Appropriation, Pakistani Literature, Mamoon Ji, Rahman | The research paper explores different appropriation strategies of English language in Pakistani English literature. The research examined various appropriating techniques and the reasons behind using these techniques in short story Mamoon Ji by Tariq Rahman. English has become the lingua franca in the world. So, the writers tend to appropriate language in their writings from all over the world. The same phenomenon has been observed by the researchers in Tariq Rahman's writing. The researchers analyze the text and apply Ashcroft's theory of appropriation (2002) to investigate five appropriation strategies like glossing, untranslated words, syntactic fusion, vernacular transcription as well as code-switching. Many Urdu words have been analyzed along with Arabic words and Punjabi phrases at lexical and sentence levels. The focus remains on how Rahman employs the language appropriation techniques to convey themes, represents cultural contexts, and construct characters. The study provides the significant information in examining the issues, extracting desired information & reaching outcomes. The outcome of current study has far-reaching implications from different viewpoints as it can be useful for pedagogy in teaching Pakistani English literature. |
| ARTICLE HISTORY | |
| Date of Submission: 30-07-2024 | |
| Date of Acceptance: 03-09-2024 | |
| Date of Publication: 05-09-2024 | |
| |  2024 Journal of Social Research Development |
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| DOI | https://doi.org/10.53664/JSRD/05-03-2024-06-57-65 |

INTRODUCTION

The literature is a medium that connects both language and culture. Literature, particularly novels, often serves as a medium for cultural representation, employing techniques like code-switching to construct and present unique cultural identities (Khan, 2020). Furthermore, language is a process of transferring one's thoughts or messages to others. So, it is also a process of transferring customs and values to others. In other words, language is the great source of representing culture. All writers use

language to convey the messages and depict their cultural norms and values through language. By incorporating oral traditions & indigenous phrases, authors create authentic representations of their native societies (Kammampool, 2021). Still, language is a system or mechanism of communication and is a cultural practice. Thus, we can say that language is useful instrument for interacting with society & culture. English is an official language in Pakistan. It has been most dominant language of country. In this regard, English has emerged as a powerful tool for cross-cultural communication, facilitating understanding and collaboration across the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Atasheva, 2024).

While English has been adopted and adapted by native people, contributing to world literature and cultural expression (Pandey, 2024), its hegemony raises concerns about linguistic and cultural imperialism (Zeng & Yang, 2024). Thus, this has led to growth of Pakistani English writers; Tariq Rahman is one of them. Tariq Rahman is Pakistani academic scholar, writer, & researcher. Rahman (2020) discusses the status and features of Pakistani English, noting its diversity and importance in education and literature. He is famous for writing many books and articles as well as famous for his collection of the selected short stories. As literature allows liberty in writing, in Pakistani English literature, we can see many Pakistani writers employing diverse language appropriation strategies in their works which seems to promote their culture. These linguistic strategies serve to bridge the communication gaps, preserve cultural identity, and challenge the hegemony of standard English in postcolonial literature (Khan, 2022; Shamas & Ehsan, 2020; Sarfraz, 2021). Also, these strategies allow writers to reconstruct their cultural identities & challenge linguistic hegemony (Magdelene & Patchainayagi, 2022).

Thus, the short story Mamoon Ji by Tariq Rahman revolves around the main protagonist, Mamoon Ji, the narrator's uncle. He is a bank officer. He is known for his kindness and unconventional nature. The narrator depicts a reminiscence story about Mamoon Ji's anomalous nature and kind-hearted actions. Mamoon Ji's actions and behaviour often shock family members. Families have different opinions on Mamoon Ji's strange behaviour; some think it is great that he is so generous, while others think it is ridiculous. As the narrator grows up, Mamoon Ji becomes recognizable, and known for his shabby look and good deeds. Mamoon Ji is a profound figure in community due to his generosity. The story takes a tragic turn when his wife passes away. After some time, he faces health issues and passes away. Before his death, he distributes all his money to charity and builds a dispensary for poor people. Consequently, the short story is a compelling narrative that probes into character of Mamoon Ji and his generosity. His personality leaves behind a legacy of the big-heartedness and solicitousness. In this regard, the story explores human nature and depicts the themes of kindness, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Accordingly, this narrative portrays Mamoon Ji as the unique and unforgettable character.

Objectives of Study

The study aims to determine that how Pakistani English writers have used language appropriation strategies to represent Pakistani culture and English. The aim is to highlight how localized English is promoted doubtlessly by Pakistani English writers in their literature. The study explores & describes different language appropriation techniques in Tariq Rahman's short story Mamoon Ji, taken from

The Third Leg and Other Short Stories, by considering study of [Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin \(2002\)](#). The objectives are:

1. To find out various language appropriation strategies employed by Rahman in Mamoon Ji to convey Pakistani culture within narrative.
2. To find out the main motives for using language appropriation strategies in the narrative Mamoon Ji by the writer.

Research Questions

1. What language appropriation strategies does Rahman use within the narrative Mamoon Ji?
2. What are the main motives behind the writer's language appropriation strategies in the narrative?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language appropriation techniques are countless and vary broadly in Pakistani English literature. Therefore, many Pakistani writers use language appropriation techniques as the most common way of transforming English, which helps the writers gain recognition. Many Pakistani and post-colonial writers have contributed to the transformation of English literature in this way. Many recent studies explore language appropriation in Pakistani & postcolonial literature. The research study ([Altobai, 2020](#)) entitled "The Paradox of Cultural Decolonization through Colonizer's Language in Achebe's Things Fall Apart" explores how, in the book Things Fall Apart, Achebe used English, language of colonizer, to accomplish cultural decolonization. Besides, the research paper ([Nabi, Yasir & Saleem, 2021](#)) titled "Use of Appropriateness in Sidhwa's Water, and Their Language of Love: Measurement on A Continuum" describes the appropriateness of language in her novel and her collection of short stories. This study examines appropriating techniques to compare Sidhwa's two works to determine frequency of appropriation usage in both the writings. Likewise, in research paper ([Nazeer, Sharif, Ali & Ahmed, 2022](#)) entitled "An Analysis of Language Appropriation Techniques Used in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron", Nazeer, Sharif, Ali and Ahmed analyzed text by investigating various appropriation strategies.

They also investigated the reasons for writer's use of language strategies. The research study used technical analysis of [Ashcroft \(2002\)](#) to discover different language appropriation strategies from the novel. In research study ([Batool, Khalid & Maan, 2022](#)), "The Cultural Appropriation of Urdu in Usman T. Malik's Collection Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan", Batool, Khalid and Maan discover that Malik also employs many language appropriation strategies to promote culture and language. This involves examining how Rahman adopts and adapts diverse linguistic elements from various languages to enrich the narrative. In his collection, Malik uses many Urdu words. Similarly, research project ([Nasir, Batool & Afsar, 2022](#)) named "Language Appropriation and Construction of Identity in Pakistani English Literature: A Narrative Analysis of 'Meatless Days' by Sara Suleri" analyzed the use of linguistic appropriation strategies & identity construction in Sara Suleri's work Meatless Days. Understanding how these stylistic devices contribute to & text's overall themes and the reader's experience is crucial. The study analyzed book's first two chapters to know how Suleri

highlights the separate identity construction in terms of culture & language and how she employs language appropriation.

The research study (Maryam, Shahid & Fatima, 2023) titled “understanding appropriation in Lahiri unaccustomed earth: A Post-Colonial Critique”, authors investigated the language appropriation strategies from the novel. This research applies Ashcroft’s model (2002) and Kachru’s studies (1983) to analyze appropriating techniques from novel. The writer of novel, Jhumpa Lahiri uses Bengali American characters in novel, explored how colonized were forced to adopt Western culture & how characters took Western culture by implementing their own culture, customs, language and society. It can involve looking at how Rahman’s use of language reflects societal norms, cultural conflicts, or postcolonial themes. Also, research article (Ahmad & Sabeen, 2024) named negotiating linguistic boundaries: Language Appropriation in Hosseini the Kite Runner explored language appropriating strategies from post-colonial novel Kite Runner. It could focus on how readers perceive & understand narrative based on own linguistic & cultural lenses. The study uses Ashcroft model of appropriation (2002) & Kachru model (1983) to reveal alterations in language, to describe cultural representation and decolonization.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses Ashcroft et al.’s qualitative method to analyze text of Rahman’s short story, Mamoon Ji. Many writers use strategies of the Ashcroft to appropriate Standard English. In this connection, according to Ashcroft et al. the theory of appropriation, various strategies are explained one after another as follows:

Glossing

The most dominant approach employed in cross-cultural writing is glossing. This technique explains non-English vocabulary, phrases, and sentences to highlight cultural distinctions. Many works by Pakistani writers from the multilingual backgrounds consist of rich content with respect to glossing. According to Ashcroft et al., “Glossing is far less prevalent than it was twenty thirty years ago, but it is useful for showing how simple referential bridges establish themselves as the most primitive form of metonymy” (p.60).

Untranslated Words

This is another method of using Standard English for appropriation. Post-colonial writers frequently utilize terms from native tongue without providing explanation or translation. These untranslated terms and expressions from the original languages demonstrate the cultural disparity. Ashcroft says, “The technique of selective lexical fidelity, which leaves some words untranslated in text, is a more widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness. Such a device not only acts to signify the difference between cultures but also illustrates importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts” (p.63).

Syntactic Fusion

Syntactic fusion is often used in post-colonial literature. This technique plays a significant part in appropriation of English. Syntactic fusion is blending of two language components or structures. As

Ashcroft said, "Syntactic fusion is much more common in post-colonial writing as a less overt feature of linguistic material. A Multilingual society like Papua New Guinea offers rich source for syntactic variation" (p. 67).

Code Switching & Vernacular Transcription

Code-switching and vernacular transcription are also common techniques of appropriation. Code-switching refers to switching from one language to another language. The vernacular transcription refers to using the native language by translating it to another language in the text. Many famous proverbs found in every language regarding culture and society. Thus, the writers from different backgrounds use those famous proverbs in their writings more likely to encourage their societal expressions. Therefore, they tend to convert those proverbs from the original language to the target language in their writings. About this strategy, the authors of "The Empire Writes Back" write that: "An interesting feature of monoglossic literature is the importance of the transcription of dialect forms or radical variants informed in one way or another by a mother tongue or by the exigencies of transplantation" (p.72).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on Textual Analysis. The researchers analyze the representative short story of Tariq Rahman to explore the author's liberal use of language in the text. This study uses strategies of appropriation proposed by Ashcroft. Many languages appropriation include glossing, untranslated words, syntactic fusion, code-switching & vernacular transcription. This study uses Ashcroft model of appropriation strategies to study these language appropriation strategies in short story Mamoon Ji by Tariq Rahman. First, the researchers analyze text and then investigate different appropriation strategies of language from the text to support findings with textual evidence. This research study carefully analyzes appropriation techniques to shed light on relationship amid culture & language within the narrative.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The short story Mamoon Ji, authored by Tariq Rahman, contains many Urdu words that are more likely to promote the culture and language. This analysis unravels the appropriation of the English language in many ways. It is stated that "These appropriation techniques allow writers to articulate native ideologies without relying on the foreign mediums, thereby resisting Eurocentric linguistic dominance" (Magdelene & Patchainayagi, 2022). Thus, it unfolds many language appropriation strategies to uncover author's motivation behind using appropriation techniques in text. "Common techniques include glossing, untranslated words, code-switching, and lexical innovation" (Ahmad & Sabeen, 2024).

Glossing

The term 'glossing' refers to the non-English words representing cultural and traditional expressions. More likely, Rahman uses many Urdu words in his short story Mamoon Ji to represent his culture. The title Mamoon Ji itself is a glossed word. The word Mamoon refers to uncle, mother's brother, and is used by people of India and Pakistan. The suffix Ji used with Mamoon is attached to show a polite form of yes, used in India and Pakistan to show deference. The writer also uses the words beta and

beti as glossed words; the word beta refers to son, and word beta refers to daughter. Through these words, writer shows love and care through cultural expression. Chacha and Khaloo are also glossed words which writer employs in the text. The word Chacha refers to the father's brother and is also used for valets and butlers who work in offices, shops, and the army. The word Khaloo refers to the mother's sister's husband. This word is also employed to express societal and familial values. Besides, the writer uses the word ghorī as a glossed word referring to mare to show vulgar expression. The writer also employs the words Begum and Sahib in the text. In India and Pakistan, the word Begum refers to lady wife, and the word Sahib refers to mister. Therefore, the writer uses non-English words immensely in the text, surely to express or put emphasis on certain words to describe cultural and traditional expressions.

Untranslated Words

The untranslated words cannot be rendered and belong to a specific area. Rahman also uses many untranslated words in his short story, including the Pullau, Baboo Mian, Mian dad, divan, hookah, shalwar kameez, Punjabi, Hatim, burrah sahib, daal, kebab, paratha, Ji, and Bihari. Pullau, paratha, daal and kebab are traditional foods cooked mostly in India and Pakistan. The word shalwar is a loose, baggy trouser, and the word kameez is a long, loose shirt worn by Eastern people. The word Punjabi is a language spoken mostly in India and Pakistan. The word hookah is the traditional pipe used for smoking in eastern areas. The word divan means lower back sofa. Hatim is an Arabic word used for a decisive or authoritative person. The word burrah Sahib is used for gentleman or high-ranked officer. The word Bihari refers to a person who belongs to a place named Bihar. The words Mian and Ji are also traditional; the word Mian is used for master, and the word Ji is used for respect in the East. However, the writer leaves these words untranslated in short story. Using untranslated words leads to cultural representation. The incorporation of Urdu words, particularly in domains like food and culture, contributes to the formation of Pakistani English as an independent variety (Sarfraz, 2021). English readers can understand that they are the cultural words the writer employs in the text.

Syntactic Fusion

Syntactic fusion is the blending of two language structures. It is created by combining the structure of the native language with the target language. In short story, the writer uses some words: kebabs and parathas. It reflects importance of linguistic lines in literary studies to unveil layers of meaning that may not be apparent through traditional literary analysis alone. The writer uses original words of native language and joins words with the suffix 's' taken from the English language, which leads to syntactic fusion.

Vernacular Transcription

The writer uses vernacular language to depict localism in text. As every language has vernacular expressions which its speakers use in society. There is only one vernacular proverb used by Rahman in his short story: 'O, Offspring of Monkey! Can't you do it gently' (p.101). 'Get up then, you Offspring of a Monkey, and get ready for the fodder' (p.102). The given proverbs are examples of vernacular transcription. Rahman took these proverbs from the Urdu language and translated them into the English language.

Code Switching

Code-switching is a language appropriation technique in which a person switches between codes. Code-mixing is prevalent in Pakistani English novels, with authors incorporating native words to fill lexical gaps and express ideological concepts that English cannot adequately convey (Khan, 2022; Shamas & Ehsan, 2020). The writer employed this strategy in this short story: 'O Pali lokaya', began my father...' (p.100). In the given sentence, Rahman uses Urdu words with English words and a Punjabi phrase that leads to code-switching. 'He is Hatim if he did not have this...' (p. 100). In this sentence, the writer uses the Arabic word Hatim to describe the authoritativeness of the character Mamoon Ji.

'I've brought kites for you, Imran beta, he said...' (p.100).

'But I am awake, Mamoon Ji.' (p.101).

Irshad Mamoon Ji was Chacha Ji, and Athar was Khaloo Ji. For Mamoon Ji, all boys were beta, and all girls beti. (p.102)

'It will be less foul than the burra sahib's language' (p.102).

'The children are hungry, Begum.' (p.105).

'Parathas for the imp'... (p.106).

'That mare will make parathas with his...' (p. 106).

The parathas came, and Mamoon Ji ordered me... (p.106).

'Sahib is dying Ji', he wailed... (p.110).

All the given sentences show that the writer uses words and phrases from other languages along with the English language in the text. Therefore, all the examples describe the writer's use of code-switching in the text as a language appropriation strategy.

CONCLUSION

This research study analyzes the language appropriation strategies in the short story Mamoon Ji by Tariq Rahman. The writer uses various appropriating techniques proposed by Ashcroft's framework of appropriation in the text. According to Bawa Kammampool (2021), "Language appropriation in postcolonial literature serves as means of reclaiming cultural identity, inspiring colonial legacies and creating new modes of representation". The analysis reveals that the writer not only uses Urdu words but uses Arabic words & Punjabi phrases with English language. Like other Pakistani writers, Tariq Rahman uses different linguistic techniques in his short story Mamoon Ji to promote localized English, emphasize Eastern culture more, and provide ease to native readers. Accordingly, Rahman surely uses different cultural language expressions in the English vocabulary to describe that they should not avoid their cultural norms in writings. Investigating language appropriation techniques of a short story Mamoon Ji written by Tariq Rahman, offer valuable sight to liberal use of language used to promote cultural norms & traditional customs. This analysis unravels different techniques from the text, which include glossing, untranslated words, syntactic fusion, code-switching, and vernacular transcription. Many recommendations can be proposed to explore the literature from sociolinguistic perspective. By using Ashcroft's framework of linguistic appropriation, researchers can dissect any literary work's language alteration strategies. Furthermore, literary texts can also be examined from post-colonial perspective to understand the effect of post-colonialism on different writings of that era.

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