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APPROPRIATION OF LANGUAGE IN FAZLI'S *INVITATION*: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the language appropriation strategies identified by Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin (1989) employed in Shehryar Fazli's novel *Invitation* (2011). The study evaluates the language appropriation tactics and strategies employed in the discourse to portray the native culture effectively and with more authenticity. The strategies include glossing, untranslated words, syntactic fusion, and code switching. The data collection process for this qualitative study involves using content analysis method. Thus, this study examines the effective role of language to resist against the colonizers under the realm of postcolonial studies in the novel *Invitation*.

Keywords: Appropriation, Language, Postcolonial, Resistance

Introduction

The British colonizers utilized language as a tool to retain cultural dominance, promotes British ideologies, and facilitates administrative control over the colonized. On the other hand, the indigenous languages were considered inferior to English. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, (1989) state that the colonial language not only subdued the coloniser's identity but also suppressed languages and dialects of the locals. European colonialism profoundly impacted the lives and traditions of Indigenous populations globally (Lewis, 2020). These transformations occurred in many manners; however, few would have endured without the coercive enforcement of language, compelling colonial subjects to adopt a European language and often to forsake their own. Thus, colonization greatly influenced Indigenous languages. In many cases, it has

led to a decline in the population of native language speakers and, in certain situations, language extinction. Colonialism led to the emergence of new languages through the interaction of diverse communities, resulting in pidgins and creoles, some of which, like Haitian Creole, are today acknowledged as distinct languages. These processes established new hierarchies of languages, pidgins, and creoles, through which language served as a means to delineate distinct groups of individuals and comprehend their placement within sociopolitical hierarchies.

To challenge this, the local writers who wrote in English began to react through appropriation of language. Appropriation, under the framework of postcolonial literature, denotes the deliberate integration of elements of the colonizer's culture and integrating them into one's own (Shaheer, 2023). It encompasses the act of borrowing, modifying, and reinterpreting cultural practices, language, and literary traditions. Postcolonial writers use appropriation to affirm their autonomy and question the dominant influence of the colonizer's culture. One example of appropriation in postcolonial literature is the use of the English language by authors belonging from the former British colonies. English, being the language of the coloniser, has emerged as a means for postcolonial writers to articulate their thoughts and convey their experiences to a broader readership. These writers undermine the colonial connotations of the English language and employ it as a means of cultural defiance.

In postcolonial literature, the act of appropriating language is regarded as both a form of resistance and empowerment from the side of the colonized. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, (1989) argues that in the postcolonial struggle against colonial dominance, language is a more efficacious medium than belligerent rhetoric and war. He says "appropriation is more valuable mechanism on the part of the weaker end" (Ashcroft et.al, 1989, p.19). According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, (1989) the major function of the language of the postcolonial writing is that it "seizes the language of the language of the centre and replaces it in a discourse fully adapted by the colonized space" (Ashcroft et.al, p38).

Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, (1989) argue that postcolonialism functions as a defensive mechanism, safeguarding the culture and identity of the colonised while simultaneously providing various and powerful forms of resistance. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, (1989) claim that "resistance has become a much-used in postcolonial discourse, and indeed in all discussions of 'Third World' politics" (Ashcroft et.al, 1989, p.19). They thoroughly studied several literary works and have developed a comprehensive model for the appropriation of language which is a form of resistance through language.

Statement of the Problem

The British colonizers employed language as a mean to maintain cultural supremacy, propagate their own ideals, and establish administrative authority over the colonized. English was regarded as superior to the local languages. In order to undermine this view of language, the local English writers from the colonized territories responded by appropriating the colonizers' language to challenge their hegemonic view of English being the superior language. Pakistani authors in English have also responded to the colonial authority in one way or the other. One such way is using language as a tool of resistance which is appropriating the English language; therefore, this approach of using language as a tool of resistance against the colonial view of language supremacy. Shehryar Fazli's use of appropriation of language in *Invitation* (2011) can be seen as a form of resistance against the colonial hegemonic view of English as the superior language. Fazli incorporates appropriation of language through the main protagonist of the novel *Shahbaz*. Other characters like Ghulam Hussain and Mona Phuppi also use abundance of a variety of localized English language expressions which can be only associated to Pakistani culture and society.

Research Question

How does appropriation of language act as a form of resistance in Fazli's *Invitation* (2011)?

Literature Review

It is accurate to state that the British have departed from subcontinent, however they have managed to maintain their dominance through the use of their language (Akram A, Ayub Z, 2018). The colonial language has oppressed the endeavours of the subcontinent were carried out and exerted control over other regions Indigenous languages. Akram and Ayub (2018) investigate appropriation of language in *Twilight in Delhi*. The findings indicate that the changes in language resulting from language appropriation are clearly visible in the novel. These changes have the potential to be incorporated into localised English, giving it a new and powerful dimension. This can challenge the dominance of British political language in the literary world. The novel *Twilight in Delhi* employs a wide and careful use of language to reveal the decisive aspects of native culture. This skilful use of language places the author in a favourable position among post-colonial writers, as the novel effectively conveys ethnic identity through the use of indigenous language. According to this research paper *Twilight in Delhi* portrays the cultural and religious legacy of a community of Muslim families living in British India. The author chose to employ the English language in order to effectively communicate with a global audience and depict the culture, traditions, and religious practices of the Indian Muslim community. Nevertheless, while discussing the most poignant moments and speeches, the prominence and significance of one's

birthplace take precedence. While composing *Twilight* in Delhi, Ali did not limit himself to using only English. Instead, he enhanced it with the aromas of cardamom, chiles, and elaichee, so leaving his mark on the process of adapting English to suit native sensibilities.

Awan et.al (2012) argue that although the current language may be used effectively to accurately portray and explain local events, English is no longer considered a language linked to cultural dominance. Awan et.al (2012) have examined the appropriation of language in Khaled Hosseini's, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. This literary work falls under the category of post-colonial literature. They provide substantial proof of the decolonization of the English language, transitioning it from being the language of colonizers to one that aligns with the requirements and preferences of colonized individuals. Khaled Hosseini has demonstrated his status as a postcolonial writer through his skilful utilization of language appropriation in the novel. This has allowed him to express indigenous cultural assertiveness. The work communicates cultural claim by employing indigenous languages. Despite the author's Western education and proficiency in English, they feel it is necessary to adopt English when discussing Afghan society and culture. While the author chooses English as the language to discuss the people of Afghanistan, with the intention of reaching a global audience, he goes above the limitations of English by including idioms and sentence structures from the local languages. This allows him to accurately portray the society and culture of Afghanistan. Hosseini skilfully adapts the English language to accurately portray Afghan life. He also incorporates elements from the Persian language, enhancing the English language with an Arabic and Persian influence to effectively convey the cultural experiences of Afghan society.

A study conducted by Ahmed M and Sabeen (2024) analyses how post-colonial Afghan-American writers' appropriate language, with a focus on Khaled Hosseini's book *The Kite Runner* also. According to them that the act of adapting another language and culture to fit your own needs and objectives is known as appropriation. Post-colonial writers that utilise English as a literary device out of necessity or opposition typically employ this technique. All other indigenous languages were suppressed by the colonisers during their colonisation. They established a system of authority based on language domination by using the English language as a tool for control. However, by employing various tactics within their own social and cultural context, post-colonial writers have rebelled against the colonial language's overwhelming influence and weakened it. Ahmed M and Sabeen (2024) examined the data for this study by using a variety of language appropriation methodologies, as mentioned by Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin (1989) and Kachru (1983). The investigation's conclusions showed that the text makes use of a variety of language appropriation

strategies, including glossing, untranslated words, code-switching, lexical innovation, using rhetorical and functional styles, translation equivalency, and contextual redefinition. Thus, the study contributes to the larger conversations in modern literary debate on language appropriation, cultural representation, and decolonisation.

The related studies and the reviews about the theory assert the fact that though ample studies have been conducted on the appropriation of language, there still appears a gap for the researcher to view this the novel *Invitation* from the angle of Ashcroft et.al (1989) idea of postcolonialism regarding appropriation of language which he presented in his book *The Empire Writes Back* (1989).

Analysis

Glossing

In *Invitation* (2011), glossing serves neither as a translational technique nor a method of clarification but rather as a conscious effort to establish Pakistani identity's cultural and linguistic independence. By incorporating the glossed terms into his fiction, the author challenges the colonial perception of English as a dominant, universal language. He aims for English to be enhanced and modified through indigenous expressions. Y. Wang (2023) in his work refers to how glossing in postcolonial literature works beyond translation to resist language homogenisation and affirm cultural identity. Glossing, in its use within the framework of such works, allows for preserving and asserting a "receptor" culture by challenging the colonial dominance of the English language. Here, this aligns with strategies in Fazli's *Invitation*, where glossing is a strategy of not explaining but rather one of resistance and cultural preservation.

"It was Mona Phuppi, my Aunt, her pants rolled up to her calves like mine, exposing thick white ankles. (p.1)."

The author incorporates the word Phuppi (P.1) before mentioning 'my aunt' showcases Pakistani culture for readers to observe and blend in, while also highlighting the use of vocabulary in an evolving variant of English known as Pakistani English.

Such relationships and cultural concepts are often homogenised into colonial narratives, reducing the depth of the non-Western traditions to their Western counterparts. This reductiveness displaces the cultural richness and particularity of non-Western traditions. The author resists this erasure by glossing over familial terms such as Phuppi (p.1) and paternal aunt. Using the native term but setting its English translation alongside it, the author of *Invitation* (2011) challenges readers to understand the cultural weight of the term. While 'aunt' is merely a generic term in English, Phuppi (p.1) is a loaded word that brings the layers of respect, emotional closeness, and hierarchical familial relationships peculiar to South Asian traditions. This act of glossing redefined English within the framework of Pakistani culture, which compels the language to obey the richness of indigenously lived relationships rather

than vice versa. In so doing, the author resists the homogenization of relationships that Western languages and narratives often operate, presenting English not as a colonizing force but as a tool reshaped by the identities it tried to convey. Carlson (2011) states that to "raise the question of 'authenticity' is to challenge not only the narrative but also the 'truth' behind local ways of knowing (p.59)."

Glossing bridges readers who do not know Urdu, allowing them to continue with the text without losing its cultural nuance. Meanwhile, it affirms the specificity of Pakistani culture in resistance to the colonial narrative if English has been posed as the only language that can express complex realities. Such quotidian practice in Pakistani life finds representation, for instance, in frequently glossing food items like Parathas (p.7), or some cultural greetings, such as Adaab (p.7). More than serving understanding, such terms, when glossed, initiate the readers into cultural practices which colonial narratives seldom, if ever, spoke to or minimised. The author thus turns the use of English in *Invitation* (2011) to a non-justiciable right to remember and celebrate Pakistani identity rather than to erase it.

Invitation (2011) gets radical and episodic in Fazli's linguistic resistance. He acts against the cultural and linguistic erasure that colonialism perpetuates by placing the indigenous terms within their respective contexts. He gestures toward richness within the traditions and practices internal to Pakistan. Writing in *Empire of Language: Toward a Critique of (Post) Colonial Expression*, Dubreuil (2023) accounts for locating indigenous linguistic features within a text, providing resistance to the colonial texts that would aim to homogenise cultural differences. Dubreuil (2023) puts it best: "By contextualizing native terms within their cultural frames, authors rise up against the universalist pretensions of colonial languages to magnify the irreducible richness of local traditions and practices" (p. 47). This is precisely a reinforcement of how the author's strategy of borrowing from Pakistani linguistic elements has acquired an essential function in insisting on their cultural specificity against the homogenising force of colonialism. This reinforces the author's strategy of incorporating Pakistani linguistic elements to assert their cultural specificity and resist the flattening effects of colonial homogenisation. Glossing reconstitutes English as a medium carrying the burden of postcolonial identity complications and resists the historical role of the language as an agent of cultural domination. Through glossing, the author of *Invitation* (2011) ensures that indigenised local expressions survive and thrive within the text. Such a strategy of glossing goes through multiple functions of bridging the linguistic gap and reclaiming the narrative space to present the difference and granularity of Pakistani culture and is, hence, very relevant in answering the second research question. In forcing one to read in particular cultural and linguistic terms, Fazli confronts readers with Pakistani identity in resistance to colonial legacies.

Untranslated Words

. "And at night the children slept on charpoy outside while the elders slept in the small single-room house at the centre of the property (p.2)."

The author uses the word Charpoy (p.2) without providing its English meaning, 'a bed used especially in Pakistan and India consisting of a frame strung with tapes or light rope.' He has left the word 'charpoy' unglossed to emphasize on the importance of his culture.

"Ghazanfar, this boy doesn't even say adaab when he greets me. Can you imagine us never saying adaab to Phuppi or Chacha (p.7)."

The word Chacha (p.7), 'refers to brother of mother or father', has left untranslated also by the author.

"Doli removed the miswaak from his mouth. 'He called again.' He threw my room key onto the counter (p.13)."

The word miswaak (p.13), means a teeth-cleaning twig particularly used by Muslims, is employed by the author without providing any translation.

Leaving words untranslated in Shehryar Fazli's *Invitation* (2011) is more than just a stylistic thing; it is a sort of resistance to language colonisation. This approach holds the integrity of indigenous expressions and assert the cultural specificity of the Pakistani identity. In declining the translation of terms like Shalwar-Kameez (p.13), Charpoy (p.2), and Adaab (p.7), emphasizes on the fact that there are things in culture that cannot be captured in English. This decision simultaneously reflects the limitations of the colonial language and puts Urdu as a language that is overweight with emotion and social depths of meaning.

Untranslated words in *Invitation* are powerful cultural anchors that locate the narrative in Pakistani traditions, history, and identity. By not translating terms show resistance against the colonial imposition of linguistic homogenisation and foregrounds the richness of Urdu itself as a language of expression of complex realities. The strategy allows the preservation of the cultural authenticity of the narrative and is a challenge to the colonial erasure of indigenous languages and their traditions. Thus, this approach reclaims language authority for Urdu and other native languages by compelling readers to work through the work's cultural and linguistic specificity and securing their place in global literature.

Syntactic Fusion

Syntactic Fusion is another strategy used for appropriation of language. It plays a key role in the appropriation of the colonizer's language in postcolonial studies. Syntactic fusion refers to the act of merging two language structures. it refers to the strategy that results when the syntax of two languages is combined.

"And at night the children slept on charpoys outside while the elders slept in the small single-room house at the centre of the property (p.2)."

"The man crossed from called out. 'Kya Mehsoos'. I looked up, not knowing the word he used (p.11)."

"He exclaimed at the appearance of our parathas and tea, brought to us in aluminium plates and mug (p.14)

'abay chorain, DC sahib! Mohajirs are the only one who can run this country (Fazli, 2011, p.21)."

Syntactic fusion is also a tool for asserting cultural identity, including in the description of everyday life. For instance, phrases like "parathas and tea" (p. 14) and "namakparras" (p. 43) use Urdu terms in reference to food in an English sentence, underlining the cultural difference of the Pakistani food tradition.

The use of syntactic fusion reflects the dynamic nature of language, which evolves to accommodate the identity of its speakers. By producing a hybridised variety of English supports Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's (1989) contention that it is characteristic of postcolonial writers to transform English into a medium that reflects their unique cultural realities. The infusion of Urdu into English depicts the malleability of language and the ability of language to resist colonial homogenization.

Code Switching

Code Switching becomes symbolic of the multilingual features of Pakistani society, where both English and Urdu coexist as part of daily communication. Code switching adds a degree of realism to the narrative while resisting the colonial ideal of linguistic standardisation.

"Han Kiya? What's so funny? (p.1)."

This is an example of inter-sentential code switching from the selected text. This sentence reflects the conversational manner between Mona Phuppi and her nephew Shahbaz. She inter-sententially switches from the Urdu phrase 'Han Kiya?' to English 'What's so funny?'

With inter-sentential code-switching, the author refuses the stiffness of monolingual expression; instead, he reflects the fluidity and adaptability of an essential part of the postcolonial linguistic practice. This technique upsets colonial representations of English as the superior or universal language, positing it instead to stand and act alongside Urdu as an equal partner in expression.

"You know Abba will never agree (p.2)."

Here in this sentence the author has employed Intra-sentential code switching by using the cultural word "Abbu" meaning father in Urdu language.

Another operative mechanism is intra-sentential code-switching, which occurs within a single sentence, and this, too, has adequate representation in Invitation. A case in

point is the sentence, "You know Abba will never agree" (p. 2), where the Urdu term Abba (father) is smoothly inveigled within an English structure. This practice is a prime example of everyday lived linguistic reality for Pakistanis, who often combine elements in one sentence from several languages.

Code-switching in the novel *Invitation* operates not only to reflect bilingual reality but also to act as resistance. The author, through his easy code-switching between the two target languages of Standard varieties of English and Urdu, subverts the colonial privilege of precedence given to Standard English over native speech. This practice underlines the agency of the postcolonial speaker, who is free to use different varieties at will according to situational needs and desires. This fluidity challenges the colonial expectation that postcolonial subjects should adhere to the linguistic norms of their colonisers. Instead, it presents a version of English enriched by indigenous influences. Code-switching enhances the narrative authenticity of *Invitation* since it captures the nuances of Pakistani speech patterns, with its frequent shifts between English and Urdu. Characteristic of the multilingual fabric of Pakistani society, the conversation often flows across languages effortlessly. It means that the narrative will reflect the true nature of its characters' cultural and linguistic realities and remain unpushed into formlessness that the so-called literary standards propounded by colonialism or the West would have imposed upon it. By challenging monolingual norms through code-switching in *Invitation*, the author challenges the notion that English literature evokes a sense of monolingual policy. This agrees with Kachru's (1983) contention that code-switching was a strategy for asserting emotive emphasis and cultural identity. The characters use different languages, not out of necessity but as a matter of choice, reflecting their agency and linguistic competence. Code-switching resists such a colonial portrayal of English as a language of power and sophistication; it presents it as one of many tools for expression. By continuing to allow Urdu to coexist with English, the author redefined this colonial language into a medium that would reflect realities post-colonial. In *Invitation*, Shehryar Fazli is willing to resist colonial language dominance through his poetry by combining code-switching syntaxes. The author achieves nuance and depth of expression by incorporating English into Urdu, creating a storytelling style that reflects the multilingual realities of Pakistan and challenging ideas of English as a single language. While these devices enhance the narratorial verisimilitude that is taken as a given, they actually put across the case for the cultural and linguistic emancipation of the postcolonial peoples. The author of *Invitation* (2011) constructs different syntactic blends through which language adaptability is demonstrated, even as one such as English has to be converted into a medium sifted through by indigenism. Code-switching has managed to capture the fluidity of bilingual communication, which defies colonialist linguistic norms.

All these techniques combined extol the pluralism and finish of Pakistani identity and give Invitation (2011) premium value as a strong example of language resistance in postcolonial literature. The use of localized expressions in Invitation transcends the threshold of mere linguistic adaptation and functions as resistance against colonial attitudes towards language and culture.

Conclusion

The given analysis elaborates on how Invitation (2011) by Shehryaar Fazli has carved a space for cultural and linguistic autonomy and given linguistic resistance to the colonial framework. Glossing or leaving words untranslated, syntactic fusion, and code-switching, reappropriates language as an apparatus of culture and place the selected narrative along the vectored lines of Pakistani particularities. The appropriation, therefore, provide a glossing that allows the author to retain depth and sincerity from the indigenous expressions while bridging linguistic gaps for readers who do not speak Urdu. In the process, the author ensures that the English, while negotiating the narrative, bends to carry the fullness of Pakistani traditions rather than wear them down. This resists the simplification or erasure of non-Western relationships and practices constituting the colonial method; it allows the cultural distinctiveness of Pakistani life to shine through. The resistance goes further with the untranslated words, affirming a limit to English as an international language. Syntactic fusion and code-switching reveal hybridity in this mix of Urdu structure and vocabulary with English to realize an energetic linguistic style. Such blending upsets colonial expectations of linguistic purity and shows how English can be remade into a medium inflected with local languages and cultures. This suggests that code-switching resurfaces again, showing the fluidity of multilingual communication, which implies that the author attains speech naturalness for the characters. Such narration reflects how postcolonial speakers adapt to using options between English and Urdu within and sometimes across sentences, an attribute which will foreground their agentive roles in shaping linguistic practices. Because this is an excellent indebtedness to English hegemony, it begets one medium from among many that evaporates into the plethora of means of expression.

The selected work eloquently depicts how words can revolutionize how to keep and celebrate cultural diversity. The incorporation of the localized expressions in the work takes back the linguistic authority for Urdu and all South Asian languages to stand on an equal pedestal with the transmission of meaning and feeling in English. It is also a reclamation against colonial marginalization that keeps Indigenous languages at the centre of the text. By using words that are not translated and syntactic fusion, readers are immersed directly into the details of Pakistani culture, resisting the assumption that English is somehow neutral or universal. In that sense, this writing supports an

enormous undertaking of linguistic decolonization in the postcolonial era: making English a medium carrying the inflexions of its speaker's realities. The following analysis delineates how the use of localized expressions establishes cultural identity and challenge the linguistic hegemony of the colonizers. Glossing, words that are not translated, syntactic fusion, and code-switching are different ways in which the homogenizing tendency in the colonial framework is challenged to pay homage to the diversity and richness of Pakistani traditions. Such linguistic innovations readapt English to bear the weight of postcolonial life and, in this respect, reaffirms the cultural legitimacy of Pakistani identity.

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