

The Politics of Code Switching and Code Mixing: A critical Study of Arundhati Roy's Novel *the Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in the Postcolonial Discourse Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to investigate the code-switching and code mixing (CS and CM) strategies deployed by Arundhati Roy (Roy) in the novel, 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' (MOUH) in terms of the linguistic hybridity and cultural syncreticity as an vantage site to contest and mediate the presumptive purity, representation, authenticity and universality of the western discourses and its discursive norms. In addition, it explores how such linguistic and literary practices deconstruct and decolonize the binary opposition like "speech/writing" "self/Other" "Presence/Absence" in the postcolonial disruptive discourse perspective. The core aim of the study is also to investigate the authenticity of the CS and CM strategies employed by the postcolonial writers like Roy consciously or unconsciously to foreground the difference and ambivalence in their counter discourse perspective. The study has also a great significance in terms of the pedagogical, theoretical, and analytical perspective in the postcolonial settings of Anglophone south Asia, western Africa, West Indies as well as in the settler colonies. The research design focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the selected and identified texts specifically from the novel MOUH and generally from other postcolonial discourses in the context of the interpretative epistemology, deconstructivity and postcolonial discourse perspective. The study concludes that such textual practices of code mixing and code switching are also authentic and pragmatic; which simultaneously also reflect an alternative vantage site to address the metonymic gaps in terms of difference, identity, hybridity and representation of the ex-colonized and marginalized nations in the context of overwhelming globalization and neo-colonialism. The study also affirms and recommends that in this age of melting zones, widespread migration and globalization; linguistic variations and cultural diversities must be celebrated as a privileged site of difference and plurality. It also suggests that the creative English writers like Arundhati Roy and their narratives may be encouraged and disseminated in order to demystify the misrepresentation, misperception, misconception, and mistrust between the Anglo-American's Discourse shaper and mover, and the peripheral counter discourses in terms of the mediation and constant engaging contest and conflict across the globe.

INTRODUCTION

To many literary writers and critics of the South Asia literary landscape, Roy is one of the most celebrated Indian novelists and political activists. For instance, her novel *god of small things* has been hailed as a great literary artifact, which has attracted global readership. With the publication of this novel; she has been shot to the limelight and received highest literary awards like *Man Booker Prize*. In addition, she has also published critical essays, and powerful political speeches, journalistic writings and interviews, which have been compiled in the many literary works till now. In her second much awaited novel *MOUH* is published in 2017, after the phenomenal gap of almost two decades. In both her novels, along with these critical and political narratives, she not only dismantles the western linguistic and literary discursive norms, but also simultaneously, re-appropriate and

reconstructs such western linguistic, literary, cultural and institutional tropes to foreground the South Asian peculiar linguistic, cultural, racial, political, and patriarchal norms based on the indigenous normative practices. She also exposes transgender discrimination, extremism, terrorism, neo-colonialism as well as brutal mistreatment of the millions of Dalits, women, brutal policies against people of Kashmir, and other marginalized communities of India in her discourses. She not only subverts the western discursive literary and linguistic norms but also simultaneously, reconstructs these literary, institutional and cultural tropes on the linguistic and literary pattern of indigenous languages like, Hindi and Urdu to install the geo-political and pluralistic ethno-linguistics norms of the South Asian societies. In the similar context, Ahmad refers views of Widdowson that once "language is used, it can't be kept under your control, people do appropriate it." He further refers views of Phan Le Ha that notion of

appropriation not only denotes difference and separateness, but also simultaneously facilitate “to serve global citizens and would not take their sense of belonging as well” (4-5). Likewise, in the similar context, Roy’s deployment of CS and CM strategies also foreground the perennial concerns like hybridity, alterity, self, othering, ambivalence, sexuality, extremism, and global economic politics in the context of the South Asian’s tangled post-colonized experiences. The conceptual framework would be postcolonial discourse theory, interpretative epistemology and deconstructionism for the analysis of the selected texts from her novel (*MOUH*). This study would also be very constructive and effective for the bilingual/multilingual scholars, researchers, theorists and teachers of the Anglophone countries as well as for the Settler Colonies to rein-scribe and re-structure the western linguistic and literary tropes in the context of the post-colonized lived experiences.

Background of the Study

In this study, I would also like to investigate the practice and diffusion of the western discourses in terms of the linguistic, cultural and economic consolidation of the empires in the overseas territories. It also investigates how these western literary discourses are disseminated to reshape and reconstruct the linguistic, cultural and geo-political norms of the subjugated people of the South Asia, Anglophone Africa, west Indies and partly of the settler colonies. In addition, the western discourses are diffused as an organic, authentic, and universal. But on the contrary, the non-western discourses and cultures are projected and highlighted as atavistic, sentimental, sensual and vernacular. In addition, these western discursive practices are spread as sacred in terms of the savage, inhuman and unethical of the colonized subjects. In the similar western textual concern, Javeed refers views of Audre Lorde in the context of South Asia on the colonial as well as indigenous powerful elites that most of the western colonial discourses “conditions us to see human differences in simplistic binary opposition like, dominant/subordinate, white/black, superior/inferior. In a society there must always be some group of people who through systematized oppression to occupy the place of the debased inferior. Within this society, that group is made up of Black and Third World people, working-class people, older people, and women” (830).

Hence, the researcher postulate how with the constant deployment and spread of the western linguistic and literary discourses resulted simultaneously, the emergence of the counter discourses by dismantling and appropriating practices like neologism, glossing, literal translation and CS and CM on the basis of the syntactical, morphological, phonological, graphological, semantic and grammatical patterns of the indigenous languages of the people of the subcontinent. In the similar vein, Ahmad refers views of Eric Gans, who traces the origin of counter discourse practices in terms of Generative Anthropology that the “emergence of sign, language as foundation of the human community must have arisen in a “collective event”... that “all culture is scenic” ... in the sense of evoking the tension between the “desiring periphery and desired center of a collective scene.” In a similar

vein, Ahmad also quotes Afolayan’s views of Mikhail Bakhtin on the counter discourse practices that “The word in language is half someone else’s... it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own” (2). Hence, the aim of the study is to foreground the linguistic, literary, cultural norms embedded in the postcolonial discourses of South Asia, Anglophone Africa, and West Indies and partly of the Settler colonies; which are also authentic, and humanistic in terms of the western hegemonic discourses. Accordingly, the Anglophone creative writers re-appropriate and re-constitute the inherited linguistic, literary, political, institutional and cultural tools in order to address the metonymic gaps as well as to foreground the linguistic richness repertoire of their indigenous languages as well as diverse cultural and pluralistic social norms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher views that it is very pertinent here to distinct the subtle difference between these two terms of for the conception and clarity in terms of the subverting and appropriating strategies inducted by the postcolonial writers in their discourses. Bamiro refers views of Braj Kachru- a noted linguist and theorist of the postcolonial englishes, who described the subtle distinction between CS and CM in the literary texts. According to this distinction:

“Code-switching entails the ability to switch from code A to code B. The alternation of codes is determined by the function, the situation, and the participants. In other words, it refers to categorization of one’s verbal repertoire in terms of functions and roles...code mixing, on the other hand, entails transferring linguistic units from one code into another. Such a transfer (mixing) results in developing a new restricted or not so restricted code of linguistic interaction. One may consider code-switching a process which can result in code-mixed varieties. A multi-lingual or multi-dialectical person is generally able to associate a function and an effect with various types of language or dialect mixes” (23-24). In the similar context, Trask too defined code-switching that:

“Changing back and forth between two language varieties, are especially in a single conversation. Socio-linguists use the term *code* to denote any definable speech variety, including both a particular language and a particular variety of a language...” (36-37)

In the similar contextual vein, Ashcroft et al posits that ...the “dominant language and its discursive forms” are appropriated and reconstituted through the strategies of code switching to express widely differing cultural experiences and to insert these experiences into the inherited dominant modes of representation to diffuse for the global audience. Hence, Roy in such perspective deploys such practices also in her narratives to deconstruct and decolonize the colonial or indigenous political discourses (19). In the similar contextual perspective, Talib cites text from Mulk Raj Anand novel’s ‘*Untouchable*’ which authenticates CS and CM as the counter discursive narratives to contest the universality and the hegemony of the politics of the identity and representation embedded in the western discursive practices. The following instances of the linguistic and literary deviations

can be suggested as a CM and CS strategies to foreground and defamiliarize the pluralized and hybridized experiences in the context of the postcolonial South Asia:

I have been shouting, shouting, shouting, and even asked some people to tell the Hakim Sahib that I have a prayer to make to him (149).

In the above cited text, Anand deploys CS and CM strategies in the narratives in order to carry the burden of his complex colonized experience in the perspective of South Asia. He mixes and switches codes in phrases like *Hakim ji* on the linguistic pattern of his mother tongue as the dominant colonial language appears inadequate to address such as the liminality, alterity and metonymic gaps in the non-western settings. In the similar context Talib, also cites how the language of Australian poetry in the "*Kingsley's novel, The Recollection of Geoffrey Hamlyn* (1859)" inducts indigenous lexical words or phrases in CS or CM as linguistic strategies like "*sheep, blackfellows (Aborigines), kangaroos, kangaroos rat, oppsums (actually the possums) emus, drought and bush-fires*" to foreground the Australian 's identity and irreducible hybridity in the geo-political landscape of Australia (p-61).

In the similar context, Shamsi, also postulates that Ahmad Ali in his novel *Twilight in Delhi* inserted the CS and CM as the counter discursive strategies to install the complex colonized experiences as the dominant colonial language is inadequate to address such metonymic gaps. Such postcolonial narrative practices from his novel are identified as under:

Dhum! Qalandar, God will alone, (11).

In the above text, Ali deviates from the inherited western linguistic and literary norms and deploys CS and CM from Urdu to English codes or vice versa as counter discourse strategies in order to foreground the distinctive Muslim linguistic, literary and cultural norms in terms of the irreducible linguistic hybridity, cultural syncreticity and lived realities of the postcolonial subcontinent.

In the similar context, Prathim-Maya Dora- Laskey cites views of Rushdie that he deploys "code-mixing of English and Hindi/Urdu" to produce multiple meanings and identities. In addition, Dora Laskey views that "his ethos, experience, and, indeed, artistry cannot be adequately expressed without the aid of Indianisms and Indian neologisms" as the colonizer's language is inadequate to address "the ideological, experiential, and artistic universalisms imposed" by colonial existence." (1)

In the similar linguistic strategies, Yee Ho posits that CS or CM as counter discursive practices are used in the oral or written discourses to foreground the "identity" and alterity in the context of irreducible linguistic and cultural plurality in the indigenous setting of Hong Kong (1-2). In the similar textual vein, Bamiro refers similar views of Achebe "I feel that English language... still in full communion with its ancestral home but modified to suit new African experiences (316)." Consequently, it can be construed that such practices deployed by the Anglophone African writers validate close analogy to the Roy's strategies of CS and CM to inscribe alterity, representation, difference and resistance in her narratives.

In the similar vein, Kehinde – a postcolonial literary scholar postulates that how the post-colonial African novelists have deployed their fictions as a counter discourse to facilitate the "transgression of boundaries and abrogation of the hegemonic rigors previously mapped out in precursor western literary texts about Africa and Africans." (93). In the similar textual and literary practices, Ahmad et al postulates that the practices of "Code-Switching and Code-Mixing are very effective and productive strategies for teaching" as well as for foregrounding the identity, hybridity and difference in the non-western settings. (49)

After investigating the comprehensive literature review in terms of CS and CM counter discourse strategies, the researcher concludes that there is deep analogy between Roy's strategies and the other postcolonial writers of South Asia, Anglophone Africa, and West Indies and partly even of the settler colonies' creative English writers in terms of counter discursive practices. Henceforth, the researcher is going to refer on the rationale for choosing the research design and theoretical frame work for the analysis of the identified and selected key texts in terms of CS and CM from Roy's novel *MOUH*.

METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study is based on the critical analysis of the text of the novel *MOUH* in the postcolonial counter discourse, deconstructive and interpretative perspective. After through study of the novel, the researcher identified and selected certain key texts from her novel in terms of CS and CM strategies deployed by Roy in order to foreground the irreducible postcolonial concerns of language, culture, alterity, identity, hybridity, resistance, difference and representation in the academic landscape in the contemporary age of post modernism, digitalization and globalization. In addition, the researcher chose the postcolonial discursive, deconstructive and interpretative perspective as most of the other critical theoretical frameworks and methodologies are based on Euro-centric, phonocentric and Logo-centric. In addition, such western literary theories and criticisms till late 1960's focus on the absolute truth, fixed meaning, fixed identity and objective reality.

Accordingly, such western approaches are contested by the post-modernist and post-structuralists' critics' who postulate that there is no absolute truth, reality and fixed meaning. There are many truths and infinite process of meaning based on the linguistic, social, ideological and cultural experiences of the individuals in terms of the temporality and spatiality of the given society. In the similar vein, Charles Bressler refers views of the postmodern and the poststructuralist critics that there exists no such thing as "objective reality"; there is no "ultimate truth because truth is perspectival, depending on the community and social group in which we live. Since many truths exist, we must learn to accept each other's ideas concerning truth, and we must learn to live side by side in a pluralistic society, learning from each other while celebrating our differences" (100). Consequently, the researcher views that the postcolonial counter discourse is only an alternative framework to address the metonymic gaps in terms of

the irreducible linguistic and cultural syncreticity in this age of trans-borders and trans-culture. Henceforth, in the next pages, the selected and identified texts would be analyzed and interpreted in the postcolonial theoretical, deconstructive and interpretative epistemology framework.

ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED TEXTUAL STRATEGIES OF CS AND CM FROM THE NOVEL *MOUH* IN THE THEORETICAL FRAME OF POSTCOLONIAL COUNTER DISCOURSE

In the similar context, Green and Le Bihan (1996) posit that "Canonical English literature" may have marginalized the colonial subject, but nonetheless, "Canonical English literature" spread and read in English speaking world across the globe. Such imposition of the western discursive practices entailed the reconstitution of inherited canonical practices by creating a "counter discourse" – a form of writing back which challenges and interrogates the powerful influence of an empire by denying it but simultaneously engaging, incorporating and reconstructing its linguistic, literary, cultural and institutional tools in terms of their indigenous settings (203). In the similar context, Alam refers view of Achebe about imposition and practices of dominant English language, "which history has forced down our throats" resulted "to generate the counter discourses to resist the oppressive presence." (1)

By taking into account of these explications and discussions, the researcher investigates that how Roy inducts CS and CM techniques in her novel *MOUH* to inscribe alterity, marginality, and a radical sense of otherness in the indigenous settings of South Asia. In this linguistic process of CS and CM, she frequently switches and blends from the indigenous languages' codes of Urdu, Hindi or Malayalam into the dominant English language codes in her novel and other political narratives to validate and authenticate the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic norms of the South Asian complex colonized experiences. She also transplants these CS and CM devices to show the sensibility and mood of her indigenous languages and cultural norms. She also employs CS and CM strategies to demonstrate the extremely intense, complex and inextricable nature of the animosity between the Hindus and Muslims in the context of the gruesome partition of the subcontinent and ongoing bloody conflicts and perils of the nuclear war in the subcontinent. Such innovative linguistic practices in her novel (*MOUH*) also imply the inadequacy of the inherited dominant language to address the lived social and cultural gaps in terms of the complex realities of the postcolonial India and South Asia.

Her linguistic and textual strategies of CS and CM embedded in her novel *MOUH* are identified, selected and collected by the researcher in terms of the postcolonial counter discourse. However, the following texts out of the identified and collected examples are investigated, analyzed and interpreted here as under:

All he said was the first phrase: La ilaha. There is no God. He could not go a further.... until then he said, reciting the Kalima would only be a mockery of prayer. (*MOUH* 10)

In the above cited text, Roy inserted CS and CM strategy like "*La ilaha*" and "*Kalima*" as a counter discourse strategy to foreground the obscurantist version of religion and of the mystic concept of religion. Sarmad- a noted mystic of the subcontinent was executed on the charge of blasphemy during Mughal emperor Aurazeb Alamghir (1608-1707-the last effective orthodox Mughal emperor of India). Roy's insertion of such phrases of Urdu language highlight the richness repertoire of the indigenous language in order to carry her post colonized complex experiences. It can also be interpreted that the mysticism focuses on the universal love of humanity, spirituality and love to God, whereas the dogmatic version focuses on extremism, ritualism and obscurantism. She inserts CS and CM strategies in her discourses also in order to reflect the historical, social, ideological and cultural plurality of the people of the subcontinent as both Muslims and Hindus till today visit to his Mausoleum for seeking love and blessing of this saint. In the similar perspective, Roy foregrounds the post-partition jingoistic nationalism and bloody communal conflicts in the context of the stereotypical political realities of the subcontinent:

On Independence Day they sold toy machine guns and tiny national flags mounted on stands that said Mera Bharat Mahan, My India is Great!

Down below on the pavement, on the edge of Jantar Mntar; the old observatory!..... He electrified Hindu chauvinists with their controversial old war cry, Vande Mataram! Salute the Mother... (MOUH 100-103)

In the foregoing text, Roy deploys CS and CM strategies to foreground the postcolonial perennial concerns like nation, politics, language, identity, resistance and difference in order to install the richness repertoire of her indigenous languages as well as the ethnic, cultural and political polarization of the postcolonial subcontinent. It also demonstrates that how the people of post partition of India are proud of their greatness of India, despite abject poverty, economic inequality, cultural disparity and social degradation.

Simultaneously, she also highlights that after the partition of the subcontinent, the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious communities became hostile and antagonistic to one another. She also exposes the extremist and jingoistic forces of Hinduism, which are committing despicable atrocities and massacre of the minorities and Muslims in Kashmir by invoking such old war cry *Vande Mataram! Salute the Mother*. In the foregoing text, she transfers the lexico-semantic, orthographic and grammatical codes of Urdu language into the dominant English language to incorporate ethnic tension, political internal strife and bloody conflicts in the local settings of India. In such linguistic process, she blends the lexical and syntactic structures of English, Urdu and Hindi to show the cultural distinctiveness and separateness from the center of privileged western norms. In addition, she inducts the ethnic-rhythmic, mood and imagery into the dominant Language in terms of the tumultuous political and chaotic situation of South Asia. Ironically, it can also be concluded that before the partition of the subcontinent, there was unity in diversity among the diverse communities like Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the subcontinent.

In the similar context Roy exposes the Muslim's extremism and sectarianism in the turbulent and chaotic history of

the subcontinent. In the following texts, she foregrounds, how on the minor and negligible religious differences, people kill each other in the postcolonial polarized and tumultuous subcontinent:

He said, 'Tanzeehi Farhati Jamia ul Noor Mewat'.
I said, Die, Kafir!' and I pushed him over (MOUH 169)

In the above cited text, Roy deploys CS and CM strategies as a counter discourse to expose the extremist orthodoxy and obscurantist ideology which caused an indescribable bloodshed and massacre in India and Pakistan. In the foregoing text, Roy exposes the misuse of the religion by the unholy nexus of the foreign and indigenous dominant forces for their vested political and economic interests at the cost of subjugated people in the postcolonial India and Pakistan. In the above text, one believer of the same religion, killed the other believer in the name of the sect *Tanzeehi Farhati*, which is absolutely against the essence and tenet of Islam and universal tenets of humanism. Consequently, in the light of the above logical and cogent discussion tendered in the background, literature review, methodology and data analysis of the study, the following lucid and objective results are inferred from this study.

CONCLUSION

After the comprehensive investigation and interpretation of the key text of the novel *MOUH*, the study authenticates that the counter discourse practices installed by Roy in her narratives demystify and deconstruct the western linguistic and literary discursive practices. Such counter discourses in terms of CS and CM strategies installed in her novel also unmask the indigenous hegemonic patriarchal, political, cultural and social inhuman and savage practices. Likewise, the study vindicates and concludes that the abrogating and integrating strategies of CS and CM deployed in her novel are realistic and authentic, as these transmit the "message events" and "lived history" in the non-western settings of South Asia. In a nutshell, the study authenticates that Roy linguistic and textual strategies of CS and CM in her novel address the metonymic gaps as well as foreground the ambivalence, resistance, and difference in terms of the western discursive practices. The study concludes that such linguistic and literary practices deployed in the novel *MOUH* are also pragmatic, valid and trustworthy to inscribe difference and resistance in the context of the neo-colonialism and globalization rather than unconsciously accepting and experiencing the world only through the lens of the western stereotypical discursive norms. It also concludes that the creative and innovative English literatures of the postcolonial South Asian embedded with the counter discursive practices are as much authentic, innovative and creative as are the western discourses.

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