

Postcolonial Discourse and Language Politics: A Linguistic Analysis of English Literary Texts

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ABSTRACT

The corpus of the postcolonial English literature that has been created at South Asia is a linguistically and ideologically complex space, living with the remnants of the colonial subjection still bound to the modern struggles over identity and power conditioning and representational measures. Brought in traditionally as the lingua franca of colonial rule and cultural control, English continues to play a confusing role in the postcolonial environment, as both a medium of interaction with the outside world and a remnant of colonial oppression. The current investigation is a review and critique of postcolonial discourse and language politics that deconstructs the chosen English literary texts by these writers: Chinua Achebe, Hanif Kureishi and Mohsin Hamid. The article uses postcolonial theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, and sociolinguistic approach to examine how the following writers steal English and transform it through the practices defined as code switching, creating lexicons, syntactic deviation, and narrative transformations. It is hypothesized that South Asian and Pakistani writers take an action to transform the English language to indicate resistance, hybridity and localized identities, therefore, challenging the concept of linguistic imperialism and undermining the dominance of standardized English.

KEYWORDS: postcolonial discourse, language politics, Pakistani English, South Asian literature, and hybridity and critical discourse analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of language plays a central role in the studies of post colonialism as the vehicle of communication, but even as a mechanism of control. During the colonial experience, English did not just act like a reveling in the indigenous lexicon, it transformed avenues to job, education and civic rightness. English was an instrument of colonialism, endowed by the institutional structures of colonialism, the school, the civil service, the courtroom, with the status of canonical forms of intelligence and power, and as such, the indigenous languages were shunned by the designs of colonialism and relegated to the realms of vernacular, traditional knowledge, and reduced to disqualification as forms of public reason.

The conceptual framework adopted in this research in terms of tracing how English as a gatekeeping resource has been institutionalized in the colonial dominance and the continuity and perpetuation of this inequity in the post-colonial Pakistan and South Asia is summarized in figure 1. The figure outlines the intersection point between macro-level structures (education, administration and law) and micro-level literary impacts (Voice,

translation demands, register evaluation and policing of good English) which the analysis then tracks throughout the readings of the countries chosen.

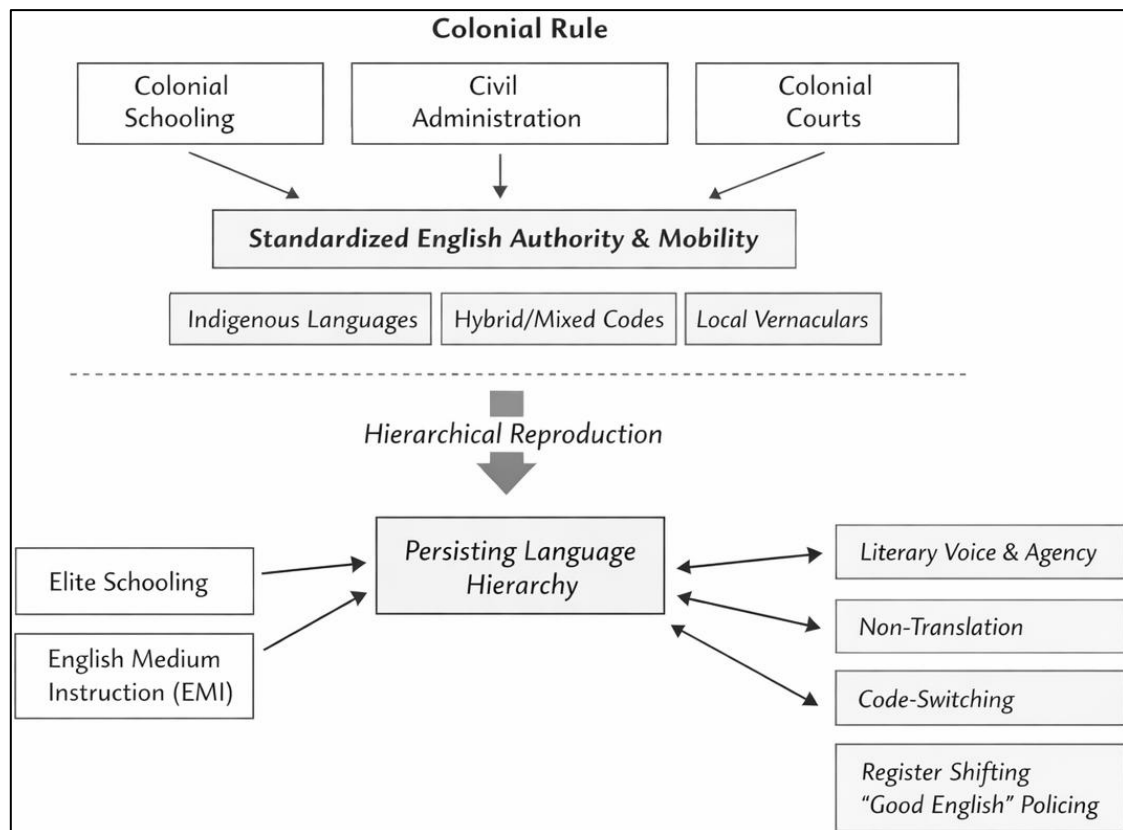


Figure 1. Colonial-to-postcolonial language hierarchy model.

The legacies of the linguistic hierarchies in South Asia and especially in Pakistan are reflected by the ambivalence surrounding English language. English is official, privileged in the higher educational institutions, and is still at the core of higher bureaucracy and legal-administrative register. In a group of regional languages, Urdu is a symbol and a lingua franca of the nation. Accordingly, linguistic landscape is not marked by the constant division of labor, rather it is that of a stratified market where English is used as cultural capitals, though other languages or mixed repertoires are often placed at a lower rank, determined by locality, perceived respectability or a political suspect.

One of the most informative places one can go to derive their interrogative of this unequal terrain is found in the postcolonial English literary texts. As opposed to policy documents, textbooks and official varieties of the speech, the literary texts may perform the voice conflict staging. They performance-articulate who is authorized to talk, who is forced into translation and who language acts receive rewards and punishments. They also create visible the ways in which good English can be at once as a resource and as an imperative: not only a requirement to speak in specific manners in order to be heard but also as a means of sifting bodies into credible and uncertain publics.

The politics of literary English cannot be condensed, moreover, to the issue of the choice of language. It also involves what happens when the writers bend English to the local worlds. The postcolonial text is capable of inhabiting the colonial language, but to displace its authority via the hybridity and ambivalence (Bhabha, 1994). They dispute the way the colonial talk made the colonized subjects of knowledge and control (Said, 1978). Practically, this displacement most frequently takes the form of writing back, which is a policy of

appropriation and abrogation whereby English gets to hold onto itself, emptied of the monopoly of understanding of cultural universality (Ashcroft et al., 2002).

Finding a linguistic approach explains the manner in which renegotiation is done at the form stage. The opposition is seldom limited to the open political expression, it is often played in the micro-level of decisions. The lack of translation of local terms necessitates the English language to assimilate other epistemologies instead of assimilating them in the form of the imperial gloss.

When rhythm and syntax echo oral storytelling, the text refuses the equation of “standard English” with literary legitimacy. When the narrative address disrupts the standard directional logic of explanation, the implied reader is then instead of being a passive sovereign perceiver moved to become an engaged participant and, as a result, the burden of interpretative labor redistributed. This rebranding of agency on the level of the reader is an inherent change to the epistemic calculation of engagement with the text.

These stakes are intensified in the regional context amid the growing sociopolitical salience of English particularly given the far-reaching development of English-medium instruction (EMI). Even though EMI is being constantly marketed as a way to other nations become competitive on a global scale, it also can replicate systemic inequality in case the access to high-quality instruction is still unequally distributed between the realms of private and state institutions of higher learning. The recent theoretical up-to-date studies of EMI in South Asian contexts have explicitly related terms distribution of English to its continued inequities in terms of equity and social justice by asserting that language-in-education policymaking must be evaluated in the light of not only inspiring rhetoric (but maybe) by its effects on distributing opportunities and reiterating class stratification (Giri et al., 2024). Language politics within the postcolonial milieu is also characterized by the state conception of the notion of the modern. The language policy and planning research believes that postcolonial governance often ascribes a model of the modern nation-state that is unable to accommodate multilingual realities and as such, that multilingualism is a problem that must be managed instead of a message that can be cultivated (Makoni et al., 2023). The arguments of English versus Urdu and issues of marginalization of regional languages in Pakistan are not only issues of cultural difference, but also are issues of matters between epistemological legitimacy, epistemological definition and who counts as an educated citizen, and which publics the state accepts as legitimate.

The current research project explores the concept of language politics that is part of the postcolonial discourse through the other half of the analytical approach, linguistic analysis of English literary works based on South Asian and Pakistani settings, using a three-part authorial sample to clarify two related aspects of the problem. Chinua Achebe is ushered into the position of methodological reference resource since he shows in a very clear way how English can be taken over in order to express a native world vision through controlled lexical importation together with proverb-based narration. Achebe may be African, but the linguistic techniques that he applies have hugely impacted the postcolonial writing worldwide as a way of transferring them to an indigenizing of English without yielding to metropolitan expectations. In different ways, Hanif Kureishi and Mohsin Hodad Kureishi develop this project into South Asian threads of diaspora and globalization in which English is interweaved with racialized belonging and class mobility and geopolitical relations of suspicion.

Finally, the analysis is informed by recent Global English’s scholarship, which treats English as a plural language circulating through diverse functions and varieties, making questions of ownership and legitimacy unavoidably ideological (Baker et al., 2025; Jenkins & Morán Panero, 2025). The perspective of Pakistani English in this frame is not a

deviation of a single external norm, but rather of an ecology of English's, which formed by history, education, as well as contact with local languages. This perspective can be further supported by general evidence of studies in the area of World English's where systematic grammatical patterning in Pakistani English is documented, and it becomes obvious that local English is no random error but a socially significant variation (Schmidt and Funke, 2025). In the current research, these implications are applied to the literary space in the question of how textual form transforms into the location onto which linguistic hierarchy is replicated, negotiated or contested and in how English is made to speak out of the own epistemologies (Ngugiku wa Thiong'o, 1986).

Research Questions

This study is guided by four interlinked research questions:

1. How is language implicated in the construction of postcolonial discourse in South Asian and Pakistani English literary texts, particularly through narratorial stance, representation of speech, and the allocation of linguistic authority?
2. What are the uses of linguistic strategies, i.e. code switching and lexical appropriation, syntactic deviance and pragmatic reaccentuation used by post-colonial writers to challenge colonialism and linguistic imperialism?
3. In what ways are code-switching, lexical innovation, syntactic deviation, and narrative voice useful in the construction of postcolonial identity in the context of multilingualism, stratification on class and diaspora?
4. What do South Asian and Pakistani authors do to re-scaffold English so as to reflect local cultural and ideological truths and to at the same time connect with an international audience, and work within the normative pressures of so-called standard English?

Together, these questions formalize the language politics in a conceptual framework of an empirical object, where the demands, or refusal of translation to be institutionalized, to position the character either descriptively in terms of accent and register, to allocate the moral value in terms of an evaluative language, and what is interpreted in terms of local and global scopes.

Research Objectives

The current study has four objectives consistent with the questions provided above:

- To investigate the significance of language politics in postcolonial English writing of South Indian-based early Pakistan through the framework of placing textual choices in the context of colonial education, nation-building, and modern globalization.
- To define the major linguistic practices by which authors adapt and modify English with special focus on code-switching, translation of proverbs, vocabulary borrowings, syntactic modelling, and stance-marking.
- To examine chosen literary pieces through a combined approach based on postcolonial theory and discourse-oriented linguistic analysis and, therefore, illustrate how the micro-level language choices are fulfilled by macro-level ideological struggle.
- To show how English works, in postcolonial literary practice, as a matter of resistance, hybridity and identity construction, and reveal the trouble of the localized English's with the ideology of the standard language.

The study in practical terms also seeks to generate descriptive reality as well. It attempts to establish a comparable vocabulary around the literary language-politics terms of untranslated cultural lexemes, adessive reversal, and strategic nonstandard and to carry out the correlation of these terms with the related social meanings they index, instead of assuming them to be decorative style.

Significance of the Study

In this work, the postcolonial literary and applied linguistic interdisciplinary is given a contribution because literary language is not a distinguished medium, but a tool that may be analyzed. The postcolonial critique explains the creation of subjects through discourse and assertion of privilege to some voices over others (Said, 1978), but there is a tendency to use the language and power claims as an abstraction. This study, by tracing out the articulation of power in the micro-level textual choices; translations left unfinished, patterned code-switching, stance indicators, address change, etc., identifies the ideological apparatuses as being constituted by shape and outlines how such formal means position readers.

To conduct the projects in Pakistani and South Asian English studies, the project locates literature as a resource that is hardly exploited as a site of localized English's and their sociocultural implications. It has been shown that Pakistani English features systematic grammatical patterning (Schmidt and Funke, 2025) but through literary artefacts, the patterning has stylization of identity work. To take a case in point, an Urdu insertion can indicate an attitude of closeness or isolation, an echoically Quranic can reorganize power, and switches between refined and informal syntax can reveal respectability division into classes. This way, the research adds to the linguistic description, a culturally contextualizing exposition of the practical use of these forms

Lastly, the paper has practical educational and policy implications. The presence of legitimacy is often misconstrued with a closeness to a singular so-called standard in the EMI contexts, although the Global English's scholarship claims that English can be described as plural, which is an ideologically disputed phenomenon (Baker et al., 2025). The analysis contributes to regional efforts by supporting the idea of assessing the policy of English using the prism of equity as opposed to an impressive aspiration only (Giri et al., 2024). It further reiterates decolonial arguments that linguistic decolonization is not a backdoor process to pure languages but also a re-evaluation of how people and languages know things (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

Language has always been one of the main lines of discussion within the post-colonial scholarship as the medium by which the colonial power is embodied, naturalized, and replicated. Colonial governance did not operate only through force or finance; it also operated through communicative regimes that determined whose speech counted as public authority and which knowledges could circulate as legitimate. Once the English was essentialized to the courts, civil administration, higher education, and the profession, it served as a sort of gate-keeping device that placed populations in terms of access to institutional legitimacy and those sent to the language margins. In this respect, language served as a scheme of governance not just a reflection of the colonial power but also the production of the ideas of competence, intelligence, civility and modernity and, thus, a controlling factor of their dispensation.

The strong theoretical background of capturing the representational aspect of such a process is the examination of Orientalism by Edward Said. According to Said (1978), colonial domination cannot be discussed outside the discursive regime that creates an intellectual object of knowledge, whose form is exotic, irrational, backward, or dangerous, and thus vulnerable to treatment. What makes this perspective of concern to language politics is not any particular stereotype itself, but the mechanism behind that stereotype,

which is that discourse produces governable subjects by reproducing repetitive descriptions, interpretative frames, and moral judgements that have become naturalized. In this context, linguistic representation is always involved in the creation and propagation of power; it is an act that places people into the status of a superior power exchange. Colonial texts were not just part of a description process, but were the very element of genocide of colonial establishments, as they gave a justiciaries paradigm of intervention, categorization and control.

This suggestion made by Said has serious repercussions to the examination of literary language as it explains how power operates not just at the scale of an open political language but also narratives, choice of words and framework. The way the colonial discourse marginalized the colonized subjects to the sphere of objects of description, the postcolonial writers of that time can rebel against the imperial hegemony by making them the agents of speech. It can be done by means of narratorial focalization of language, in other words, establishing whose voice will interpret events, by direct and indirect speech, which as a result defines who will speak, and how, and by distributing the work of translation, those producing the meanings of a culture also assign the role of stating them to specific actors, to specific audiences. Literary texts can reproduce or reproduce Orientalist logics by utilizing explanatory practices that assume a Western interpretive center, and they can also disrupt Orientalist logics by forcing the reader to engage in a partial form of non-transparency or the act of cultural specificity. In this analytical paradigm, the discourse of postcolonial literature stands out as a station wherein the linguistic representation an identity of the speaker, the expounder and the measured is a politics of knowledge.

Whereas Orientalism explains the way the discourse creates the colonial knowledge, Ngugi wa Thiong'o presents one of the most ardent explanations of language as a means of cultural transmission and where the psycho-social struggle is performed. Ngugi wa Thiong'o University professor Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) defines colonial education as more than bilingual education, an ideological project that reforms affect and aspiration and remembrance. The language of the colonizer is posed to be the language of reason, progress, and modern subjecthood whereas the languages of the natives are perceived to be obstacles to progress. Cultural alienation is a result of this: as the child is informed that intellectual success and social mobility is exempted of reliance on local histories, moral worlds, without speech which is detached, the mother tongue will become a mark of inadequacy. Ngugi insinuates only that, but well, it is truly about epistemology. Language brings with it a worldview and once worldview has been institutionalized as the form of public legitimacy, it imposes other worldviews into silence or marginality. In the more radical version, which is by far his most radical one, decolonization is mandated by restoring native languages as the complete means of intellectual and artistic life.

Simultaneously, Ngugi wa Thiong'o is placed in a dilemma, which has led decades of postcolonial literary practice: how to pursue decolonization at a world where English is now globally consequential? It is not something that many writers and communities can just avoid whereby English is in material infrastructures publishing economies, academic evaluation regimes the digital visibility as well as in professional mobility that influence survival and opportunity. Among the issues that the question of language choice must always address, then, are the issue regarding audience, access, and inequity in linguistic capital allocation among the postcolonial societies. In South Asia and Pakistan, English is usually linked to elitist education and high-end jobs whereas national and regional language can have a high sense of affective investment but less institutional power in some areas. Postcolonial writing in English should therefore be seen not as a simple acceptance of the

colonial legacy, but rather an extremely intricate negotiating of a language that is both resource and an issue of conquest.

It is at this juncture where other postcolonial theorists, instead of stressing on rejection, focus on appropriation. It is significant that Homi Bhabha theorizes hybridity since it offers a way of vocabulary with which to conceptualize how the colonial authority is reproduced and destabilized in the same act of language. Bhabha (1994) argues that colonial discourse demands mimicry: the colonized subject must become “almost the same” as the colonizer educated, articulate, civilized yet never fully equal. This is not quite structure, which creates ambivalence. Colonized speakers English is not easily assimilated in what has been constructed by the colonizer, due to its involvement of the local histories, phonologies, cultural references and pragmatic conventions. However, such resistance does not simply exist as a deficit, rather it constitutes a locus of disruption. The third space that is created by hybridity allows the intent to recent colonizers, reconfigure them, and disrupt them. The colonial power, which is based on a perceived idea of purity, either linguistic or cultural, has been challenged as a result of hybridity.

Hybridity is even more effective in the linguistic study of the English literary works when it is conceptualized as a collocation of textual operations, as opposed to an unconcreted, naming term. It is realized in code switching and code mixing whereby, depending on its positionality and framing, English and indigenous in turn are used in situations with intimacy, authority, exclusion or resistance. It also comes out in lexical appropriation, where culturally specific terms, such as kinship models, religious terms, foods, honorifics and so on are borrowed without being translated into English and these infect the English language with new semantic burden. Also, the hybridity could be found in syntactic rhythm and discourse patterning since the sentences in a narrative can reflect local oral narratives or pragmatics. It is also manifested in the management of readerly access: a text can avoid glosses to avoid causing a lack of interpretive labor, but it redirects interpretive labor to sit it on her own epistemic basis to make the reader do the work of reading the text. All these practices are part of a politics of legitimacy making it clear that English is not an independent, universal tool but one that has to seek negotiation with post-colonial reality. Writing back paradigm provides a programmatic supplementary explanation of the strategy of the postcolonial literature by describing the process of English appropriation and reconstructions as an instrument of contestation. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002) argue that postcolonial writers intervene into imperial discourse through two processes that are interdependent, that of appropriation and the abrogation. Appropriation refers to the use of the colonial language in telling the local histories, perceptions of situations, and expressing the narratives in alternative ways. Abrogation refers to denial of a single metropolitan convention and the accompanying assumption that a standard English is the only regulation that can be called to serious literature. These strategies, in combination, weaken the claims of a linguistic hierarchy showing that English cannot be owned centrally and that the status of prestige is historically specific and goes against ethnocentric characteristics.

Writing back convergence in South Asian and Pakistan context is linked to a specific sociolinguistic ecosystem where English language is strictly correlated to the social stratification and institutional benefits as well as post colonies state formation. English is often a high stakes identifier, where being fluent can be viewed as a proxy measure of the elite education, professional power and even the cosmopolitan travel. This type of stratification is also supported by the scholarly work that is particularly interested in the Pakistani context and explicitly theorizes the language choice and evaluative norms as power embedded practices in the institutional life (Bhatti, Saleem, and Chattha, 2024). At

the same time, the national and regional languages still have strong affective and symbolic capital and multilingual repertoire is seen not as exceptional but as the norm. As such there is born a sophisticated linguistic market place where English is sought after and despised at the same time, empowering and disempowering. Literature is a special place of expression and criticism of this marketplace since it could enact the social meaning of accent, register, code switching, and translation. Institutional access may be indexed by a character using the sharpened English and angry may be indexed in a sudden switch of the language to the Urdu or Punjabi and may indicate a desire of authenticity and rejection of elite surveillance. Alongside, recent criticism of Pakistan shows how these hierarchies receive gendered powers; e.g., feminist analyses of female disempowerment and violence in Pakistani Anglophone literature (Bhatti, 2024).

In recent years, the postcolonial discussion of linguistic questions has come to overlap with the tendencies in the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics, in particular, the decolonial turn and the Global English's research. The idea of decolonial scholarship states that the process of coloniality is duplicated not only when there is the hierarchical distribution of language but also when it comes to the epistemologies, according to which the language is studied and taught. Hudley, Mallinson, and Bucholtz (2024) observe that linguistics has also often generated knowledge by establishing extractive relationships with the marginalized, as speakers, but not as makers of the knowledge. Within this paradigm, decolonization requires both methodological and ethical transformations: the marginalization of epistemologies, the recognition of positionality, an anti-normalizing move towards Eurocentric categories, and the responsibility of language research to society instead of institutions only. This argument matters for literary linguistics because it encourages analysts to ask not only *what* linguistic features appear in texts, but also *whose* linguistic practices are recognized as legitimate and *how* analytical frameworks might reproduce standard-language ideology.

The research on Global English's provides a field-wide reconstitution of the English language object as such. Baker, Ishikawa, and Jenkins (2025) combine the research results to prove that it would be better to think of English as a plural entity: it is circulated in various practices that are predetermined by local historical paths, contact ecology, and communicative necessity. Ideologically, this implication is irrevocable in that native-speaker norms constitute a political category that governs centers and excludes others to the periphery. In the context of post-colonial literary criticism, it requires an assessment of localized English's as alternative to imperfect versions of a centrifugal model, but as forms of linguistic organization having their own systematicity, their own socio-semantic modalities. When writers shape English to the local realities, they are not in any way merely borrowing some foreign code; they are in fact spreading English itself towards plurality worldwide.

Pluralization of English in the South Asian context cuts across education policy and modern-day proliferation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI). They state that EMI is often legitimized by discourses of globalization and employability, but such an imbalanced distribution of educational resources makes this modal contribute to inequality between the private and the public. In its language-politics perspective, EMI in many cases turns English proficiency into a moralized marker of merit, intelligence, and modernity, and as such, hiding structural inequities in the form of individual failures. The consequence of this to works of literature is that the social meanings that are appurtenant to the category good English reverberate well beyond the educational setting: they shape the possibilities of employment, the discourses of marriageability, bureaucratic experience and everyday ideas of respectability. As a result, literature can be interpreted as a discursive archive, which

narrates the EMI sociocultural implications, showing the way English serves as an object of aspiration, humiliation, marginalization, and symbolic violence in the everyday life of characters.

The information about the structural constraints that dictate the post-colonial language practices is further explained in scholarship of language policy and planning. According to Makoni, Severo, and Abdelhay (2023), post-colonial language policy is limited by the pre-existing conceptualizations of the modern state, in particular, the tendency to view languages as self-contained, measurable and potentially standardized as well as hierarchically attributed. It is not just the reification that is descriptive but legitimizing governance as a result of categorical structures which in most cases blur the conditions of lived multilingualism. Colonial-era language hierarchies are frequently left as heritages to post-colonial states and make specific languages the carrier of administrative efficiency and the fact of multilingual pluralism a controllable issue. This state-based linguistic ideology is expressed within the context of literary studies, in the manner in which the protagonists are made to engage in self-translation within bureaucratic environments, how a particular language is made to signify in the positions of authority and so forth, and how linguistic practice in turn assumes the functions of determining membership.

The most recent empirical investigation that is based in Pakistan indicates that seemingly insignificant orthographic differences may produce disproportional impact in digitally mediated language ecosystems. On the above, Bhatti and Arif (2025) were able to show that marginal perturbations (i.e. the insertion of one diacritic character or a cross-script character) introduce a cascading failure in natural language processing system running on written Punjabi, hence confirming that script and orthographic non-standards serves as an institutional location of linguistic legitimacy (Bhatti and Arif, 2025).

Another empirical aspect to these theoretical and policy-driven debates is formed through descriptive research on local versions of English, e.g. Pakistani English. The existence of local varieties of English has been identified by one of the opposing sides of the argument about post-colonial linguistic continuity and authenticity to imply that the absence of a narrated linguistic competence. Modern research on World English's refutes such deficit discourses offering instances of accountable grammatical and pragmatic mode of being which concur with stable regional standards and therefore emphasize on the functional robustness of these varieties. As an example, Schmidt and Funke (2025) examine the alternation rules of mandative constructions in Pakistani English, proving that grammatical options of the language matter are patterned as opposed to accidental. Literarily linguistically speaking, this kind of evidence is consequential because it sanctions the reading of some nonstandard features as being socially significant instead of being mistaken and erroneous. When they use localized forms of the English language, the writers might be following traditional forms of use based on educational systems, institutional history and social identities.

In the case of literary linguistics, this descriptive volume is important in two aspects. At the outset, it supports the fact that the linguistic differences of a writer founded on the standards of his/her metropolis can be explained as a stylistic and philosophical staging, but not as the backward linguistic traits of the particular writer. Second, it provides a methodology of studying strategic shifting between English's: authors have the possibilities to alternate between standardized and localized variants to dramatize class differences, institutional power, or conflicts relating to change. The changes are not neutral but some sort of social signaling that is inherent to the structures of the languages. The fact that a character knows standardized English in one professional environment, which is at the same time localized in a proximate or situation is not just limited to pragmatic code-

switching as a device of realism but rather the text is an illustration of how linguistic legitimacy can be contextualized and forms an illustrative example of an asymmetric linguistic marketplace as platforms by the speakers.

The synthesis of these strands explains the modern academic environment and stipulates the knowledge gap upon which a linguistically knowledgeable investigation of the postcolonial English literature works is based. The postcolonial theory provides such powerful findings that include representation, hybridity, mimicry, and writing back which are essential in capturing the ideological interest of language (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994; Ashcroft et al., 2002). Decolonial linguistics enhances the methodological urgency to eradicate linguistic categories, evaluative principles as well as research practices into politically contingent phenomena (Hudley et al., 2024). Global English's is an area of scholarship that has de-centered the falsehood that English is some kind of centrally located, monolithically possession, pointing to its plural and more contingently based, locally many-sided character (Baker et al., 2025). The way the institutionalization of English acquires power as a justice mechanism in the modern South Asia is shown through empirical inquiries in the educational and policy domain (Giri et al., 2024; Makoni et al., 2023). The synthesis thus holds that the politics of language in postcolonial texts have to be studied not just in the terms of thematic content and identity construction, but also the way that texts represent politics in the form of linguistics.

The only issue that still remains is how to not subsume these levels of analysis but rather to bridge the gaps between them. Literary criticism sometimes dismisses the idea of language as a metaphor of identity, without clarifying how the aspects of linguistics can perform ideological work. Although it can be accurate in terms of descriptive accounts, applied linguistics is prone to downplay the colonial histories and the policy regimes that make such features socially consequential. A strict postcolonial linguistic approach has insisted on both these positions: it has insisted on the fact that literary English persists as a part of the historical web of domination and it has also insisted on the way micro-level decisions, including those that concern translation and non-translation, code-switching, lexical selection, syntactic rhythm, narrative address, evaluative position, etc. embody these histories in the texture of the text. In doing so, it allows postcolonial discourse to be examined not only as what texts say about power, but as what texts do with language to reconfigure power.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and orientation

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in literary linguistics. The premise is that postcolonial language politics are enacted through patterned linguistic choices. Literary linguistics supplies a vocabulary for describing those patterns while keeping them tied to narrative function (Simpson, 2014). With text-based evidence in mind, the current study aims to explain how text negotiators use English in the postcolonial setting to negotiate the power, identity, and cultural memory.

The pattern taken is comparative but circumscribed. The three main texts, Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Hanif Kureishi *Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and Mohsin Hamid *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) are not the representative sample and are treated as the strategically selected cases. Achebe creates a canonical representation of the indigenizing of English using the framework of proverbs and the use of lexemes and expressions of cultural specificity; Kureishi foreshadows the aspect of diasporic hybridity, racialization, and the performance of class; Hamid creates a narrative address that is carefully controlled and

selects. The comparative analysis is one such methodological check, a convergence trend will strengthen the argumentative statement, and any cases of divergence will have to be amended.

Epistemological Stance and Reflexivity:

The sense making process is mediated by the disciplined inference as opposed to the impressionistic response. Recurrence, co-textual relations and distributional characteristics across events of discourse generate the meanings and are vindicated on explicit linguistic grounds. The article however recognizes that there is a risk of perpetuation of standard-language ideology by means of the practice of analysis. To avoid this danger, the decolonial reflexive stance is taken: the analysis does not assume a decolonial monolingualism, a reader of the text, as the interpretive center; the multilingual insertions are not seen as periphery or decoration. The existence of decolonial guidance in linguistics foreshadows positionality, transparency, and accountability, particularly when it comes to using minoritized language practices (Hudley et al., 2024).

Corpus, sampling, and data extraction

The data will consist of purposely chosen textual excerpts of the 3 target novels. The research questions support the use of purposive sampling because they aim at moments when language acquires narrative values, i.e., those situations when translation is required or even refused, when accent and register are measured, when language performance locates characters, or the voice of narration is rearranged to regain interpretive authority. The process of sampling was made in two phases. To begin with, every novel was thoroughly read with the aim of identifying so-called language-salient areas: the experience of institutional encounters, moments of cultural elucidation or denial and the moment when the speech is formally assessed or translation made decisive. Second, the areas were also selected based on the criteria of three features: (1) linguistic evidence (borrowings, mixing languages, expressions of proverb-like structure, and explicit evaluative commentary); (2) narrative consequentiality (linguistic choices influence interpersonal relationships, credibility and access through social evaluation); and (3), interpretive tractability (sufficient co-text to analyze pragmatic force, stance, and voice).

The passages were copied into an analytic corpus and could be checked using the information about their provenance (e.g. new title, chapter or section, and page range when present). Extraction focused on extractable units, usually of 150-400 words, to allow close and systematic analysis whilst retaining enough co-context that could be used to interpret pragmatic devices like irony, mitigation or address.

Units of analysis

The discourse event as occasioned in the text is the main unit of study: a commentary given by a narrator, a reported-speech episode, a dialogic phenomenon, or even a descriptive sequence doing cultural labor. In each of the events, there is analysis of three levels of language: (a) lexis and phraseology (of borrowings, calques, semantic shifts, and proverb like constructions); (b) clause level grammar (of agentivity, transitivity, modality, nominalization, passivation); and (c) discourse organization (of speech representation, cohesion, focalization, adjectivity and evaluation). This stratified technique helps cushion the tendency to reduce the analysis to either reductive in nature as in tracking themes, or feature-were-counting as in counting features which would fail to cover meaning.

Framework and integration Analysis

Three mutually supportive theoretical lenses are combined, namely, postcolonial theory, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and sociolinguistics. Triangulation of these frameworks will provide the research with the postcolonial emphasis on power relations and cultural hegemony, the CDA emphasis on language as a means of ideology and inequality, and sociolinguistic emphasis on linguistic variation and social identity.

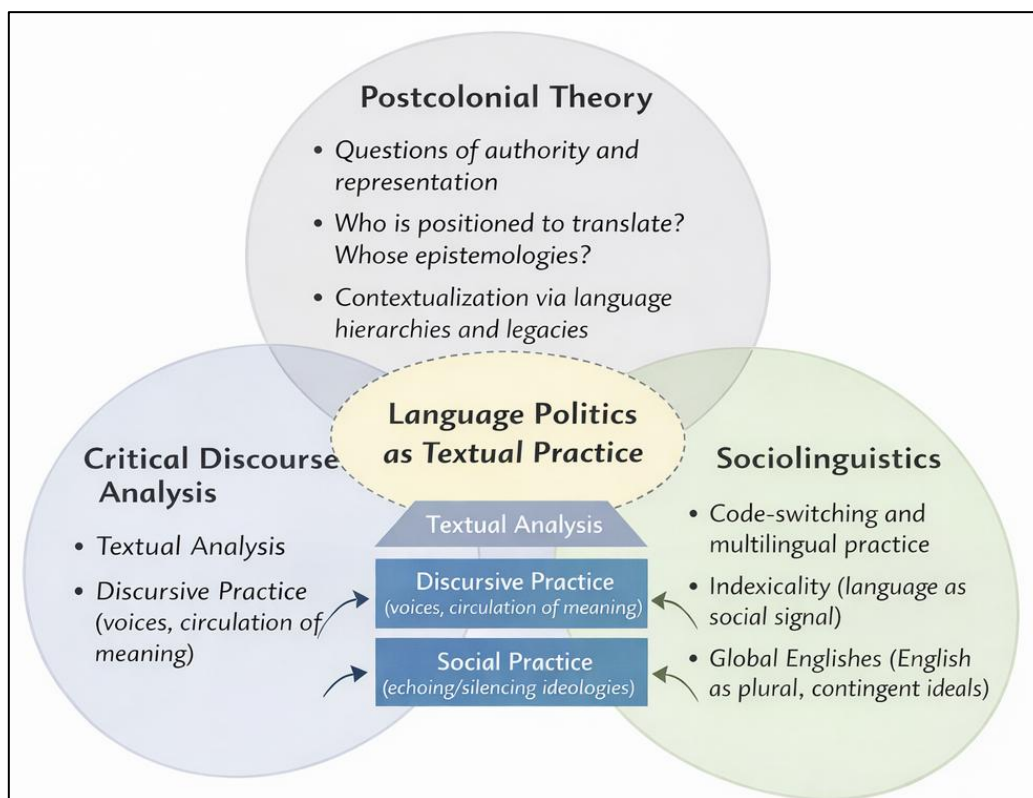


Figure 2. Integrated analytical framework: Postcolonial theory, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and sociolinguistics.

The purpose of the use of postcolonial theory is more of a contextual direction than being a decoder per se. It produces a series of questions that makes the analysis remain receptive to the legacies of colonialism and ongoing linguistic order; to whom is it necessary to translate, and to whom does the labor of exegesis devolve; whose voices have become constructive and whose have been mobilized by what linguistic processes. Context is regarded as part of meaning-making, and through texts dramatizing hierarchies by determining who can talk, who needs to translate, and whose knowledge is acceptable. To contextualize this historical work and prevent an excessive case of overgeneralization, it also involves using critiques of postcolonial language policy that define how the modern state can naturalize language hierarchies through administrative and educational regimes (Makoni et al., 2023).

It is the critical discourse analysis that provides the key set of tools that permit connecting micro-level choices regarding the use of language and power relations. The paper follows a text-sensitive CDA methodology that would involve a close linguistic description, as well as an interpretive explanation. The model used by Fairclough is used to bypass through the textual analysis, the texts themselves, and the discursive practice (the performance, circulation and assessment of voices) and the social practice (the hierarchy at large which legitimize some varieties and speakers) (Fairclough, 2010). CDA-informed direction is such based on the approaches of nomination and predication (the naming and the characterization of actors), and intensification or mitigation (the calibration of certainty

and obligation) (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). The syntheses of applied linguistics consulted by the study, to guarantee the sensitivity to genre and the literary reworking of discourse, lay emphasis on the circumstances, intertextuality, and the flow of discourse between domains (Flowerdew and Richardson, 2018).

The sociolinguistic theory argues in favor of the explanation of multilingual practice and language variation as indexical resources. This is because code-switching, lexical insertion and register shifting will then be regarded as socially situated moves and may be signaling solidarity, boundary-making, irony, accommodation or resistance depending on their distribution and framing. The consideration of localized English as an acceptable variation other than a deviation of an external norm is based on a Global English's approach (Jenkins and Moran Panero, 2025). This position, methodologically, is essential since it averts the analysis of viewing non-metropolitan forms as error to be redone, rather variation is seen as significant, its social outcomes are examined in the scope of character positioning and narrator voice.

Triangulation is done to bring integration across frameworks. For each discourse event, the analysis begins with linguistic description, moves to discourse interpretation, and then returns to the postcolonial question of what forms of authority are affirmed or unsettled. Where a reading depends on cultural knowledge, the inference is treated as provisional and checked against co-text, and later in cross-text comparison.

Coding scheme and analytic procedure

Analysis proceeded through iterative cycles of close reading, coding, and synthesis.

Phase 1: descriptive annotation. Each sampled passage was annotated for overt language markers: indigenous lexical items, untranslated cultural references, proverb-like constructions, honorifics and politeness markers, shifts in formality, and explicit metalinguistic commentary (e.g., evaluations of correctness, refinement, accent, or foreignness). Notes also recorded where the text explains a term, refuses explanation, or frames explanation itself as a power relation. Notes also tracked whether speech is rendered directly, indirectly, or through free indirect style.

Phase 2: structured coding. A coding log recorded features under four families: (1) lexicon-cultural (borrowings, calques, semantic shifts, culture-specific metaphors); (2) interactional/pragmatic (address terms, mitigation, directives, deixis such as we/they or here/there, stance markers); (3) clause-level (transitivity and agency, modality, nominalization, passivation); and (4) discourse/narrative (speech representation direct, indirect, free indirect focalization, evaluative stance, and adjectivity). Each entry included a brief note on immediate co-text (what comes before and after) and an initial hypothesis about social meaning, flagged as provisional.

Phase 3: patterning within texts. Codes were clustered into recurring configurations and interpreted in relation to narrative function. For example, repeated non-translation coupled with proverb-inflected phrasing may work to center an epistemology without submitting it to an external explanatory regime. Repeated shifts between polished and colloquial register may dramatize classed mobility or racialized surveillance. Sustained ambiguity in address, especially where a narrator speaks "to" an implied interlocutor, may reposition the implied reader from confident observer to implicated participant. Interpretations were tested against counter-passages to avoid over-reading.

Phase 4: cross-text comparison and revision. Configurations were compared across the three novels to clarify what is text-specific and what suggests broader postcolonial strategies for making English answerable to local worlds. Claims were revised when counterexamples appeared, and interpretations were stated conditionally where required by context. The final analytic account for each text integrates micro-level evidence with

contextual explanation, avoiding both a purely thematic summary and a decontextualized catalogue of linguistic features.

Trustworthiness, ethics, and limitations

Credibility is supported through an explicit audit trail (selection criteria, code definitions, analytic memos), thick description (claims tied to concrete textual evidence), and negative case analysis (actively seeking passages that complicate an emerging claim). Reliability is thus enhanced by the presence of a consistent application of the same coding categories to all sets of text and the recording of border cases, rather than marginalizing them as they occur unintentionally. Confirmability, which is related to it, is supported by disciplinarily segregated descriptive and interpretative components, in addition to clearly defined inferential routes.

Although the presence of novels makes the consent of the participants unnecessary, the researcher still has a substantive ethical responsibility in avoiding the exoticization of the multilingual action, and avoid recreating the deficit-oriented paradigms of local versions of English. This paper, therefore, has assumed an attitude of academic responsibility according to which the forms of linguistics are treated as significant resources that occupy path historical patterns of inequality, and which is also actively opposing the reflexive desire to normalize variational phenomena that have cultural functions. The major weakness of the investigation lies in it being narrow in scope: the corpus is purposefully small and the findings thereupon are therefore presented as being analytically-based propositions but not as generalizations. In addition, literary language is a representation as opposed to an original account of what is happening. As a result, this analytical approach views linguistic options as narrative performances of social meaning and is thus concerned about the constructions, evaluation and politicization of language, and not with how language is used as factual evidence.

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Lexical Appropriation and Cultural Assertion: Achebe

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* demonstrates how English can be reshaped to express indigenous epistemologies. The integration of Igbo proverbs, untranslated lexical items, and oral narrative structures forces English to accommodate African cultural realities (Achebe, 1958). Linguistically, the described strategic practice is against the homogenization of language and challenging colonial ideas of linguistic supremacy.

The conceptualization by Achebe has left a long-lasting impact on the South Asian authors who also combine Urdu, Hindi as well as the local language records into English prose to define the cultural authenticity.

In order to be able to investigate the politics of language in the postcolonial English literary works, a set of particular linguistic characteristics were determined and explored through a carefully designed corpus of texts; these characteristics help to reveal how the English is borrowed, mixed, and ideologically repackaged in the postcolonial.

Table 1: Linguistic Features of Postcolonial Discourse

Linguistic Feature	Description	Postcolonial Function
Lexical appropriation	Use of indigenous words and expressions within English text	Asserts cultural identity; resists linguistic erasure
Code-switching / code-mixing	Alternation between English and local languages	Represents hybrid identity; challenges monolingual norms

Linguistic Feature	Description	Postcolonial Function
Syntactic deviation	Departure from standard English sentence structures	Validates non-Western linguistic patterns
Narrative voice	Use of first-person or marginalized perspectives	Reclaims agency of the colonized subject
Evaluative language	Reversal of colonial value judgments	Deconstructs colonial ideology
Discursive positioning	Reassignment of speaker–listener power relations	Challenges colonial authority

7.2 Code-Switching and Hybrid Identity: Kureishi

As Kureishi uses code-switching and culturally defined discourse to reflect fragmented identities of British South Asians in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the theme of a fragmented identity resonated in the structures of self-concept and self-conduit in British South Asians (Kureishi, 1990). Code-switching is a hybridity linguistic marker, which means that it is a resistant tool to assimilations and establishes cultural affiliations in a plural form. This hybridity of language undermines solidarities of the monolithic notion of English and anticipates the politics of belonging to the prototypes of the diasporic spaces.

Things Fall Apart as Penned by Achebe provides a groundbreaking standard of lexical decisions in postcolonial English. Aboriginal Igbo words, vocabularies on kinship, and proverbs are directly implanted in the English narration which does not contain any explanatory glosses and this is forcing English into embracing African epistemological constructs (Achebe, 1958).

Table 2: Lexical and Stylistic Features in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Feature	Textual Evidence (Illustrative)	Linguistic Effect	Ideological Implication
Indigenous lexicon	Igbo terms (e.g., cultural titles, rituals)	Expands English vocabulary	Rejects cultural assimilation
Proverbs	Literal translations of Igbo proverbs	Oral discourse within English	Centers indigenous wisdom
Minimal translation	Lack of glossing for local terms	Reader accommodation required	Reverses colonial readership hierarchy
Oral narrative structure	Repetition and rhythm	Non-Western storytelling	Challenges Eurocentric literary norms

Such tactical intervention by Achebe has brought a discernible impact on the South Asian authors who are also using Urdu and Hindi and other regional words in the English writings; both strengthening cultural specificity and at the same time defying standardization.

7.3 Narrative Voice and Discursive Power: Mohsin Hamid

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Hamid (2007) preannounces a Pakistani speaker, who is confident speaking English to a Western interlocutor. The monologue narrative strategies

undermine the traditional hierarchical dynamics of power because the Pakistani subject is presented as a formidable discursive power.

Repetition, politeness and ambiguity narrator has employed reflects the communicative practices of the South Asian and serves to challenge the Western narrative conventions.

In the Kureishi (1990) work *The Buddha of Suburbia*, code-switching and culturally coded discourse represent the identification with a diasporic identity among the South Asians. The concept of linguistic hybridity implies the delicate status of the British Asian subjects in both racial and cultural justice.

Table 3: Code-Switching and Hybridity in Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Linguistic Strategy	Function in Text	Identity Representation
Code-switching	Alternation between South Asian cultural references and British English	Dual cultural affiliation
Colloquial English	Informal, spoken discourse	Youth and countercultural identity
Cultural references	Food, religion, family norms	Assertion of ethnic identity
Mixed registers	Shifts between formal and informal language	Class and cultural negotiation

Sociolinguistic ally, code-switching is a strategic implement to identity compared to a marker of linguistic incompetence hence the need to resist assimilation.

7.4 Syntactic Deviation and Oral Storytelling Traditions

Syntactic deviation is often used by the writers of postcolonial works to reflect the oral traditions and non-Western narrative conventions. The length of sentences, rhythmic repetition, and non-linear narration disrupt grammar rules of the standard version of the English language and validate alternative norms in language, thus serves as forms of ideological critique of the linguistic authority in a critical discourse analysis approach.

Staged in the form of a dramatic monologue, Hamid, in his book *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, has an interlocutor in the West, thus turning the usual existing system of power of the speaker and listener. In this story, even the Pakistani narrator takes the lead in the discussion, manipulatively leading the interpretation, but maintaining a certain degree of uncertainty (Hamid, 2007).

Table 4: Discursive and Pragmatic Features in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Feature	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Function
First-person monologue	Continuous narrator control	Reclaims narrative authority
Politeness strategies	Honorifics, indirectness	Reflects South Asian pragmatics
Ambiguity	Unclear intentions and outcomes	Resists Western narrative closure
Repetition	Recurring phrases and themes	Emphasizes ideological critique

Feature	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Function
Addressivity	Direct engagement with listener	Reverses colonial gaze

These are the elements that allow Hamid to criticize the power imbalance in the world and place a Pakistani subject into the realm of English and make them persuasive, thoughtful, and authoritative.

7.5 Syntactic Deviation and Oral Traditions

Syntactic deviation is a syntactic and ideological tool, used in South Asian, Pakistani postcolonial writings. Long use of clauses, and rhythmic repetition replicate the oral storytelling traditions and do not conform to the typical form of the English grammar.

Table 5: Syntactic and Discourse-Level Deviations in Postcolonial English Texts

Syntactic Feature	Description	Postcolonial Significance
Extended sentence structures	Long, layered sentences	Reflect oral narration
Repetition	Lexical and thematic repetition	Emphasizes cultural rhythm
Non-linear narration	Temporal shifts	Rejects Western linearity
Parataxis	Loose clause linkage	Oral discourse influence

In the perspectives of Critical Discourse analysis, the deviation that is seen undermines the powers that prescriptive norms of English assume and thus they legitimize other forms of linguist structures.

8. English as Resistance and Hybridity

There should be no meaning behind the English appropriation of postcolonial writers as cultural subservience; instead, it is a sign of the tactical maneuvering through the global discourse. The South Asian and Pakistani writers have created localized forms of the English language that encode native realities and challenge linguistic imperialism and hegemony of natives. This thus happens to agree with the notion of hybridity by Homi Bhabha whereby meaning is created in a middle ground of linguistic space that not only destabilizes the colonial power.

8.1 Standard-Language Ideology/linguistic Legitimacy

One of the uncovered similarities in the three writings is criticism of standard-language ideologies that assume that a certain externally authorized variety of the English language is a sort of neutral standard of what is right, intellectual, and believable. In the postcolonial setting, this ideology goes beyond the interests of linguistics, as it is actually a moral and institutional order that arbitrarily distributes legitimacy. A good English speaker is therefore often assumed to be a competent, sophisticated, and modernized speaker; the accented or mixed speech, on the other hand, is socially considered to be a danger, and needs to be corrected, translated, or controlled. The Scholarship of Global English's argues that these hierarchies are not the result of any innate communicative insensitivity, but are the result of social construction of assessment based on historical imperialism and modern inequality. The novels that have been examined shed light on the processes through which such assessments are acted out. In the indigenized English of Achebe, the fact that literary

quality is determined by metropolitan ideals is denied; Kureishi shows how the style of speech can be a proxy of racialized belonging and upward social mobility; Hamid dramatizes how credibility and doubt can be realized based on linguistic framing despite the speaker being a practiced orally and rhetorically skilled speaker. All these works together emphasize the fact that English is not a social phenomenon, it is a communicative tool, which should be judicial in the sense that it judges speakers.

8.2 Translation, Opacity, and the Redistribution of Interpretive Labor

Translation is one of the most politically charged operations in postcolonial writing because it raises a fundamental question: who is expected to understand whom? Colonial discourse historically positioned the colonized as the object of explanation, and the colonizer (or Western reader) as the default interpretive center. Postcolonial literary texts can reproduce this hierarchy when they routinely gloss indigenous terms to maintain reader comfort, but they can also contest it by refusing full transparency.

The glossing exercised by Achebe in a reserved manner depicts the intentional use of obscurity, which is not only to purposefully obscure but also to re-calibrate interpretive labor. The reader therefore must adopt alien terminology and platitudes of reason as opposed to translating cultural signification purely on an imperial explanatory basis.

In the diasporic settings, Kureishi discourses, where culture is identified by particularity, also carry out the practices of boundary work, which means that the belonging is not achieved by wholesale translation to the state of Englishness. Another way Hamid uses this political position is in his strategically manipulated ambiguity: the speech of the narrator to a Western interlocutor jeopardizes the understanding of the speaker, thus highlighting the fact that no understanding is guaranteed and that the power often depends on the agency that decides what is understandable.

8.3 Institutional English and the Classed Production of Voice

Even though these are mainly literary pieces, the linguistic politics used cannot be discussed without institutional situations, namely the educational system and bureaucracy, assigning social decisiveness to the English. English is not only used as a language of instruction in many postcolonial contexts but it acts as an apparatus of credentialing (or rather regulatory) in assigning access to jobs, power, and social legitimacy. As a result, there is a classed sense of fluency; the knowledge of the English language may be discussed as the sign of schooling, family structure, and closeness to elite networks despite the possible ineffectiveness of such conclusions.

Therefore, this analysis can be interpreted as the mapping of the classed production of voice. By switching between the refined and rough registers, authors do not simply create a believable dialogue, but staged the deployment of the English language as a means of belonging and non-belonging, control and powerlessness. This organization has an entwist in the quotidian performance in Kureishi in which the diasporic actors organize racialized surveillance and aspirational tactics. In Hamid, the hyper-controlled English used by the narrator acts as a means of rhetoric and makes the process of stereotyping the Pakistani way of speaking and credibility hard, but the necessity of such control itself indicates the unfair environment postcolonial speakers are presented in.

8.4 Convergent Strategies across Texts: A Cross-Case Synthesis

Throughout Achebe, Kureishi and Hamid works, one can identify a set of converged strategies, although it is set and historical period different. On the one hand, all the texts pluralize English by giving it new epistemologies, either by using indigenous language, or

by use of hybrid discursive routines or by means of redistribution of address structures that change the position of speaking. Second, radical redefinition of authority: Achebe prefigures Igbo literacy with proverb logic, Kureishi subjugates English structures of monolith and by reversing the colonial gaze, Hamid puts the Western interlocutor into a structurally inferior interpretive reflective posture. Third, every text mobilizes micro-level linguistic forms, non-translation, code-switching, syntactic rhythm, pragmatic moves, as the place of ideology who is not just spoken about, but also deployed.

This summary gives more weight to the main argument that language politics in postcolonial literature do not entirely work on thematic level. The materialization of language is found in the feel of the sentences, the handling of understanding, the allocation of quoted sentences and the implied order between the orator and hearer. The novels presented here exhibit the resolution to make English responsive to local histories and the modern power relations.

8.5 Implications to English-Medium Instruction and Decolonial Language Policy

The implications of the literary evidence discussed in the proposed research are not limited to the subject of literature analysis, and there is also the application to the domains of English-media instruction (EMI) and mass societal discussions of the issue of language policy in South Asia. The concept of EMI is often contextualized as having an unbiased avenue to opportunity, but this has in many instances constructed English speaking as a merit and modernity barometer. To this paradigm, structural inequalities can be obscured (uneven distribution of schooling resources, teacher training gaps, and access to linguistic capital based on classes) and blamed on the failure of individuals.

Conversely, the authors examined in this case provide the other logic, which is that English should not be treated as a unique standard that should be estimated. Instead, it could be seen as plural, locally formed and morally responsible to its voices that it is supposed to represent. This view, in terms of policy, has been advocated to view English education in the prism of equity and social justice instead of aspiration alone. Pedagogically, it will mean that accents are not to be erased or arbore to an approximation of the metropolitan, but and communicative power, interpretive agency, and to represent local worlds without self-entering.

Acknowledgement

Dr Ayesha Junaid is a researcher at Prince Sattam university Al-Kharj. She is thankful to the university for providing her the research opportunity. She also appreciates the constructive feedback of the reviewers.

9. CONCLUSION

The current investigation has attempted a study of the postcolonial discourse and politics of language through a linguistic study of South Asian and Pakistani English literary works. Based on the works of Chinua Achebe, Hanif Kureishi, and Mohsin Hamad, the study proves that English is borrowed and modified to express the idea of resistance, hybridity, and postcolonial identity.

The results show that the English in the postcolonial literature is not a colonial remnant, or rather it is an active and a contested resource. The linguistic strategies, such as code-switching, lexical innovation, syntactic deviation, narrative experimentation, allow authors to protest prevailing discourses and to take culturally-oriented voices in the realm of world literature.

Future studies might build on such results by corpus-based studies or comparative studies of the various versions of English in South Asia.

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