

LANGUAGE DEVIANCE IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S NOVEL "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"

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Abstract: Roy uses altogether an extraordinary variety of English and that's why she is successful to communicate to the world the culture that she represents. The richness of her novel lies in the use of Indian English and the varieties of techniques she uses. Roy uses English, which very often deviates from the standard conventions—use of words and sentences from regional language, the use of capital letters, use of italics, verbless sentences, misspellings, single word sentences, change of parts of speech, clustering of adjectives, nouns which are deviation from norm in the English language. 'With extraordinary linguistic inventiveness, Roy funnels the history of South India through the eyes of seven year old twins', Gillian Beer, chairwoman of the Booker judges said. 'The story she tells is fundamental as well as local; it is about love and death, about lies and laws. Her narrative crackles with riddles and yet tells its tale quite clearly.' Roy has been bold enough of risks, using a number of different strategies in language—psychological, local, typographical, structural, and cultural to construct a powerful story. By examining these techniques the reader can see how Roy uses language to define her characters. Roy's use of language throughout the novel helps the reader better understand her various complex characters, most importantly Estahappen and Rahel, the seven year old twins who are most affected by the events that take place within their family and community. The author's play of language is not merely a tool for communication in the novel, rather it is an aspect of each character's personality. Language play gives the reader a clear indication of who the character and the purpose.

Roy is quite intentional in her manipulation of words throughout the text. By breaking up later into syllables she calls attention to the weight of the meaning. Roy uses fragmentation in Lay. Ter. to call attention to the importance of the word—the reader can see through the word change and the subsequent description of the change the significance the break has to Estha. In breaking up the word later Esthappen gives the word more weight and more importance. Such use of language is particularly interesting given Roy's use of a language that is not natively her own. Booker prize winner Arundhati Roy's debut novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997), was met with critical acclaim. The first Indian woman to receive the prestigious Booker Prize for Literature. This paper envisages how Arundhati Roy uses language locally, psychologically, structurally and culturally in her debut novel "The God of Small Things". For the purposes of this study "language" should be understood to mean not only the spoken or written word but also the way cultural groups understand and communicate to one another.

1. INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy is one of the gifted writers like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Githa Hariharan. She has created history in the genre of fiction with her first novel "The God of Small Things"(1997). Scholars have interpreted her book for its linguistic inventiveness and style.

2. OBJECTIVE

The study focuses on the characters' manipulation of the English language coupled with Malayalam (the twins' native language) to bring meaning into the bewildered context of their lives. In addition, this study explores language as a powerful medium of expression to suit her characterization, narration and thematic effect.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study presents the Leech and Short's framework. The study discusses Kachru's Bilingual features (transfer) which are typical Indian English linguistic features commonly used by the writer.

4. DATA AND ANALYSIS

The presentation of Data lists style features in Arundhati Roy's text using the framework of Leech and Short followed by Kachru's. The presentation of Data pertains to style features in Arundhati Roy's text based on the above frameworks.

1. Lexical: (e.g. simple words, compound words, formal or colloquial vocabulary);
2. Grammatical: (e. g. verbless sentences, parenthetical constructions, question sentences);
3. Figures of speech : (e.g. anaphora, parallelism, metaphor, simile); Cohesion and Context: (e.g. Lexical cohesion, coordinating conjunctions, ellipsis, character representation, narrative technique) etc.

4.1. Lexical categories

The following are the examples in the text of "The God of Small Things" .

a. Complex vocabulary

Roy is fond of using many complex words as part of her innovative style. The high use of complex words is one of the stylistic devices used by her. Some of the examples are: vase-hand (GST 48), outdoorsy (GST 13), edelweiss (GST 27), cuff-link (GST 51), peanut – crunching darkness (GST 98).

A significant style of the use of these new words in Roy's text is that when such a feature does occur, such as peanut-crunching darkness, it attracts the reader's attention and can be used as a foregrounding device.

b. Specific vocabulary

Roy's frequent use of Malayalam words such as words for food items, kinship terms etc. reveal the post-colonial writer's use of language. For example, ammoomas (GST 138), appoopans (GST 138), 'Kushumbi' (GST 185), Entomologist (GST 258), modalali (GST 273). These are introduced into the text to evoke a regional flavour.

c. Colloquial vocabulary

Through the medium of spoken word, Roy has succeeded to a remarkable degree in conveying not only the socio-cultural ambience of her characters but also indigenising the colonial English. A few examples from the text are: ghoulish (GST 44), shit-wiper (GST 51), gawkish (GST 140), 'Oower' (GST 184), Love-in-Tokyos (GST 301), cuff-links (GST 51).

d. Rare vocabulary

Roy uses specific words to mark character types. Through this use characters' nature is reflected in the narrative. Some examples are: Lymantriidae (GST 49), Mercurochrome (GST 61), feudal lords (GST 66), goons (GST 67), plasticine (GST 79), Karna Shabadam (GST 234), Duryodhana Vadham (GST 234). A character like Pappachi being an Entomologist uses specific words like Lymantriidae (GST 49). The novelist incorporates certain native words and phrases in the speech of the characters. The stylistic significance of this device is, perhaps, for providing local flavour.

4.2. Grammatical categories

a. Ungrammatical sentences

Roy employs grammatical deviance as one of the powerful foregrounding elements for functional purposes. For example, We can't not go to school (GST 250).

b. Topicalisation

This involves the shifting of some elements of the sentence to the sentence initial position. For example, In the Hotel Sea Queen car park, the sky blue Plymouth gossiped with other, smaller cars. Hslip Hslip Hsnooh-Snah. A big lady at a small ladies' party. Tailfins aflutter (GST 113). A normal grammatical order of the sentence would be: The sky blue Plymouth gossiped with other smaller cars in the Hotel Sea Queen car park. In the above line the prepositional phrase In the Hotel Sea Queen car park has been brought to the sentence front position for focus the place.

c. Graphology

There are some creative writers who experiment the writing system for poetic effect.

They are like painters to describe an object graphically. In the classical literary tradition, an eminent poet, E.E. Cummings has evoked the graphic aspect of the picture in his poem "Sunset". Being an architect, Roy seems to have a great interest in the graphic representation of the language.

Regarding the repetitive use Roy says in an interview, "For me, the way words and paragraphs fall on the page matters as well – the graphic design of the language"

(1999: 32). That was why the words and thoughts of Estha and Rahel were so playful on the page.... Words were broken apart, and then sometimes fused together.

Later became Lay.Ter. An Owl became A Nowl. Sour metal smell became Sourmetal smell (1997: 7).

There are other ways, too, in which the children play with words, for instance reading them backwards. Rahel and Estha read Stop, be Indian buy Indian and many more words and sentences backwards. Arundhati Roy uses many such rhetorical and stylistic devices, breaks the words and enjoys their disintegration, as in the following.

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ing (GST 189).

4.3. Figures of Speech**4.3.1. Grammatical and Lexical schemes****4.3.1.1. Phonological schemes****a. Assonance and Alliteration**

The extensive use of assonance and alliteration as in the following examples gives poetic effect to the text : wind and water with short spells of sharp, glittering sunshine, slanting silver ropes slammed into loose earth (GST 1), The sad singing started and they sang the same sad verse (GST 6).

4.4. COHESION AND CONTEXT (Logical or other links between sentences)**a. The Definite Article 'the'**

Roy makes extensive use of the definite article 'the' to give minute details. For example,

The pots and pans.

The inflatable goose.

The Qantas koala with loosened button eyes.

The ballpoint pens with London's streets in them (GST 311).

b. Deictics

The Deictic terms 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those', etc. have also been used by Roy in her text and they help her achieve cohesion in the text. For example, perhaps this was the real revolution (GST 39).

c. Ellipsis

The use of Ellipsis in the text contributes largely to cohesion within the text. For example, Estha Esthappen -was the older by eighteen minutes (GST 2).

5. CONCLUSION

To appreciate Roy's experimentation with the English Language, we should consider what she has to state about the present status of English in India. Roy states "There are more people in India that speak English than there are in England. And the only common language that we have throughout India is English. And it's odd that English is a language that, for somebody like me, is a choice that is made for me before I'm old enough to choose. It is the only language that you can speak if you want to get a good job or you want to go to a University. All the big newspapers are in English. And then every one of us will speak at least two or three -I speak three - languages. And when we communicate

- let's say I'm with a group of friends - our conversation is completely anarchic because it's in any language that you choose" (1997: 7). Roy, sometimes, like a linguist, she translates the root word of Malayalam into English, like modalali as landlord, mol as girl, and mon as boy. By her use of stress on the particular word depicts the emotional intensity as well as the pitch-level in the regional variety of language. The word divorce is being pronounced with a long vowel as Die-divorced (GST 130). She also brings in the local language in the pronunciation of the words. Rahel as a non-native speaker of English uses the consonant [g] in place of [k] by pronouncing Thang god in place of Thank God (GST 320). She makes a good comparison between the regional and the English. For example, 'See, you're smiling!' Rahel said, 'That means it was you'. Smiling means, "It was you".

'That's only in English!' Velutha said. 'In Malayalam my teacher always said, "Smiling means it wasn't me"' (GST 177-178).

With her native like control in English, Roy takes the same liberty with the language as she would use in any regional mother tongue. She is not overly conscious in her use of language as in the case of writers in a colonial setting. The latter English were something sacred, not like their home language and hence to be handled with due respect.

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