



Exploring the Tapestry of Sociolinguistic Diversity in Athar Tahir's 'Second Coming'

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Abstract

This article explores sociolinguistic subtleties of Athar Tahir's novel "Second Coming" and explains how language variations and cultural nuances are interlinked to portray the identities of characters and their exposure. Kachru's Three-Concentric Model is employed in the study for investigation of linguistic choices that express cultural values and social dynamics in Thai and Pakistani social context. In depth textual analysis of the novel was made qualitatively by taking account of minute details about sociolinguistic diversities. The interpretation of traditional customs i.e. Thai wai and gendered interactions in Pakistani culture mirrored the compelling impact of cultural practices on interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, the study highlights interplay between religious identities and personal boundaries imposed on the basis of social factors create tensions between societal expectations and individual aspirations. By analyzing language and cultural variations this research highlights the multifaceted nature of communication and its efficacy toward identity construction and a deeper comprehension of diverse human experiences depicted in the narrative.

1.Introduction

Language is not merely confined to communication but to broader cultural contexts and influences relationships (Sapir, 1921). Language serves as transfer medium of thoughts, without language thought becomes vague and undefined like an uncharted nebula

(Saussure, 2011). Sociolinguistics studies the core idea of relationship between language and society by the combination of firsthand knowledge with data to conclude cultural language use and further assess language's functionality in social and contextual differences (Nisa, 2019). Dialect, a language variant, mirrors the shared social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of speakers (Trudgill, 1999). Modern sociolinguistic theories describe that language and society are interlinked, language carries individual significance in social and cultural context (Mallinson, 2015). Contextual factors (formal, informal), personal factors (speaker's relation i.e. familiar or strangers) and cultural factors (class, race, gender, ethnicity) have a great influence on language choices in social settings (Bayyurt, 2013).

Culture is a complex whole with blend of factors like believes, arts, laws, morals, customs, and other acquired habits by individuals being society members (Tylor, 1871). Social norms are both descriptive of behaviors by individuals and prescriptive about code of conduct for society members (Fiske, 2004). Mastering a language inculcates understanding of cultural context first because language is important in shaping and evolving cultural beliefs. Culture influences core values and interactions while language facilitates ideas exchange (Bella, 2021). From earliest 21st century, English is serving globally as prime medium for globalization and transnational communication that led to emergence of stable regional forms of English referred as "World Englishes" (Schneider, 2018). Despite its widespread application English portrays rich diversity through its dialectical variations each having unique cultural touch such as British, American and Asian. In fictional narratives core concern of sociolinguistic is language complexities in storytelling and helps in exploration of linguistic choices of characters which lead to identity construction in cultural context (Doležel, 1998). The combination of sociolinguistics and literature offers a rich area of study.

The present study will focus on Athar Tahir' debut novel *Second Coming* that has received high commend from national and international readers of English fiction. *Second Coming* is an intriguing portrayal of characters' striving to overcome limitations in their pursuit of love that are fabricated by complexities in language and cultural differences. Pakistani and Thai English are portrayed in the novel that is mirrored through characters' interaction. The researcher tried to analyze identities of localities presented in the novel with the help of their language use incorporating code-mixing and other techniques of lexical borrowing. The narrative portrays human condition from various perspectives i.e. cultural, linguistic and social that invites readers to witness the intricacies of life. Furthermore, this study focused on the local cultures, traditions and religious belongings of Pakistani and Thai character as depicted in the novel. *Second Coming* is a bold tale that skillfully characterized by love, age, culture and language as reviewed by Navid Shahzad (2023). Tariq Mahmud (2023) described the novel as biographical work set in a cross-cultural context with a blend of rich imagery and lyrical flow that captivates reader's attention. There is a huge gap in literature to cover with this study due to the latest publication of novel. This study will explore cultural elements like religion, social class and traditions to analyze how they affect novel's sociolinguistic context. The study will analyze Pakistani

English and Thai English in context of Kachru's three concentric model as outer and expanding circle respectively, focusing on differences in lexical choice, grammar, and pronunciation. Ultimately the study will shed light on the characters' linguistic choices to portray socio-cultural and socio-linguistic variations reflecting their cultural backgrounds in interactions.

Following are the research questions to be addressed in this study,

1. What language variations are portrayed in the novel?
2. How do the linguistic choices of characters in the novel reflect their cultural background?

3.Literature Review

Labov in 2006 described sociolinguistics as multidisciplinary field that gives comprehensive portrayal of the relationships that language and society possess. David Crystal' book English as a Global Language (2003) described English's status as global language and defined its historical roots in colonial expansion of British Empire that brought English language to diverse regions on globe. According to Bhatt (2001), globalization have increased scholarly interests in linguistic and practical potential of English's global spread and its acceptance in Western and non-Western world. Global Englishes' concept demonstrates English's role in facilitating all global aspects acting as an influential code for major language communities. Seidlhofer in (2005) put forward the idea of two defining factors that make a language global that are language's official status and prioritization in teaching as foreign language. He further addressed the close link of language and its status as all-rounder dealer in every field. Kirkpatrick (2007) described effect of learning time on its fluency, first learned language has efficacy in usage than the second learned language. Native language fluency is based on its first learning than any other foreign or second language. Moore (2004), stated that bringing off social positions and obligations by the speakers have greater influence on their speaking style. There are several other factors that exhibit influence on speaking patterns of individuals in asocial context i.e. social standing, gender, age, educational heritage and situational contexts. All these factors are incorporated in speech unconsciously and ultimately follows the societal norms of language use.

Kachru (2008) has given concept for three-circle model, based on English speaking community' country wide location. He assigned US and UK' English speaking community, inner circle and outer circle's status to Indian, Pakistani and Nigerian English while expanding circle to Chinese and Brazilians English speaking community with special regards to their historical, socio-political and cultural attributes. Kachru's three concentric circle model or "World Englishes" in 1985, opened new avenues and fresh perspectives on English language development on globe. Kachru's model enjoys significant status on language's usage account and worldwide users. Chutisilp (1984) and Watkhaolarm (2005) described factors for language contacts in Thai cultural contexts with efficacy in Thai English literature.

Pakistani writers' prominent feature in writing is lexically borrowed words from local languages i.e. Punjabi and urdu to give their work a touch of their Pakistani identity and

reflect their cultural landscape (Jadoon, 2022). Anwar (2007) concluded a research for Urdu phrasal and clausal variation in Pakistani English as a speaker of English as second language. He used data from prevailing English newspapers in Pakistan and journals and found evidences of incorporation of Urdu clauses and phrases in their English language use. The study also found effect of local languages on grammatical construction of English sentences. Additionally, a research conducted by Gulzar (2009) which included the analysis of code-mixing and switching's practicalities in Pakistani education system. Present study stands out from previous researches on the basis of untouched area of literature, sociolinguistic study in Athar Tahirs' *Second Coming*, due to its recent publication and lack of prior researches on this work.

4. Research Methodology

For the exploration of sociolinguistic variations in novel *Second Coming* authored by Athar Tahir, study employed qualitative research design. Selectively relevant sections of the novel were text were taken using purposive sampling that ensured a comprehensive analysis of linguistic and cultural features within the text. A thorough textual analysis was done that enabled data collection and structured approach for evaluation of linguistic delicacy along with cultural expressions. The sociolinguistic analysis incorporated in the study highlights Pakistani English with respect to outer circle and Thai English with reference to Expanding circle of Kachru's three concentric model. This approach gives a comprehensive account of English language use and cultural backgrounds of the character. This analysis contributes to understanding of World Englishes in a broader context. With the analysis of novel's dialogue, the study highlighted how use of English reflects characters' diverse cultural identities. Furthermore, differences on the basis of social standings, religion and cultural norms studied for a clear exploration of sociolinguistic diversity in novel's context.

5. Data Analysis

The analysis of sociolinguistic variations in Athar Tahir's *Second Coming* reveals distinct language variations that reflect character's cultural backgrounds. With the textual analysis of novel, two core linguistic contexts emerged, Pakistani English and Thai English. Both these dialects are characterized by unique features influenced by their respective cultural and social influences. Pakistani English serves as a medium for narrator's identity and cultural portrayal that expressed his background from Pakistani social context. The narrator's proficiency is shown through code mixing, Urdu vocabulary integration within English dialogues. The code mixing employed by the narrator indicates his command of both languages. Following are few Urdu words,

Words	Meaning
Salaam	Greeting
Muezzin	Man who calls Muslim to prayer
Imam	The officiating priest of the mosque
Kiffaye	A special type of headwear
Pukka	Solid, Sound and Reliable, Genuine
Dhoti	Long loincloth
Chai	Tea
Farangi	European
Pyjama	Trouser
Dukkha and Sukha	Sadness and happiness
Pipal	Fig tree
Koel	Cuckooz
Bazaar	Market
Buddha adami	Old man
Bhang and Charas	Drug ,marijuana
Khaki	Yellowish brown color
Irfaan	Wisdom
Shalwar	Trouser
Sahib	Sir
Roti	Tortilla
Jaman	Jambola fruit
Basmati	Type of rice
Ghazal	Poem

Figure 1 Code-mixed words in Pakistani English

There are few worth mentioning expressions that exemplifies lexical hybridization, the blend of English with local Urdu word.

Hybridization

Word	Meaning
Khaki paper	Paper with yellowish brown color
Gem Bazaar	Market of gems
Washing ghat	Place where washerman washes cloth
Banana roti	Banana flavored tortilla
Basmati rice	Basmati rice variety of rice

Figure 2 Hybridization in Pakistani English

Lexical borrowing from Urdu vocabulary illustrates linguistic hybridity within the Pakistani context. The inclusion of phrases with the use of affixation shows another notable feature in Pakistani English, where Urdu-derived affixes coins new terms that reflect everyday use.

Affixation

Word	Meaning
Harmonium-wallah	person with harmonium
Taxi wallah	person who owns taxi
Bus wala	person who owns bus
Tonga wala	one who has carriage drawn by hors

Figure 3 Affixation in Pakistani English

Whereas, Thai English portrays the challenges and complexities of English as second language in post-colonial context. Pronunciation patterns, such as the replacement of /v/ and /w/ sounds with /b/ highlights the characters' linguistic backgrounds and her struggle for fluency. For example, utterances like “Yes, bely sad lobe stoly” reflect the phonetic adaptations influenced by Thai language structure. Grammatical structures in Thai English demonstrate semantic influences from Thai regional language. Thai character displays a mix of grammatical proficiency and errors. This blend shows the shift toward language acquisition and highlights the impact of cultural identity on language use.

Additionally, the lexical choices of Su mirrors a distinct cultural perspective as shown in expressions i.e. use of “dear” and “love” in casual communication. This shows a casual behavior of Thai's towards these affectionate norms that are prominent in Thai culture. While in Pakistani culture these affectionate terms are only used for closed ones rather

than to be used in casual contexts. This shows a striking variation in attitudes of two distinct cultural backgrounds. The blending of Thai words while speaking in English i.e. sui (road), wai (greeting) further emphasized cultural integration and challenges for character to use a foreign language in interpersonal communications. By inculcating striking features of Pakistani and Thai English narrative highlights struggle of protagonists toward language as well as cultural adaptations. These results describe the complexity of multilingual postcolonial settings for interpersonal communications. This contributes to understanding of sociolinguistic diversity in a broader context of contemporary literature. Distinct behaviors are exhibited by characters in the novel which demonstrates their cultural identities. For example, the use of traditional Thai greeting gesture 'wai' shows their respect toward and cultural values. This cultural gesture showed by Su when performing the wai, a greeting. This greeting conveys dignity and connection towards other people in a communicative context. For example, Su introduced herself as protocol officer by bringing her palms together and bow down slightly. This act of greeting comprehensively mirrored Thai cultural essence.

On the other hand, Pakistani cultural context is portrayed in reluctance of a man to embrace women outside his family. The narrator's internal conflict between societal norms and individual desires is described in the context of his willingness to hug Su and sudden realization of his boundaries and societal expectations. He pulled himself back realizing a Pakistani man's cultural obligations not to embrace a woman except family. These linguistic choices bring light to cultural dynamics and linguistic functions as an expressing medium for social boundaries and personal choices.

Tahir's portrayal of cultural differences is not only confined to language use but is extended to traditions and social norms that differentiated Thai and Pakistani characters within the narrative. Hospitality of Thai character is prominent in the text i.e. traditional greetings, dealings with guests and kindness gives a sense of belonging. The narrator's experience with gentleness of Thai people during his visit to Bangkok is described in his interactions with Thai community. This analysis illustrates effect of cultural practices on shaping interpersonal relationships. The guarded nature of Pakistani male character regarding his physical contact reveals a complex gendered dynamic. The author's acknowledgment of his boundaries toward physical interaction with female characters emphasizes the cultural norms and differences. All these analyzed factors reflect societal expectations for gender and their physicality in a cultural context which helps in shaping individual behaviors and perceptions.

Tahir added religious themes and obligations intricately in the novel that added depth to the narrative. The rejection of Su' intimacy on the basis of narrators' Muslim identity by mentioning "You Muslim" reflects role of religious obligation toward interpersonal relationships. This religious element plays role in developing a cultural fabric and depth of the story. While, the portrayal of social class and economic standing highlights challenges that are faced by individuals in social context. In the novel Su' character shows distinct mesh between desire for material possession and self-worth.

In short, Tahir's *Second Coming* presents a rich tapestry of sociolinguistic diversity. In the novel language use and cultural practices highlights portrayal of identity and social dynamics. Tahir displayed relationships and interactions that shape human experiences by focusing on language and cultural variation. This multifaceted approach invites readers to analyze complexities of communication and cultural identity in a today's globalized world

6. Conclusion

In Athar Tahir's *Second Coming* sociolinguistic diversity is explored through analysis of linguistic variation i.e. analyzing accent shifts, lexical borrowing from local languages and grammatical deviations. These results describe the diversity in linguistic as well as cultural context of multicultural communities. This study analyzed two distinct dialects for English mirrored from the interaction between Thai and Pakistani character within narrative by the lens of Kachru's model of World Englishes. This analysis describes how code mixing, lexical borrowing, hybridization, and affixation serve as identity markers in a cross-cultural communication. The novel's characters are portrayed as multiplex representative of their sociolinguistic contexts. Their unique linguistic fabric portrayed in the novel deepens their authenticity. This attribute mirrors delicate dynamics in language interaction that lies within multicultural settings. The individual language choices of characters highlight their cultural identities and gives insight into their socioeconomic standings. Moreover, the study shows cultural nuances i.e. traditions, religion and social roles that have huge impact on characters' speech patterns and interactions. Cultural integrations and sense of belonging put forward challenges for protagonists to handle and engage with their heritage in broader social context. Language and distinct cultural interplay gives a comprehensive understanding of identity formation of individuals and interpersonal connections. The narrative emphasizes the importance of recognition and acceptance of diversity and societal dynamics through effective portrayal of linguistic, religious, socioeconomic, and cultural variations.

Future researchers should extend the analysis beyond Kachru's World Englishes mode and integrate different other frameworks to analyze the representation of Thai and Pakistani linguistic elements in the novel. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis can be made to evaluate ideologies and power dynamics in context of sociolinguistic variance. Authorial intent, personal history and its influence on narrative can be studied for future works. Comparative analyses of novel with other literary works can be a good dimension for study. This will comprehend language efficacy toward cultural display in contemporary literature through selected texts.

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