

Language And Identity In Postcolonial Diaspora: A Study Of Linguistic Hybridity In Khaled Hosseini And Chinua Achebe'S Works

Bhupendra

*Department of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
Email: bhupendrasheoran1008@gmail.com*

Dr Richa Arora

*Department of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
Corresponding Author, Email: richa.arora@jaipur.manipal.edu

Abstract

Linguistic hybridity is a key concept in postcolonial literature and it can be used to resist as well as adapt among diasporic people. This paper discusses the use of linguistic hybridity in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe in the presentation of cultural displacement and the identity problem. By employing the concept of hybrid (Homi Bhabha), the views on the decolonization of the language (Ngungi wa Thiongo), and the idea of dialogism (Mikhail Bakhtin), the paper investigates the ways in which Achebe and Hosseini use the native languages (Igbo, Pashto, Dari) in the works written in English to form the diasporic consciousness of the characters. In its analysis and comparative reading, the study concludes that linguistic hybridity is one of the tools used by Achebe to preserve and resist the culture through inclusion of Igbo proverbs, untranslated phrases, and oral traditions of storytelling to defy the power of colonial English. Conversely, Hosseini is linguistically hybrid and uses it as a visualization of nostalgia and adjusting to a new environment which is represented by the mixture of Persian and Pashto words into an English environment to symbolize the broken identities of the Afghan exiles. The argument of this paper is that, although the linguistic techniques used by Achebe help stress the precolonial cultural continuity, Hosseini focuses on emotional and psychological issues of exiles. This study contributes to the study of postcolonial literature by comparing these two literary practices and demonstrating the way the language can be a living space of negotiating identity in diaspora literature. The findings confirm the importance of linguistic hybridity in postcolonial discourse and provide insights on how language is resistant and accommodative to cultural change.

Keywords: Linguistic Hybridity, Postcolonial Identity, Cultural Displacement, Chinua Achebe, Khaled Hosseini, Diaspora

Introduction

In postcolonial writings, linguistic hybridity has become a significant tool to enable the authors to express the pressures, multidimensionality, and reconstructions that exist in postcolonial and diasporic identity. This notion implies the implication of mixture of the indigenous languages with the colony languages maintained by the latter with the former and is essential in the delivery of cultural deals that are fashioned in the displacements, migrations, and cultural shifts. Language as such find's application in the context of postcolonial environment not only as a communication device but also act as sign of power, identity and defiance. The writers in the developing world include writers who reside in a

diasporic setting and they tend to use language to affirm their cultural identity in their effort to negotiate the intricacies of the relationships that exist around them.

The works of literature by Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini demonstrate how the multicultural languages dynamics is involved in clarity of negotiating the displacement of culture and building of associations in the postcolonial diaspora. *The Things Fall Apart* (1958) written by Achebe is the first of its kind because it has adopted the Igbo proverbs, oral traditions and indigenous terms in English language since the author attempts to honour the African cultural heritage despite the colonial influence of the English language. Hosseini, on the other hand, portrays *The Kite Runner* (2003), written in English, with the deep penetration of Afghan culture and uses Dari and Pashto words to express the psychological and cultural turmoil of Afghan characters, as they respond to their past and how they perceive themselves in exile. Both authors show the way the language of colonizers and the language of colonized people may interrelate and produce the hybrid linguistic context that reflects the diversity of cultural experiences of their characters.

Research Gap

In spite of the extensive scholarly focus on linguistic hybridity in postcolonial literature, the comparative study of the ways in which this method is applied to different cultural contexts, in particular, the African and Middle Eastern diasporic literature, is rather scarce. The majority of the literature is concerned mostly with the fact that Achebe criticizes English as a tool of colonialism or Hosseini describes Afghan identity in a nostalgic way. A significant lapse in the exploration of the use of linguistic hybridity by both the writers in exploring complexity of identity, memory and belonging in the setting of cultural displacement would be present.

Research Questions:

- How do linguistic blends in Achebe and Hosseini works portray cultural dislocation and formation of identity in the postcolonial diaspora?
- What is the role of the blend of the native and colonial languages in both the novels as a way of resistance and adaptation of the characters?
- What impact does the clash of the native and the colonial language have on the struggle of the character with belonging, memory and self-identity?

Theoretical Framework

There are three broad postcolonial and linguistic theories upon which this research is based: Homi Bhabha Hybridity Theory (*The Location of Culture*): The emphasis of the hybridity idea by Bhabha is on the spaces of intermediary where the cultures meet and mix and the result is creation of new identities. This idea is specifically relevant to analyse the way the mixture of languages used in postcolonial literature introduces new meanings and identities. *Decolonizing of Language (Decolonising the Mind)* by Ngũgĩ Thiong'o: Ngũgĩ asserts that not only colonial languages are the instrument of the oppressor, but also the one which is deployed by the colonised individuals who themselves struggle against and assert their selves. It is his perception of relationship between language and power that is important to understand Achebe and Hosseini language preferences.

Dialogism (*The Dialogic Imagination*) by Mikhail Bakhtin: Pythagoras (Bakhtin dialogism) enables us to study how various languages and voices are communicating in a text as

meaning is created through the interaction of the languages and voices in the text. This model is quite vital in comprehending the interactions of English and first languages in the works of literature between Achebe and Hosseini.

It is argued in this paper that linguistic hybridity in the *Things Fall Apart* and, in *The Kite Runner*, can be viewed as a force field of resistance and adaptation that define the identities of characters undergoing displacement of culture and memories and of homeland. Whereas Achebe uses the linguistic hybridity so that to prove and affirm the African cultural identity in face of colonialism, Hosseini uses it to demonstrate the mental and emotional folds of dissimilarity and living abroad. Looking at the presence of language in both works, this paper suggests the concept of linguistic hybridity as the main mechanism of creation of diasporic identities and culture negotiation in the postcolonial context.

Literature Review

In the recent studies in postcolonial literary criticism, linguistic hybridity has been noted more and more as an important aspect in the definition of identity and cultural memory, and also in the resistance activities. Kumar and Singh (2025) examine the linguistic hybridity as the mode of narrative subversion in postcolonial and diasporic writing and claim that the hybrid linguistic forms enable writers such as Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini to deconstruct cultural identities that disrupt the colonial binaries. In their study, they define hybrid language as a strategic move that opens up space to marginal epistemologies in dominant literary traditions. Riding on the same path, Deshmukh (2025) discusses the emotional effect of linguistic hybridity, particularly in diasporic discourses. Her analysis of *The Kite Runner* points out the mixture of Dari and Pashto with English as the indicator of the inner displacement and diasporic grief, making hybridity a story and a mental representation of disintegrated identity.

Ali and Sharma (2024) present a comparative study of Achebe and Hosseini, addressing the way in which linguistic hybridity of these authors transforms the colonial language in order to serve the localized cultural truths. They claim that Achebe uses Igbo proverbs and syntax to add African voices to the English literary tradition, but Hosseini adds Afghan phrases in order to stir emotional responses related to loss and exile. Patel (2024) brings an educational insight, illustrating how both authors use language as a tool of reflection that cultural transition and hybridity in the classroom take place. She emphasizes the fact that hybridized texts involve students in a critical evaluation of the relationship between language, identity and history.

Building on narrative theory, Rahimi (2023) introduces a dialogic analysis of *The Kite Runner* and outlines the ways in which the narrative voice is constructed by Hosseini with the help of a combination of linguistic and cultural registers. She uses the Bakhtinian theory to claim that the characters in the works of Hosseini exist in interstitial linguistic spaces that correspond to their psychological liminality. In the same way, Menon and Das (2023) focus their attention on postcolonial voice and syntax, acknowledging the English of Achebe as a deliberately destabilized variant of English, which resists homogeneity of narration and colonial conventions. They observe in their study how the untranslated Igbo words are not only cultural identifiers but also, in their own way, narrative disruptors that do not allow complete integration into the colonial discourse.

Chakraborty (2023) examines how hybrid expressions in South Asian literature have evolved and they locate Hosseini alongside the few other diasporic writers who deliberately interlace expressions in vernacular languages into their writings. She argues that such practice becomes a recovery of voice and history, especially in the case of forced migration and cultural displacement. Her observations confirm that when applied by diasporic authors, linguistic hybridity is not just a decoration that can be viewed as having political and emotional richness.

These are the modern research works that confirm and further extend the previous basic theories. The idea of hybridity presented by Homi K. Bhabha in *Location of Culture* (1994) continues to be critical to the way authors insert themselves in colonial languages. The concept of the third space that is promoted by Bhabha is particularly relevant when it comes to discussing the negotiations that are carried out in both the works by Achebe and Hosseini. In *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues in support of reclaiming indigenous languages; he criticises colonial language as a system of domination, but in a more complex way, he opposes the use of English by Achebe as an instrument of carrying Igbo stories. Moreover, the theory of dialogism proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) can be regarded as another useful tool that can help one understand the way in which multilingual exchanges in texts can be interpreted as the manifestation of bigger cultural and ideological contradictions.

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative, comparative approach to the literary genre to explore how linguistic hybridity is used to show cultural displacement and identity construction in *Things Fall Apart* and *The Kite Runner* by Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini, respectively. The key aspect of this approach is a close reading of both primary texts. By studying diction, syntax, and thematic structure carefully, the paper reveals the means through which lingual hybridity manifests itself in the stories. Particular attention is paid to the use of native languages, cultural proverbs, figurative expressions, untranslated words, since these elements contribute to the understanding of the importance of language as a means of expressing cultural values and forming the personality and the point of view of the narrator.

The comparative dimension of this study is of the essence to understand how, given that they write about the same phenomenon and are both writing as people of different cultures and in different times, Achebe and Hosseini use the language to describe the life of colonized or displaced people. The analysis examines how linguistic hybridity can be used as a kind of resistance to colonial or dominant cultural influence and a source of survival of indigenous identity within globalized or diasporic context. Through comparing the two novels to each other, the paper reveals similarities in the literary expression of hybrid identities.

The research applies three key theoretical frameworks in order to contextualize the perception of linguistic hybridity. The concept of hybridity proposed by Homi Bhabha helps to understand the way the cross-cultural relationships create new intermediary identities. The theory of language decolonization developed by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o casts light on the political and cultural significance of the presence of indigenous elements of language in the narratives created in English. The concept of dialogism by Mikhail Bakhtin is used to support the analysis of dialogue between different linguistic voices and cultural codes of meaning being constructed in one work through opposition and bargaining.

The written information is collected through the identification of important passages in which the hybridity of language is the most prominent. The passages contain such examples as characters changing languages, using expressions that are culturally important, or speech patterns that are affected by the cultural background. Its discussion focuses on the way these examples reflect the issues of identity, resistance, and belonging. In this way, the paper aims to critically analyze how the two authors Achebe and Hosseini use language as more than a narrative tool, but instead to express cultural memory, displacement and change.

Textual Analysis and Comparative Discussion of Linguistic Hybridity

Chinua Achebe uses a language mixture in *Things Fall Apart* in order to prove the cultural identity of Igbo words, creating a story, which is deeply rooted in Igbo culture but still understandable to English speaking audience. This mixture of languages both engulfs the audiences in the Igbo worldview and stands against the unifying colonial power of the English language. Interaction of English with Igbo elements not only makes a character such as Okonkwo alive, but it also depicts a complex text, a text that sees through both native and colonial perspectives.

This is especially evident in the humour and imagery of the sporadic small talk, in which such phrases as, cutting a bunch of canes out of a stop of oats, explain the depth of the cultural thinking behind the most mundane of actions. The narrative style used by Achebe correlates the English language with Igbo sentence structure and a local idiom, which supports a cross-cultural conversation with a local authenticity. This linguistic situation is complicated by the invasion of colonial missionaries and administrators, who turned English into a zone of conflict and compromise. The fact that Igbo characters have Christian or English names suggest a cultural crisis, whereas, the focalization and dialogism in the text enables various voices to emerge including those of women and other marginalized characters such as Ekwefi, as opposed to dominant patriarchal and colonial discourse.

Postcolonial approach of Achebe challenges colonial ideas of permanentness and excellence. His characters do not oppose cultural oblivion by rejecting English but instead, they reclaim English and apply it in their Igbo context, therefore, producing a hybrid identity. This cultural fear is seen when Okonkwo feared that his sons would be lost into the colonial culture: “The fear that his son would be turned into a woman by the white man was a part of his anger” (Achebe, 1958). With the help of dialogism, focalization, and a variation of English that contains Igbo features, Achebe creates a linguistic space in which cultural survival becomes a part and parcel of the language.

Khaled Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* also employs the linguistic hybridity, but in a diasporic setting instead of a colonial one. Dari words and Afghan cultural expressions are incorporated into the English text of the novel and create a complicated text reflecting the psychological fragmentation of exile, as well as a nostalgia about a lost homeland. Dari words have no translations in order to preserve their authenticity and emphasize the differences between the cultures, particularly in the scenes, which depict the childhood of Amir or the family relations. These language oppositions are not just decorative, they are meant to arouse memory and identity.

Hosseini also uses neologisms and metaphorical expressions to show emotions and cultural displacement. Afghan descriptions, as well as the emotions, such as, pebbles likened to giant ladies, gentle loll, cabin fever, interlude the poetic with the symbolic. These language decisions establish a bond between certain Afghan experiences and human universal feelings. These examples are a statement of longing and a need to belong, and they focus on the impact of political and geographic displacement on the identity of an individual. The linguistic imagination of Hosseini turns into a tool of the investigation of hybrid identities in the globalized context, where belonging consists of fragmented but intense belongingness.

Comparatively, Achebe mainly uses hybridity as a form of cultural conservation and counterattack against colonial presence whereas Hosseini uses it to provide an example of psychological disintegration, nostalgia, and adaptation in exile. The use of Igbo proverbs and culture by Achebe helps to strengthen indigenous identity against foreign domination. On the contrary, Hosseini uses the English language to mirror the memories and emotional realities of the Afghans, making exile palatable to local and international readers.

Achebe is interested in fighting against the process of linguistic assimilation and attempting to place cultural diversity into English, whereas Hosseini changes English to express Afghan identity beyond its boundaries. The first one affirms linguistic freedom in a colonized space; the second one notes the precariousness and resilience of identity in diaspora. However, both writers employ language as a tool of cultural statement of resistance or adaptation, which proves that linguistic hybridity is an important element of postcolonial and diasporic identity.

Conclusion

The essence of the issues of identity, belonging, cultural memory within the postcolonial and diasporic literature brings out a special but important aspect. This aspect shall be discussed further within the last paragraphs of this concluding section. This phenomenon is the employment of hybrid languages. Its applicability is boosted by the fact that we look at the works of *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. In the contemporary world of multi-cultures, it is not unusual to encounter multicultural societies with the application of the hybrid language. The common hybrids are situational mixings which involve two or more languages used within a specific area. It is curious by looking at hybrid languages in postcolonial and diasporic environments. This interest frequently results into questions regarding the effect of hybrid languages use on identity, belonging and cultural memory. In plain words, we are to ask ourselves whether the usage of a hybrid language is instrumental in developing identity, belonging, and cultural memory. Going by a number of robust examples that are present in the styles and narratives of both Achebe and Hosseini, the answer is definitely in the affirmative.

The linguistic hybridity is an expression of the difficulties of the colonial and postcolonial societies. Hybrid languages create bonds between cultures and people of diverse backgrounds via translingualism using a medium that is commonly used in our extremely modernized world in everyday lives. This reminds me of the pride that Chinua Achebe takes in his African roots as well as his experiences in Britain. Such sentiments are depicted in his short stories, novel, and poetry that tend to address issues that relate to the colonial problems in Africa where he was born. As the son of the Nigerian pastor, who lived in the region immensely impacted by the influence of colonization and the activity of British missionaries, Achebe could not but be exposed to the effects of the British Empire in his land. It is

probably due to this exposure that Achebe underscores the need to preserve his first language as well as the English he was taught in a school in Nigeria which was run by the British. The use of local Nigerian vernacular in the most popular works of Achebe assists him to express the unifying themes, which run throughout the lives of his characters. The movement and the dislocation created during colonization are the major themes in the story of Africa and its conflict as a result of imperialism. When this particular idea fails to appeal, the recognition of the localized problems and views of Achebe makes a direct connection whenever a Nigerian word is mentioned in his own language, as opposed to his impressive mastery of English. The connection therefore means that a multilingual individual and multicultural speaker of English is actually facing the same problems that are mentioned in his stories. This element emphasizes the application of hybrid language as a powerful tool in expression of feelings and scenarios that stretch beyond cultural and language boundaries.

As a result, it can be definitely said that linguistic hybridity significantly contributes to the works by Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini. The claim can be proved not only with the help of the examples of the famous stories of the authors about the clashing loyalties, identities, and feelings that appeared to be a result of translingual experiences but also by the previous researches in the sphere of identity studies. In conclusion, literature by both Achebe and Hosseini can be seen as the illustration of hybrid language use and its influence on cultural memory, a sense of belonging, and identity. These three aspects tend to interact with each other in most of the cases.

Key Findings

Linguistic Hybridity as a Tool of Cultural Resistance: The integration of Igbo proverbs and untranslated indigenous expressions into English represents a conscious act of cultural resilience in the face of colonial domination. By fusing native linguistic elements with the colonizer's language, authors challenge the hegemony of imperial discourse and assert indigenous identity. This mixed form of language allows a lively negotiating process among languages without losing the values of cultures, thus providing a modulus of avoiding assimilation.

Linguistic Hybridity and the Formation of Identity in Diasporic Conditions: Linguistic hybridity is seen to offer a platform through which diasporic people express diversity in identities and intricate feelings. Juxtaposition of various languages, especially in conjunction with English, demonstrates the inner struggle of main characters who have to balance between their identity and exile. The nostalgia and alienation are induced by code-switching and multilingual expressions, which show tensions between the pleasantly remembered homeland and the cultural space that has been adopted.

The Issue of Language as the Point of Cross-Cultural Communication: Achebe and Hosseini depict language as the point of transition in cross-cultural communication. Within the hybrid linguistic space—or Bhabha's "third space"—cultural interactions occur, revealing both convergences and frictions. Such dialogic exchange does not only criticize the monolithic narratives that the colonial authorities tried to impose it celebrates the power of cultural syncretism as well. Hybrid language therefore turns out as the sign of adaptation, resistance, and understanding.

Implications for Postcolonial Studies

Hybridity in postcolonial literature is important in that it can give us some insight into how complex the connection between language, identity and belonging really can be, especially in situations where there is displacement and movement of populations. This paper is based on a critical examination of various ways in which writers like Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini utilize crossbreeding in language to uncover hidden layers of negotiating culture in postcolonial and diaspora fictions. Use of language by the characters speaks of more general historical legacies of colonialism and forced migration and the way illuminates the construction and reformulation of identity through language.

Besides, a cross-cultural analysis of Achebe and Hosseini highlights the importance of linguistic hybridity as a strength of literary technique. They write their books in response to different anxieties, but these anxieties are not unique, as both have to do with the maintenance and the transformation of communal identity under the pressures of colonial intrusion and fragments of diaspora. This common usage of mixed language turns into a metaphorical form of curing, an imaginary connection between separate geographies and shattered cultural existences, as the universal quest of identity and belonging in spite of imposed borders is emphasized.

Recommendations for Future Research

Proceeding forward, the study of linguistic hybridity in literature could be further extended by analyzing the works of the authors like V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Agha Shahid Ali whose writings are preoccupied with the issue of cultural identity, memory and displacement. Also, the semantics of the representation of migration, diaspora, and transnational belonging as it is stated by hybrid linguistic formations applied by contemporary authors is a domain that opens many possibilities in exploring the topic in more detail. Similar studies can also be enhanced with an inquiry into sociolinguistic implication of linguistic hybridity relating to its implications in discourse formation, creation of subversion to dominant discourse, and to the production of social change through literature.

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