

Code Mixing and Code Switching in Modern Sindhi-Short Story

Abstract:

It is a natural phenomenon that cultures have a direct impact on literary language, and regional cultures influence international writing trends and vice versa. 'Code-switching' refers to the change from one language to another in the middle of a discourse and 'code-mixing' is a partial switchover to another language. These are common practices in literature including short stories. Modern short story writers in Sindhi very often employ these techniques by switching to English or Urdu. They do this for various reasons, for example: to indicate the educated background of a character, to depict a character belonging to elite class, to show the class complexes or simply to reveal the linguistic background of the characters.

This research study is a textual analysis of a selected number of Sindhi short stories including those of the prominent writers such as: Jamal Abro, Naseem Kharl, Amar Jaleel, Noor-ul-Huda Shah and more, unfolding the text of their short stories on different critical levels, such as: a) How these writers have used these linguistic techniques. b) How far they have succeeded in achieving their literary objectives through these techniques. c) How effective these techniques are as literary tools in getting the social and psychological messages across.

Keywords: *code-switching, code-mixing, discourse, class complexes, textual analysis.*

Introduction:

Civilizations overlap other civilizations and cultures influence other cultures. It goes with languages too, their influence can be observed not only on ordinary conversation but also on literary text. Languages which emerge as dominant and are frequently used by a large number of people tend to have their impact on the speakers and writers of other languages. This is true in case of English influencing modern Sindhi-short stories. One way to ascertain it is to study code switching and code mixing in them.

Code mixing and code switching, the techniques to switch language right in the middle of a narrative are quite common approaches both in literature and spoken communication the world over. English literature offers many examples of writers switching to other languages such as Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, Irish and, particularly French, which has established its importance as one of the commonly used languages in Europe. The novelist M.M. Kaye in her works of fiction like *Far Pavilions* and *Shadow of the Moon*, while using the subcontinent setting, at places switches code to Hindi and Urdu. *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmed Ali bears the traces of code switching and code mixing and so do Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*.

In Sindhi short fiction, the use of Code Mixing or Code Switching is as prolific as in any other literature produced by the writers who are part of a bilingual or trilingual society. Sindhi short story writers are trilingual in majority of cases, as they learn three languages: Sindhi, Urdu and English right from schooling to higher education and these languages are treated as mother tongue, national and official languages respectively. It is natural to expect that with this mixed linguistic background one can see the text of their stories a partial blend of these languages. It is because of this linguistic foundation that leads the writers to mix or switch codes very often as the characters of their stories, like them are supposed to know more than one language, depending on their social, linguistic and educational background. In majority of cases, these writers are highly educated members of society belonging to different walks of life ranging from bureaucrats to professors, from government officials to doctors and engineers.

In case of modern short stories in Sindhi, it is not only code switching but also code mixing; in fact, it is more of the latter than the former, as Sindhi short stories are sprinkled with not only the complete sentences but also phrases and words of other languages particularly English and Urdu. Code mixing is part of everyday language especially in Sindhi speaking section of

society in urban Sindh, the linguistically diverse province of Pakistan.

In foreign language classes the use of code-mixing and code-switching is not limited to written composition only, but it is an equally common practice in oral communication as Youkhana (2010) states that 'code switching is a frequently observed phenomenon as language learners often turn to their native language in the foreign language class rooms'. As for it being a writing approach, this practice is commonly observed in a multilingual society and that holds true for Sindhi short story writers of the modern period.

This research article studies the short stories of some the renowned Sindhi short fiction writers as well as of some lesser-known authors ranging from the critically acclaimed Jamal Abro to emerging writers like Munawwar Siraj. The stories of writers such as Ghulam Rabbani, Naseem Kharl, Amar Jaleel, Shoukat Hussain Shoro, Ahsan Danish, Qazi Ayaz Mahesar and Munir Ahmed Manik are part of this study. Among the women Sindhi short story writers, the stories of Noor-ul-Huda Shah, Naheed Mughal, Sahar Imdad and Tania Thebo have been included. I have analysed the possible purpose of using these linguistic techniques and whether the practice has helped these writers achieve their literary objectives. Moreover, the focus has been on the point of how effectively these techniques have been employed as literary writing tools.

This research paper covers the selective study of code mixing and code switching in Sindhi short stories written over the sixty years of modern period, right from 1960s to the present. It particularly analyses English expressions, highlighting the linguistic and storytelling skills of the writers who have used this technique to reveal the social and academic background of the characters of their creative endeavours. It has been studied how this practice manifests cultural and linguistic influence on modern Sindhi-short story.

Data Analysis and Discussion:

Modern Sindhi-short fiction writers use a wide variety of patterns of storytelling, ranging from autobiographical style to conversational portrayal of characters. One can find a large number of stories in Sindhi with a visible evidence of both code mixing and code switching, particularly the use of English. This study includes the stories of both well known writers as well as those who are almost unknown. This selection gives a decent chance to analyse the tendency to code switch or mix among the selected writers.

Abro J. (2009) has sparingly employed code mixing and code switching in his short stories. He has used only a few expressions of English particularly in his story *Meherbani* (Thanks) which carries only one complete English expression and that is: 'Mind your own business!' but its text also contains phrases and words like: 'fast life', 'manner-less', 'encourage', 'smart', 'forward', 'up-to-date', 'third class' and 'position'. Jamal has effectively achieved his primary purpose of identifying the main character, the narrator of the story, with elite class through this technique.

Kharl N. (2005) has made a brilliant use of code mixing and code switching in his short story: 'Current'; the name of the story itself is an example of this technique. This story is about a young man who has been educated in America and marries a woman from a conservative family. The author lightly depicts the initial marital complications between the couple. The story is interspersed with a number of expressions in English portraying the educated background of the male character. Some of the expressions are: 'Why don't you understand?', 'Don't be silly.', 'What is the harm?', 'I will also try on my side.', 'What a funny name!', 'I like the name.', 'Darling I love you from the very day I saw you', 'What nonsense!' and 'offer prayers'. The text of the story also contains many phrases in English such as: 'Victorian type double-bed', 'lower-middle class family', 'by face', 'by nature', 'once in a year', 'music concert', 'wedding costume', 'eastern princess', 'blood red', 'orthodox family', 'bath room',

'religious-minded', 'gain confidence', 'lights off' and 'sex life'. It also contains words like: 'drawing', 'husband', 'wife', 'function', 'parents', 'offer', 'cousin', 'mommy', 'try', 'dance', 'father', 'left', 'right', 'terrible', 'shower' and 'chandelier'. In a way, the story is the blend of both Sindhi and English languages. Apart from that, four of his other stories carry English names. They are: 'mixed Girl', 'partner', 'guts' and 'dummy'.

Jaleel A. (1998) has made a considerably copious use of these approaches in a number of his stories. In his story *Ishq Aeen Interview* (Love and Interview), he has used quite a few English expressions or complete sentences such as: 'You are dangerous.', 'No, sir I am harmless.', 'That lousy woman wants to see you.', 'Don't be silly.', 'I am sorry, chum.' and 'Why don't you read comics?' In the same story there are phrases like: 'take it for granted', 'general knowledge' and 'secret agent'. Moreover, it contains words like: 'rejected' and 'observation'. This story largely focuses the educated background of the central character who is being interviewed for a job therefore code switching serves the logical purpose of furnishing the necessary information about the character's academic status and linguistic knowhow. In his story *Siyanan Mein Hik Bhook* (A Fool among the Wise), he has used English words such as: 'handsome', 'silly', and 'What! His story *Charbat Aeen Hik Nurse* (A Fool and a Nurse) contains Urdu expressions with a particular accent to reveal the Christian background of Suzi the nurse and the uneducated background of Charbat another main character in the story. Jaleel's story *Shikast* (The Defeat) carries a unique example of this technique in which the narrator of the story offers the reason why a particular character uses the English word 'prostitute' instead of its Sindhi equivalent and that is because, 'he wanted to encapsulate and mitigate through the borrowed word, the poison associated with the word in Sindhi.' Besides, it is considered taboo to use such expressions in public especially in Sindhi society. A number of Jaleel's stories carry partially English titles such as: *Sachal Sarmast Trouble Mein* (Sachal Sarmast in Trouble), *Sindhi Gidar in Islamabad* (Sindhi Jackal in Islamabad), *Sayyah, Guide Aeen Transistor* (The Tourist, the Guide and the Tran-

sistor) and one of his stories is titled *The Most Dangerous Man in Pakistan*.

Among the women Sindhi fiction writers Shah N. H. (2002) is the one who has made, though selective yet frequent, use of code mixing and code switching in some of her stories. One such example is her short story *Dohi* (Guilty) in which she has repeatedly used English expression: 'Believe me sir!' and it also contains phrases such as: 'echo-sound effect', 'air-conditioned office', 'imported boss', 'about turn' and 'imported order', and in the text of the same story there are words like: 'obey' and 'please'. She has brilliantly used this technique to create an impression of apathy and to depict a situation of systematic genocide by a certain members of society with an authoritative mindset. In her short story *Anapooro Aasmaan* (The Incomplete Sky) she has used expressions like: 'O my God! Look at him.', 'Am I right?', 'How beautiful!', 'O Gosh!', 'You know' and 'He is a great poet.' The text of the same story is interspersed with words like: 'guilt', 'relax', 'compartment' and 'definition'. She makes her characters switch to English while exposing a ruthless and domineering psyche of a particular group. Expressions like 'compromise', 'committed' and 'guilt' are apparently Shah's favourites which she has used in more than one of her stories such as in *Tatto Tun Tanoor Jeean* (The Body Heated like Oven), *Iain Ta Thiyano Aahay* (It is Bound to Happen) and *Kalisa Je Saleb Tay Gijha* (The Vulture on the Cross of the Church) respectively. Code mixing and code switching in many of her stories serve the basic purpose of revealing the academic standing of her characters.

Rabbani (1960) has applied code mixing and code switching, somewhat selectively, in his story *Neth Bahar Eendo* (Spring will Set in at Last), the characters of that story have a fairly high educational background. They are having a literary discussion and switch to English and Persian through their discourse, quoting poetic lines such as: 'She walks in Beauty like the night, of cloudless climes and the starry skies', and 'You hide your tears and sighs, under a certain smile!'. The story also contains the

English sentence 'Sergeant without brain has a success in army.'

Danish (2005) has tactfully used code mixing and code switching in some of his stories. In his story *Wana Wairi* (The Ivy) he has used a few simple English expressions such as: 'Oh! Thanks God.' and 'Thank you.' The same story carries phrases like: 'English type', and 'smiling girl' and in its text there are words such as: 'cousin', 'problem', 'States', 'parents', 'settle', 'aunt', 'receive', and 'please'. The text of his story *Barsati Mosam Jo Almiyo* (The Tragedy of Rainy Season) contains some English expressions like: 'I am very sorry darling.', 'Oh! My God.', 'My pleasure.', 'Very sad.' 'Nonsense' and 'Welcome'. In his story *Parado Zindagi Jo* (The Eco of Life) his characters switch to English using expressions like: 'Oh! You are funny.', 'Take it easy.', 'My sweet heart.', 'Happy birthday to you.', 'Oh! My God! Is it 15th of February today?', 'So nice of you.' and 'celebrate'. Apart from these stories he has sporadically switched to English in some of his other stories such as: *Bay Ant Musafat* (Unending Journey), *Peera Jo Parlau* (Reverberation of Pain) and *Maan Aeen Toon* (You and I). Code mixing and code switching in his stories indicate the educational position and social class of his characters.

Mahesar (2010) has used code mixing and code switching rather profusely in his story *Miss Lychee* which is a good example of how a language influences the speakers of another language making their conversation a mind boggling blend of the two. This is particularly common in a class of society which considers borrowing expressions from a foreign language something of a status symbol and often it is a case of ill education and lack of care towards language learning and use, especially when no language matters much for its speakers, let alone their mother tongue. For Mahesar English does the trick to portray two of his characters as university students having a lively discourse. The text of the story is interspersed with English expressions like: 'My Lychee', 'infection prone', 'instant ready', 'ticket free', 'vegetable mind', 'social relations', 'freedom fighter', 'sexual satisfaction', 'tonsils', 'inflamed', 'sandwich', 'manage', 'ego', 'diabetic', 'ultimately',

'skeptical', 'justified', 'ideologies', 'cosmology', 'chastity', 'evangelist', 'category', 'exaggeration', 'anti-bodies', 'serve', 'perfectionist', 'influence', 'psychology', 'shine', 'downfall', 'antiques', 'feminism', 'symbol', 'fashion' and 'seduction'. In this instance it is more of code mixing than code switching.

Manik's (2004) story *Haqiqat Aeen Dhoko* (Reality and Deception) is an example of unusually excessive code mixing and code switching yet it serves the purpose of depicting a character with sound education in a feudal set up. Some of the English expressions he has used in this story are: 'Oh! I can justify it.', 'Yes, it is logically, ethically justifiable.', 'Oh, I am sorry.', 'I will face it.', 'I am a doctor not a puritan.', 'No, it is wrong.', 'She is innocent, she would not be blamed.' 'Oh, leave it.', 'Yes, it is also possible.', 'What is morality?', 'I will go there.', 'Yes, sir, what can I do for her?', 'Oh, damn it.', 'vague concept', 'consequence', 'lust', 'guilty conscience', 'lack of moral courage', 'hysterical condition', 'sexual urge', 'legal aspect', 'nympholeptic', 'contraceptives', 'fornication', 'illusion', 'antagonise', 'paradox', 'sympathy', 'hypocrisy', 'abortion' and 'solution'. At places, Manik uses jumbled and rambling sentences in English sliding into unimpressive.

Shoro (2010) in his story *Mashaaloon* (Torches) used code mixing and code switching partly to depict the characters of two foreigners as the guests of the narrator in the story. He has switched to English using expressions such as: 'very sad', 'night gown', 'firing' and 'accelerator'.

The story *Book Shelf Mein Dabji Wayal Lurk* (Tears Pressed under the Books on the Shelf) by Mughal N. (1994) bears the visible evidence of code mixing and code switching. She has used quite a few English expressions in that story such as: 'attract', 'suffocation', 'overcrowding', 'adverse effects', 'collection', 'double-minded', 'knock', 'response', 'by the way', 'smoking', 'unexpected', 'air port' and 'formalities'. In her story titled *Huda Shah* she has used English expressions like: 'dress', 'unique', 'friendship', 'birthday', 'change', 'cassettes', 'functions', 'complicated', 'show', 'submit', 'assignment', 'complications',

'physically', 'mentally', 'invitation card', 'sad songs' and 'love marriage', 'initial stage'. Mughal has depicted an ailing character on medication in that story so the text contains some terms related to medical science like: 'X-ray films', 'abnormalities', 'patho-department', 'Barium meal', 'diet', 'perforation', 'treatment' and 'medicines'. Moreover, she has transcribed, rather unnecessarily, the complete printed text from a post card and reported a note written in poor English from its back in the same story. She has employed code switching in some other stories also, such as: *Almiyay Jo Hik Na-oun Itihas* (A New History of Tragedy), *Gulab Rut Joon Muradoon* (Wishes in the Rose Season) and *Har Akh Jo Lurk: Hik Shakhsu* (A Man: Tear of each Eye). Her code switching indicates the sound academic status and social standing of her characters.

Code mixing and Code switching have worked very well for Thebo (2010) who uses them to point out the social class and educational position of her characters. She, in her story, *Sochoon Aeen Sapna* (Thoughts and Dreams), has code switched to English, using expressions such as: 'full of glamour and glimmer', 'cosmopolitan', 'communication', 'options', 'direct', 'abstraction', 'expression', 'interested', 'propose', 'ambition', 'demanding', 'natural', 'backwardness' and 'approval'. Sometimes code mixing and code switching expose the linguistic skills of a writer, as they do in case of Thebo who has used the phrase 'arrange marriage' instead of 'arranged marriage'.

Sahar's (2010) story *Heea Par Angaaran* (This Custom is to Move on Burning Coal) is a typical example of how women Sindhi short story writers use code mixing and code switching, that is, too much and at times for no apparent reason. This indicates the fact that code mixing is as excessive in their stories as in Sindhi elite class. She, in her story, has used English expressions like: 'cool look', 'hot pot', 'dining table', 'floor cushion', 'bedroom', 'hair band', 'shoulder bag', 'centrally air conditioned', 'instigate', 'lucky', 'brush', 'gestures', 'I envy your husband', and 'it is time to close your computer', misusing the word 'close' instead of 'shut down' or 'turn off' thus exposing her linguistic abilities.

Bed Number Atheen Jo Khali Pano (Emptiness of Bed Number Eight) a story by Siraj (2012) bears some traces of code mixing. It is a story about a mental patient hallucinating in a hospital ward. The writer has used English expressions such as: 'Sorry, out of order', 'causality', 'blood pressure', 'reception', 'sister' and 'disorder'. The story is yet another example of growing tendency of Sindhi short story writers to mix codes particularly to English as part of their narrative.

Conclusion:

It is a fact that cultures influence the writing trends. Modern Sindhi-short story indicates many such influences including the cultural impact on literary language. Selective study of code mixing and code switching in the stories of the period particularly from 1960s to present shows a clear indication of the influence of English language on modern Sindhi-short fiction. The reasons of such an influence are: social interaction, languages influencing other languages and literature, and in this case the factors that count most are the rich linguistic and literary position of English language internationally and its influence on regional languages during the colonial and post-colonial era.

The degree of the use of code mixing and code switching by some modern Sindhi-short story writers varies from too much to very little. Some of them employ them more often than the others do. The writers such as Naseem Kharl and Amar Jaleel have applied these linguistic and literary techniques profusely but brilliantly. They have achieved through it their basic aims of projecting their characters quite impressively. On the other hand, the writers like Jamal Abro and Ghulam Rabbani have used them sparingly but equally successfully. Ahsan Danish, Shoukat Hussain Shoro and Munawwar Siraj have done fairly well with their use of language mixing. Noor-ul-Huda Shah has used them very skilfully and they serve the purpose to highlight her characters and project her themes. Munir Ahmed Manik and Qazi Ayaz Mahesar have used these approaches rather too much but even in their case, they have served the purpose of character projec-

tion. In the case of Sahar Imdad, Naheed Mughal and Tania Thebo these techniques have been used almost nicely. It must be noted that in these instances, both code mixing and code switching are used together. The basic reasons for the use of these techniques are mostly to indicate the linguistic, social or educated background of the fictional characters.

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