

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC HYBRIDITY: A DIASPORA STUDY OF THE LOST PEARL

***Dr Mushtaq Ahmad, **Shafaq Mehmood**

ABSTRACT

*The research study attempts to investigate the aspects of cultural and linguistic hybridity through the diaspora study of Zuberi's (2012) *The Lost Pearl*, under the theoretical framework of Bhabha's (1994) *The Location of Culture*. The purpose of this research is to identify the elements of cultural and linguistic hybridity in Pakistani and American society. Diaspora theory established intellectual spaces for indigenous people to speak for themselves, in their own voice and produce cultural and linguistic discourses. The study measured the influence of cultural and linguistic hybridity on the life of main character Sana Shah. It focused on the issues, such as, the relationship between diaspora and hybridity, role of diaspora theory in cultural and linguistic hybridity, reason of Sana's migration from Pakistan to America and usage of two different languages. The research is based on qualitative method. The methodology supports the reasons and the findings that are discussed with the help of diaspora theory. The research also analyzes that the Cultural studies have great potential to liberate us from the boundaries that limit our capacity for thought and discussion.*

Key words: *The Lost Pearl, diaspora, hybridity, Cultural hybridity, Linguistic hybridity, The Location of Culture.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Research

The idea of diaspora is defined as the dispersion of people from their birth land (Wahlbeck, 2002). According to the term the migrated communities have strong bondage with their old country language, culture, custom or folklore etc. The study of diaspora aims to reconsider the meaning of home and its different sense of belongingness. Diasporic immigrants find it difficult to differentiate between their old and new identities.

The worth of diaspora is that it shows sedimentation of communities scattered over the globe. The diasporic communities are regarded as a representation of certain cultural, religious and lingual unities. They have been molded by several waves of migration, each of which could be different from the other one. They have an extraordinary emblematic center that enables them to reproduce and then overcome the complications of the distance that divides their communities. Brubaker's (2005) utters, at first instance diaspora is an exercise that redefines and redesigns the world to describe it.

The term 'diaspora' is used by Intellectuals to mention a multi-generational configuration. Diasporas have been demarcated as constructions getting across generations. It is a voice of oppressed peoples. The Palestinian and Armenian diasporas are ideal example for the expression of this intention.

Hybridity is concerned with the new transcultural forms that arise from cross cultural exchange. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in nineteenth century. It is used in discourses about race, Postcolonialism, identity, anti-racism and multiculturalism, and globalization, developed from its roots as a biological term. The principal theorists of hybridity are Homi Bhabha, Nestor Garcia Cancilini, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak and Paul Gilroy, whose works respond to the multi-cultural awareness that emerged in the early 1990s.

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal

**Researcher, Riphah International University Faisalabad

Hybridity means mixture of two things. It is not necessarily a peaceful mixture. It can be contentious and disruptive in its experience. It consists of many forms: linguist, cultural, political, racial etc. Cultural hybridity is associated with the effects of multiple cultural attachments or the process of cultural mixture. Linguistic hybridity can refer to elements from foreign languages that enter into a given language. It is the adoption of English words into Asian or African languages, or the advent of Asian or African words into English. The term diaspora and hybridity are the parts of postcolonial theory.

The Lost Pearl (2012) is the first novel of Zuberi. She was brought up in Pakistan and now lives in Jacksonville, Florida. The work set both in Pakistan and America. It follows the story of two characters: Sana Shah and Ahmer. *Sana* is the main character of the novel. She lives in Pakistan with her parents and brother Sahir. She is an eye witness of the murder of her father. After the death of her father she realized the worth of lessons learnt from him as pearls of wisdoms. The tragedy forced her to migrate from Pakistan to a completely opposite western culture in California. "I want you and Sahir to go with phuppo to California for a few months to get away from all this. It's been so tough for you; you need a change". (2012, p. 19).

After the migration she feels that American culture and language is different from Pakistani culture and language. The use of Urdu words such as "doa", "rotti", and "desi" with in an English work is a powerful tool to assert the importance of the heritage and local culture of Pakistan. She attends Stanford where she meets Ahmer. They involved due to their shared cultural legacy. The descriptions of Sana's childhood and her know-hows in Pakistan and America are beautifully written. Zuberi used great metaphors. The love for her country is very apparent in her descriptions regarding to American and Pakistani life style.

In the beginning I could not quite define what I missed about Pakistan. Over the years I came to understand that it was a little of everything: our neighbor knocking on the door because she had run out of tomatoes; the fresh guavas sold on the street... pakors fried at the onset of every monsoon, friends chatting and and singing to the rhythm of the rain, the house full of people and voices. (2012, p. 56).

Pakistani English fiction writers have the ability to dismantle the classic traditions and to amalgamate the cultures of both east and west. *The Lost Pearl* (2012) has a poignant theme which symbolizes the Pakistani heritage that includes norms, values and most importantly language. She tries to vocalize the suppressed legacy of Pakistan under the dominance of western hegemony as she says through the beautiful words: Silence can be golden, but remember silence is as bad as a lie if it is used to hide the truth ... these are things. Never cry over them, never fight with others for them. The happiness things bring does not last, and people think that when the happiness fades, they need more things, not realizing that it's not going to last either, because this kind of happiness doesn't touch the soul ("Literature Beyond the Borders", 2017).

The research will investigate that how and in which respect Zuberi,s(2012) novel speaks for cultural and linguistic hybridity in two entirely different nations: Pakistan and America.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem which is being addressed in this research is cultural and linguistic hybridity which is present in *The Lost Pearl*. Diaspora theory provides a support to handle this problem. Zuberi's novel *The Lost Pearl* is a hybrid novel. It focuses on two main issues, one is cultural hybridity and the other is linguistic hybridity. It follows the story of two characters: Sana Shah and Ahmer. Sana is the main character of the novel. She migrated from

Pakistan to California. She is a hybrid between two cultures and two languages: Pakistani and American culture, Urdu and English language.

1.3 Research Objective

The objectives of this research paper will be to:

1. identify the reason of migration from original land to foreign land with the reference of the protagonist of the novel.
2. find out the issue of hybridity.
3. identify the elements of cultural and linguistic hybridity.
4. point out the role of diaspora study.

1.4 Research Questions

The researchers will find out:

- a. How diaspora and hybridity are correlated?
- b. Why did the protagonist use two different languages during her conversation in the novel?
- c. How does diasporic theory deal with cultural and linguistic hybridity?
- d. How did the protagonist's migration from Pakistan to America produce cultural hybridity?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hybridity (linguistic, cultural) is the main issue in diaspora writing. Cohen (1997) examined diasporas as groups of individuals breathing and sharing the norms and environs by using a common territory. Like Cohen, Brah (1997) stated diaspora as a phenomenon that deals with the transformation and intermingling of cultures and languages in a vigorous and fluctuating manner.

Achebe's (1994) *Things Fall Apart* examines the cultural and linguistic hybridity. He used native Igbo culture to dismantle the co-existence of colonial language and culture. British colonizers controlled African colonies by forcing the natives to speak English; eventually a binary was established between English and Native language. *Things Fall Apart* cultivates a very strong Igbo linguistic identity by safeguarding the Igbos traditional language codes and patterns against the threat of European language and colonial annihilation. "We cannot leave the matter in his (white man's) hands because he doesn't understand our customs, just as we do not understand his. We say he is foolish because, he does not know our way..." (p. 191). With these words, *Okeke*, translates for English. For Achebe, the English language cannot fully serve and can merely approximate the need to articulate his Igbo culture. The devices Achebe relies on to give form and pattern to his novel are some figures of traditional African oral literature like proverbs, myths, forms of speech, many Igbo translated terms which illustrate the necessity of abrogation and appropriation. The use of words and expressions such as *ogone*, *gome*, *oradinwanyi*, *agbala*, *obi*, *foo foo*, *uso*, and *ogbanje* do not only serve to make the novel greatly authentic and credible, but also give it an Igbo character and flavor.

Ashcroft et al. (1998) explores the dichotomy between two opposing perspectives. According to them postcolonial world respond to both British and local variants of indigenous language and culture.

Emecheta's (1979) novel *The Joys of Motherland* focuses on the story of an Igbo man trying to survive in colonial logoc ruminates on the privilege of being alive despite the trying circumstances of extreme poverty, colonial rule, and loss of his Igbo cultural heritage. The narrator tells the reader,

He was like someone who had a valuable gift and for a long time had not appreciated its value: it was only when the gift was about to be taken away from him that he realized what he had been taking for granted (p.59).

The colonized people begin to appreciate and cultivate what they see as inherent or unchanging aspects of their culture and language.

Rushdie's (1991) writing deals with the political, cultural, and imaginative changes which took place in the East and the West. Rushdie shows how although past geo-political colonialism largely continues as a cultural process in the present, things is nevertheless unavoidably changing. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie admits to the fictional polishing up of history/memory so as to be able to represent it as either history or fiction. It is this inquiry into reality and memory, and how one is affected by historic and cultural movement, translation, migration that underscores much of Rushdie's writing. He says that it was during this period that he finally was able to make a living from his writing. "Bad times, after all, traditionally produce good books". (1991. p. 3) Rushdie's exposition of the brutal actuality of British colonial imperialism is juxtaposed with some passages about what lives really like in parts of England.

This is England. Look at the bright illuminations and fireworks during the Hindu Festival of Lights, Divali. Listen to the Muslim call to prayer, 'Allahu Akbar', wafting down from the minaret of a Birmingham mosque. Visit the Ethiopian World Federation, which helps Handsworth Rastas 'return' to the land of Ras Tafari (p.117).

This passage describes contemporary England; a place where 'being English' is represented as being very diverse. It is no longer seen as being culturally homogenous. The homeland is an important place in someone's life. It is an idea for shelter, security and comfort. In his work *The Imaginary Homeland*, Rushdie argues, "the writer who is out of country and even out of language may experience this loss in an intensified form" (p. 12).

In Ondaatje's (1992) novel, *The English Patient*, the main characters have multiple cultural identities. The central character is referred to as the English patient, although in fact, he is a Hungarian expatriate turned citizen of the world without one specific national identity and therefore he also embodies cultural hybridity. All characters experience their cultural identity as a fluctuating and fluid process. The theme of cultural hybridity is prevalent in the story of *The English Patient*.

According to Hall (1996), a myriad of different cultural identity positions resulting from the multiplicity of sources so that identity stems from nationality, ethnicity, race, social class, language, gender, and sexuality. Different identity positions, including national and cultural identities, have become fragmented or dislocated. This postmodern formulation of cultural identity as something that is in a constant movement, endlessly redefined and relocated is useful in the analysis of the novel's themes of hybrid cultural identities.

Sidhwa's (1993) *An American Brat* is a perfect example for the study of cultural hybridity as it contains a protagonist that is caught between two different cultures and has to make crucial choices with regard to the way she would like to live her life. Although *An American Brat* begins in Pakistan, a large part of it is set in the United States. When Feroza first arrives in the United States, she can be described as a typical Pakistani girl. The first person to introduce her to American culture is her uncle Manek. After being embarrassed by Manek a few times, Feroza starts to use a deodorant, as Manek taunts her by saying "You can't smell your own smell, stupid; people are going to start fainting any minute" and "That's the trouble with you desis. You don't even know what a deodorant is, and you want to make an atom bomb!" (p.74). Moreover, he advises her to avoid eating desi style: "You've got to stop eating with your fingers...It makes them sick" (p.145). This is something that Feroza has

to struggle with not doing but after being banned from eating with her fingers for the following three days, she finally learns to stop doing it. From working on her accent, her attitude, dressing sense, to even housekeeping skills, Jo has a major impact on Feroza's mannerisms. Jo 'cures' Feroza's way of saying "May I have this—may I have that?" (p.154) and replaces them with Gimme a lemonade, "Gimme a soda" (p. 154). It is from Jo that Feroza picks up an American accent and way of speaking. Feroza makes several changes to her personality in order to 'camouflage' herself into the American environment. She found the very concept of these jobs breathtaking, beyond the compass of the possible in Pakistan. The novel reflects the relationship between original culture and language and new culture and language.

Hamid's (2008) *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* explores the limits of hybrid existence in post-9/11 America. Although cultural hybridity was once possible and even encouraged as part of an American identity, the events of 9/11 undermine the potential for the dual loyalty of maintaining two cultural identities (one American, one Pakistani). The notion of Hybridity evolved in opposition to Bhabha's well-known theories surrounding hybridity and the third space, which imagines hybridity as existing within the liminal space between cultures. Bhabha argues that hybridity is a culture difference. Difference acts as distance that allows the hybrid entity to make meaning and thereby effectively 'see' a culture through contrast. The novel witnesses Chengez' journey into the 'at home' of American without abandoning the 'at home' of Pakistan. In the maintenance of both sides, he is able to achieve the double inclusion of cultural Hybridity.

3. THEORITICAL FRAMEWROK

The theoretical framework is depending upon the model of Bhabha's (1994) *The Location of Culture*, discussed with the perspective of diaspora theory. The theory is relevant to the typical idea of nation-state. It shows the societies as multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, multiracial and pluralistic. In the study minorities are referred as immigrants, guest workers or expatriates. The immigrants have a vision of their native country. They are unable to forget its physical location, history, achievements and sufferings. Bhabha (1994) is a prominent vocal sound in diaspora studies. He is influenced by Derrida, Faoucault and Lacan. In his views, ambivalence is a dominant thing for colonial countries. In his work, Bhabha (1994) explains imitation or mimicry, gap, hybridity, ambivalence and liminality. All the ideas which are present in this theory divulge the colonized people's resistance against the colonial powers. His writing provides a source to study the cultural theory. In this theory colonizers and the colonized peoples depend on each other. Bhabha (1994) also put stress on the importance of language and for this purpose he also developed a linguistic model. He states that everyone should create a balance between his personal identity and the identities of the world.

The study covers the issue of linguistic and cultural hybridity through the Diaspora study of *The Lost Pearl* under the theoretical framework of Bhabh's (1994) *The Location of Culture*. It advocates new style of thinking about personal identity bear from "the great account of the languages and landscapes of migration and Diaspora" (p. 235). It destination those who live margin lives on the margins of different nations, in-between reverse homeland. For Bhabha livelihood at the border requires a new fine art of the present. Borders are important thresholds, full of contradictions and ambivalence. They are intermediate fix where one contemplates moving beyond a barrier. It offers a gateway to the diversity of human cultures in the postcolonial world. He stated, "the beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past...we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of differences and identity". (1994.p.1) For him

hybridity taken place in conditions of inequality, during the attempted imposition of culturally hegemonic practices.

The theory refers to the discourse which deals with the effects of colonization on culture and language. In Diaspora study, hybridity has become one of the major issues, with the in-between, Diasporas, mobility, and cross-overs of ideas and identities. It examines the cultural and linguistic experiences of former colonized societies by including voices, stories, and images of peoples that migrate from their original country to a new country. The research finds out that Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity is an essential object in diasporic studies. It recommends that cultures originate after this hybridizing process. He ascertains that colonial affairs are the amalgamation of the colonizer and of the colonized. Mixing of the culture is a fragmentary process. Bhabha's theorization of cultural and linguistic hybridity has a worthy place for the validity of this research.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out through qualitative method. The research found out the features of cultural and linguistic hybridity through the diaspora study of Zuberi's (2012) *The Lost Pearl*. The Ethnographic research design is used to analyze the data. It is a sub-form of qualitative method. Ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social system. It uses a theoretical lens to study the behavior, customs, culture and language of a group of people or system. In the study, the researchers utilized a number of books, journals and websites which dealt with diaspora and other issues related to cultural and linguistic hybridity. The process of data collecting techniques will focus on four steps, namely careful and comprehensive reading, note taking, data interpreting and data categorizing. The researcher will read Zuberi's (2012) *The Lost Pearl* carefully and comprehensively. In order to get the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher will read and reread the novel to get more vivid understanding about it. To obtain the necessary data, the researcher will take notes and highlighted the related data. The data which will be gathered through note taking further interpreted by using diaspora theory. After that the findings and conclusions will be drained, and recommendations will be made. Conceptual framework will be used for further analysis of the data.

The framework will show all the dynamics of the societies based on the convention of language and culture, the theory emphasized that language and culture diverges from place to place and from class to class. The study aims to raise awareness about the issue of diaspora and hybridity. It provides an opportunity to study different cultures and languages in diverse geographical locations

5. ANALYSIS

The study focuses on the role of diaspora theory. It shows that how this theory put its impact on the lives of the characters, which are present in the novel as well as in other parts of the world. It focuses on the character of Sana and Ahmer. *The Lost Pearl* is about the situation of people that migrated from their original land to foreign land. It shows the situation of diasporic and hybrid people in past and present era. It discusses the struggle and achievement of the characters which they got at the end of the novel. The success which they got also shows the success of this vary postcolonial movement. Cultural and linguistic hybridity is a very dominant issue which will be discussed in this research. *The Lost Pearl* by Zuberi (2012) talks about the issues as cultural and linguistic hybridity due to diaspora movement of protagonist of the novel from Pakistan to America. The plot of the story revolves around two entirely different strata of societies.

Sana is the main character of the novel. She belongs to Pakistan and has very strong attachment with her family, especially with her father. After the death of her father she migrated to California. In *The Lost Pearl* she used two languages: Urdu and English. Urdu is her native language and English is a language, she is adopted after her migration to California. She stated, "He recognized me, and the very first time he called me Apa". (p .3) Zuberi used many Urdu words in her novel, such as Ammi, Beta, Abba, Iddat, Junnat, Phuppha, and Nana. Zuberi used these words because she wants to show the value of native language. In the novel Sana's mother advised her, "Don't forget to speak Urdu". (p .39) She wanted that Sana never forget her native language under any circumstances. Sana clears one thing that she faced a great challenge to learn English language in foreign land. Like the differences between Urdu and English language, she also felt some of the Cultural differences.

In the novel, Sana comparing both of the cultures: Pakistani and American. She stated, "We were often invited to dinners on weekends, mostly at the house of Pakistani families". (p .43) In America the situation is totally different. English peoples don't have friendly relationship with others. In America, she wakes up with the sound of dishwasher, the sound of Michael mowing his lawn next door and the wall clocks, which represents the busy life of English people. In Pakistan she feels the aroma of freshly cooked roti and the bells on the door rang by the milkman. She said "none of the accounts were the same...each had a different beginning and a unique conclusion". (p. 46). The foreign country applies a strong impact on them. The same thing is happening with Sana. As she describes a day of her American life:

One memorial day weekend, my uncle announced that we are going to San Francisco...we were at the golden gate bridge. It looked stunningly beautiful, bursting with life...we visited crooked street...we spent some time at pier 39...we sat on Merry-g-round. I would start to smile, but every time I let joy near, I felt guilty, as if happiness was disrespectful to my father's memory. (p. 24)

In the novel Zuberi (2012) also discussed two different literary tastes. She gave the references of both English literature and Urdu literature. In America Sana and Ahmer both are working on a novel *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen. *Pride and prejudice* is an English novel that represents the English culture. Ahmer is also a migrated person from Pakistan to California. Both constructed a strong bondage due to their same background. Ahmer has Pakistani literary taste. He likes the poetry of Parveen Shakir, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, and Noor Jehan. He also developed Sana's interest in Urdu literature. Lara Zuberi explored Pakistani poetry in American culture. So this research will put light on each and every point which is related to the issues that are happening in the lives of diasporic peoples through the character of Sana and Ahmer. In the novel, *The Lost Pearl*, Sana Shah is also deeply attached with her homeland; she is living in America but looking back towards Pakistan. The type of hybridity which is present in *The Lost Pearl* is intentional. Zuberi used two languages (English, Urdu) and two cultures (Pakistani, American) in her work to elaborate the value of native language and culture. Bhabha (1994) said that diaspora shows the complicated cultural memory and that memory is a model of tension between homelessness and the intelligency of the storyteller whose ability takes no further afield than his own" (p. 123). Sana's cultural memory also creates some rigidities regarding to her homeland. In the views of Derrida (1981), quoted by Bhabha (1994):

It is neither desire nor pleasure but between the two. Neither future nor present: but between the two. It is the hymen that desire dreams of piercing, of bursting in an act of violence that is (at the same time or somewhere between)

love and murder. If either one did take place, there would be no hymen... It is an operation that both sow's confusion between opposites and stands between the opposites at once. (p. 127)

The same idea is present in *The Lost Pearl*, Sana facing two situations, love and murder. She loves Ahmar but her also conscious about the murder of her father. When she knows the half-truth regarding to the imprisoned father of Ahmar the situation became more critical. So it's like a set-up that constructs misperception among opposites and stands between the opposites. The whole work of Zuberi (2012) exposes Sana's thought about her Pakistani cultural hybridity and her approach concerning to American lifestyle. For immigrants the important thing is that to learn how to survive in host countries by adopting their way of life. Culture has some important features like food, language, literature and religion. And these are the essential things in the life of every individual.

The analysis shows that the story was stunningly assembled. The painted description of Pakistani and American world is just like pearl of wisdoms. The work examines the trauma of a girl, who moved to foreign land and brings with her the most important secret of her life. And in that foreign land she is constantly coping with it. The important thing is that throughout her visit she never left her culture and always follows the instructions of her parents.

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