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Chapter VI

Ghosh's Unique Talent in Using English with Native Languages

The process of nativization of the English language in India can be compared to the processes of Americanization, Australianization, or Canadianization of the English language.

Braj B. Kachru, an authority on the linguistic aspects of Indian English says,

... it is argued that the Indianization has resulted in distinct Indian characteristics at all linguistic levels, i.e., phonetic, grammatical, lexical and semantic. These deviations may result from the culturally and linguistically pluralistic context of India, and from the specialized uses of English in India as a language of administration, education, the legal system, and mass media. ("The Indianization of English", 167)

Indianness in Indian English Writing

It is pointed out that the mixing of English with indigenous Indian languages was started during the first wave of Indian English writers, including R.K. Narayan and G.V. Desani, about 65 years before. Even before that, writers such as Rudyard Kipling and Jim Corbett, displayed a similar tendency in their writing, by combining their English with Hindi/Hindustani words. Today Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Bengali, Konkani and the various other languages of India are seamlessly integrated in Indian English writing. R.K. Narayan has used Hindi words such as *dhoti*, *saree*, *puja*, *jutka*, *beedi*, *khadi*, etc. in his works.

Salman Rushdie not only mixes Hindi and Urdu words in his English but also incorporates words and phrases from Gujarati, Marathi, Kashmiri and various other Indian languages, in his novels such as *Midnight's Children* (1981), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995)

and *Shalimar* (2005). In this context Vedita Cowaloosur has made a noteworthy observation about Ghosh in her article:

Ghosh is even more experimental, for he not only incorporates *bhashas* such as Bengali and Bhojpuri, but also includes a spectacular blend of already hybridized languages, such as the argot of Asian seafarers or lascars (which consists of several *bhashas* such as Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam and Tamil, along with English, Arabic, Persian and Portuguese – among many other languages) pidgins of migrant communities (such as Sahibish and other existing chutneys) in which Indian languages figure. Indian English writing today comprises therefore not just Hinglish, but also Banglish (Bengali and English), Tamlish (Tamil and English) Tamhinglish (Tamil, Hindi and English) and multiple such variations—including the linguistic peculiarities and creative realities of Indian's various diasporas, which, in this day and age, contribute notably in the constitution and dissemination of Indian English (es), both within India and outside (4).

The form and style of a language used in a novel are closely associated with the living conditions and traditions of its characters. Raja Rao, the famous Indian English novelist, has mentioned the above aspect in the 'Foreword' of his great novel *Kanthapura* (1938):

'We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians.

We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression

therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive

and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it'.

M.K. Naik, the famous historian of Indian English literature, agrees with the above remark, through the following words:

The narrative technique of the novel (*Kanthapura*) offers the required justification. The narrator is an old grandmother, who tells the story in the garrulous, digressive and breathless style of the Indian *purana* or the *Harikatha*, mixing freely narration, description, reflection, religious discourse, folk-lore, etc. Like Anand, Rao also boldly translates Indian words, phrases, expletives, and idioms – in this case from his native Kannada – into English and uniformly brings a touch of a poet to his style. (“A History of Indian English Literature”, 175-176)

Today ‘Indian English’ has become a prominent variety of English like American English, African English, Canadian English, etc. and many researchers have come forward to study its linguistic and sociological aspects. The term ‘Indian English’ refers to the English texts written by the Indians. The form of English used by educated Indians could be called ‘‘standard Indian English.’’ Macaulay’s Minute of 1835 introduced bilingualism in India and thereby the different several native Indian languages began to associate closely with English. This collaboration of native languages with English has caused the evolution of a distinctive Indian variety of English. It is based on the view that institutionalized language varieties can come into existence through ‘interference’ and the Indianization of English is an outstanding example. The linguists show great interest to examine the relationship between the lexical, syntactic, and stylistic characteristics of Indian English. A minimum knowledge of the functions of English in the Indian context will help the readers to appreciate Indian English better.

Social life in a large country like India is a varied and diversified one. There are people who live in the countryside, the seaside and the hillside whose way of thinking and living are entirely different from one another. Whereas the people who live in cities follow a metro culture. For an Indian English writer narrating a story in English that happened in the Indian social, historical and cultural background is a herculean task. The reader should feel Indianness in each and every word of the novel. It is not easy to translate the strange slangs and idioms used by the common people to English. If it is done, the reader will miss the pleasure of reading. Similarly it is very difficult to find out apt English words for several Hindustani words.

At the same time there are several Indian English writers who have great confidence in English because they believe that English is a pliant language which can be used in different ways as the occasion demands. During the last sixty years, there has been a great deal of experimentation in the use of English language in Indian English fiction. The few writers who wrote novels in English in the early part of the twentieth century used the language carefully, with stiff correctness, as they had the awareness that it was a foreign language. But in the thirties there was a sudden development in Indian English fiction, both in quantity and quality. The writers, especially novelists, began to use English language as one of India's many other languages. This confidence gave them courage to bend and twist this language according to the situation. The Indian English novelist is writing about people who do not normally speak English or think in English. He is generally dealing with non-English speaking people in non-English speaking situations. This problem becomes most acute in the writing of dialogue or presenting conversation.

Although the Indian English novelist writes in English, his area of intimate experience is limited to a small geographical area. The quality of language of such geographical areas will reflect in their writing. For example, when Mulk Raj Anand writes, knowingly or

unknowingly he conveys a Punjabi flavour through his English. The same aspect is seen in the novels of R.K. Narayan and there we see a south Indian touch in his English. Raju Rao deals with Kannada speaking characters and nuances of their language. There is a Bengali rhythm in the style of Bhabani Bhattacharya's English. Whereas in the works of the Indian English writers like Santha Rama Rau, Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgonkar, Salman Rushdie, etc. the influence of their native languages does not reflect seriously. They are able to write in standard English as native speakers of English. The impact of 'Public School English' is clearly seen in their creative writing.

Indian English writers are trying for flavouring the English language with words from native languages (*bhasha* words) and phrases instead of using a homogeneous and standard form of English, not merely in order to represent linguistic diversity and the polylingualism of characters and of settings of their texts, but also as a means to rethink and reimagine the power equations between the Anglophone world and the world that these authors write about. This process has become very common in Indian English today. The code - mixing of English with indigenous Indian languages or *bhashas* is known as in different usages like 'transculturation', 'hybridization', 'chunification', 'biryani-fication', and 'weirding' of the English language. Harish Trivedi has made a genuine comment on this remarkable feature in his Foreword to *Chutnefying English*:

'When did Hinghlish begin to emerge and for what reasons? Evidence suggests that this may have begun as soon as Hindi and English begin to inhabit the same geographical space - with the coming of the British to India. For languages do not exist in watertight compartments; they are organic things and when placed alongside each other they always interact. In fact, languages feed on each other almost cannibalistically; if they did not, they would die (xii)'.

Uniqueness of English language used by Amitav Ghosh

Though Ghosh was born in Calcutta (Bengal), he studied and worked at different places like Delhi, Colombo, Cairo, London, Cambodia, U.S., etc. His family background, education and career have helped him to acquaint with different forms and style of English. He married Deborah Baker, an American writer and presently has settled in Brooklyn, U.S.A. It seems that a large number of readers and critics think that American English has influenced his creative writing. In fact, he is an Indian English writer because most of his themes are connected with India and he has used a number of words, phrases and idioms from the native languages of India, especially from Hindi and Bengali. He is more popular among his contemporary writers for his thematic diversity and many of his stories happen at different places, sometimes more than two or three places.

Generally, it is reviewed that he has experimented a variety of English in his works according to the theme, plot, context and characters. Even in the case of eminent Indian English writers it is seen that the influence of their native or first language intrude to the flow and meaning of English expression. But in the case of Amitav Ghosh, while assessing his novels we do not even sense that English is his second language. That is why, Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam have commented that Amitav Ghosh brings to the English language an ease of felicity of expression which endows all his fiction with a quality of its own. (Bhatt, Indira and Indira Nityanadam, 'Interpretations Amitav Ghosh's 'The Shadow Lines', *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh*, 10)

The awards he has received for his novels not only from India but also from all over the world are good testimonials to his high standard of English language. Ghosh gives utmost attention in using English language quite befitting to the character's education. He has no hesitation in presenting conversations between the characters in simple English as the

occasions demand. Binayak Roy points out how as a writer Amitav Ghosh is different from other contemporary writers in the beginning of his essay 'Imperialism, Exile and Ethics:

Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*':

Amitav Ghosh's speciality lies in his deft handling of political and philosophical issues without sacrificing the graces of art. Exhibiting a pound sense of history and space, his novels explore the human drama amidst the broad sweep of political and historical events. He has a personal stance on such events. He has a personal stance on such controversial issues as postcoloniality, postmodernity, subjectivity, and subalternity. He interweaves them in a complex pattern in his works which themselves are generic amalgams. This generic multiplicity stems from an inherent interdisciplinarity within postmodernism which is part of its assault upon the Enlightenment (143-144).

Ghosh's first novel, *The Circle of Reason* (1986) is less celebrated and rarely discussed. But it imprints deeply a 'magical real' sensibility of day to day words used in language. Stephanie Jones has made a striking comment on the language of Ghosh in the concluding part of her article, "A Novel genre: Polylingualism and Magical realism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*":

Bringing narrative to bear on the apparently discrete themes of *Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, *The Circle of Reason* comments not just on the difficulty of translation, but insists on the internal inadequacy of broad linguistic categories and the incoherence of heightened philosophical distinctions. The text bears out the definition offered by Deleuze and Guattari, moving through a radically marginal, politically vibrant and creative sense of strangeness within

the language to offer a ‘revolutionary’ idea of community, history and genre. The narrative – constantly diverting towards etymological end-points, exceeding and subverting thematic direction, dwelling on the physically weird, psychologically disoriented and historically strange – defines generic containment to evoke a poignantly novel sense of a ‘minor’ cosmopolitan community, both constrained and liberated by the polylingualism of language (441) .

Ghosh has interlinked some major themes like multiculturalism, diaspora, ethnicity, war, concept of freedom, violence, communal riots, partition of a nation, love, human relationships, and their impact with the life of middle-class families in his second novel *The Shadow Lines*. The action in the novel covers India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and England connecting the present with the past. In the beginning of the novel Ghosh explains the present condition of the Chaudhuri family in Calcutta and its immediate past history. When he narrates the history and the family background, he employs standard English challenging any original English novelist. In this context the remark made by Arjya Sirkar in his article, “*The Shadow Lines: The Promise of Another Dawn*” is noteworthy: “And by a strange stroke the English language is a part of the intellectual equipment, his English, therefore, is unobtrusive, unselfconscious and by and large not unnatural”. This aspect of Ghosh’s English is generally seen throughout this novel. The narrator’s description of his cousin Tridib is a good example for this:

But occasionally, when he was in the mood and somebody happened to say something that made a breach in his vast reservoirs of abstruse information, he would begin to hold forth on all kinds of subjects - Mesopotamian stellate, East European jazz, the habits of arboreal apes, the plays of Garcia Lorca, there seemed to be no end to the things he could talk about. On those

evenings, looking at the intent faces of his listeners, watching his thin, waspish face, his tousled hair and his bright black eyes glinting behind his gold - rimmed glasses, I would be close to bursting with pride (8-9).

The roots of the Chaudhari family belonging to Dhaka are in present Bangladesh. The protagonist narrator and his family stay in Calcutta, and the story begins and develops in and around Calcutta, and therefore the novelist is forced to use more Bengali words in his narration. In the beginning of the novel, the narrator introduces his grandmother's sister like this: "It startles me now to discover how readily the name comes off my pen as 'Mayadebi' for I have never spoken of her thus; not aloud, at any rate: as my grandmother's only sister, she has always Maya - thakuma to me" (3).

Ghosh doesn't put the word 'Maya - thakuma' in italics or doesn't give any glossary for the word. Similarly when he describes another important character Tridib, he says,

Then, one evening, on my way to the park I heard he'd surfaced at Gole park again. I doubled back and found him at his favourite adda, on the steps of an old house, surrounded by his acquaintances. I waved to him, from between someone's legs, but he was busy answering their questions and he didn't see me. Where have you been all the while, Tridib - da? Somboddy said. It must be three or four months... (11).

"On another occasion Tridib asks his friends, 'Where do you live, mairi?'" (9) The words 'adda and mairi' are typical Bengali words. In addressing to one another the writer uses Bengali style, 'Tridib-da'. The narrator's father speaks of Mayadebi's husband very reverently to his colleagues. He says, "My meshomoshai, His Excellency, the Indian Consul - General in Sofia (or wherever happened to be), Shri Himangshushekhhar Datta - Chaudhuri" (34). The word 'meshomoshai' is a Bengali word meaning maternal uncle.

The Glass Palace (2000) is a historical fiction in which Ghosh has made an attempt to narrate the family saga of three generations of the main protagonist Rajkumar Raha, his friend Saya John and the arrest and exile of King Thebaw and his family in Burma. In this epic narration he mingles the most important colonial subjects like history, culture and society in three South Asian countries: India, Burma (Myanmar) and Malay (Malaysia). The background of this novel gives Ghosh ample scope to illustrate the mixture of cultures in his writing and it reflects in his language also. With the advent of New Literatures in English almost all the Indian writers in English have dared to represent a new kind of English. The colonization has made great impact in indigenous languages and it also influenced writing in English in India. Ghosh has given proper attention to native languages along with English. He has made use of many local Hindi words or Hindustani language in *The Glass Palace*.

The novel starts in the 19th century with the introduction of the central protagonist, Rajkumar Raha, who lands up in Burma in a state of penury due to a shipwreck. He was an Indian, a 'kalaa', as he came from the sea, a foreigner in an alien country. He was an orphan from Calcutta and got a temporary employment at a food stall in Mandalaya owned by a woman named Ma Cho. She was a half-Indian and 'she was in her mid-thirties, more Burmese than Indian in appearance.' She did her cooking sitting by an open fire, and apart from fried baya-gyaw, she also served noodles and soup. It was Rajkumar's job to carry bowls of soup and noodles to the customers. In his spare moments he used to clear the utensils, tended the fire and shredded vegetables for the soup pot. There Rajkumar happened to meet a visitor namely Saya John and through this character Ghosh reveals his theory of multi-culturalism and multilingualism:

A few days later Saya John was back. Once again he greeted Rajkumar in his broken Hindustani: 'Kaisa hai ? Sub kuchh theek-thaak ?'

Rajkumar fetched him a bowl of noodles and stood watching as he ate. 'Saya' he asked at last, in Burmese, 'how did you learn to speak an Indian language?'

Saya John looked up at him and smiled. 'I learnt as a child,' he said, 'for I am, like you, an orphan, a foundling. I was brought up by Catholic priests, in a town called Malacca. These men were from everywhere - Portugal, Macao, Goa. They gave me my name - John Martins, which was not what it has become. They used to call me Joao, but I changed this later to John. They spoke many many languages, those priests, and from the Goans I learnt a few Indian words. When I was old enough to work I went to Singapore, where I was for a while an orderly in a military hospital. The soldiers there were mainly Indians and they asked me this very question: how is it that you, who look Chinese and carry a Christian name, can speak our language? When I told them how this had come about, they would laugh and say, you are a dhobi ka kutta - a washerman's dog - na ghar ka na ghat ka - you don't belong anywhere, either by the water or on land, and I'd say, yes, that is exactly what I am'. He laughed, with an infectious hilarity, and Rajkumar joined in (11).

The colonial authorities decided to allot a permanent residence for King Thebaw and his family at a place called Ratnagiri which was some hundred and twenty miles south of Bombay. Thus they who were born and brought up in Burma, were forced to live in India and to mingle with Hindustani languages. When the Queen and the collector's wife Uma interact with each other they use many Burmese and Hindustani words and phrases.

Ghosh has used a number of words from native languages and it is a lengthy list: baya-gyaw (a Burmese food item), aingyi (a Burmese female dress), longyi (a male dress), 'Kaisa hai'? Sub kuchh theek - thaak?', pwe, pinni, nakhoda, gaung - baung (the turban of

mourning), patama-byan (examination), yethas (bullock-carts), htamein, luga - lei, tai, etc. are some of the words he has used from Burmese language. Besides, he has used a large number of Hindi words, sayings and proverbs in this novel. Some of them are the following: kalaa, kaisa hai ?, Sub kuchh theek thaak?, dhobi ka kutta (a washerman's dog), na ghar ka na ghat ka (you don't belong anywhere), khalasis, ek gaz, do gaz, teen gaz, jhinjhinaka bazaar, gaaris, kuchh to karo, basti, langot, buddhu, havildar, kaun hai, etc. Thus, Ghosh proves himself his masterly knowledge in both languages, Burmese and Hindi.

Several scholars and critics have appreciated Ghosh's use of English in *Sea of Poppies*. When people from different nations belonging to wide range of hierarchies come together in a ship and interact with one another, it is a Herculean task to improvise them in English. Stephanie Han from City University of Hong Kong has appreciated Ghosh's talent in tackling English for diverse occasions in a narration in one of her brief essays:

Amitav Ghosh's *Seas of Poppies* (2008), set prior to the first of the Opium Wars (1839-42), demonstrates unique and familiar image of polyculturalism and the making of language, identity, and nation through characterizations and dialogue. Ghosh creates a mythical imagined community that emerges on a ship, the *Ibis*, where traditional hierarchical barriers based on language, gender, ethnicity, and class break down. The vessel is bound for Mauritius where the human cargo will toil on plantations and / or serve prison sentences. Ghosh incorporates a spectacular blend of diverse forms of English, including nineteenth-century, British, American, and Indian Englishes, nautical terms, Hindi -, Urdu-, and Chinese- influenced pidgin English, and the language of lascars. He posits English as a flexible and an innovative language that reveals character through dialogue and unites disparate voices in a community that originates on board a ship (298).

Ghosh's skill in using English language is more evident in his novel *Sea of Poppies*. Alan Cheuse has assessed Ghosh's talent in using English in his book review of *Sea of Poppies* like this:

Ghosh tells the story of how all these characters, Indians and crew alike, end up on this voyage in an appealing, somewhat modified, lingo of the period - when British English mingled with Indian Englishes, and dallied with dozen of other dialects: ships lore, pirate talk, Lascar pidgin, and all other verbal music of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. And beneath it all like the endless rolling salt sea, Ghosh's own beautifully made sentences and paragraphs buoy up ship, plot, characters, and the setting itself, with a natural ease and beauty (12-13).

Words from Vernacular Languages in *Sea of Poppies*

Stankiewicz of Temple University made an interview with Amitav Ghosh related with anthropology and fiction. He hinted Ghosh that he uses unfamiliar words from vernacular Indian languages with much ease and quoted the following two sentences from *Sea of Poppies* :“Just as the sound of the sunset azan was floating across the water, Neel discovered that he had no more of the fine *shanbaff dhotis* and *abrawan - muslin kurtas* that he usually wore on public occasions : they had all been sent off to be laundered. He had to content himself with a relatively coarse *dosooti dhothi* and an alliballie kurta’’. (*Sea of Poppies*: 104) The interviewer meant that why Ghosh uses words from an indigenous language in an English novel. Ghosh's answer to his question really reveals his attitude to different languages:

It's interesting that you've chosen to quote the bit about *shanbaff dhotis* and *abrawan -muslin*. The reason I'm a writer is because I love words, the very

sound of them. That's often the only reason why I put them in. Of course I do try to stay within certain boundaries of plausibility: but the real reason why these words are there is not because they refer to details or because they are necessary to the narrative. It's simply because I like the way they sound (539).

Ghosh has his own ideology and principles in employing English language in writing fiction. His talent for experiments in language is clearly visible in the novel *Sea of Poppies*. It is set in the background of Opium War taken place between China and British India when India was an official colony of England. The story begins in the the remote village Ghazipur and there he narrates the life of the poor villagers and workers in the opium factory controlled by the British officials. The villagers speak Hindi and the novelist has to translate them in colonial English. The British officials deal with them in English associated with the local language Hindi. Later the story shifts to the shores of the river Ganges and gives the details of the schooner *Ibis* where the novelist describes the activities of the owner of Ibis in Calcutta and some of his friends. The third part 'Sea' is concerned with the inmates of the ship as it leaves Calcutta and moves on towards its destination in Mauritius. Thus the variety in themes, plots, places and characters give a chance to the novelist to deal with a mixture of languages.

Ghosh does not stick to any particular style of English. His English flows befitting to the situations in his novels. He explains the reason for using a variety of English saying that the idea of fixity in language is so impossible and so unnecessary. Since childhood, we have always been told to use the correct English words, 'to speak properly' and we have developed a deeprooted anxiety about the language. But English used to be much richer than that, and the process of purification should be combated.

Ghosh has genuine interest in the infinite possibilities of language and applies them in the possible spaces. Linguists generally have agreed that modern vocabulary has evolved as a result of cosmopolitan experience and various encounters with different types of people. Ghosh traces the roots of some words and employs them in suitable occasions. His primary knowledge in the native languages like Bengali, Hindi and Urdu has helped him to make use of his fluency in English very cunningly and boldly.

Amitav Ghosh believes in the porosity of languages which help them to interact with even other strange languages, crossing borders of regions and ignoring specific grammar and phonetic rules and guidelines. He thinks that there are certain cultural spaces in this world where there will be an absence of shared language and then hybrid languages come into existence. He introduces such a space in the narration of the schooner *Ibis*. Its crew and passengers are a reflection of the polyglot community from different parts of the world. They belong to diverse racial, regional, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. *Ibis* has a British captain, an American second mate, and a number of Indian soldiers to maintain law and order in the ship. A glance at the crew and passengers surprises us how they communicate with one another. They are a peculiar assortment of people, hailing from different parts of the world like Arabia, east Africa, Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, China, India, England, America, etc. They speak freely, communicate their ideas without any obsession and give commands to their subordinates in their own languages mixing with English. Ghosh presents such dialogues on apt occasions and makes those scenes more lively. Such a scene is given in the beginning of the novel between Serang Ali and Zachary Reid, an American mulatto:

‘Serang Ali, where you from?’ he asked.

‘Serang Ali blongi Rohingya - from Arakan - side.’

‘And where’d you learn that kinda talk?’

‘Afeem ship,’ came the answer. ‘China-side, Yankee gen ‘I’ um allo tim tok so-fashion. Also Mich’man like Malum Zikri.’

‘I ain no midshipman,’ Zachary corrected him. ‘Signed on as the ship’s carpenter.’

‘Nevva mind,’ said the serang in an indulgent, paternal way. ‘Nevva mind: allo same-sem. Malum Zikri sun-sun become pukka gen ‘I’ um,’

So tell no: Catchi wife -o yet?’

‘No.’ Zachary laughed. ‘ ‘N’ how bout you? Serang Ali catchi wife?’

‘Serang Ali wife - o hab makee die,’ came the answer. ‘Go topside, to hebbin. By’m by Serang Ali catchi nother piece wife...(16).

Ghosh doesn’t attach any glossary for his coined words in English associated with native languages. Surprisingly enough, he doesn’t even use italics for such words. He has his own justification for using words from vernacular languages in the same spelling, even without putting them in italics. Once he commented in an interview like this:

When he sees Indian writers italicizing words, he is amazed, because there are very few ordinary Hindi or Urdu or Bengali words that are not in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In our age of globalization there’s this idea that English is becoming more expansive, but much the opposite is happening: in the 19th century, it was much more accepting of other influences, especially Asian influences. This is why he feels that if

Asian writers like him are going to write in this language, then they must reclaim for it what it historically had.

Another remarkable thing about Ghosh's English in *Sea of Poppies* is the extra strain he has taken is finding out the various terms denoting the different parts of the schooner and the varied tasks the sailors have to perform one after another. For the successful controlling and manoeuvring of a sailing ship, the lascars should be acquainted with the names of different parts of it. The anglicized terms are often too erudite and sophisticated for their humble tongues. For proper communication they have to find out a lexicon of their own. As it is a historical fiction taken place in the early half of the nineteenth century under colonial rule, the writer has to find out the words which had been used in that period.

Ghosh expresses his great debt in acknowledgements to many 19th century scholars, lexicographers, linguists and chroniclers in writing this novel. He has referred Report on Colonial Emigration from the Bengal Presidency, 1883, by Sir George Grierson. Besides, he has made use of the same author's book on grammar of the Bhojpuri language and his 1884 and 1886 articles on Bhojpuri folk songs. He has indebted much to J.W.S Mac Arthur who was the superintendent of the Ghazipur Opium Factory for his Notes on an Opium Factory (Thacker, Spink, Calcutta, 1865). Ghosh has great commitment to Lt. Thomas Roebuck for his nautical lexicon, first published in Calcutta, *An English And Hindostanee Naval Dictionary of Technical Terms and Sea Phrases as Also the Various Words of Command Given in Working A Ship & C. With Many Sentences of Great Use at Sea; To which Is Prefixed A Short Grammar of The Hindostanee Language* (reprinted in London in 1813) by Black, Parry & Co; booksellers to the Hon. East India Company. Later the same book was revised by George Small, and republished with a new title, *A Laskari Dictionary or Anglo-Indian Vocabulary of Nautical Terms and Phrases in English And Hindustani*, London, 1882. Ghosh has referred one more dictionary thoroughly namely Hobson - Jobson: *A Glossary of*

Colloquial Anglo- Indian Words and Phrases, And of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive.

Ghosh has shown keen interest in the etymology of words contained in the above mentioned lexicons and applied them in the anatomy of the schooner *The Ibis*, descriptions regarding the hierarchy of the crew members, rules connected with the rationing system in the schooner, etc. Their repeated usages on several befitting occasions help the readers to consider those new coined words as an integral part of Indian English. In addition to this, Ghosh has made use of his talent as a linguist to coin new terms based on Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Bhojpuri, etc.; he has made the first mate of the schooner as 'Burra Malum' and the second mate as 'Chhota Malum'.

Dr. Gazi Tareq Muzamil evaluates Ghosh's English in his book, *Admirable Superseding of Amitav Ghosh* like this:

As with the other writers of 1980s, Ghosh uses English without dilemma and employs the language with ease. He also experiments with the style and the manner novelists in English, especially from other languages employ in fiction writing. *Sea of Poppies* demonstrates the dizzying hybrid of slang words that were picked up by lascari speech which gradually made room in English language too. Set during the British Empire's Opium trade with China and when India was an official colony of England, the novel is spread across northern India, Calcutta and the high seas in 1838, which establishes a link between different languages from India as well as other countries and the amalgamation of various words in English (82).

Ghosh narrates some scenes of the story in local language as suitable to the occasion. At the same time, he describes them in English also. While Deeti was going to her new home

after marriage, sitting in the prow of the boat, with her wedding sari drawn over her face, the women in the boat sang:

Sakhiya - ho, saiya more pise masala

Sakhiya - ho, bara mitha lage masala

Oh friends, my love's a - grinding

Oh friends, how sweet is this spice! (32).

As the above song is given in two languages - Hindi and English - it doesn't hinder the flow of reading.

Ghosh has taken special care in giving meaningful Hindustani names to his important characters. The protagonist is given the name 'Deeti' which means an affectionate, respectable and older woman. This name helps much the reader to feel a genuine attachment to the character. Her daughter is called 'Kabutri' which means very loving. Her husband is given the name Hukam Singh. The family name 'Singh' suggests that they belong to the upper Hindu caste of Kshatriya. The other male character is Kalua who is a giant of a man in size and the name hints at his black colour. Ghosh has selected carefully the names connected with the Zamindar of Raskhali: Raja Neel Rattan Halder, his wife is Malati, his eight-year-old son Raj Rattan, his main servant Parimal and his mistress Elokeshi who was once a famous dancer. All these names give this story a genuine Indian touch.

In *Sea of Poppies*, language significantly serves both as an index of the cross – cultural fusion that was operating in the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, their littoral zone and hinterland in the second quarter of the nineteenth – century, and also as a trope for the emergence of new identities in the *Ibis* trilogy. The migrants on the ship form transcultural and translingual relationships among themselves during the voyage. The form of

cosmopolitanism in *Sea of Poppies* comes through hardship and suffering, and is based on survival and necessity. Most of them are stateless and homeless, and deported and displaced persons. There we encounter unusual forms of relationships between different classes (Neel and Parimal) between races (Jodue and Paulette) between religions (Jodu and Monia) and between castes (Deeti and Kalua). These strange relationships provide the migrants comfort and consolation, and dignity and solidarity. It gives them strength and courage for defiance and resistance, and desire for ultimate freedom. Ghosh shows remarkable skill to juggle myriad interconnected stories of disguises and transformations among the migrants on the *Ibis*. He displays deep knowledge in the idioms and dialects representing the multiple languages in the novel. Shao-Pin Luo of Dalhousie University in Canada has researched in detail about Ghosh's talent associated with the concept of "vernacular cosmopolitanism" and made the following observation:

‘ In *Sea of Poppies*, he presents a world of heteroglossia that includes seafaring lingo, French, a fantastic spectrum of English, including Hinglish, Chinglish, and Franglais, pidgin and creole, as well as many indigenous languages – Bhojpuri, Bengali, Hindustani. Moreover, Ghosh describes not only the distinct languages, and their intermingling, but also the intricacies of any one language used in different circumstances. This sea of words clashes and mingles, evoking a vivid sense of living voices as well as demonstrating the linguistic resourcefulness of people in diaspora.’