International Journal of English Research
ISSN: 2455-2186
Impact Factor: RJIF 5.32
www.englishjournals.com
Volume 4; Issue 3; May 2018; Page No. 11-16

A linguistic approach to Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*

Zakiyah Tasnim
Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Chittagong, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Abstract
Many non-native writers of postcolonial English literature have been transforming English language to a remarkable extent while grasping their own cultures in English. These transformed varieties are recognised as versions of English language on various occasions. This research paper explores Sea of Poppies, a novel of the Indian translingual writer Amitav Ghosh, as an example of this language transformation. The novel is studied, along with the works of other researchers, with the sole focus on the transformation of English language in it. This study looks for the answers of two questions - how is Amitav Ghosh transforming English language in Sea of Poppies?; and what happens when languages meet?.

Keywords: transformation of English language, *Sea of Poppies*, meeting of languages

Introduction

Having the mid nineteenth century British colonial history as the backdrop, *Sea of Poppies*, the first of the *Ibis* trilogy of Amitav Ghosh, is a complex assimilation of multiple and miscellaneous political, economic and social elements. The eve of Opium wars between Britain and China, colonial history of Indian villages during Opium trade, Opium cultivation, religion, zemindary, criminal justice, trade, botany, sailing, and language -- all are the different traits found in the novel.

At the centre of the novel is the large vessel *Ibis*, starting its journey from Eastern India across the Indian Ocean to Mauritius ("Mareech") island. Like the varied themes of *Sea of Poppies*, the people on board of *Ibis* are also diverse in their origin and background. Every one of them has an individual story to tell and also a personal history that they want to escape. Among these people on board, we have a poor young widow from a northern Bihar village who is escaping her religious cult with her low caste lover, a dispossessed and wrongly punished Bengali Raja, a free spirited French girl who is brought up as any other Indian teenager, her Bengali half-brother, the Bengali agent of a British trader who is in search of some mysterious spiritual landmark, a mulatto American freedman and a team of lascars with the sea as their nation. *Ibis* is not only transporting all these people to a far island, it is in a sense transforming them to new lives, issuing new identities for almost all of them. Of the wide-ranging themes of *Sea of Poppies*, this paper picks up 'language' as its concern.

How English language is transformed and what might be the reasons behind this transformation is the focus of this essay.

2. Language as a Theme in *Sea of Poppies*

The linguistic features of *Sea of Poppies*, along with its themes and characters, are equally important to get the novel the attention of critics. British academic Dr. Christopher Rollason looks at Ghosh's use of language as 'daring' and 'even ground breaking'. In his blog he writes about the language of *Sea of Poppies* as 'English peppered with Indian terms from Bengali or Bhojpuri'. As Ghosh has depicted characters from all the four corners of the world, they are naturally colourful and vibrant in their use of languages. Native Bhojpuri language of Deeti and Kalua is contrasted with the Bengali of Jodu and Baboo Nob Kissin. Raja Neel Rattan is an example of code-switching as he has to deal with different classes of people. Paulette's Bengali is from her caretaker and when she uses English that is with a French intonation because of her French origin. Ghosh is the most experimental when he gives voice to the lascars. Their different origin, lifelong travelling and pidgin give birth to a unique language. Ghosh's research with the nineteenth century sailor's language creates this hybrid language.

In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh highlights the contextualization of language. How a language is transformed in different contexts and what happens when languages meet are of a great concern of Ghosh in this text.

2.1 Language in Context

Business Standard, in its 'Amitav Ghosh on Language in Fiction', quotes the writer where he says: 'One does not need to know meanings of all the words to enjoy a novel'. About language in context Ghosh's viewpoint (in the same article) is:

> While it is in the usage of the language, in its repetitions, resonances and substitutions, he said, that a new word becomes "clear from the context that it means something." About English author Blyton's pot beef he said, "How can I know what pot beef is unless I tasted it but I figured out it was some sort of food, and that's all you need to know."

This might be one of the reasons why Amitav Ghosh does not always provide the translation or interpretation of the native words in his novels. He uses the context to provide the idea of

the meaning of the word. In this way he skillfully engages the readers actively to know the native word. One such situation is at the very beginning of the novel when Deeti lays 'dhoti and kameez' and prepares 'rotis and achar' for her husband. '…she rose early and went through the motions of her daily routine, laying out a freshly-washed dhoti and kameez for Hukam Singh, her husband, and preparing the rotis and achar he would eat at midday' (3). In present days a native reader of English language may know 'dhoti' and 'roti' but 'kameez' and 'achar' are more unlikely to know with their definite meanings. Still, from the context the reader can guess 'kameez' to be some kind of dress (it is the tunic actually) and 'achar' to be some food (kind of pickle). Again, the delineation of the scene where Deeti's 'ghungta' covers her face in front of Kalua and falls off her head when she is inside her home, in page 4, tells the reader that it is the native word for 'veil'. In the same way, 'chula' is the 'stove' where she does 'most of her cooking'.

Ghosh shows how a situation or context can be expressed even with the economic use of language. Only the utterances of the zemindar's name by the judge – 'Neel Rattan Halder' announce the change of fate for the once powerful landlord.

The use of different linguistic devices – like metonymic gap, code-switching, use of untranslated native words etc. are employed by Ghosh in *Sea of Poppies* to highlight the power of context in the use of language.

2.1.1 The Metonymic Gap

Renowned Australian critic and theorist Bill Ashcroft in his *Caliban's Voice* considers metonymic gap as:

> …the cultural gap formed when writers transform English according to the needs of their source culture. […] the inserted language 'stands for' the colonised culture in a metonymic way and its very resistance to interpretation constructs a 'gap' between the writer's culture and the colonial culture. […] The local writer is thus able to represent his or her world to the coloniser (and others) in the metropolitan language, and at the same time, to signal and emphasise a difference from it. (175)

The metonymic gap is one of the strong weapons Ghosh uses in this novel for language transformation. For instance- Deeti's mother-in-law considers her as 'Draupadi'. Thus, the non-native reader comes to know of the popular Hindu mythological character of *Mahabharata*, the virtuous wife of five Pandava brothers. Ghosh gives the supporting information about 'Draupadi' and also the reason why Deeti is called Draupadi by her mother-in-law. With this allusion, he makes the non-native reader admit that there is no other substitution of this name in English language.

2.1.2 Untranslated Native Words

Bill Ashcroft sees this technique of using untranslated native words as the refusal to give the imperial language 'the higher status'. He thinks that 'Refusing to translate words not only registers a sense of cultural distinctiveness but also forces the reader into an active engagement with the vernacular culture' (176). Amitav Ghosh's use of untranslated words and expressions from the native languages of his characters is a remarkable feature in his novels. With a large number of international readers, this act of Ghosh seems to be engaging them actively with the native language and culture of his characters. *Sea of Poppies* is no exception to this linguistic endeavor of its author. Starting from mundane household chores, the novel lists numerous untranslated native words from different aspects of Indian life including religion, cuisine, dresses etc.

Spiritual Journey with Words

The spiritual journey of Baboo Nob Kissin not only introduces native Hindu religious words like 'tikki', 'gurus', 'tols', 'pathshalas', 'ashrams', 'brahmachari', 'sadhus', 'rishis', it takes the non-native readers to the sacred journey with this character as well, making them acquainted with 'Sri Krishna's leela'.

Costume Design

Some of the untranslated words of *Sea of Poppies* are to let the foreign readers get introduced with the costumes of this region. For example, Ghosh uses the untranslated forms of some female costumes like 'sari', 'choli', 'dupatta', 'ghungta', 'khol' etc. The male costumes tell us of the social class of the owner as well. For instance, 'langot' and 'lungi' are for the men from the lower level of the society, whereas 'dhoti', 'kameej', 'kurta' are worn by comparatively solvent males in Indian society.

Colourful Colloquial Words

This text is an exceptional chance for non-native readers to peep through the mundane yet colourful Indian daily lives through its colloquial words. Indian units of measurements come in the novel in the forms of the untranslated words like 'seers', 'tolas', 'chittacks', 'kos' etc. Commonly used spoken words of Indian life are also covered by Ghosh as he includes 'jharu', 'jhulis', 'tamasha', 'ghat', 'muezzins', 'luchha', 'Jamaraj' and many others.

What's on the menu?

In *Sea of Poppies* Amitav Ghosh gives the non-native readers a tour inside the north Bihari cuisines. The foods from this area are based more of vegetables than fishes as this locality is far from the sea. 'Dal', 'dalpuri', 'pakora', achar', khicri' are the Bhojpuri foods 'served' in this novel by Ghosh.

2.1.3 Code Switching

Yaron Matras, in his *Language Contact*, defines code-switching as 'the term that is normally applied to the alternation of languages within a conversation. […] The least controversial code-switch is an alter national switch at the utterance level, produced by a bilingual consciously and by choice, as a single occurrence...' (101-114).

When Amitav Ghosh plays with language, he does not do it unintentionally or without any purpose. One main goal he achieves through code-switching is to indicate the social status of his characters. He draws our attentions to the fact that social classes of the speakers can work as a reason behind code-switching. Ghosh also brings colonial rule as another reason of code-switching in this novel. Mr. Doughty uses two

standards of English language with his second mate Zachary and the lascars of the ship. In his very first entry he is found to shout with the crews in an angry commanding language with many Indian untranslated words and slangs.

> Damn my eyes if ever I saw such a caffle of barnshooting badmashes! A chowdering of your chutes is what you budzats need. […] Do none of you halacores have any wit at all? […] Has he been given the kubber that my bunder-boat has lagowed? Don't just stand there: jaw! Hop to it, before I give your ganders a taste of my lattee. Have your bysmelas before you know it. (25)

From his authoritative tone and many native words and local slangs it is suggested that the listeners are inferior to him in their social rank. However, he immediately switches to a more acceptable form of the language when he speaks with his American colleague Zachary who is taken as a 'white' at this point of the novel: 'And I'm James Doughty. […] The Burra Sahib – Ben Burnham that is – asked me to take charge of the ship' (25-26). Nevertheless, Mr. Doughty is not totally free of native words. He uses 'Burra', the native substitute of 'aged' or 'old'.

Ghosh also shows the code-switching to indicate the listener's social class from the view point of the colonised as well. Raja Neel Rattan Halder, the zemindar of Raskhali, has to maintain his economic and administrative engagements with the colinisers. Educated Neel is at ease to use the standard form of English whenever he is in contact with any Englishman. At the same time he is automatically the native Neel in his dealings with the locals. With his servant-cum-caretaker Parimal, he says: '*Yehkya bat hai*?' (168) and immediately he changes to the formal English with the police officer: 'Ah, Major Hall! What can I do for you?' (170).

Similar is the linguistic behaviour of Serang Ali. As an experienced sailor he has been in contact with fellow sailors from different nationalities and therefore, developed a new kind of communicative English to serve his purpose, full of sailor's pidgin and syntactic fusion. He uses the most unusual version of English language in *Sea of Poppies*. A 'Rohingya from Arakan-side', Serang Ali has learnt his mixed language from 'China-side afeem ship'. He mixes different sentence patterns and translates the native words into English. He argues with Zachary to not to keep Jodu on the boat and says: "'Malum hab cuttee he head?" he said. "What for wanchee this-piece boy? He blongi boat-bugger – no can learn ship-pijjin. Better he wailo chop-chop" (151). What he wants to mean here is: 'Sir, have you lost your mind? Why do you want this boy? He is a boat-beggar who cannot learn the ship-pidgin. It is better if he leaves quickly'. Serang Ali changes his 'twisted' English to the simple native Hindi while he is talking to Jodu: 'Tera nam kya? (142).

The above mentioned examples show how Amitav Ghosh uses code-switching to reveal the social status of the characters.

2.1.4 Misinerpretation

An interesting aspect of language is shown in *Sea of Poppies* – that is -misinterpretation**.** Language can give wrong signals if they are not interpreted correctly. On board of *Ibis*, where people of different castes and origins are travelling together, Paulette tries to hide her identity by changing the intonation of her voice. French by origin, she has learnt Bengali from Jadu and has the trace of waterfront version of the language. She has also learnt English. Neel Rattan is misguided of her identity and thinks of her as some street girl who has learnt English from her customers: "Paulette's tongue had betrayed just enough of the waterfront's sibilance for the mystery to be solved. Neel had heard Elokeshi speak of a new class of prostitute who had learnt English from their White clients – no doubt this was one such, on her way to join some island brothel" (393).

2.2 Language in Contact

Sea of Poppies provides some excellent examples of the result when languages meet. The text basically shows the transformation of English language when it comes in contact with different Indian languages like Bhojpuri and Bengali. Ghosh shows it both from the native speaker's point of view and from the view point of the non-native users.

2.2.1 Transformation of English in Native Speakers' Voice

Experiences of Zachary to learn sailor's pidgin in the beginning of the novel displays the process very closely how he forms a new language for the professional purpose. This is how Ghosh puts Zachary's experiences into words:

> Once under sail, Zachary was forced to undergo yet another education, […] he had to learn to 'resum' instead of 'rations', and he had to wrap his tongue around words like 'dal', 'masala' and 'achar'. He had to get used to 'malum' instead of mate, 'serang' for bo'sun, 'tindal' for bosun's mate, and 'seacunny' for helmsman; he had to memorize a new shipboard vocabulary, which sounded a bit like English and yet not: the rigging became the 'ringeen', 'avast!' was 'bas!', and the cry of the middle morning watch went from 'all's well' to 'alzbel'. The deck now became the 'tootuk' while the masts were 'dols'; a command became a 'hookum' and instead of starboard and larboard, fore and aft, he had to say 'jamna' and 'dawa', 'agil' and 'peechil'. (15-16)

As he is going to be on board of the ship for a long time, Zachary needs to learn the existing pidgin of the sailors. He not only learns new vocabulary, the syntax of his own language is also transformed while he interacts with Serang Ali:

'Chin-chin Malum Zikri! You catchi chow-chow? Wat dam' t'ing hab got inside?

Although startled at first, Zachary soon found himself speaking to the serang with an unaccustomed ease: it was as if his oddly patterned speech had unloosed his own tongue. 'Serang Ali, where you from?'(16) he asked. Zachary's learning of sailor's pidgin shows how a man of his position gets his language transformed to deal with the fellow sailors.

Through Mr. Doughty's voice the author shows how the native English rulers or tradesmen used to mix some Indian words in their dialect intentionally to have a more meaningful and easy communication. However, the interesting thing to

remark here is that the rulers are concerned enough to maintain a remarkable distance with their subjects to highlight their superiority over them. Mr. Doughty has been in this profession for a long time, working with the native Indians. He teaches Zachary the changed language and thus makes him prepared to deal with the native people. As his speech is full of different native Indian words that Zachary is ignorant of, Mr. Doughty summarizes their stand point to Zachary thus:

> If he, Zachary, wasn't to be diddled and taken for a flat, he would have to learn to gubbrow the natives with a word or two of the zubben. […] 'The zubben, dear boy, is the flash lingo of the East. It's easy enough to jin if you put your head to it. Just a little peppering of nigger-talk mixed with a few girleys. But mind your Oordoo and Hindee doesn't sound too good: don't want the world to think you've gone native. And don't mince your words either. Mustn't be taken for a chee-chee.' (49)

The females are also part of this language transformation process as they have to interact with their native servants as well. Mrs. Burnham, the 'BeeBee', mixes native words in her speech: 'The kubber is that there's more than one young missymem who's got a mind to bundo the fellow. […] "you sly little shaytan!" (210); "'Sentiments, my dear Puggly," she said sternly, "are for dhobis and dashies…." (274); '…that's the worst kismet any woman could wish for, even worse than a wordy-wallah!' (275). Again, Mrs. Doughty's speech -- 'You've certainly worked a bit of jadoo tonight.' […]; 'Didn't you dekko?'; or 'you silly bandar' (263) all exhibit the inclusion of native Indian words within their native English language.

Sometimes, the English idioms are partially translated with the native context. In BeeBee's speech –'there's a paltan of mems who'd give their last anna to be in your jooties' (273) is an example of fitting an English idiom in a non-native situation with untranslated and hybrid words.

2.2.2 The Non-native Users' Transformation of English

From a colonised non-native speaker's point of view the "mastery of language affords remarkable power" (Fanon, 9). It is a chance to prove that he "is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (Fanon, 9). However, mother tongue interference creates difficulties in this process of mastery. How non-natives learn to communicate in English for practical purposes is seen in the sailor's pidgin in *Sea of Poppies.* They transform the language in such a way that it sometimes goes far away from the standard version of the language- "Sabbi. Fixee alla propa" (151). Baboo Nob Kissin Pander's English is more of a syntactic fusion - "Only one minute, Miss: then you dekho" (134) or, "Master waiting, waiting, all the time breaking my head and collaring me – why my ship is not coming?" (139).

3. Colonial History of Language: Kind of Social Processes that Make Language

The four hundred years of European colonialism brought European languages to meet many indigenous languages of the people they colonised. The long time social, economic and political relationship between different groups of people automatically had some impact on the languages of both coloniser and colonised. The social processes that were involved in this process of transformation included trade, travelling, administration, education, religion, love, ordinary interaction and so on.

3.1 Trade and Travelling

Trading was the primary aim when the colonies were established. Starting in the 16th century, the Europeans travelled to all the four corners of the earth for next four hundred years and expanded their trade. Taking advantage of their increasing military and imperial power, the Europeans, especially Britain, dominated over world trade during the colonial period. British ships took control over many of the Asian trading routes. During this imperial trading, English language travelled to the farthest corners of the world with the imperials and came into contact with many other languages. Consequently, English language resulted in transforming itself to a great extent. Thus, trading through travelling became one of the chief reasons of the transformation of English language during colonial expansion.

Amitav Ghosh projects British Opium trade at the centre of *Sea of Poppies* (and also the *Ibis* trilogy). Ghosh shows how trade can penetrate in the root level of the colonies touching every sphere of the lives of the colonised. The trader in the novel, Mr. Burnham, travels to and later settles in India. He is in contact with the upper class natives, like the local zeminder, for trading. However, the appointment of Baboo Nob Kissin as the accountant of Mr. Burnham shows the inclusion of educated natives in administrative jobs. Baboo Nob Kissin is the representative of the native intermediate class T. B. Macauley was intending to form from the natives –

> We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, --a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature.

Though not dealing directly with the English masters, the lower class natives were also affected by the trading of the English merchants. Deeti's family in *Sea of Poppies*, like rest of the villagers, has to grow opium for the company. Her husband works in the opium factory. Thus, Amitav Ghosh depicts the relationship of British colonial trading and the lives of their colonial subjects. He is skillful in establishing the relationship among trade, travelling and language. Benjamin Burnham's language is not that much transformed as he uses English mostly with the educated people. Yet, native words like 'pucka', 'shahbash', 'nautch' get into his standard form of English. Mr. Doughty, because of his extensive travelling and dealing with non-native sailors, is allotted a more transformed from of the language, with frequent use of native words – 'Just eat the bish, you gudda', he says to Zachary (114). Travelling has presented Serang Ali

with a totally transformed form of language full of sailor's pidgin. "'Malum Zikri one big piece pukka sahib now. Must wear propa cloths," said the serang. "All lascar wanchi Malum be captin-bugger by'm'by'" (50).

3.2 Education

As a direct result of colonialism, English has become the common medium of education in many countries of the world where it is not the native language. About the colonial power of English language in his country Ngugi writes – "In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was *the* language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference" (11). English language holds much of the world's knowledge, especially in science and technology. The establishment of schools and colleges remain as one of the lasting traits of colonialism. The fore sighting natives learnt the language to fit into the colonial machinery. Raja Neel Rattan is well educated in *Sea of Poppies* and can communicate in English very well. 'Neel's schooling in English had been at once (so) thorough and (so) heavily weighted towards the study of texts…' (237).

3.3 Administration

Although they were traders at first, the colonisers pretty soon got involved in the game of thrones in their colonies. They were concerned about government, justice and different social institutions. The British colonisers came into contact with the local governing system -- zemindary in the Indian subcontinent, the members of this working force and also with the related entertainments of the zemindars. To grab and maintain the power of the colonies, the colonisers had to get hold of an effective and proper communication. When they came to communicate with the local administrators, their languages came in contact and transformation was inevitable. Use of many administrative native words in *Sea of Poppies* shows Ghosh's concern about this reason of language transformation. Many of the native words used here are administrative as this novel highlights trade, justice and governing system of the colonial rulers. Sahibs, huzoor, salams, zemindary, bandobast, burraa khana, sheeshmull, shrub, nautch-girl, khidmutgars, cumra, cuzzanah, kubber, dufter, gomustas, burkundazes, muharirs, silahdars, darogas, jel-khana and many other native words related with the zemindary and administration are used in this novel in an untranslated form.

3.4 Ordinary Interaction

Language transformation can also take place even when people interact casually. It is very much natural to be influenced by the other language when different language users come into contact with each other. If they do not have any common language to communicate, people create pidgins and transformation of language takes place. Amitav Ghosh seems to show the language change by ordinary daily interaction through the English female characters who deal with the native servants. The daily interaction with the natives leaves so deep a trace in their language that they are found to use the transformed English even with other English speakers, as is seen in the languages of Mrs. Burnham and Mrs. Doughty. Even between them, or with Paulette, they mix native words with the English lexicon. Their daily encounter with the servants created a new language of command that Ghosh terms as the 'kitchen-Hindustani'. Zachary's language is influenced by Serang Ali's, even before he starts to learn the sailor's pidgins. The daily interaction with her ayah makes Paulette learn Bengali although she is French. Her language is again transformed once she comes to live with Mr. Burnham's family.

3.5 Love

Love of people, love of a place, or simply love of languages can also have roles in language transformation. Paulette's father Mr. Lambert was in love with the place and therefore settled in India. The horticulture here was of a great interest to him; an interest that Paulette inherited. She gets up early in the morning to have some free time for her when she can 'work on the unfinished manuscript of her father's *Materia Medica* of the plants of Bengal' (128). His inclination to Bengali language is evident from Baboo Nob Kissin's speech: '"Lambert-sahib always discussing with me in Bangla", the gomusta continued. "But I am always replying in chaste English"' (136). Paulette is grown up by their Bengali ayah and 'the first language she learnt was Bengali' (67). Therefore, when she has to live with Mr. Burnham's family, she fumbles with English language along with the other English customs of the house: "…Paulette had labored hard to behave and speak exactly as she should, but not always with success. […] in referring to the crew of a boat, she had proudly used a newly-learnt English word: 'cock swain'. But instead of earning accolades, the word had provoked a disapproving frown" (128).

Yet, Paulette has to leave Bengali, the language of her love, and learn English for practical purposes. The servants in Mr. Burnham's house would not pay heed to Paulette if she speaks in Bengali with them. The bearers and khidmutgars 'would often ignore her if she spoke to them in Bengali – or anything other than the kitchen-Hindustani that was the language of command in the house' (123).

4. Conclusion

While reviewing *Sea of Poppies* in *The Independent*, Shirley Chew, professor of commonwealth and postcolonial literatures at the University of Leeds, writes of the language of the novel thus:

> With the colourful characters, another bedazzling aspect of *Sea of Poppies* is the clash and mingling of languages. Bhojpuri, Bengali, Laskari, Hindustani, Anglo-Indian words and phrases, and a fantastic spectrum of English including the malapropisms of Baboo Nob Kissin, Burnham's accountant, create a vivid sense of living voices as well as the linguistic resourcefulness of people in diaspora.

Amitav Ghosh does his research on the language used by people of different social classes during the period of Opium wars. He has used separate vocabulary for the English traders, sailors, shipmen, native educated class, and also for the uneducated one. Keeping in mind the class, scope and social interactions that influenced their language, Ghosh carefully

has chosen the language, terms and expressions for each of his characters.

Culture journalist Boris Kachka, who is also a contributing editor at *New York* magazine, writes about these linguistic experiments of Ghosh in *New York Guides* that --

> There's a glossary of sorts, and Ghosh makes no apologies for his pidgin-riddled sentences. "When Melville says 'the mizzenmast,' who today knows what that is? The idea that language is a warm bath into which you slip in a comfortable way, to me it's a very deceptive idea."

Using multiple linguistic devices in different ranges Ghosh does three things in *Sea of Poppies*

1. He uses lots of native words that may be recognised within English glossary in future. The number of accepted Indian words in English lexicon is increasing day by day. And Amitav Ghosh is showing many new words the pathway to English language;
2. Amitav Ghosh takes Indian culture to his non-native readers. By using words for Indian cuisine or daily lives the author is representing Indian culture in its real form. The foreign readers would feel to know this rich culture with a first-hand experience once they have read the novel;
3. He holds the process of change in English language that took place during the colonial period in the Indian subcontinent. The facts of colonial rulers, traders, their engagement with the native Indians, sailing – all are interweaved with fiction in this novel. While fabricating his story with these elements, Ghosh keeps 'language' as a parallel living component that is influenced, nourished and finally transformed into a newer version at the end of the story.

Ghosh's linguistic experimentation can be supported from Okara's viewpoint about the transformation of English language by the non-native writers. Gabriel Okara in his essay 'African Speech … English Words' says - "Living languages grow like living things, and English is far from a dead language. There are American, West Indian, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand versions of English. All of them add life and vigor to the language while reflecting their own respective cultures" (Kellman, 187).

About the endurance of the localised 'english' in postcolonial literature Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin express their view in *Empire Writes Back* thus – "Both english and English, with their attendant social, cultural, and political agencies, will exist side by side as 'vernacular' and 'standard'. In the literature this division works on behalf of the literary text in english to signify difference, but it also indicates the very complex dynamic of appropriation in these cultures" (74).

At this present age of globalization, English language is used in the farthest corners of the world. Amitav Ghosh does his best to represent the Indian share in the process of this globalization. Considering the words as living migrants, Ghosh tries to map their route from the Eastern world to the Western shores of English language.

References

1. 'Amitav Ghosh on Language in Fiction' in *Business Standard*. 15 March 2015. http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/amitav-ghosh-on-language-in-fiction-115031500372_1.html[accessed 24 March 2018]
2. Ashcroft, Bill. *Caliban's Voice*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.
3. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. London: Routledge, 1989.
4. Chew, Shirley. '*Sea of Poppies*, by Amitav Ghosh: Strangers under Sail', the Independent, 2008. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/sea-of-poppies-by-amitav-ghosh-5481895.html[accessed 24 March 2018]
5. Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks.* Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
6. Ghosh, Amitav. *Sea of Poppies.* New Delhi: Penguin Group, 2008. Print.
7. Kachka, Boris. 'Amitav Ghosh's Floating Berlitz Tape: More Fun than Learning a new Language: Reading One' New York Guides. 2008. http://nymag.com/guides/fallpreview/2008/books/49502/ [accessed 24 March 2018]
8. Macaulay TB. 'Minute' 2 February 1835. http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html [accessed 24 March 2018]
9. Matras, Yaron. *Language Contact.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Print, 2009.
10. Ngũgĩ, WA T Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. London: J Currey, Print, 1986.
11. Okara, Gabriel. African Speech… English Words. *Switching Languages*: *Translingual Writers Reflect on their Craft*. Ed. Kellman. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, Print, 2003, 185-187.
12. Rollason, Christopher. 'Apparently Unbridgeable Gaps of Language: Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smokes* and Emerging Global English?' Bilingual Cultural Blog. 2011. https://rollason.wordpress.com/2011/09/23/%C2%AB-apparently-unbridgeable-gaps-of-language-%C2%BB-amitav-ghosh%E2%80%99s-river-of-smoke-and-an-emerging-global-english/>> [accessed 24 August 2018]