CHAPTER V

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

This chapter aims to project the nativisation of language in Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies* applying Kachru’s examination of the linguistic aspects of the Indianization of English in India. It also analyses the complexities of multilingualism and the interaction of languages. Braj B. Kachru (1983) pays particular attention to the ways in which English in India has become part of the socio cultural context of the country. Though English is an alien language in India, over the years of its stay in the subcontinent it has taken its roots and blended with the cultural and social matrix of the region and the language has been indianized through a long process of acculturation.

“By Indianism is generally meant a word, phrase, idiom, expression or point of syntactical usage which is not a part of current English or American usage and involves a shade of meaning or usage which is peculiarly Indian or is reminiscent of the lexis, idioms, phrases or syntax current in one of the modern Indian languages” (Gokak 25). Kachru provides examples from vocabulary, syntax and discourse conventions which illustrate the process. Lexical openness is a trade mark of Indian English canon; hybridized and compound words are embedded in the English text, as markers pointing out to a cultural distinctiveness.

Since English is used for intercultural interaction across languages in South Asia there has been a slow acculturation of the language. Kachru remarks, “The Indianness in Indian English or in a wider context the South Asianness in South Asian English is the result of the acculturation of a Western language in the linguistically and culturally pluralistic context of the subcontinent” (*The Indianization of English* 1). He goes on to
say that these parameters of Indian culture and languages determine the language change and language adaptation.

“Indians are bilinguals in the sense that they are using English as a complementary language in typically Indian contexts” (Kachru, The Indianization of English 100). As Indian English chiefly functions in the Indian sociolinguistic context, the social and cultural factors play a significant role in the bilingual’s use of English as L2 and influence the formal features of his English. In the process the language becomes indigenized by adopting words from local culture. A whole range of indigenous words pertaining to food, clothing, forms of address, abuse, caste system, profession, religion appear in both the novels. Indian and Burmese cultural terms reflected in these novels are

Food items – bayagyaw (5), Pickles, mung dal (106), fish-head dals and fish-tail jhols (122), dal-roti (281) - TGP
Aluposth (7), Achars, dalpuri, pakoras, dal, (38), rice and dhal khichri (67), Kathal (223) - SOP

Clothing - gaung-baung (17), sola topee (67), langot (85), longyi (106), htamein (109), kurta (287), shewani (287), angarkha (320) - TGP
kameez (1), sarong (24), lungi, choli, dupatta (189), pantaloon pants (278), gunghta (279) - SOP

Profession - dubash, munshi (12), Khalasis(13), Mingyi, Wungyi, wundauks, myowuns (22), ayahs(54), lathiyls (125), oo-sis, pe-sis, pa-kyeiks (69), luga-lei (71), hsin-ouq (73), pe-si (91), khansama (112), chowkidar(241), afsar (289)
The use of these regional terms has created a true native atmosphere in the novel. It gives a native colour and local flavor to the fiction. Though the native lexical items have more or less appropriate equivalents in English, the native words are preferred for their contextual appropriateness. When a regional term occurs for the first time it is given in italics. The meaning of an indigenous word is either understandable from the context or it is explained in the text. English equivalents for the native words in the novel suggest that his novels are for a wider reading public, not exclusively Indian. Words with English translation are
Jahaj – a ship (TGP 8)
dubash and munshi- a translator and clerk (TGP 12)
Nakhoda, the boat’s owner (TGP 13)
Yethas, bullock-carts (TGP 43)
Thooriya, the sun (TGP 47)
Chaung, a rushing mountain stream (TGP 68)
Basti, a settlement of shacks and settlements (TGP 83)
Mahouts, elephant trainers (TGP 89)
maistry, a labour contractor (TGP 124)
pulwars, single-masted boats (SOP 221)
patelis, double- masted boats (SOP 222)
bhauji, sister-in-law (SOP 243)
ghrina, a stomach clenching revulsion (SOP 268)
godna-wala, a tattooist (SOP 291)

The weaving of native words in the English syntactic matrix is prominent in certain
culture-specific registers like culinary, costume and religion.

By way of clothing, Parimal had brought along the finest Rashkali regalia, including a
chapkan jacket ornamented with aljofat seed-pearls and a turban fitted with the famous
Rashkali sarpeech- a gold spray, inlaid with rubies. (SOP 218)

Neel called for a kurta of plain mushru mulmul and an unbordered dhoti of Chinsura
cotton. (SOP 219)
He was made to eat a meal composed of various auspicious foods - vegetables and puris, fried in the purest ghee and sweets made with patali syrup. (SOP 219)

Lexical openness is a trademark of Indian English canon. It is contextually determined and establishes the legitimacy of Indian English. Lexical innovations in South Asian English as Kachru remarks manifest itself in the following types:

1. Single items
2. Hybridized items
3. Hybridization and Derivative Suffixes
4. String formations

By Single item innovation, Kachru means the transfer of South Asian lexical items into South Asian English (The Indianization of English, 152). These direct adaptations from indigenous languages has been sub grouped into two categories ‘assimilated lexical items’ and ‘restricted lexical items’. Assimilated items are those Indian words which have become a part of the English lexicon and are used both in British and American English. Restricted lexical items have not made it into British or American varieties of English but have a high frequency in the lexicon of Indian English. Sailaja has given a list of assimilated and restricted items from Mary Serjeantson’s A History of Foreign Words in English (Indian English 68-75). Assimilated items used in The Glass Palace and Sea of Poppies are

Bangle (13), Sepoy (26), coolie (29), loot (31), bamboo (69), karma (87),

bungalow (110), cheroot (155), pepper (182), Pyjama (320) – TGP.

Betel (14), shampoo (19), Shawl (107), sandalwood (218), coolie (320) - SOP
Hybridized lexical item comprises of one or more elements of which one is from a South Asian language and one from English. Patil remarks that such hybrid formations are “conscious experimentations carried out with a view to imparting Indian colour to the narrative” (56). Compounding is frequent in Indian languages and this is transferred to Indian English. Kachru has classified these hybrid formations into two sub groups: South Asian items as head and South Asian item as modifier.

South Asian items as head

Abandoned Kalaa (132), City goal (246), English sarkar (430) - TGP

Silver anklets (82), Collector Sahib (108), Muslim julaha (434) - SOP

South Asian item as modifier

Ghadar party (223), Congressmen (287) - TGP

Rudraksha bead (9), nautch- girls (47), Pykari merchant (29), loin cloth (95) – SOP

Hybrid formations with derivative suffixes from the South Asian language

Army- wallah (TGP 331), ferry – wallah (SOP 61), punka –wallah (SOP 127), wordy-wallah (SOP 275)

String formations

String formations have more than two elements one of which may be a compound modifying a head from a South Asian language or from English.

String formations with South Asian head

Quick-fingered pa-kyeiks (69), white-walled pagodas (90), stick-wielding lathiylas (125), Knee-length angarkha (320) - TGP
Leather-workers caste (4), Poppy-seed rotis (93), Gold-embroidered Lahori jooties (107), lathi-wielding silahdar (478) – SOP

String formations with English head

Night-time catches (17), wisp-like slimness (19), tree-shaded path (61), foul-smelling layer (127), rags-clad Indian (132), Chinese-owned business (245), foul-mouthed mechanics (252), grease-blackened overalls (252), White-saried political associates (286), red-tiled shop houses (323), close-cropped hair (332), Sand-grip tyres (389), red-brick chapel (412), half-used tin (413) – TGP

Cloth-wrapped package (6), opium-induced somnolence (36), deep-water ships (61), Beef-eating foreigners (106), long-handled oars (231), Shrewd-looking woman (233), henna-red hair (257), Straw-thatched shed (281), Coconut-fibre ropes (293), opium-wasted body (325) – SOP

String formations with more than two elements

Bare-bodied, white-bearded man (SOP 291), long-planned-for rituals of departure (SOP 353)

Jaideep Sarangi in the introduction to Indian Novels in English – A Sociolinguistic Study has pointed out that such lexical openness ‘reflects postcolonial cultural nationalism in a power-politics scenario’ (19).

Linguists have noted various features in the English speech of Indians. One such feature is the reduplicated item used for emphasis and to indicate continuation of a process. Kachru is of the view that reduplication of words is much more extensive in
several non-native Englishes than in contemporary American or British English. *(The Indianization of English* 12) There is a typical repetition found in the novels of Ghosh which makes the language appear more Indianized.

Reduplicated items used for emphasis are

*It was a mistake, a mistake.* *(TGP 86)*

*Underneath all is same, same* *(TGP 212)*

*‘Run, Arjun!’ . . . ‘Run, Run’* *(TGP 396)*

*It was a mistake – a terrible, terrible mistake* *(TGP 400)*

*Wait, wait* *(SOP 286)*

*Come! Come through the water; it’s not deep* *(SOP 225)*

*Come, come he cried* *(SOP 282)*

*Baba-re . . . no, no, no . . .* *(SOP 338)*

*No, no the scheme will lead only to a big big mischief.* *(SOP 338)*

*Beware! Beware!* *(SOP 367)*

*Chhoro, chhoro-let us out, let us off* *(SOP 371)*

Reduplicated items used to indicate a process are

*Kalua bided his time, counting, counting* *(SOP 177)*

*He waited and waited* *(SOP 177)*

As English is used as a second language in India by English knowing bilinguals in an Indian cultural and linguistic setting a language contact situation occurs which involves two languages (L1 and L2) and in certain cases two cultures (C1 and C2). Such a contact
situation results in an interference or transfer of language at different levels. Kachru has termed the types of transfer in three levels:

1. Transfer of context

2. Transfer of formal items

3. Transfer of form-context components.

**1. Transfer of context**

Transfer of context refers to transfer of elements of certain contexts from C1 and L1 to L2. It involves the transfer of cultural patterns which are absent in those cultures where English is used as L1. According to Kachru cultural patterns like the caste system, social attitudes, social and religious taboos and superstitions which occur in typical Indian context come under such transfer. As *The Glass Palace* is set in Burma, Malaya and India we have transfer of context both from the Burmese and Indian cultural patterns. Here are few instances of such transfer found in *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies*.

Caste system

Caste discrimination is typical of Indian socio-cultural context where the sight and touch of a person of lower caste was considered a social taboo.

*He made no move to help his passenger and was careful to keep his face hidden from him: he was of the leather-workers’ caste and Hukam Singh, as a high-caste Rajput believed that the sight of his face would bode ill for the day.* (SOP 4)

*These sweepers and cleaners of night soil she regarded with such loathing. . . . As for the sweepers’ tools - jharus made from palm-leaf bristles- neither sword nor serpent inspired a deeper unease in her.* (SOP 199)
Social attitude

Burmese custom demanded commoners to go down on hands and knees as a mark of respect to the royalty.

*Everyone who came into the room fell instantly to the floor to shiko to the queen.* (TGP 143)

*Their shikoes became perfunctory; they began to complain about sore knees and refused to stay on all fours while waiting on the queen.* (TGP 52)

In Indian context a widow was expected to either immolate herself in her husband’s funeral pyre or abdicate all the joys and pleasures of the world.

*As a widow at home Uma’s life was one of rigid constraints and deprivation: her hair was shaved off; she could eat no meat or fish and she was allowed to wear nothing but white.* (TGP 184)

*Half dragged and half carried she was brought to the pyre and made to sit cross-legged on it, beside her husband’s corpse.* (SOP 177)

Social taboo

In the Indian cultural context to dine or have close contact with beef-eaters was prohibited for high caste Hindus.

*The two Englishmen merely bowed their heads in response, but Zachary startled Neel by moving forward as if to shake hands. He was rescued by Mr. Doughty, who managed to intercept the American.... Touch him and he’ll be off to bathe.* (SOP 107)

*When entertaining, it was their custom to sit politely at table with their guests but without touching any of the food that was heaped before them.* (SOP 106)

Religious practices
They were racing upstairs to see Neel and Manju walking around the fire, his dhoti joined to her sari by a knot. (TGP 295)

This is a reference to the Hindu custom of the bride and bridegroom walking around the sacred fire and taking vows of loyalty and fidelity with the sacred fire as their witness.

Superstitions

Superstitious beliefs such as the influence of stars on one’s destiny and the medicinal properties of amulets tied to the body are brought out in the following passages.

*Her prospects had always been bedevilled by her stars, her fate being ruled by Saturn - Shani - a planet that exercised great power on those born under its influence, often bringing discord, unhappiness and disharmony.* (SOP 30)

*Baboo Nob Kissin’s hand flew to his amulet. . . . ‘Yes sir; from temple only I got. As such it is mainly for medicinal purposes. Made from copper, which enhances digestion’* (SOP 213).

2. Transfer of formal items

Transfer of formal items may refer to the transfer of L1 meanings to L2 or may it may involve the transfer of formal units like the sentence, clause, fixed collocation and compound.

Transfer of L1 meanings to L2

In this type of transfer the meaning of an item of an Indian language (L1) is transferred to an item in English.
And after that you’ll be off to your in-law’s palace, in Alipore. You’ll be nicely looked after over there. (SOP 266)

It was exactly in this way that she had expected to awaken from the flames – afloat in the netherworld, on the Baitarini River, in the custody of Charak, the boatman of the dead. (SOP 178)

In this system of justice it was the English themselves who were exempt from the law as it applied to others: it was they who had become the world’s new Brahmins. (SOP 239)

In Indian regional context sasural ghar is an ironical reference to prison. The meaning of L1 is transferred to L2.

Afloat in the netherworld is a transfer of Hindu mythological belief that the souls of the departed go to the netherworld thus referring to death.

The world’s new Brahmins - In the Indian context Brahmin refers to a caste that belongs to the register of social hierarchy. In this context it is transferred to mean a privileged lot. Thus the transfer of meaning may result in extension of the register-range of an item of L1.

Formal Transfer

Formal transfer may occur in two ways. It may be translation of an Indian item or it may be a shift based on an underlying Indian source item. Kachru is of the view that while transferring items from L1 to Indian English an Indian writer of English does not think in terms of parallel units in IE but is interested in building up a native contextual unit in L2 (The Indianization of English 133-34). So in translation he makes a distinction between ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ translation and explains that unconscious translation appears at the lower end of the cline of bilingualism where a bilingual does not realize he is using a transferred item of L1 while conscious translation is when a
writer purposely transfers items from L1 for stylistic effect. “Conscious Indianisms are those used in IE writing with the purpose of establishing one-to-one correspondence or partial correspondence between the formal items of the L1 and Indian English, in order to make the dialogue ‘realistic’ to Indianize the situation” (ibid 134).

A creative writer uses translation as a linguistic device to build up a native contextual unit in L2. Translation may be either ‘rank-bound’ where the Indianisms belong to the same rank in both the languages or ‘rank-shifted’ where there is no structural equivalence between Indianism and an Indian source item.

Rank-bound translations

Ox-cart (TGP 126), coach man (TGP 213), Thumb print (SOP 30),

Head – scratching (SOP 54), Ill-omen (SOP 218), Row boat (SOP 279),

oil-lamp (SOP 291), half-light (SOP 394)

Rank-shifted translations

Ceremonial entrance (TGP 40), Turmeric-anointing (TGP 286),

Widow burning (TGP 294), Rice ceremony (SOP 220), cow girls (SOP 291)

Tilak ceremony, sacramental circling (SOP 448)

These linguistic expressions are culture specific and can be understood only in the Indian context.

In a shift no attempt is made to establish formal equivalence as in a translation. An underlying formal item of an Indian language which provides its source is adapted to form a shift. A shift is better understood if considered with its appropriate contextual
units in the Indian Culture as its underlying source item is generally a fixed collocation of an Indian language. The following Indianisms in the novels can be treated as shifts.

*It is you who should wear a skirt and own a stone for grinding face powder.*

*(TGP 39)*

*Now here’s a real Draupadi . . . clinging to her sari.* *(SOP 287)*

The phrases ‘wear a skirt and own a stone for grinding face powder’ refers to the cowardice of the minister in the Burmese court. The humiliation that Neel suffers in the hands of the officials who pull off his dhoti is likened to that of Draupadi in the Indian epic.

Literal translations of Indian proverbs and idioms are also found in the novels which gives a local colour.

*. . . sitting cross-legged on the floor like Brahmins at a feast.* *(SOP 97)*

*Is this the time to stand there like a tree?* *(SOP 225)*

*. . . the ends of his dhoti trailing behind him like the bleached tail of a dead peacock.* *(SOP 287)*

*You can’t throw him away like the skin of a peeled onion* *(SOP 434)*

These types of transfer result in Indianisms which are contextually determined and collocationally deviant from the native varieties of English. They are deviant in the sense that they have specific meaning in typical Indian cultural context (C1) and functions in those contextual units assigned to it in Indian culture which are absent in British culture (C2). In *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies* novels we find many collocations which are contextually determined such as
Ceremonial entrance (40) ground breaking ceremony (195), Turmeric-anointing (286), wedding bed (291), unveiled bride, flower-strewn bed (295) – TGP

Butter-thieving Lord, Blue-throated Lord (146), Ritual-bound Hindus (216), pennant-topped temple (218), Cooking fire (286), Rice ceremony (220), vermillion-filled parting (394) – SOP

Kachru has also noted that there is a syntactic process involved in the formation of Indian collocations - a syntactic unit of higher rank in English is reduced to a unit of lower rank in Indian English. Some of the rank-reduced Indianisms are

boat owner (TGP 13), fish eyes, food-stall, farm wives (TGP 17),

Dress boy (SOP 19), kitchen – boat (SOP 107),

3. Transfer of form-context components

In Indian languages there are formal items which function in typical Indian cultural context (C1). While writing about such contexts in English the formal items which function in such Indian contexts are transferred to IE. This process involves the Indianization of speech functions such as abuses, curses, greetings, blessings and modes of address and reference.

Abuses

Abuses and curses reveal the personal attitude of the speaker in a particular culture and the social position of the addressee.

You fool of an Indian, you coal-black Kalaa (TGP 7)
Didn’t I tell you to keep quiet, You idiot of a Kalaa? (TGP 18)

The Indians were treated as blacks by the Burmese and so Rajkumar as a poor Indian orphan was always addressed to as Kalaa by Ma Cho, the owner of the tea- stall in which he worked as an errand boy.

You dare look me in the eye, you son of a pig? (SOP 469)

When Subedar Byro Singh comes to know that Jodu, the Muslim lascar is in love with Munia, a Hindu, he calls him the son of a pig which is a derogatory term used by the Hindus.

that shit-shoveller you call a husband is as good as dead. (SOP 477)

Kalua as an out caste is referred to as a shit shoveller, a term which reveals his caste and his low position in the society.

Greetings

Greetings and modes of address/ reference convey social attitudes towards a person. In Indian cultural context Namaskar is a verbal greeting used to show respect to elders. Generally it is not used to greet a friend or sibling.

She put her hands together and whispered a namaskar (TGP 268)

Joining hands is a non verbal gesture that often accompanies verbal greetings in Indian context.

She found herself folding her hands in the Indian way (TGP 181)

Neel folded his hands together in welcome (SOP 107)
Neel joined his hands together in greeting. (SOP 170)

He greeted the first mate by beaming broadly and joining his hands together.
(SOP 329)

Kalua dusted himself off folded his hands respectfully together (SOP 203)

Joining hands is an exponent of the same social position while dusting off is a non-verbal clue for greetings used in master/servant relationship. Kalua’s submissive behaviour is the result of years of insult and abuses that he had undergone as an untouchable.

Kachru has also observed that in different social relations like that of master/servant or aged/youth a greeting does not echo the same response in India as in English society but one of respect or love depending on the context. When the aged sailor recognises Jodu and greets him Arre Jodu, na? Isn’t that you - Jodu Naskar? Jodu responds his greetings with salams a mark of respect: Jodu made his salams: Salam Kalaji. Yes, it’s me. (SOP 63)

Phatic language is used to establish rapport and social interpersonal relationship. Ghosh uses Indian phatic expressions which serve as interpersonal greetings.

Acha? Well, now we would like to ask something else of you, Uma (SOP 109)

Blessings

With heaven’s blessings you lap will soon be filled (SOP 35)

Beti, your lap will soon be filled- you will have a thousand sons. (SOP 36)

Modes of address
“Choice of address terms depends on power semantics, solidarity, social stratification and position in a social group, age and kinship” (Sarangi 23). Address terms reflect the status and social position of the addressee. Modes of address and modes of reference are determined by the system of L1 and the social pattern in which the system functions. Ghosh uses Indian address/reference terms that vary socio linguistically.

_He was busy with his kites till late last night, huzoor._ (SOP 218)

In Indian context the honorific term ‘huzoor’ is used to address superiors.

_Before she died she told me to be sure to find Lambert-sahib’s daughter._ (SOP 63)

‘Collector-sahib,’ he said abruptly, ‘have you seen the news?’ (TGP 105)

_sah’b, I told her that you would make sure she came back._ (TGP 331)

Sahib usually refers to a white person. In the above context Beni Prasad and Arjun as representatives of colonial administration are addressed to as ‘sahib’.

_We went back to the village, Khalaji, said Jodu._ (SOP 63)

_Kotwal-ji, it was I, sirdar of the burkundazes who wanted to meet you._ (SOP 223)

_Ramsaran-ji, wait_ (SOP 225)

_Ji_ is used both as a bound morpheme and free morpheme. As a bound morpheme it acts as an honorific suffix and in isolation it acts as an honorific address term that indicates respect and honour. _Ey_ is used to address a person of low caste.

_Ey-re’ Kalua_ (SOP 60)
In Burmese culture the queen is addressed as ‘Mebya’ and ‘gyi’ is used as an honorific suffix.

For your safety, Mebya (TGP 23)

Sayagy! Shall I go up . . . ? (TGP 72)

Indian reference terms found in the novels are mostly related to the profession of the addressee.

His name was Subedar Bhyro Singh (SOP 31)

Raja Neel Rattan Halder, the Zemindar of Rashkali was on board. (SOP, 39)

It’s that duffadar, Ramsaran-ji she whispered to Kalua (SOP 203)

The tatties were being wetted constantly by a team of punkah-wallahs. (SOP 212)

Contextual restrictions are made by some of the kinship and neutral relationships and hence regional terms are used to indianize the expressions in English. The Indianized mode of address found in the text makes the text more Indian than English.

Ma, what are you looking at?

Beti, I saw a jahaj - a ship (SOP 8)

Kabutri ki ma- (SOP 27)

In Indian culture women do not tell their husband’s name. Deeti uses the reference term ‘that man of mine’ to refer to her husband.

That man of mine is unwell at the factory. (SOP 60)

In addition to lexical borrowing, hybrid formations, translation, transfer and literal translation of idioms and proverbs, Ghosh has also employed code mixing and code
switching as a tool to bring forth the Indianness of the sociolinguistic traits in an Indian context. Prasad remarks, “Many shades of social meaning can be conveyed by people by their choice of sound, word or grammar” and so he feels “it is common for them to code-switch from one variety to another” (47).

Bokamba defines code switching as the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event, in other words intersententially. Sridhar and Sridhar have made a distinction between code switching and code mixing stating that the language alternations take place intra-sententially in code-mixing. ‘Code mixing refers to the transition from using linguistic units words, phrases, clauses, etc. of one language to using those of another within a single sentence’ (408). Moreover code-switching has pragmatic or discourse oriented functions that may be absent in code-mixing.

Sridhar and Sridhar have also distinguished code mixing from borrowing on the following grounds.

(1) Borrowing is usually restricted to single lexical items while code mixing involves words, phrases, clauses and sentences.

(2) Borrowing can occur in the speech of monolinguals but code mixing presupposes a certain degree of bilingual competence.

(3) Code mixing is not used to fill lexical gaps.

(4) Borrowings represent mostly nouns whereas code mixing draws on all constituent types.

(5) Borrowings represent a restricted set of expressions while Code mixing draws creatively upon the whole of the vocabulary and grammar of another language.
Code switching as Kachru remarks is a ‘contextually determined device’ (The Indianization of English 198) which in multilingual settings is determined by the relationship between the speaker and addressee, nature of the speech event and the socio-cultural situation which includes the attitudes, values, conventions, prejudices and preferences of the people who use the language. Nicole Devarenne is of the view that “Speakers willingness to mix and switch language is not simply a matter of convenience but also serves stylistic purposes and can be used as an expression of identity or to signal subtle shifts in footing” (399). Code switching in the present context is used as a marker of attitude, emotions and also for contextual emphasis. English equivalents for these words are also given for the understanding of the non-native readers.

Code mixing and code switching are found in the following occurrences as an

Expression of contempt:

*He had been swearing all the while, of course but now he used an oath that everybody understood: Soor ka batcha (SOP 227)*

As already mentioned an abuse is socially determined and exposes the attitude of the speaker. The speaker here is Mr.Crowle, a white man. He switches codes to reveal his contempt for Serang Ali, to insult him, and to show his authority. The particular abuse son of a pig results in discord when used by a non-muslim to Muslim and in this context the novelist records, there was not one among the crew who did not bridle at the curse.

Expression of alarm:

*It was his expression of alarm – Burra Malum aya! – that alerted Jodu (SOP 226)*
Steward Pinto is alarmed by the unexpected visit of Captain Chillingworth and Mr. Crowle to inspect the ship at an odd time when the crew was sluggish after a midday meal. Pinto’s utterance, a mix of laskari *burra malum* and Hindustani *aya* expresses caution and alerts the crew members.

Expression of surprise:

*The cksen recognized him at once: Arre Jodu na? Isn’t that you- Jodu Naskar? (SOP 63)*

The cksen is surprised to see Jodu after a long time and initiates the conversation with the Bengali interjection ‘Are’. The element of surprise revealed through the interjection *Are* and interrogatory *na* reveals that the domain is an informal one.

Expression of concern:

*Glancing from Hukam Singh’s prone body to Deeti, he said quietly: Tumhara mard hai? Is he your husband? (SOP 98)*

The speaker is the English agent in the opium factory. While Deeti goes to the opium factory to fetch her sick husband, she is assailed by the supervisors but the English agent interferes with concern and speaks to her in his stilted Hindi. Deeti noticed the kindness in his voice.

Expression of anger:

*Where were you? Kam-o- kaj na hoi? You think there’s no work to be done? (SOP 6)*

The speaker is Deeti who is obviously annoyed by her brother-in-law’s sarcastic comments about her working alone and the need for a son to help her in the field. Her
anger and indignation is reflected in this particular discourse which she addresses to her daughter.

‘That is enough, Mr. Collector,’ she said. ‘Enough, bas karo’ (TGP 107).

Beni Prasad Dey, the collector, tells the queen that the influence of the British Empire would persist for centuries and points out that the Burmese royalty would not be in India if they had known it earlier. The queen is incensed by his comments and retorts in Hindustani.

‘Come Dolly, Let’s go . . . chalo, chalo, jaldi chalo’ (SOP 171).

Dolly is worried as the queen had refused to meet her because of her marriage to Rajkumar and refuses to move from the place. Rajkumar grows impatient and switches to Hindustani to urge her to go with him.

Code switching is frequent in declarative sentences also. Some illustrations of code switching in declarations are

*Remember- you have one night to decide . . . if you come, it must be at dawn . . .

*Sawere hi awat ani. (SOP 205)

The speaker is the duffadar who warns a wavering Kalua to make a quick decision on signing as a grimitya in *Ibis*.

*He turned to the sepoys who had led him in, and said, in rough Hindusatani:*

*Mooth Khol. . . open his mouth. (SOP 287)*

*Without a glance in his direction the sergeant issued another order, in Hindusthani . . . Kapra utaro . . . take off his clothes. (SOP 288)*
The order given by the English sergeant in Hindusthani shows the attitude of the sergeant who is infuriated by Neel speaking to him in English. As a colonizer he could not accept a native convict speaking to him in his own language. With an attitude of indifference he gives orders to the sepoys in English.

The commands of the sailors are also marked by mixing of codes. Generally code mixing is bound with the identity of the speaker. But in the present context it is attributed to the identity of the persons addressed. As the grimityas may not be familiar with the language of the maritime language, the orders are given in their native languages. Here are a few instances of code mixing in the nautical directives.

... at last the command came- ‘Foretopmen aloft!’ – Trikatwale upar chal! (SOP 368)

‘All hands to quarters, ahoy!’ The pilot’s shout was followed by a cry from the serang:

Sab admi apna jagah! (SOP 369)

‘Pay out the cable!’ - Hamar tirkao! ‘Haul together!’ - Lag sab baraber! (SOP 170)

Code mixing is seen in certain culture specific contexts which have no equivalents in the native variety of English. There are also certain texts which demand contextual emphasis. Here are a few illustrations from the novel where the original language is maintained for contextual emphasis.

They shouted an invocation to the river – Jai Ganga Mayya Ki . . . – and gulped down a draught of air. (SOP, 7)

He began to mutter prayers as if to ward off your ghost: He Radhe, he Shyam (SOP 334)
Then his lips began to move in prayer. . . ‘B’isma’llah ar-raḥman ar-raḥim, handu’llillah al-ra ṣb al-ʿāmin . . . In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Praise to the Lord of all Creation . . . ’ (SOP 369)

The mess-boys in all their many faiths, knelt beside him and bowed their heads: Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum . . . Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with thee . . . (SOP 171)

The narrative is also embedded with Bhojpuri folk songs sung by the natives on various occasions - Wedding song, Prayer song, Song of parting and so on. The vernacular is used here not only to bring out the Indianness but also to give voice to the exiles “because of all the tongues spoken between the Ganges and Indus, there was none that was in its equal in the expression of the nuances of love, longing and separation - of the plight of those who leave and stay at home” (SOP 399).

Usually these songs are sung by women folk. The English equivalents for these songs are also given. Wedding songs are sung when the bride goes to the groom’s house accompanied by her relatives and friends. As Deeti was sitting in the boat anticipating a new life with her husband she heard the women singing;

*Sakhiya –bo sarya more pise masala
*Sakhiya –bo bara mithe lage masala
*Oh friends, my love’s a-grinding
*Oh friends, how sweet is this spice! (SOP 32)

Prayer song is sung at the end of the end of the day when darkness creeps in. As Deeti returns from the opium factory with her sick husband the future seems bleak and she is
worried how she would manage without her husband’s salary. Though the day was still bright, Deeti felt her life being enveloped by darkness and sang,

*Sajh baile Sajha ghar ghar ghume  
Ke mora sajh manayo ji  
Twilight whispers at every door: it’s time to mark my coming.* (SOP 99)

Song of parting is sung as a lament by the mothers when the bride is carried to her groom’s house. As Ibis starts her voyage, Deeti is reminded of her daughter Kabutri and is worried that she would not be there to see her daughter growing up nor would she present at her daughter’s wedding. The women folk in the ship join Deeti as she sings

*Talwa jharaile  Kawal khumlaile  
Hanse roye  Biraha biyog  
Kaise kate ab  Biraha ki ratiya  
The pond is dry / The lotus withered  
The swan weeps / For its absent love  
How will it pass / This night of parting?* (SOP 398)

In *Sea of Poppies* Ghosh has not only brought in Bhojpuri, Bengali and Hindustani but has also the Laskari dialect. Sailors from all around the Indian Ocean – East Africans, South Asians, Fillipinos, Chinese, Malays and Indians went by the name ‘lascar’. As the Lascars were from different places their language too was an odd hybrid of words and phrases assimilated from different places. The laskari dialect which served as the lingua franca of these sailors from varied backgrounds is referred to by the novelist as the “motley tongue, spoken nowhere but on the water, whose words were as varied as the
port’s traffic…yet beneath the surface of this farrago of sounds, meaning flowed as freely as the current beneath the crowded press of boats” (*SOP* 96).

Zachary Reid the second mate had to learn the language of his crew members and a new shipboard vocabulary: ‘resum’ for ‘rations’, ‘malum’ for mate, ‘serang’ for bo’sun, ‘tindal’ for bosun’s mate, and ‘Seacunny’ for helmsman. The ‘peechil –kamre’ meant the after-cabins, ‘beech –Kamra’ the midships- cabin and ‘dabusa’ was supposed to be the ‘tween deck. In the new shipboard vocabulary

\[
\text{. . . the rigging became the ‘ringeen’, avast was ‘bas’ and the cry of the middle-morning watch went from all’s well to alzbel. The deck now became the ‘tootuk’ while the masts were ‘dols’; a command became a ‘hookum’ and instead of starboard and larboard, fore and aft, he had to say ‘jamna’ and ‘dawa’, ‘agil’ and ‘peechil’.} \ (SOP 14-15)
\]

The laskari, as Ghosh remarks, was just a language of command and for communication the lascars used Pidgin, a hybrid language which has served as a trade language for centuries. Pidgin arises when groups of people who do not speak a common language come into contact with each other. Kachru enumerates the characteristics of pidgin namely ‘structural simplicity, inability to express abstract concepts and restricted functional range’ (*The Indianization of English* 196). The conversation between Zachary and Serang Ali when they meet for the first time goes like this:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Chin- Chin Malum Zikri? You catchi chow-chow? Wat dam’ t’ing hab got inside?} \\
\text{‘Serang Ali, where you from?’ he asked} \\
\text{Serang Ali blongi Rohingya- from Arakan-side} \\
\text{And Where’d you learn that kinda talk?}
\end{align*}
\]
‘Afeem ship,’ came the answer. ‘China-side, Yankee gent’l’um allo tim tok so-fasion. Also Mich’man like Malum Zikri.’ (SOP 16)

The novelist records that Zachary was startled at first to hear the Serang speak in a different dialect but soon he found himself speaking with an unaccustomed ease. He felt as if his tongue was let loose.

Keith Whinnom remarks that the creation of a pidgin depends on contact between speakers of three or more mutually unintelligible languages. “The need for the rapid development of a means of communication results in a relatively simple type of language which may draw on the languages of the groups involved. In structure they do not resemble any of the languages in contact though they draw vocabulary items from the languages” (98). The characteristics of Pidgins as Whinnom records are:

1. Polysemy –

   You catchi chow-chow? (SOP 16)

   So tell no: catchi wife- o yet (SOP 16)

   If no catchi dokto he makee die (SOP 23)

   Malum drinki he: no catchi sick (SOP 23)

   Catchi is used to express different meanings like eat, marry, fetch and healthy.

2. Mutifunctionality

   Lascar bugger savvi too muchi sail ship (SOP 17)

   Serang Ali too muchi smart bugger (SOP 17)
**Too muchi press gang in Por’Lwee (SOP 18)**

In the first sentence *too muchi* is used as an adverb, (knows well) in the second it is used as an adjective (very smart) and in the third sentence it is used as a quantificational determiner (many).

3. Repetition to intensify


*(SOP 16)*

*Take ship por’L wee- side three days, look-see* (SOP 17)

*Malum, look-see* (SOP 18)

Loreto Todd (1984) has remarked that pidgins are syntactically simpler than mother tongue varieties of English. Negation involves the use of a negative marker that precedes a verb or a noun.

*No sabbi ship-pijjin* (SOP 17)

*Malum Zikri go so fashion to Por’Lwee, no come back.* (SOP 18)

*I ain got no watch* (SOP 19)

Plenty is used as an intensifier as in

*plenty sick, plenty smelly* (SOP 16)

*plenty trouble* (SOP 18)
The novel displays different varieties of English as spoken by the characters. The master of the ship was a Boston Irishman whose language had an Irish drawl as seen in his following utterances to Zachary.

*Not going to spill no colour on my table, even if it’s a pale shade of yaller* (SOP 15)

*I know how to take care o’ meself: not the first time I’ve had a run of the squitters and collywobbles.* (SOP 16)

When the Ibis reached India, the schooner dropped anchor at the mouth of the Hooghly River. Waiting for the pilot to steer the ship up the Hooghly River, Zachary heard Doughty shouting down the gangway:

*Damn my eyes if ever I saw a caffle of barnshooting badmashes. A chowdering of your chutes is what you budzats need.* (SOP 25)

*Where’s the mate? 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.* (SOP 25)

This is a fine example of the language of the colonizer being infiltrated by the language of the colonized. Tonkin is of the view that in a multilingual situation “transfer” or “interference” is inevitable and so it is important to examine “shifts between different languages, between a standard and non-standard dialect or a mixture of all these, according to social situation” (Quoted in Prasad 47).
The English of the Europeans who lived in South Asia for many decades during the colonial period was spiced up with many terms from Hindustani and Bengali. The novelist has spelled the native words in such a way that their European accent is highlighted. Mrs. Burnham’s manner of talking shows the native influence on the speech patterns of the Europeans who have been living here for years.

Mrs. Burnham did not like the idea of having outhouses in her residence for she said

\[\textit{So tiresome to have to run outside every time you have to drop a chitty in the dawk.} \textit{(SOP 123)}\]

Trying to convince Paulette to accept the old judge Kendalbushe’s proposal of marriage, she tells her,

\[\textit{Don’t you samjo, Puggly? He’s planning to propose to you. . . . ‘Can you imagine dear what a prodigious stroke of kismet it will be for you to bag Mr.Kendalbushe? He’s a nabob in his own right – made a mountain of mohurs out of the China trade. Ever since he lost his wife every larkin in town’s been trying to bundo him. I can tell you, there’s a paltan of mems who’d give their last anna to be in your jooties.’} \textit{(SOP 273)}\]

Here are a few examples of the native words pronounced in the English manner.

\[\textit{But mind your Oordoo and Hindee doesn’t sound too good.} \textit{(SOP 49)}\]

\[\textit{The long- tails have to be given a taste of the lattee.} \textit{(SOP 113)}\]

\[\textit{‘. . . there isn’t a rootie in the choola, is there?’} \textit{(SOP 276)}\]
Paulette Lambert spoke a Frenchified English, mixed with native words that reflect her French background and Indian upbringing.

‘An idée came to my mind,’ said Paulette

So it is not possible, according to you, for a woman to be a marin? (SOP 254)

Indian influence is very much apparent in the language of Nob Kissin and he may be considered to be a minimal bilingual belonging to the Zero level in Kachru’s cline of bilingualism. “Such bilinguals may have some knowledge of the written or spoken medium of English, but they will not be considered proficient in the language” (Kachru, The Indianization of English 129). Indian influence is seen in the use of continuous tense where a native speaker would use simple present as in:

‘Lambert-sahib always discussing with me in Bangla, but I am always replying in chaste English’ (SOP 125)

Few more instances of such influence are

‘Yes sir, from temple only I got.’ (SOP 213)

‘Already I have been on one ship – to Jagannath temple, in Puri. No problem was there.’ (SOP 215)

Ghosh’s thorough knowledge of how language functions in society is reflected in the different ways the characters are made to speak. They speak differently according to the company in which they find themselves. Zachary feels at ease with Serang Ali and
speaks to him in the lascar dialect. Their conversation reveals the straightforwardness and
the trust they had on each other.

'I'll be dickswiggered!' said Zachary, in grudging admiration. 'Don't that just beat
the Dutch? You sure that the right place?'

'What I tell you no? Serang Ali Number One sabbi ship-pijjin.' (SOP 17)

In the company of the ship's captain and first mate, Zachary speaks in Standard English.
While conversing with Paulette Lambert he puts on a high-spin.

'Is something the matter?' Zachary said, alarmed by her pallor. 'Are you all right, Miss Lambert?'

'Believe me, Miss Lambert, a schooner's no place for a woman - lady, I mean, begging your pardon. Especially not someone who is accustomed to living like this. . . .'

'Marine?' he said in surprise. 'No, Miss Lambert, there sure aren't any woman marines that I ever heard of.' (SOP 254)

In an interview to L’ Expresso by Angiola Codacci, Ghosh has remarked, “The Indian Ocean is an incredibly multilingual area and I wanted to give the reader some idea of this by using different varieties of language. English has been a globalised language for a long time, so it is rich in dialects and registers and I don’t see any reason why these vast resources be put to use.” As Shirley Crew points out, the mingling of different languages Bhojpuri, Bengali, Laskari, Hindustani and Anglo-Indian phrases and words reveals the linguistic resourcefulness of people in diaspora. (The Independent)