Chapter VI

Tradition and the Deviation
(Lexical, Syntactic and Phonological Rhetoric)

The fiction of the Desais, especially of the junior Desai is notable for its ‘chutneyed’ English or rather Hinglish. Randy Boyagoda uses the word “chutneyed” in the introductory paragraph of his review of Anita Desai’s latest novel _The Artist of Disappearance_ (2011) in the following context:

Sometimes a mango is just a mango. This is rarely the case in Indian novels, where mangoes tend to be luminescent orbs dangling in steamy air, glistening with sweetness, sex and being itself, waiting to be plucked, caressed, birthed. Either that or they’re muddy and rotten and piled high on a dirty road, surrounded by rancid garbage, rank cooking fires, beggar children and grinning, greasy swindlers. In other words, mangoes in India’s literary fiction are much like India in literary fiction: distinguished by pleasing aromas or permanent anarchy, if not some _chutneyed_ combination. (“Anita Desai on Longing and Striving”)

If a mango is not just a mango for Indian English Fiction, if it can be used to refer to “pleasing aroma” as well as to “permanent anarchy” or to both in the form of “chutneyed combination”, will it not require a macaronic aspect of language?

India is home to several language families; about seventy four percent of the total population of India speaks Indo-Aryan Languages, twenty three percent Dravadian while others speak Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman, etc. The 1991 census of India records 1.576 individual ‘mother tongues’. It was recorded in the 2001 census of India that more than a million native speakers speak 30 languages and 122 languages are spoken by the other more than 10,000 people (“Languages of India”). According to Bhatia and William C., “Three millennia of language contact have led to significant mutual influence among the four language families in India and South Asia. Two
contact languages have played an important role in the history of India: Persian and English” (qtd. in “Languages of India”).

According to Central Intelligence Agency (US), 41% of the total population of India speaks Hindi, 8.1% Bengali, 7.2% Telugu, 7% Marathi, 5.9% Tamil, 5% Urdu, 4.5% Gujarati, 3.7% Kannada, 3.2% Malayalam, 3.2% Oriya, 2.8% Punjabi, 1.3% Assamese, 1.2% Maithili, and the remaining languages are spoken by 5.9%, as it was recorded in the 2001 census (“People and Society: Languages”). This led Joseph E. Schwartzberg, in his article on India for Britannica, to write:

India remains one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Apart from its many religions and sects, India is home to innumerable castes and tribes, as well as to more than a dozen major and hundreds of minor linguistic groups from several language families unrelated to one another. (“India”)

In spite of geographical, ethnic and linguistic diversity, there is a sense of oneness in all Indians. Pt. Nehru, in his The Discovery of India, writes:

It is fascinating to find how the Bengalis, the Marathas, the Gujratis, the Tamils, the Andhras, the Oriyas, the Assamese, the Canarese, the Malayalis, the Sindhis, the Punjabis, the Pathans, the Kashmiris, the Rajputs, and the great central block comprising the Hindustani-speaking people, have retained their peculiar characteristics for hundreds of years, have still more or less the same virtues and failings of which old tradition or record tells us, and yet have been throughout these ages distinctively Indian, with the same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities.(61)

To get such an audience involved in the theme and rhythm of any creative writing, an author, on the one hand needs to follow the standard norms of the language they are writing in, and on the other they have to put their ideas in such a creative or rather in macaronic way so as to make the readers feel as one or the other character of the story. In this regard, Kiran and her mother, Anita Desai, seem to have written the novels much in the same way. To situate the scenes and events in their geographical locations and to make their characters look like real, the Desais make their novels full of stylistic nuances. They seem to have accepted the notion propelled by Meenakshi Mukherjee, which she puts in her well-known critique: “the most significant challenge
is the task of using the English language in a way that will be distinctively Indian and still remains English" (165).

Undoubtedly, both the mother and the daughter, unlike the ancestors of Indian English Fiction like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R K Narayan, who have often been criticized for their indianized version of English, had been successful in using the Standard English. At the same time, it had been distinctively Indian in their hand, thus always retaining pleasing aroma of Indian culture. In the light of the above discussion, we will discuss style and structure of their fiction, in terms of the lexical and syntactical structure of Standard English. It would also try to reveal the way the two deviated from the standard norms. In this context, it must be mentioned that only the select novels of the mother and daughter are the focus of the present research work.

6.1 Anita Desai

With the publication of Anita Desai’s first novel *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), the attention of the critics shifted to the duality of style and structure of Indian English fiction. It allured the critics from across the world. Unlike in the fiction of her predecessors, the exnormative and endonormative balance is apparent in her fiction. The introductory note of Encyclopedia depicts her credibility in the best possible manner:

Anita Desai (born 1937) has been touted by “British Writers” A. Michael Matin as “one of the preeminent contemporary Indian novelists.” even referred to by many as the Mother of the Indian psychological novel genre. Her meticulous depictions of modern Indian life, combined with an elevated level of linguistic skill that frequently enters the poetic realm, have secured her a place of honor in the pantheon of Indian authors. (“Desai, Anita”)

Just as Dickens was pre-eminent among English writers of his time, Anita Desai is among writers of Indian English Fiction, as the above lines by A. Michael Matin suggest so. Be it a matter of theme i.e. psychological that she deals with, or a matter of linguistic competency that she showed just from her debut in the field and which finds a constant development throughout her literary career, she has been regarded as “the pantheon of Indian authors”. With a different narrative technique and style from
her predecessors as well as from her contemporaries, Anita Desai created a new fictional world. It consists of special literary and linguistic techniques like the poetic devices, code switching, code mixing, and with lexical as well as syntactic experiments. V. Sridevi puts it in the following words:

Anita Desai differs from other Indian novelists such as R K Narayan, Mulkraj Anand, Bhabani Battacharya, and Raja Rao in her set of language and style that she employs to portray the inner crisis and tension existing in the life of a character. (11)

Unlike Raja Rao, who admits: “We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as .... Our method of expression has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American” (“Foreword” v). Desai can write in pure Queen’s English and can equally deal with the dialect Raja Rao referred to. No critique so far could raise questions on her use of English. Unlike Manohar Malgonkar who admits that, in India, using English as a medium for literature, especially, fiction seems to be “a bit of fake, as though going about with a false caste mark, for he writes in a language not his own” (qtd. in Inamdar, 262), in an interview with Magda Coasta which was originally published in Spanish in the magazine Lateral, March 2001. Desai's counter-claim is remarkable:

When I started to write there was a lot of questioning: can you really express the Indian experience, and Indian ways of thinking and speaking in the English language—a foreign language? But I think by the 80s everyone accepted the fact that English had become an Indian language, it was not going to disappear, it had taken roots and had started growing not in any artificial manner but in a very natural manner. Indians have taken it to our world and turned it into an Indian language. (“Interview with Anita Desai”)

That Desai is quite different from her predecessors and contemporaries may be because of the fact that she, except tremendous influence of Ruth Jhabvala, had never been under the influence of any other Indian authors writing in English. When Mr. Jai Arjun Singh, an Indian Journalist, asks about the authors. she derived the inspiration from and about the influences of the literary figures, she carries with her. she admits:

Mainly non-Indian writers, as you might have guessed. I read all the English classics – the Bronte sisters, Virginia Woolf, E M Forster. We didn't really
study the Indian writers — even Tagore wasn’t studied — we had to discover them on our own, later in life. As for contemporaries, I had a sense that I had no contemporaries! R K Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand were there, but from an earlier generation and I didn’t know them. The one contemporary I had, whose company I enjoyed and who was a tremendous influence on me, was Ruth Jhabvala — she was a neighbour of ours in old Delhi, living a life very similar to my own. (“A Conversation with Anita Desai, and Some Notes on Her Work”)

Desai never tried her hand at the kind of dialect Raja Rao refers to or she never allowed her writing to be “a bit of fake” as Malgonkar thinks about Indian Writing in English. However, for the sake of feasibility, to make the theme, the characters and the social milieu they are under, more comprehensible, she frequently enjoys code-mixing and code-switching. She is multilingual and can deal with English, Hindi, German and Bengali equally. But, whenever, it comes to mixing some particular terms of a language with the other or occasionally switching over a language, she seems to have had become more conscious to such usages as compared to those in her earlier writings. In her interview with Jasbir Jain, she comments:

I think and all Indians are aware — since all of us are bilingual if not trilingual — one tends to employ more than one language and select whichever word seems more apt and most descriptive at the moment. There are a few German words and phrases which come easily to me, seem to me to be more descriptive than their Hindi or their English or Bengali counterparts but, actually, I have had to quite consciously erase these from my writing as well as from my present life too. It would be too complicating to bring in the German strand apart from all other strands which make up my life. (qtd. in Shah. 8-9)

In general, when a writer, within a single strand, switches over from one language to the other, it is never without a purpose. That particular writer does so keeping the target readers in mind. This is very much like authorial intention. When Anita talks directly to her readers, her prose is cluttered with English adjectives and adverbs that make her style “marked by three characteristics: sensuous richness, a high-strung sensitiveness and a love for the sound of words” (Mukherjee 179). One witnesses this
“sensuous richness and sensitiveness” in the dialogues and monologues of her fiction. But when she makes her characters speak, she often changes her mode of English speech to suit the social milieu to which her characters belong. However, the deviation from the standard norms of English Grammar, insertion of the loan words and changing the spellings of English words for the purpose to show indigenous idiosyncratic nature of Indians using a certain kind of English are less frequent in her fiction than one finds in the few novels of the junior Desai. But, more daringly, the senior Desai, sometimes, uses such phrases as: “Drinka pinta milka day” (BB 110). The following poetic lines from Voices in the City probably serve the purpose of representing the idea discussed above:

Ghosh Mosh Chunder Bose my name,
In Radha Bazar I keep my shop.
O I’m a veree good Bengalee babu.
In Radha Bazar I keep my shop.

(VC 156)

In the above lines, sung by Nirode to Amla, in the noun phrases “Radha Bazar” and “Bengalee babu”, the words “Bazar” and “babu”, though included in the 8th edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, have been included here. It has been done here with an intention to show Nirode’s speech which is indicative of the way the Hindustani expressions are being mixed in the English speeches. Moreover, writing “Bazaar” as “Bazar” and “Bengali” as “Bengalee” further supports the idea. Changing the spelling of the word “very” as “veree” to suggest that Nirode pronounced this word as /ˈveriː/ and not as /ˈveriː/, which creates an impression of the way, Indians pronounce certain vowels. To Meenakshi Mukherjee, the authors usually “change the spelling of English words to indicate the illiteracy of the speaker” (166).

One thing is noticeable here that the speaker, Nirode, is neither illiterate, uneducated nor the proletariat. He is educated and represents the bourgeoisie. The intention of the author behind changing the spelling of the words even in the speech of the middle class educated characters suggest that these types of pronunciation are prevalent, more or less, in every state of Indian society. It may be in the form of code-mixing and code-switching which can be seen in almost all Indian vernaculars, dialects and
languages, or in the speech of those who feel themselves equally competent in English as they are in their mother tongue.

To show the nuances of the social variants in pronunciation, Anita Desai, many times, deviates from the phonotactic rules for the position of phonemes in English. Thus in "This is how they did it in the fill-urn: the younger said, (WGTS 40), to make the word "film" - /film/ sound like /film/, she inserts the vowel /u/ between /l/ and /m/, also to suggest that the word was pronounced as if it were disyllabic, she inserts /-/ between the consonant /l/ and the vowel /u/. Her deliberate use of hyphens in the above discussed word and in the underlined words in "our women mem-bers of parliament have taken up the cause" (CP 130) and in "making way of her daughter and their lug-age to follow" (idem) serve the purpose of showing how English spoken in India is influenced by syllable timed rhythm of Hindi. The following example from Bye-Bye Blackbird substantiate why Desai changes the spellings of words:

The scene changed, the music changed, new characters appeared. They looked into a school room, swarming with the dark, oiled heads of Pakistani and Indian children, and at a teacher at the blackboard painstakingly drawing a picture of a man with an upraised ann. When it was done, she shouted, 'Police!' The children were awed and solemn and, with solemnity, they mimicked, 'Pulleece'. (BB 25)

In the above extract, Desai, first, provides the background of the cultures she is dealing with, suggested by the words "swarming" and "oiled heads" and then by changing the spelling of the word "police", she gives an idea of the way Indians and Pakistanis pronounce English words.

Sometimes we find several repetitions of a vowel in a word, for example "It keeps me sooo busy. I never get a minute." 'Noooo, he said, Nooo." (FM 140). English is a stress-timed language while Hindi, like Latin and French, is a syllable-timed language. This is the reason why Indian-English speakers usually speak with a "syllabic rhythm" (Crystal 360). Unlike English where the stressed syllable gets higher pitch: in Hindi, it is pronounced with lower pitch. This influence can be clearly felt when some people from India speak English. This, according to R. L. Varshney, makes "certain Indian accents of a "sing-song" nature, a feature seen in a few English dialects in Britain.
such as Scouse and Welsh English” (qtd. in “Indian English: Supra-segmental Features”).

Different linguistic varieties found in the dialogues of her characters make one feel that Anita Desai, like a linguist, can differentiate the marked differences between the regional and Standard English:

‘Hah, it’s always a Sikh in your stories,’ grumbled Jasbir, when he had finished laughing. ‘What about the Bengali who got onto the bus and asked for a ticket to “Downsbury”, and when the conductor asked him to spell it, he said “Qow-yow-yee-yee-yen-yes bury”.’

‘It must have been a Madrasi, not a Bengali,’ said Adit, with dignity. ‘The Bengali has the only correct English accent in India.’ (BB 132)

In many parts of India, especially in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and South India, the consonants /l/, /m/, /n/ and /s/ are generally spelled /jəl/, /jəm/, /jən/ and /jəs/ respectively. Probably, keeping this fact in mind, Anita Desai makes Indian passenger spell the consonants /n/ and /s/ as /jən/ and /jəs/ and makes Adit speculate that the person must be from Madras.

In the beginning of the part three, “Monsoon ’67” of WGTS, we come across a fisherwoman who has come to Sita to offer her fish to cook. The woman asks Sita, “You are Babaji’s daughter,” (WGTS 98) without putting a question mark at the end of the sentence. The author’s remark on the language style of the woman – “the old woman said in Konkani dialect as raw and harsh as wet fishing lines” (WGTS 98) reminds us the characterization of Eliza Doolittle, a young cockney flower girl, a character in George Bernard Shaw’s famous play Pygmalion (1913).

English is a global language. It is the language of science and technology, trade and commerce. It works as a lingua franca across the globe. Generally, in India, the people who speak in English or at least use some words or phrases of English in the form of code-switching and code-mixing, are considered to be elite. This is the reason why common English words and phrases have become the part and parcel of many languages of the world. But the way of using and pronouncing these words and phrases is highly influenced by the culture and the mother tongue of the social milieu to which the speakers of such macaronic language belong. Thus, the way Anita Desai
deviates from the phonotactic rules of English gives a glimpse of the way that certain words of English, especially the words that have become an integral part of a particular Indian language, are being pronounced in a particular social setting.

This is why that, in spite of her denial in an interview: “My novels are no reflection of Indian society, politics or character. They are part of my private effort to seize upon the raw material of life - its shapelessness, its meaninglessness” (“Renowned Indian Author Anita Desai Speaks at TCD”). The Times, in its review of *Voices in the City* rigidly remarks: “[Anita Desai] succeeds in creating a living, imaginative and eloquent impression of India” (qtd. on the back side of the cover page of the novel). The Time’s review is suggestive of Anita Desai’s unconscious bent for giving an impression of Indianism in her fiction. This becomes clearer when Meenakshi Mukherjee writes:

Anita Desai is a rare example of an Indo-Anglian writer who achieves that difficult task of bending the English language to her purpose without either a self-conscious attempt of sounding Indian or seeking the anonymous elegance of public school English. (181)

To evoke the Indian atmosphere, Desai uses the words from different Indian languages, especially from Hindi and Urdu. The list comprising some such words is given below.

**Cry, The Peacock**

*ayah, maidan, Raishib, pan, Bahl, lassi, sari, dupatta, mandir, baksheesh, missahib, zulph, mehtab, ghazals, sindoor and kumkum, yogi, sanyasis, raga, chameli, champa, bela, dhobi, etc.*

**Where Shall We Go This Summer**

*lungi, sari, khaki, baba, chalo chalo, hroo, hroo, hroo, ayah, shehnai, kho, tanpura, amma, kurta, babaji, mata, raga, bhajan, swaraj, lota, mantra, burkha, kaju, vah, chela, etc.*

**Fire on the Mountain**
hamam, biri, daman, babus, langur, nani, the Angrez Sahibs and Memsahibs, bul­buls, churails, salwar-kameez, shikaras, hubshee, Tankhas, gucchi, bandars, khud, badmash, habdameez, achha, etc.

Voices in the City

sari, pan, lungi, maidan, dhoti, mohalla, patrika, babu, zamindar, pulaos, tandoori, halwa, kebabs, shehnai, tulsi, kum-kum, puja, diyas, kamsutra, panchtantra, veena, guru, yogi, babu, sitar, wallahs, payal, chapatis, zindagi o zindagi, shamiana, tabl, tabalchi, sandesh, karma, ghats, mehandi, cholbe na, di, etc.

Bye-Bye Blackbird

Paji, puja, jungly, papadums, halwa, yar, wallah, roti and dal, bhangra, hai hai, dhois, babu, gup-shup, namak haram, burfee, salwar-kameez, henna, sitar, agni, tandoori, rassum, kamasutra, chunni, Samadhi, taba, kurta, pallav, nawab, pan, raga, alap, hatha yoga, kajri, veena, babus, chutneys, banias, ghee, chhee chhee, buddhias, pakoras, sundar, nari, pritam, pyari, alu-ikkis, murgh-mussallam, chicken-biryani, paish, sahib log, Bengali rossogollas, vindaloo, are baba, jawans, asharams, pukka sahib, kala sahibs, nmak haram, etc.

The list shows that Ms. Desai has freely used Indian lexical items. Actually, there are certain words, for example lungi, kurta, burkha, etc. for which no substitute in English is available, for they are the proper nouns lexically associated with Hindi and Urdu. But usages of the words like sindoor, lota, kaju, bandars, patrika, gup-shup, etc. for which English alternatives are available shows her inclination to use Indian lexicon in her narration.

Sometimes she uses fully fledged Indianized phrasal expressions like “the Angrez Sahibs and Memsahibs” (FM 73), “You Calcutta-wallahs” (VC 81), and sometimes she inserts Hindi poetic expressions like “Zindagi O zindagi” (VC 120) or sometimes, popular Hindi Bollywood lines like in the following passage from Bye-Bye Blackbird:

Jasbir began to sing a song that had been popular in India when he was a child there. ‘Sundar nari, pritam pyari’, he sang, and the others, clapping their hands to keep time, joined in. ‘Pyari, pyari, sundar nari,’ they sang, clapping their hands and swaying their heads to its innocent rhythm till Mala opened
the window and called, ‘Come and eat pakoras – they’re nice and hot hot, and just taste the chutney!’ (BB 138)

The Indian colour and flavour in the form of movements of the bodies of those singing the song, code mixing and reduplication in the utterances made by Mala, for example “Come and eat pakoras” and “hot hot” as reflected in the above passage and the sensuous imagery created by the auditory stimulus in the description of the way Indians eat as in ‘’Ahh, roti and dal,’ said someone on the carpet. ‘Slurp. slurp’” (BB 24) further support the eloquence of Anita Desai in giving a living impression of India and the Indian ways of doing things.

To give her novels Indian sense and aroma, though in part, Desai uses many eye-catching devices, special features of the way English is used in India. In North and West India, whenever one calls somebody, the Hindi suffix “ji/jee” is added after the addressing word to merit respect. Villagers in WGTs call Menka’s grandfather “Babaji” to show respect for him, for example “You are Babaji’s daughter.” (WGTs 98). Sometimes Urdu suffixes “Sahab/Sahib” for “sir” and “Sahiba/memsahib” for “ma’ain” to call a person, especially one with social or official status. Sita’s Husband does a respectable job in a city so villagers address him as “Sahib” in “Sahib will come tomorrow, after office.” (WGTs 118) and Sita becomes memsahib because she is the wife of a sahib, for example “The memsahib is coming” (WGTs 118).

The degree of intensity in the creativity with English lexis by Indians can be clearly realized by the way the wives of those, who get a title based on their profession, are addressed. The one who practices medicine is a doctor and amazingly, his wife is called “doctorine” or “doctornee”. The wife of a “Pandit” becomes “panditain/pandatani” and so is the case with Sita. The villagers call Sita “memsahib” because she is the wife of someone whom they call “sahib”.

Anita Desai’s frequent use of adjectival phrases is apparent and has been pointed out very precisely by many critics. Darshan Singh Maini, one of the scholars of postcolonial literature, puts the issue thus: “Words appear to have sensuous appeal for her (Anita Desai), and she exults in the reach and power of her rhetoric” (229). F. A. Inamdar goes to the extent of calling this style “‘Verbose’, the natural sister of rhetoric, is to be traced to Desai’s heavily adjectival style” (268). And this is what makes him use such harsh but constructive criticism leveled at her style: “… out of
her excessive zeal for communication. Desai's language has defects of prolixity and dragging” (Inamdar 268).

Desai's love for English adjectives seems to be so passionate that she can even create a new form of a word, for instance, the word ‘thigh’ is a noun but Desai uses it as a past participle for no apparent purpose but only for the sake of using her habit of more and more adjectives: “... a woman, round-thighed, yellow-eyed, encased in a pink skirt and an orange blouse like some ripe fruit” (WGTS 57). She even uses English adjectives, sometimes as premodifier and sometimes as postmodifier, with the Hindi nouns. If the lungi worn by the fisherman in VC is “crimson” (VC 11), Moses in WGTS wraps “his brilliant lungi more closely.” (WGTS 07) and “Moses went out to meet it, still, dipping over his peacock-blue lungi” (WGTS 87), or a man who comes to greet the family of Sita is “a perspiring, purple young man in a lungi of green checked cotton” (WGTS 57).

Because of her love of using a series of adjectives, sometimes unnecessarily, to describe something, her style is often regarded as verbose and her sentences long and involved, though with some exceptions, the sentence length fits the subject matter she deals with. It is for this particular style that Shiv K. Kumar does not hesitate in going to the extent of making such harsh comments on her style as in “... the sentences meander on, as usual, in response to some inscrutable rhythm, tapering off into mere nothingless” (qtd. in Budholia 269). Sometimes the sentence length varies amazingly giving the appearance of telegraphic style:

'Yes,’ Adit said. ‘I do. I love it here. I'm so happy here. I hardly notice the few drawbacks. I'll tell you [...] I'm happy here. I like going into the local for a pint on my way home to Sarah. I like wearing good tweed on a foggy November day. I like the Convent Garden opera house – it has a chandelier like a hive of fireflies: when I stand under it, I feel like a millionaire. I like the girls here [...] I like the streamed pudding with treacle. BB 19-20)

One does not find consistency in her style. Sometimes she uses long-winded sentences heavily loaded with adjectives and adverbs while sometimes she, like a primary school girl, writes very short sentences. The consistency is not maintained in the use of Hindi phrase also: she calls a tabla player a ‘tabalchi’ in VC on page no. 123 but in the same novel on page no. 135, a ‘veena-vadak’ becomes ‘veena-
player". However, as she gains experience, we notice a gradual development in her style. In her debut novel, i.e. Cry, the Peacock, we do not find any reference to the words and phrases she uses from the languages other than English, though, such words, though not all, have been explained in VC and BB in English in the footnotes while in other novels the same category of the vocabulary has been left unexplained. For example, the word "pan" has been used in CP and VC many times but the footnote for the word has been given only in the VC. The authorial intention, in this regard, is not clear.

One reason that after receiving worldwide attention, just after the publication of her first novel, CP, she might have thought that such lexical items may create a barrier to communication for the audience outside India, Pakistan, Nepal, etc. So to overcome this barrier, she would have used footnotes in VC and VB but the successive novels, for example WGTS and FM, which are without footnotes, make this notion false. The other possibility is that these footnotes have been added by the publisher but the same question arises here also – Why has this technique not been used in the novels other than VC and VB, though published by the same publisher? In this regard, Anita's response to a question in an interview with Jai Arjun Singh, seems reasonable to quote and which seems to give the answer of the above arguable issue:

The truth is, one finishes every book with the feeling that you’ve missed it somehow – that you haven’t done what you set out to do, that along the way it took a turn you hadn’t intended. But when I wrote Fire on the Mountain (1977), I had the feeling that I was controlling a style that was largely my own. Until then I had been writing in imitation of writers I admired, who had a huge influence on me. (“A Conversation with Anita Desai, and Some Notes on Her Work”)

Desai, as a young woman, had been influenced by British novelists like Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster and then by Russian writers, especially by Dostoevsky Chekhov, which she, herself, admits in an interview with Magda Costa. But one is provoked to speculate that Desai's style is somewhat influenced by Raja Rao when, here and there, they find situationally conditioned expressions, Indian words, idioms, phrases translated into their English equivalents as in “'Pia, pia' they cry. 'Lover, lover. Mio. Mio, - I die. I die'” (CP 95). “Namak-haram—ungrateful for
the very salt you eat" (*BB* 31) or immediate Hindi English equivalents to the English phrases e. g. "a sea of black water: “*kala pani*” (*BB* 120).

Raja Rao had also indulged in the practice of using immediate English equivalents for Hindi expressions. And just as Raja Rao felt tired of repeating the same expression in two different languages, Desai too, in her later novels, used the original words from Indian languages. We find many other examples of such kinds of literal translation in her earlier novels, for example “The Milky Way swooped across from north-east to south-west *Akash-Ganga, the Ganges of the sky*” (*CP* 27).

For the “*Cestrum nocturnum*”, in place of “night-blooming cestrum/jasmine” the phrase “*Queen of the night*”, has been used three times in *VC* as in “It is the *Queen of the Night* that attracts snakes” (16). in “…the small white stars of the *Queen of Night* bush released such overpowering fumes of fragrance…” (96) and in “the Queen of the Night attracts snakes too, and tuberoses”(107). She uses the word “break” where “pluck” would have been more appropriate as in “You have broken all the buds” (*WGIS* 41). In Hindi, the verb “*todna*” can be used for both positive and negative connotation but in English the verb “break” cannot, in general, replace the verb “pluck” which, in most of the cases, carries a positive meaning.

Reduplication, a word formation process where the root or stem of a word is repeated, either to the left, or to the right, or, occasionally, in the middle, is one of the striking features of many Indian languages. There are many situations in the fiction of Anita Desai where she reduplicates the entire word for the sake of giving an idea of the type of structure Indians use in English, especially those whose mother tongue is Hindi. This gives a glimpse of Indian sense and sensibility in her fiction. The form and structure she uses here to achieve the desired artistic effect is just like doing literal translation. So, to translate the Hindi phrases “*nahin, nahin*” and “*achha, achha*” she repeats words “no” and “good” simultaneously, for example:

‘Professor.’ Nirode croaked. ‘Isn’t Sonny in?’

‘*No--- no*, he has gone to fetch his dinner.’

‘*Good, good*, that suits me.’ (*VC* 14)

Literal translations of the most common phrases of Hindi like “*abhi, abhi*” as in “Now, now” (*VC* 56), “*han han*” as in “Yes, yes.” (*VC* 21) are in abundance in her
earlier fiction. Her love for using the reduplication is worth noticing in expressions like “Oh noble noble man” (BB 19) where, in place of using intensifier “very”, she doubles the adjective itself. Some other examples of the type are: “It’s so dry, so dry” (FM 142) or the expressions like “Dear, dear, I am sorry, I am sorry” (FM 145).

Another feature of her style that attracts our attention is the use of pan-Indian syntactic structure of English, though the frequency is very less. There are the sentences like “How you are, I hope?” (BB 111) or “Oh my, this wasn’t what I – oh my, I never planned – Oh Christmas, what am I--” (BB 91), which do not seem to make any sense, also no book on English Grammar categorizes the structure of such sentences. Use of the pronoun “what” in place of “that” in “Don’t speak like what, in God’s name?” (CP 39) is hilarious and exasperating at the same time. In “How I want to love. How it is important to me” (CP 96), Desai not only changes the normal position of the auxiliary verb but she uses period (.) in place of a question mark (?). Such structures are very common in the English spoken by most of the Indians. Use of period in place of a question mark indicates to the intonation pattern used by the speaker of these sentences.

Sometimes Desai positions the object in the beginning of a sentence making it look like ‘vocative case’, for example “Khan, I think his name is” (VC 50). At some other places a proper noun in the vocative case finds its place in the end of the sentence, for example “What a bloody stupid thing to do, Bose.” (VC 16) or as in “What a boob you are, Sonny.” (VC 55) Replacing the phrase “sweet melancholy”, she dares to write: “the sweetly melancholy tune of cow bells” (VC 28).

There are some ungrammatical constructions, which also attract our attention. As a rule of English Grammar, the phrase “one of” is always followed by a plural noun but violating the rule, she writes: “There is one of a girl coming out of her bath...” (VC 158). The time denoting phrase “half an hour” is replaced by “an half-hour” as in “…Gautama said, patiently prepared to gossip with me for an half-hour till I was calm enough to sleep” (CP 64). Here and there we find the inversion of noun phrases and verb phrases in the formation of interrogative sentences and vice versa in the indirect speech, for example “You must decide. you must see for yourself and realize what are the important things in life, what are the true value” (CP 98).
Finally, the above discussion can be positively summed up with the remark of Atma Ram:

Her language is simple and straight, poetic and compulsive. She seems to have solved for herself the problem of language through her creative impulse. Her racy style and supple language create the desired effect.

In the subsequent pages, the focus of study will be to analyse the way Kiran Desai, like or unlike her mother, deviated from the standard norms of English along with keeping the original flavor of English, the way she used Hinglish and macaronic language and her purpose behind such usage.

6.2 Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai's narrative style and creative use of language makes her a unique writer. For her successful effort in creating a type of variety of English language, which is Indian in tone, sense and feeling and yet remains English, Kiran Desai has secured her place among the great Indians who have proved their talent in this technique. Chirag Dhandhukiya concludes his famous essay “India English Fiction: Experimenting the Queen's Language” with the following comment:

... the writers of the Indian origin like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and ... Arvind Adiga have one thing common in their writings - they are not traditional Indian English writers ... they have imbibed and assimilated the western trends and it lends them the distance to have an objective view on India and Indians. These writers have come across many Englishes of the world and showed the world their English. (18)

Languages have the power of assimilation and a language such as English, which has its users across the globe, is always in the dynamic process of assimilating new words, new phrases and new structures. This is either in the form of borrowings or in the form of neologism.

In India, English is an inherited language, inherited from the colonizers. English is widely accepted in the world, as it has become the language of science, technology, trade and commerce and thus serves as a lingua franca across the globe. The freshness
and the dynamism of English lie in the inclusion of the words and phrases from the other languages of the world. Some common words and phrases of Hindi and other popular Indian languages as well as the other languages of the world have already been included in English lexis; it is still in the process of assimilation. The reason behind the inclusion of Hindi and Urdu words in English is that, in India, though English is an associate additional official language and works as a lingua franca in the multilingual environment of the country, Indian languages, especially Hindi and Urdu, go hand in hand with English. The following example from *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) [hereafter *II*] makes it clear:

> The judge heard cases in Hindi, but they were recorded in Urdu by the stenographer and translated by the judge into a second record in English, although his own command of Hindi and Urdu was tenuous the witnesses who couldn’t read all put their thumbprints at the bottom ... as instructed. (*II* 62)

But this situation, on many occasions, camouflages the truth. Shrewd politicians and corrupt bureaucrats generally play foul games and take advantage of such tryst of languages. This leads to pandemic corruption. In this connection, Kiran puts forward her viewpoint:

> Nobody could be sure how much of the truth had fallen between languages, between languages and illiteracy; the clarity that justice demanded was nonexistent. (*II* 62)

The macaronic aspect of language or use of Hinglish is more explicit in the *II*, the sophomore novel of Kiran Desai than in her debut, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) [hereafter *HGO*].

One of the crucial themes of the *II* is multiculturalism. The novel deals with the different cultural and ethnic communities of the world, hence its characters are from different cultural, ethnic, geographical and linguistic locations of the world. Kalimpong, a diglossic Himalayan state in West Bengal (explicit from the language of the Indo-Nepali community living there), is the center of the novel. Sai, who lived in Russia with her parents, after the unfortunate death of her parents, comes to Kalimpong to live with her grandfather, Jemuhhai Patel. Jemuhbai, the judge, had lived in England for four years to complete his studies at Cambridge. Gyan, an Indo-
Nepali is recruited to give home tuitions to Sai. Biju, the son of the cook at the house of the judge, goes to USA to fulfill his American dream. In America, he meets people of different political, geographical and linguistic locations of the world. Biju’s friend Saeed is from Zanzibar. His employer is from Gujarat. Jackie Haque, in his research paper “Aspects of Globalization in The Inheritance of Loss”, says:

Through the eyes of Biju, Ms Desai shows how the melting pot where Mexicans, Indians, Pakistanis, Colombian, Tunisians, Gambinas, Trinidadians, Guyanese, Ecuadorian, Kenyan all get muddled up, yet remains so unique. (68)

Even the names of the houses at Kalimpong signify the aspect of multiculturalism in the novel. For instance, the judge lives in “Cho Oyu”, a house built by a Scotsman. In the neighborhood, there is another house with a French name, “Mon Ami”. All these things lead to a multilingual scenario. The following paragraph is suggestive of the idea discussed above:

Any sense that Sai was taught had fallen between the contradictions and the contradictions themselves had been absorbed. “Lochinvar” and Tagore, economics and moral science, highland fling in tartan and Punjabi harvest dance in dhotis, national anthem in Bengali and an impenetrable Latin motto emblazoned on banderolés across their blazer pockets and also on an arch over the entrance: Pisci tisci episculum basculum. (IL 37)

And this, perhaps, may be a reason why Desai makes her characters speak in a contextually and situationally conditioned language, as Sonali Das in the Critical Endeavour finds the language of the novel as “transliterations and situation modified” (42).

Just like the novels of Anita Desai are full of the words, phrases and proverbs from Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, German, Latin, French, etc., Kiran Desai’s novels, too, show her multilingual talent. Words of Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit origin are predominant in the novels of both the mother and the daughter, though the inclusion of foreign words and phrases (Indian languages are also treated here as foreign languages, for the
novels are written in English) is more common in the fiction of the daughter. The list of the most frequent words is given below:

**Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard**

Ammaji, beta, beti, Ommm, haw-ji-haw, arre, hai-hai, keema-kebab, ko, raja, hai Rama, haiii, maji, oh ji, look ji, baba, hoo-hoo, baap re, ai, yai yai, helloji, badmashes, rama rama rama rama, kurti, khitchri, officerji, auntiji, madamji, vermaji, babaji, golguppas, arreji, datura, aiiii, etc.

**The Inheritance of Loss**

batao, Pujas, Parathas, bhat, chahtye, hubshi, yaar, topis, Goras, baap re, daku, chee-chee, goondas, chalo yaar, Babyji, mujhe jaaane do, dehati, Ji huzoor, bander, amavas, hota hai, baba, choli, lahnga, bilkul bekar, arre, batao, churbi, Sali, sala, char sau hees, oloo ka patha, tamasha, chappals, durries, wallah, baap re, goras, ghas phoos, busti, didi, jao jao, namaste, ber, jamun, churan, chutney, tatti, chandani raate, pyar ki baaten, jawan, jhoras, daldia saag, dhaniya, atta, katti, kutta, gaon, murdabad, mithai, bhago, pitaji, etc.

Like her mother, Kiran Desai too, is very fond of using chutneyed combination of Hindi words with either English words or English affixes. The list given above includes many Hindi words inflected by the English plural marker, for example “Parathas” (IL 176) is the combination of “Paratha” and English suffix, “s”. To our wonder, sometimes, we find the declension of uncountable nouns of Hindi by the plural marker of English, “s”, for example “Pujas” (IL 153). The Sanskrit origin word “namaste”, which originally functions as an interjection, has been used in the following ways: “so when Bomanbhai bent over with a ‘Namaste’ and begged his guests to eat and drink” (IL 91) and “Namaste, Kusum Auntie, aaviye, baethiy, khaviye” (IL 50).

The practice of using reduplication is very common in the novels of Anita Desai and so it is in the novels of her daughter. Unlike English, in Hindi, the degree of intensity is often shown by writing a word and immediately repeating the same word. Such usages are abundant in both the IL and the HGO: “phata-phat” (131), “Hai. hoe” (IL 146), “hai, hai” (HGO 42 & 44), “chalo, chalo” (IL 147), “Hubhsi hubshi bander
"bander." (II 185), "Hota hai hota hai" (II 179), "hoo, hoo" (HGO 107), "Ai. Yai. Yai." (HGO 113), etc.

There are situations where the cook and some other characters of the IL speak pure Hindi sentences. The wife of Harish-Harry often asks Biju to narrate a story: "Arrre, Biju... to sumao kahani," she always said. "batao..." (II 146) After the gun-robbery scene, when the boys are gone, the cook, lamenting, says: "Humara kya hoga, hai hai, humara kya hoga," he let his voice fly" (II 8). Just after uttering a full Hindi sentence, the cook mixes the codes of Hindi and English: "Hai, hai, what will become of us?" (II 8) and interestingly enough, exactly the same type of expression we come across in HGO where Ammaji is thinking about the future of Sampath: "Hai, hai, what will become of that boy?" (HGO 44). Sometimes, Kiran Desai, just like Anita Desai’s style as in "a sea of black water: “kala pani” (BB 120), first uses English expression and immediately translates it into Hindi, for example "It’s just noise, tamasha." (II 201) or vice-versa, for example "No ghas phoos, no twigs and leaves!" (II 212).

Besides using English, Hindi and Sanskrit, the words and phrases from other languages of the world are also abundant in the IL. The list is exhaustive. Some of these words, with their English equivalents in brackets, are given below:

cchang/chang (A Tibetan nice wine) - Tibetan

Rong pa (a group of people in India and China) - Tibetan

Choksee (a small wooden table that are foldable) - Tibetan

Gompa (A Buddhist building) - Tibetan

Kundum (presence) - Tibetan

Lama (A title given to the spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism) - Tibetan

Panchem Lama (highest ranked Lama after Dalai Lama) - Tibetan

Potala Palace (It is where Dalai Lama lived until he fled to India 1959) - Tibetan

Thangkha (A Tibetan silk painting with embroidery) - Tibetan
Shangri-La (a place that is extremely beautiful and where everything seems perfect, especially a place far away from modern life, originated from the name of an imaginary valley in Tibet in James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*, where people do not grow old.) - Tibetan

*Thapa* (A Tibetan Surname) - Tibetan

*Mingro* (A typical curry from Sikkim) - Nepali

*Kukri sickle* (A Nepalese knife) - Nepali

*Sherpa* (Ethnic group in Nepal) - Nepali

*Salwar kameez* (A traditional dress worn by men and women) - Persian

*Ishtoo* (A stew) – Malyalam

*Vindaloo* (A spicy curry from Goa) – Portuguese

*Srikhand* (Indian sweet dish made of yogurt) – Guajarati

*Kem chho* (How are you) - Guajarati

*Bazzar* (market) – Persian

*Beri beri* (A disease caused by lack of vitamin B) – Sinhalese

*Cho Oyo* (World’s sixth highest mountain)

*Mercara* (a hillstation in Karnataka) – Kannada

*Shikari* (a big game hunter) – Persian

*Kanga/Khanga* (a large piece of light cloth with designs printed on it and worn by women around the waist and legs or over the head and shoulders) – Kiswahili

*Shaman* (a person in some religions and societies who is believed to be able to contact good and evil spirits and cure people of illnesses) - German

Ethnic background is reflected through the way one uses a language. Sai “could speak no language but English and pidgin Hindi…” (II. 176) and lives in “her tiny social stratum” (II. 176). Consequently, Indian ways of doing the things does not seem comfortable to her: “She… could not squat down on the ground on her haunches to
wait for a bus; who had never been to a temple but for architectural interest (II. 176). She does not feel at ease after watching a Bollywood film because of its "emotional wear and tear" (II. 176). She hates to "put oil ... in hair and used paper to clean her bottom" (II. 176) just because she loves English. It is ascertained that the language we speak ensures our way of thinking and our way of doing things in certain ways because when we learn a language, undoubtedly, we inherit the culture of that language also. Use of a language and culture associated with that particular language go hand in hand. It is mainly for this reason that Macaulay kept in mind, when, in an educational Minute in 1835, he thus advised the then British government on education in India:

We must at present do our best to form a class [in India] who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. (qtd. in Weir, 80)

His words led the then cultural and educational policies adopted by the British government in India and consequently English was made the medium of instruction in some schools and universities in India in 1850. This was the starting point of the impact of the western culture on the mind of a class of Indians. It re-stratified the Indian society. The then British government succeeded in making a section of people very much like the judge, a fictitious character in The Inheritance of Loss. Portrayal of the judge's character represents a class of society in India. The judge is very conscious of using only Queen's English and perhaps seems to hate the other languages, pretending to be like a sahib. In the 'gun robbery' scene, he asks to the boys "No Nepali?". "his lips sneering to show what he thought of that, but he continued in Hindi" (II. 05). Notable is the question mark in the sentence "No Nepali?". Though, this is an imperative sentence, Desai deliberately puts a question mark here, may be to suggest that though the judge is asking them not to converse in Nepali but putting a question mark on and mocking at their inability to communicate in the English language. Though the movements of his lips suggested that he was more comfortable in conveying his idea in English, but here comes the importance of the communication being audience centered and that is why Desai made him continue in Hindi.
Love towards a language aspires one to adopt and absorb the culture related to that language. The judge studies hard only and only to get more acquainted with western culture and tries to adopt the British standards in his daily life. He takes afternoon tea every day, tries to speak English in the natural way of a native speaker, covers his brown skin colour with the powder puff but he is always in a dilemma, a struggle of identity. All of his efforts to find a place among those who are in the center are futile. Though he holds a highly prestigious position like ICS, he has to work only to reinforce the domination of Britain.

The situation becomes more pitiable when Jemubhai returns to India. Even to the members of his family, he is like a ‘foreigner’. He uses the powder puff not to protect his skin, but to cover his brown skin colour. This is because of the racial discrimination he faced during his education at Cambridge. On one hand, he could not find a room on rent in England for several days because people in Britain do not want to entertain Indians, on the other hand, when he returns to India, the members of his family are perplexed because of his odd behavior and some even mock at him. His failure to get into the center and his isolation from the Indian culture, even from his own family, makes it difficult for him to associate himself with the either culture. Though, later on, the judge gets an idea of the impossibility of getting into the ‘centre’. In the following paragraph, he realizes the reality:

8:00: the cook saved his reputation, cooked a chicken, brought it forth, proclaimed it “roast bastard,” just as the Englishman’s favorite joke book of natives using incorrect English. But sometimes, eating that roast bastard, the judge felt the joke might also be on him, and he called for another rum, took a big gulp, and kept eating feeling as if he were eating himself, since he, too, was (was he?) part of the fun ....” (IL 62-63)

Pronouncing “roast bastard” as “roast bastard” by the cook reminds the judge of the Englishmen’s jokes on the way Indians use Indianised English which makes the judge feel that he is also one among those Anglicized Indians who are the subjects of such jokes.

When the cook speaks in English, Desai never cares for the deviation from the grammatical rules of English. To get the reader’s attention, she creates a visual image
of a real character coming from the world of fiction. For example, when the house of
the judge is being robbed, he requests – “Please living only to see my son please don’t
kill me please I’m a poor man spare me” (IL 6). Krishna Singh calls such usage
“hyperbaton” (63). One finds ample examples of ‘hyperbaton’ in the HGO: “When
my mouth I’ll open, I’ll think of nothing to say” (17) and “Spit not at the doctor’s
son” (153).

Many times, the way Kiran Desai makes the cook speak becomes incomprehensible.
Once the cook tells the judge that his son Biju is an expert in preparing puddings.
When the judge asks what he can make, he gives a full-length description, without
any pause. It can be called neither a paragraph, sentence, phrase nor a word:

“Banana fritter pineapple fritter apple fritter apple surprise apple charlotte apple
betty bread and butter jam tart caramel custard tipsy pudding rum tart
udding jam roly poly ginger steam date pudding lemon pancake egg custard orange
custard coffee custard strawberry custard trifle baked alasamango souffle coffee eso
uffle chocolate souffle gooseberry souffle hot chocolate pudding cold coffee pudding
ge coconut pudding milk pudding rum barum cake brandy snap pear stew guava stew
plum stew apple stew peach stew apricot stew mango pie chocolate tart apple tart
gooseberry tart lemon tart marmalade tart beinca floating island pineapple upside lemon
own apple upside down gooseberry upside down plum upside down peach upside down
raisin upside down--- ” (II. 64)

We find somewhat similar expression in HGO also, where, there is a scene of soldiers
doing their morning exercises: “Hop. One Two Three Four. Hop. Five Six Seven Eight.
Hop. Nine Ten Eleven Twelve” (HGO 138). The mumbling and fumbling of the
brigadier is described like “Treron phoenicoptera phoenicoptera” (HGO 138). These
types of expressions are not without a purpose. They refer to certain phonological
features of a speech in a given situation. The way the cook talks about the puddings
his son can make may be just because of his over excitement to speak in a proper
rhythm. The same case may be with the soldiers; counting of the numbers without
pauses may suggest their physical energy, speed of hopping and increasing speed of
inhalation and exhalation.
Desai, to give an impression of the accent her characters use, intentionally changes the spelling of the English words. Sai makes fun of the way the cook pronounces certain words:

“At five-forty-five I would take the bed tea on a tray to your grandfather’s tent. “Bed tea,” I would call out as I lifted the tent flap.

“Bad tea,” was how it sounded. “Baaad teee. Baaad teeee.” Sai began to laugh. (II 61)

This is the unique style of Kiran Desai. She, by such deviation from the rules of English orthography, tries to achieve the sensuous pleasure. On one hand, she succeeds in creating the visual image of the word and at the same time, this technique helps her in creating an onomatopoeic effect, thus appealing to two senses simultaneously. In not only dialogic forms, but such words occur in the third person narrative as well:

It was *haat* day in Kalimpong and a festive crowd thronged to the market in high pitch of excitement, everyone in their best clothes. (II 83)

The word “*haat*” refers to the English word “hot” in the above sentence but in the succeeding paragraph i.e. “The cook folded up the letter and put it in his shirt pocket. Feeling joyful, he descended steeply into the *haat*, pushing his way between ...”, (II 83), the word “*haat*” has been taken for Bangla for the English word “market”. There are two reasons behind the assertion: (a). if the word has been used for “hot”- the word “hot” is an adjective and as a rule, if an adjective is preceded by a determiner, it must be followed by a noun and (b). if the author meant the word to be considered as a noun, it does fail in creating the cohesion and coherence. The context of the noun phrases “the market” in the preceding sentence and “his way” in the current sentence make the argument more explicit.

Some other examples of making the phonological effect visible and audible are as following:
In chapter Twenty-two of the *IL*, there is a telephonic conversation between the owner of a marketing company, “AT&T” and an unknown person (probably the man talked to Biju but the reference is not clear).

“Don’t know anyone???? You must have some relative?”

“Yeah,” American accent growing more pronounced, “but I don’ taaalk to my relateev . . .”

Shocked silence.

“Don’t talk to your relative?”

Then, “We are offering forty-seven cents per minute.”

“Vhaat deeference does that make? I haeve aalready taaald you”, “he spoke s low as if to an idiot, “no taleephone caalls to Eeendya.”

“But you are from Gujerat?” Anxious voice.

“Veea Kampala. Uganda. Teepton. England, and Roanoke state of Vaergeenia! One time I went to Eeendya and, laet me tell you, you canaaat pay me to go to that caantreev agaen!” (IL 138)

In the above quotation the word “already” - / ɔ:l’redi /, orthographically written as “already” suggests that the word was pronounced as / ɔ:l’redi / and the word “what” - / wot / written as “vhaat” indicates that the word has been pronounced as /vha:t/ , in the same way “call” / kɔ:l / becomes “caall” / k ɔ:l / and so on. This is the typical feature of English spoken in some parts of India, especially in eastern Uttar Pradesh where in WH words /w/ is pronounced as /v/ and /ɔ:/, /ɔw/ or /ə/ are replaced by / ɔ:/ . Thus to give an auditory sense of the way a particular character pronounces a particular sound in a word, Kiran deliberately changes the spellings of the words as it is clear in the sentences quoted above. To show the degree of the high pitch a particular syllable gets when pronounced by a character who represents the proletarian or the uneducated, she repeats the vowel letters representing that particular syllable: “Oh myeee Gaawaawd!” (IL 78), or as in “but I don’t taaalk to my relateev . . .” (IL 138).
Here, one finds a sharp contrast between the mother and the daughter in their approaches and purpose behind such orthographic changes in the spellings of English words. Whereas Anita Desai makes any of her characters from India pronounce the way the proletarians and the uneducated use the language, Kiran Desai is very selective, though the exceptions are there, and makes only those characters speak in this way who are illiterate or belong to a lower class.

Nirode in Anita Desai’s *Voices in the City* is educated and belongs to the bourgeoisie but Anita makes him say “O I’m veree good Bengalee Babu” (VC 156). One reason behind this contrast may be that the *Voices in the City* was written in 1965, which just was some years after India got its freedom from the British Empire. Naturally, there was a feeling of hatred towards the language of the colonizers while Hindi or rather mixture of Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit was associated with patriotism. So the little knowledge of English language the people had was highly influenced by the syllable-timed rhythm of Hindi.

Another reason can be the then education system of India. At that time, the education system was very poor in India. The poor and the socially downtrodden people were devoid of education and only a few could receive the higher education from the few petite bourgeoisies. The competency in English language of even the few rich, who received formal education, remained poor. That is why Anita Desai possibly makes her characters, even those who are educated and belong to the upper class or middle class speak Indianized version of English.

On the other hand, *The Inheritance of Loss* is written in 2006, a time when English, across the globe, carries a high social prestige with it. It has crossed all the social and geographical boundaries. Macaulay’s vision is completely fulfilled now. Now Indians are Indians only in blood and colour. They are becoming more and more “English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (qtd. in Weir, 80). Everybody in India, literate or illiterate, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, has a vision of getting their offspring admitted in English medium schools. The proletarians think English-speaking people more civilized and polite. They, as well as their offspring, if they could not get the opportunity to get formal education, like to work for a person who is or like an Anglophile.
Biju is the son of a very poor cook who works in the house of a judge, a pure Anglophile. Both Biju and his father acquire English from the judge. Both of them have very high opinion of English and the English people. Ms. Desai makes both of them speak English in the way, which clearly reflects their social class. They speak English because they are crazy about English while Anita's Nirode speaks English because he knows how to speak in English. Anita's aim in making Nirode use the same type of English is totally different as it is very clear from the discussion in the penultimate paragraph.

Biju always tries to be in the good books of English Sahibs. To meet his purpose, he speaks in English and thus pretends to be a civilized person. But the way he speaks English, many times, becomes hilarious:

"Is this the Amriken embassy?" Biju asked a watchman outside the formidable exterior.

"Amreeka nehi, bephkuph. This is U.S. embassy!"

He walked on: "Where is the Ameriken embassy?"

"It is there." The man pointed back at the same building.

"That is U.S."

"It is the same thing," said the man impatiently. "Better get it straight before you get on the plane, bhai". (II. 182)

Mr. Sen in II also pronounces English words the way Biju does. The word beautiful consists of three syllables – beau•ti•ful / 'bju:ti•fl / as given in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th edition, but when Mr. Sen in IL pronounces the word as if it is made of four syllables. Desai, through the use of orthographic technique makes it very clear in "What a bee-o-tee-fil country" (II. 131). In the same way, though the words "potato" / po'tæto / and tomato / to•ma•to / are getting primary accent on second syllable but to show which syllable of these words are getting accent, when spoken by Mr. Sen, Desai capitalizes the first three letters to show that stress was put on the first syllable, for example. "Mrs. Sen pronounced potato "POEtatto," and tomato "TOEmatto." (II. 131)
Both the mother and the daughter deliberately use such spellings so as to make their readers understand the language idiosyncrasies of the people of India as in the case of Anita Desai's Nirode in VC or of a particular class as in the case of Kiran's cook and his son, Biju in IL. Sometimes they experiment to make their audience laugh at the people with "very Indian-trying-to-be-American accent" (IL 137).

The reason behind Kiran Desai's deliberate effort to change the spelling of words spoken by some particular character is to show, as it has been discussed above, the characters' incompetency in the language. The other possible reason is that Kiran exploits graphological conventions to suggest the sort of pronunciation a reader should hear in imagination while reading the novel silently or the type of pronunciation a reader should adopt while reading the novel aloud. Meenakshsh Mukherjee calls this device (changing the spelling of English words) "patently false" (167), for a writer writing in English about the Indian characters whose language of conversation is other than English, generally write with an assumption that the statements made by them are not the real but the translated ones into the target language. To Mukherjee, the possible purpose behind such change in English spellings may be to suggest the inseparability of such words from Indian languages spoken by these characters.

There is almost a vice versa situation in a scene of HGO where a word is being uttered in a way but being decoded in some other way:

'Jackfruit', he heard her say excitedly to herself. And then, even more excited, so the word came out wrong: "Cakfruit. But it will give the whole family heart palpitations!" (HGO 44-45)

There is an ambiguity here. It is not clear whether the word "Jackfruit" has been decoded wrongly or it has been pronounced wrongly. To show the jumbling thoughts of Sampath Chawla of HGO and to give a poetic touch to the novel, Desai even uses such words, which do not exist in any Standard English or Hindi dictionary:

Why think about flutter when you have plenty of butter? Don't say you like watermelon when someone gives you pumpkin. Don't eat a fizzle to save piflle. (HGO 153)
Though, according to the Wiktionary, the word “futter”, an anagram of the word “tufter” was coined by Richard Francis Burton and it has been used as a verb connoting the meaning “fuck” in the Robert Nye’s *Falstaff* (1976):

Sir John Fastolf called out cheerfully over Miranda’s shoulder to his departing guests, remarking on the sweetness of the night air now that the storm of yesterday night had cleared it, and the day’s rain momentarily had ceased. And all the while he *futtered* Miranda’s anal canal from behind, and frigged her clitoris. (“Futter”)

Urban online Dictionary defines the word “fiffle” in two ways: 1. The name in which a puppy is called, 2. Similar to the terms grope or fondle, they are a more innocent usage of the hands upon any part of another or your own body (“Fiffle”). But whatsoever meanings are published on the Wiktionary and the Urban Dictionary, do not seem to make any sense of their usage in the context of the novel.

The way the cook in the *IL* describes certain things is very idiosyncratic. In the dialogues spoken by him, though there may not be many words from Hindi, even the selection of a single word from Hindi gives an aroma of Hinglish. Using a Hindi word even when an English alternative is available is one of the most important features of the English used by the Indian youths, especially by those pursuing professional courses. The following extract from an event narrated by the cook represents the indigenous use of English in India:

There was a thunder box for the bathroom tent and even a *murga-murgi* in a cage under the cart. They were a foreign breed and that hen laid more eggs than any other *murgi* I have known. (*IL* 60)

The use of English word “hen” and “murgi”, its synonym in Hindi in a single utterance is a very fine example of Indianized version of English.

There is a very humorous scene in chapter thirteen. Not only the selection of Hindi words but the way the cook describes his ailment, gives us a glimpse of the very indigenous way of Indians, especially the illiterates or more specifically the uneducated, visiting doctors and describing their problems:
"No potty for five days, evil taste in the mouth, a thun thun in the legs and arms and sometimes a chun chun."

"What is chun chun and what is a thun thun?"

"Chun chun is a tingling. Thun thun is when there is a pain going on and off."

"What do you have now? Chun chun?"

"No, THUN THUN."

The next visit. "Are you better?"

"Better, but still—"

"Thun thun?"

"No, doctor," he would say very seriously. "chun chun." (IL 72)

Such proletarian speech helps in creating the visual image where readers find themselves sitting at the place of conversation and watching it live and thus enjoying the racy style of the author.

In another scene, when Sai, Lola, Noni, Uncle Potty and Father Booty are on a trip and Police officers are checking the jeep they are travelling in, there is a very interesting dialogue:

They (the police officers) took his camera and began to search the jeep.

A disturbing smell.

"What is that smell?"

"Cheese."

"Kya cheez?" said a fellow from Meerut. (IL 217)

In the above example of macaronic language, Kiran Desai, with the help of the words "cheese" and "cheez", uses bilingual pun. Such puns in the form of homophonic translation are generally used for humorous purposes. For such puns to be understood clearly, the audience requires adequate knowledge of both the languages. They must
be able to understand the surface text, nonsensical translated text and the source text. In such usages, the words spoken in a foreign language sound like the surface text. The subsequent lines further serve the author’s purpose of creating humorous atmosphere:

They had never heard of cheese. They looked unconvinced. It smelled far too suspicious and one of them reported that he thought it smelled of bomb-making materials. "Gas maar raha hai," said the Meerut boy.

“What did he say?” asked Father Booty.

“Something is whacking gas. Something is firing gas.” (IL 217)

The last two sentences in the above extract are very much like the way English is used in India where sense rather than the correct usage of words becomes more prominent. With the help of mild humour, Kiran Desai, in one way, brings out some idiosyncratic and indigenous features of so called Indian English. Such humours on the use of English grammar, pronunciation and the intonation, especially by the cook and by his son Biju, are very frequent in The Inheritance of Loss.

Kiran Desai too, just like her mother, seems to be interested in coining new words and phrases. For example, there is an idiom in English “no peace/rest for the wicked” meaning “when somebody is complaining that they have a lot work to do.” and Desai uses the idiom like this: “No peace for the not wicked” (IL 236). In “Behind him a pair of Indian girls made vomity faces” (IL 297) the word “vomit” has been used as an adjective. The same type of usage, we find in “They were renting extra seats for extortionary amounts” (IL 311). No dictionary has included the words “vomity” and “extortionary”.

Not only does she make a new word out of the existing words but to make her characters speak in the way they want so as to create the social milieu look like real, she can use a noun as a verb (though no dictionary suggests so), for example “Sometimes when his father saw him he forgot to recognize his son, so clearly in the X-ray flashes of his imagination did he see the fertile cauliflowering within his son’s skull” (IL 59) or a noun as an adjective like in the sentence fragment: “the wife herself a martyred and religious mother of the kind that makes a Hindu weak in the
knees” (II 56). There are the noun phrases which have been invented by putting a hyphen between the words, for example “mouse-hole-sized room” (HGO 99), “An ice-cream-cart type” (HGO 149), “hide-behind-the-tree-and-pop-out technique” (II 254), “all kinds of Hindu-mantra-Tantra-Mother-Earth-native-peoples-single-energy-organic-Shakti-ganja-crystal-shaman-intuition stuff” (II 296), etc.

Creativity with the morphology, sometimes with English words and sometimes mixing up the words of different languages with those of English vocabulary, is one of the important features of Indian English. New terms and usages, especially compound formation has been used extensively in Indian literature in English and the Desais are no exception.

In her creativity with the language, Kiran Desai betters her mother’s talent and skill in the sense that she is not only creative with phonology and morphology, but she freely plays with many other graphological techniques as well.

One of the graphological techniques she uses is the unusual way of putting many punctuation marks or sometimes a mixture of many punctuation marks in a single utterance. It leaves an indelible unique impression on the minds of readers. She can use three to four question marks in a sentence to heighten the effect, for example “Who did you marry???” (II 121), four question marks like in “Don’t know anyone???” (II 138), increasing exclamatory marks like “They don’t want you!!!!” (II 164), sometimes use of two different punctuation marks in a single sentence like in “You’re married?!” (II 121), in “Who are you??!” (II 138) and in “Why not??!! I don’t know! You know WHY if NOT??!!” (II 213) and sometimes same word or sentence is repeated in a dialogue and every time it acquires a different punctuation mark:

“Waiter!

“Waiter!

“Waiter?

“Waiter!!

“WAITER!!!” shouted the judge, in utter desperation.” (II 206-207)
The extensive use of punctuation marks, like other graphological techniques used in Kiran’s fiction, also creates phonological effect. It suggests the intonation pattern the reader should hear in imagination.

There is a unique example of the usage of punctuation mark where Kiran Desai seems to follow the present day SMS language: “Uncle Potty was reading Asterix. Aye Gaul! By Toutatis!!!#@*!!!” (IL 216). Devika, in her research paper on Desai’s style, comments, “Her practice of using many punctuation marks, earmarking chunks of information, gives immense delight to the readers” (33).

To create phonological effects, Desai does not only use the words, phrases, punctuation, etc. but some special techniques like multilevel repetition of letters also, for example:

All around him, his family lay and snored: his father, mother, grandmother and his younger sister, Pinky, swathed in quantities of flowered organza. Rrrrr. Rrrrr. Phrrrr. Wheeeeee. Rrrrrrr. What a racket! Sampath listened to each hostile inhalation. …… He kicked a foot up into the air with impatience. ‘Sshhhhh,’ he said out loud, but it was a poor, sad sound and they took no notice. Wheeeeee. Rrrrrr. Rrrrr. (HGO 14)

The above discussion on the phonological effects produced by graphological techniques used by Kiran Desai may not be precisely accurate as Leech and Short points out:

There is apparently no graphological device, whether of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, etc. that cannot be exploited for such purposes. But because the correspondence between graphological and phonological features is far from precise, it cannot be said that a writer has actually represented the speech style of a character. (106)

Same type of sensuous imagery can be traced in many scenes of The Inheritance of Loss as in “But either her behind was left vulnerable, or her nose, and she [Mutt, the pet dog in the house of the judge] was frightened by the wind making ghost sounds in the empty soda bottles: whoo hoooo hoooo.” (IL 106) or in “The village was buried in silver grasses that were taller than a man and made a sound, shuu shuu shuu shuu.
as the wind turned them this way and that." (IL 102), sometimes by repeating the whole words, for example “stones hit the rooftops, BANG BANG BANG BANG” (IL 275), and at some occasions, she, childlike, enjoys “a comical horn PAWpumPOM paw or TWEE-dee-dee DEE-TWEE-dee-dee” (IL 286). She uses another special technique for suggesting the sound sensuousness i.e. regular and rhythmic increase in the font size of letters of a single word – “they harassed Biju with such blows from their horns as could split the world into whey and solids:

paaaaaaaaWWW!” (IL 49). The cows “mooed oo aaw, oo aaw” (IL 57) and the frogs do “trrrr whonk, wee wee butt ock butt ock of frogs” (IL 230).

Just like one finds the deviation from syntactic structure of English in the fiction of Anita Desai, there are certain syntactic deviations in the fiction of Kiran also, though such deviations are less frequent in Anita’s fiction. This is not to say that the Desais have used English of R. K. Narayan or Raja Rao but such syntactic deviations have been used either to show the linguistic competence of a character or to represent the type of English, in general, spoken in India. English spoken in India is highly affected by syntactic structure of Hindi. One of the striking features of syntactic structure of the Indian English is the inversion of noun phrases and verb phrases in the formation of interrogative sentences or sometimes even omission of the auxiliary verb:

“Hah! Why they give them a visa?” (in place of ‘Why do they give them a visa?’) and “How they buy the ticket!” (for ‘How do they buy the ticket?’) (IL 97)

Hindi based syntactic element, the tag question, is quite popular in India, for example “You are Gujerati, no?” (in place of ‘You are Gujerati, aren’t you?’) (IL 137). The use of the word “no” or “isn’t it” for every tense is a marked feature of Indian English. The word “no” stems from the use of “na” and “isn’t” from the use of “hai na” in Hindi. Even in the dialogues spoken by Sai who is convent educated and about whom the writer says “She (Sai) who could speak no language but English and pidgin Hindi” (IL 176), we find a glimpse of Indian English:

“Isn’t that your mathematics tutor?” asked Noni.
“I don’t think so,” she said, scrabbling for dignity, scrabbling for sense.

“Looked just like him, I thought it was him myself, but it wasn’t …” (IL 215)

In the fiction of Kiran Desai, there are some examples of direct translation from Hindi to English, for example “You are eating my head” (HGO 191) is also the result of a word-to-word translation. Indians, especially those whose mother tongue is Hindi, often use reduplication as a way of emphasizing an action and its effect can be seen clearly in English used by speakers with Hindi as their first language, for example “Come come! Take tea!”, reduplication, on some occasions, also replaces the intensifier “very” for example “Oh, such sweet sweet cheeks,” (IL 213) or “... everyone go shopping separately, separately” (IL 98). Using double negatives as in “It didn’t come from nothing...” (IL 241) is also a striking feature of Indian English. To express exaggeration, Desai uses “one, two, three” in place of ‘some’, for example “One, two, three of them.....so ripe, so heavy, the slightest touch could make them fall from the tree” (HGO 203-204). Here the author has also dropped the conjunction ‘and’ between ‘two and three’.

The representation of India in Desai’s fiction is reflected, not only by the grammar, code mixing, code switching and accent but also through the description of religion, culture, superstition, etc. This becomes clearer, when, in a scene, the cook and the policeman in IL talk of the religious importance of snakes:

... thereby angering two snakes, mia-bibi, husband and wife, who lived in a hole nearby.

The cook told the policeman of the drama. “I wasn’t bitten, but mysteriously my body swelled up to ten times my size, I went to the temple and they told me that I must ask forgiveness of the snakes. So I made a clay cobra and put it behind the water tank, made the area around it clean with cow dung, and did puja. Immediately the swelling went down.”

The policemen approved of this. “Pray to them and they will always protect you, they will never bite you. (IL 13)

And the following example gives the real Indian rural setting where morning is hailed with the cows mooing for food and the hens doing “kukrookoo”: 
He lay there until the cows began to boom like foghorns through the mist and uncle potty's rooster. Kookar Raja, sent his kookrookoo up like a flag, sounding both silly and loud as if calling everyone to the circus.

It is known to all that Indians use a plethora of words to show politeness and humbleness. Such use of flowery English is generally considered being the result of literal translation from Hindi to English as has been the practice of Hindi speakers from ages. There is a scene in Chapter thirty-eight of the house of “Pradhan, the flamboyant head of the Kalimpong wing of the GNLF” (IL 242), where many people are waiting to see the Pradhan for various reasons. A Marwari shopkeeper requests in the following words:

“Respected Sir and Huzoor and Your Gracious Presence and Your Wish my Pleasure, Please Grant, Your Blessing Requested, Your Honorable Self, Your Beneficence, May the Blessings of God Rain upon You and Yours, Might Your Respected Gracious Self Prosper and Might You Grant Prosperity to Respectful Supplicants ...” (IL 243)

Unlike her mother, Kiran Desai does not hesitate in using vulgar and obscene expressions, though the purpose of such expressions may be to suggest the social class and the social milieu a character belongs to or to assess the dramatic circumstances which may be an underlying cause for such usage. Though the vulgar expressions must be bowdlerized, for they could be deeply offensive to some people and they might appear strange in a research work but to assess her style more explicitly, with an apology for not expurgating them, we will spare a little time on the issue.

“The use of abusive and bawdy language is by no means a modern phenomenon” (210), so says Z N Patil. Patil admits that “discourse analysts have unfortunately almost totally neglected what has variously been called rude, impolite, insulting, abusive and aggravating language” (210). The linguistic taboos do not always affect social cohesion rather many times they play a vital role in maintaining societal solidarity. Even the well known classics are not devoid of bawdy expressions. Lachenicht (qtd. in Patil. 210) quotes many examples of insulting language from the Bible and from some popular classics. Patil is of the view that both the polite and impolite (taboo words) languages help collectively in preserving the social harmony.
He seems to be against the people who associate use of such language with backwardness or with uncivilized society. According to him, aggravating language:

[...] is used in all times and climes and the fundamental motives for its use remain the same – one uses abusive language to draw attention to oneself, or to express contempt, or to be aggressive or provocative, or to mock authority and very rarely as a form of verbal seduction. (210)

Kiran Desai uses such language in her second novel, Biju and the proletariats he is living with use taboo words frequently. Their lexical choice gives an idea of sociopragmatics of Indian and American English. Swear words are very common and extensively used in informal conversations in India. Biju’s thought process narrated in the form of free indirect speech and the informal conversations that take place between him and his comrades reveal the type of language people generally use in informal settings.

Biju’s use of such language does not imply the verbal seduction rather it shows his anger at the way he was treated in America because he did not have the green card. Once Biju gets injured and Harish-Harry, his employer, does not take him to the hospital on the grounds that he does not have a green card. Devoid of medical treatment, Biju, for convalescence, spends two weeks on bed. Commenting on what goes on in Biju’s mind after two weeks, in the third person narrative, the author writes: “The green card, green card, the machoot sala oloo ka patha chaar sau bees green card that was not even green” (IL 190). In the following paragraph, Desai, through Biju, clearly reveals human psychology behind using the abusive language.

“The green card, green card. He stood with his head still in the phone booth studded with bits of stiff chewing gum and the usual Fuck-ShitCockDickPussyLoveWar, swastikas, and hearts shot with arrows mingling in a dense graffiti garden, too sugary too angry too preserve—the sick sweet rotting mulch of the human heart. (IL 233)

It is very clear from the authorial point of view that when, because of some circumstances, a “sweet” and “pure” heart becomes “rotting mulch”, the pain of the heart is being encoded in aggravating language. And this is, perhaps, the reason that
Patil says that such language is “not a symptom of a backward or uncivilized society” (210). The heart of only the downtrodden weeps and when the pain of their heart takes the form of aggravating language, they are being called the people belonging to the uncivilized society by those who falsely call themselves to be civilized.

It is to be noted that one finds extensive use of swear words like “fucking”, “bitch”, etc. in American English and the fact that Biju is living in America, makes his English full of such swear words also. The swear word “fucking” which is considered very offensive by many people, has been frequently used by Biju and the proletarians he is living with:


“Muhheakunnuk, Muhheakunnuk – the river that flows both ways,” he added with significant eyebrows. “both ways. That is the real fucking name.” (IL 267)

And then came fucking Moby Dick. The river full of dead fucking whales. The fucking carcasses were hauled up the river, fucking pulverized in the factories. “Oil, you know,” he said with intense internal frustration. “It’s always been fucking oil. And underwear.” (IL 267)

Here and there, we find many other offensive and abusive expressions like “Bitch, whore, cunt, Sali” (IL 181). “bhenchoot jeep” (IL 287). “kutti” (II. 289). “Saala Machoot” (IL 289). “Supid bitch, dirty bitch” (IL 305). Devika’s comment on the vulgar expressions used in the novel is in the proper rhythm with the discussion done above: “...her [Kiran Desai] overindulgence in certain tactics, like using abuses or explaining again the same information already revealed through the characters makes her a perfectly human writer, reserving places for peccadillos” (49). Devika is patently right in calling such eventuated vulgar expressions “peccadillos”.

Besides, there are some obscene descriptions just like we find in Arundhati Roy’s God of Small Things and in almost all the novels of Shobha De. Though obscene but unlike Shobha De who has been referred to as “erotic and provocative” (“Shobha De”) and who has been touted by many as “princess of porn” (“Shobha De”), Desai’s
purpose is not to offer the hot stuff to romanticize her audience rather her main motto is just to give a glimpse of the male dominated society and to show the cruelty of men over women. The description of Jemu's ghastly sexual indulgence with his wife goes like this:

Ghoulishly sugared in sweet candy pigment, he clamped down on her, tussled her to the floor, and as more of that perfect rose complexion, blasted into million motes, came filtering down, in a dense frustration of lust and fury - penis uncoiling, mottled purple-black as if with rage, blundering, uncovering the chute he had heard rumor of - he stuffed his way ungracefully into her. (IL 169)

However, there is a scene in chapter thirteen where Sai, standing before the mirror, is thinking of her physical beauty. The description of “her breasts jiggle like two jellies” and her lowering of the mouth “to taste the flesh” (IL 74) does not seem to give any connotative meaning rather it may be an unconscious attempt, unlike the conscious attempt of Shobha De, to provide some hot stuff for the readers.

To give her fiction sense and sensibility of Indian aroma, Kiran Desai has left no stone unturned. While, on the one hand, she uses code-switching from English to Hindi and from Hindi to English, on the other, she very aptly describes the form and manner of storytelling as the cook does, which gives us a glimpse of the type of grammatical structures of Indian English in fashion, and thus creates the visual imagery of the people “Very Indian-trying-to-be-American accent” (IL 137).

Kiran Desai, to intensify the sensuous pleasure, also uses parts of some songs from the Bollywood in her second novel. For example:

“O, yeh ladki zara si deewani lagi hai ...” (IL 51)

“Mera joota hai japani ...” and “Bombay se aaya mera dosi ... Oi!” (IL 53)

“Chaandani reate, pyar ki baate...” (IL 273)

The reason behind Kiran Desai making her characters speak in the endonormative way Hinglish can be justified in the sense what Ismail S. Talib talks of:
Some of the styles and conventions are closely associated with the source language, and they may be difficult to convey in English as they depend on the phonological resources, sound patterns or the distinctive idiomatic or metaphorical expressions found in the language. Among them are conventions found in some aphorisms, incantations, tongue twisters and riddles. (153)

Conclusion

The overall analysis of the language of the characters of the novels under study forms a conclusive idea that, in the novels of the Desais, the presentation of the language of the characters extensively varies from the standard, though it is less obvious in the novels of Anita Desai. The idiosyncrasies of speech and social affiliations of the characters in the novels have prompted the authors to make their speech quite distinctive. Sometimes, these deviations give a clear-cut idea of dialect, creole or pidgin. But this is not to say that it is always in the language of characters that one finds this deviation, sometimes, this deviation can be traced in the voice of the third person narrators also. Ismail S. Talib’s generalized observation of the language used in post-colonial Indian English Fiction seems to be applicable on the fiction of the Desais too, though the frequency is much less. Talib reasonably asserts:

Although less common, deviations from the standard or formal usage in the language of the third-person narrator can also be found. In complex examples of speech presentation in third-person narratives, the distinction between the language of the third-person narrator and that of the characters may not be clear-cut. Because of this lack of a clear-cut distinction, deviations from the standard or formal usage can be found in the language used by the third-person narrator. ... Some of the deviations may be indicators of how the standard language of the community differs from standard British English. (139)

The Desais’ use of language in the third person narration is quite close to what we regard as ‘standard’ while the deviation from the standard is easily traceable in the language of their characters. These are the social affiliations, which make the language of the characters of the novels distinct from the standard. Thus, both the writers attempt in making a harmonized balance between the exonormative and
endonormative use of English language in their novels. Both the writers are in line with the following suggestion of Meenakshi Mukherjee:

Relevance and clarity are perhaps the two prime criteria in any experiment with diction, though no fixed rules can be formulated. Each writer has to experiment for himself and decide where a literal translation would do and where it will become an unnecessary impediment. (168)

Both the mother and the daughter have enriched their fiction by giving it a different and distinctive Indian tone and colour and at the same time they have abided by the basic linguistic structure of English. Both the writers have adopted the discourse conventions of the novel as it is written in the West and, simultaneously, they have assimilated the discourse conventions associated with Indian culture, though this assimilation is less obvious in the novels of Anita Desai as comparison to the novels of her daughter.
Works Cited


