Idiom and Ideology: Language of New Theatre

Language is an important tool for the communication of ideas and the expression of thoughts. The survival of culture without language is not possible. Language has helped mankind by transmitting the culture and civilization to coming generations. The multi-dimensional development in life has been possible only through language. The knowledge of some particular people’s language is required to get aware of their culture. There is a deep relationship between language and culture as language is a verbal reflection of one’s culture. The culture comprising the values and customs of a particular region moulds the way of one’s thinking to a great degree.

There is a close connectivity between one’s language and cultural identity. The denigration of one’s language as in the form of its exclusion from the schools, colleges and offices may make one realize the denigration of one’s ownself. An appropriate example of it is India, as at the time of colonialism, Indians were forced to adopt English language at the cost of native Indian languages. Learning a new language is like learning a new culture. It may prove to be an enriching experience if it does not force one to harm one’s native language and own identity which was unfortunately done by the colonizers.

Broadly, language can be divided in different categories for different purposes. For instance, one such division can be made between the aesthetic and the rustic language. The aesthetic language is regarded to be beyond the comprehension of the common people as one has to strive hard to understand the symbolic meaning hidden in it. Thus, it is frequently called the language of the intelligentsia. Authors, poets and
dramatists use this language to serve their purpose of giving expression to certain
experiences. It does not mean that it has no relation to the common people as its very
source in the form of ideas is the lives of the human beings. There is the rustic language
also known as the language of the rough people. It is quite emphatic as it contains
slangs which are quite straightforward and punny penetrating deep into the heart of the
listener.

With the passage of time, development took place in various branches of
learning resulting, into the evolution of their particular languages, being divided into the
category of medical language, technological language, religious language, political
language, literary language etc. based on their own terminology.

Another division of language can be made on the basis of their use putting them
into two categories – living and dead. The languages, surviving for a long time despite
several obstructions, are called the living languages. While those, which could not
overpower such hurdles, got extinct and occupied a place in history only. There are a
number of factors, which contribute to the growth and development of language, and
one of the most prominent factors is its connectivity with life. As life is the other name of
change, the language to be used should be flexible and dynamic; and it should possess
the element of adaptability. A living language remains in continuous use and it changes
with the changing culture. Language of two different cultures can not be identical. The
adaptability of culture is the very basis of the flexibility of language. If a certain culture
can not adapt itself to some new circumstances, its language will also remain static. An
example of such dead languages is found in the form of classical Greek, Latin and
Sanskrit language which could not last long due to the lack of cultural adaptability, while English language went on developing by imbibing various cultures into it for almost the last seven centuries. This absorptive quality of English language has given birth to its various forms as ‘British English’, ‘American English’ and ‘Indian English’ etc. The widespread progress and expansion of a language depends much upon the commercial activities. For instance, in India, it was Khari Boli, the advanced form of Hindi, which got enormously flourished during the great Moghul regime. Similarly, English language developed tremendously during the colonial period, with the establishment of East India Company. Whenever a country is enslaved, its language and culture are captured, overpowered and dominated by the language and culture of the other country. The same was done by the British rulers during colonialism in India who imposed English to dominate Indian culture.

There is a deep relationship between language and culture. Imperialism seeks to influence the culture of the native by means of language. In India, the British used English language as a tool to dominate over Indian culture. As a strategic movement, the imperial British language ‘English’ was placed at the very root of Indian system. One’s language, which is the basic means of communication and expression of one’s feelings and ideas, seems to be snatched away from the Indians as they were forced to be imposed upon an alien language in which they were not able to give vent to their feelings, ideas and experiences. It is well evident in the following way:

A good example of the cultural dimension of colonialism would be the role of the English in India. Colonial administrators such as
Warren Hastings and T.B. Macaulay, academic scholars like William Jones and commentators such as James Mill first studied Indian languages (especially Sanskrit and Persian) by translating texts from these languages into English or undertaking studies of Indian law, religion, or arts... In the second stage they announced that these Indian texts and cultures were primitive, irrelevant, and completely out of date. With such knowledge systems, they argued, India could never progress. From this second moment emerged the third. In the third moment they substituted English as the medium of instruction, as the language of knowledge itself. Arguing that English and European culture alone could ensure equality, liberty, development, and ‘modernization’, colonial administrators installed English.¹

In this way, Colonial rule, with the installation of English education, abrogated native’s faith system and promoted Christianity existing as the only belief system. The basic action of colonialism has always been a rejection of the established local traditions and customs as being superstitious and irrational. With the establishment of English education, the natives themselves were made to admit the inferiority of the native system of belief. Colonialism, presented as a benevolent practice through European forces, is questioned in the post-colonial writings. Such writings present the true picture of colonialism consisting of violence, selfishness and exploitative nature. It has been destructive to such a level that the native cultures and traditions were blatantly

destroyed which caused the loss of native’s own identity. Colonialism attempted to tempt the native to take the western ideas as an appropriate substitute to native’s culture, which can be understood this way:

In the cultural realm, colonialism subverted established traditions by interfearing with local customs, setting up norms of conduct, rejecting native beliefs as superstitions and, finally, ensuring that the native himself believed all this through the medium of Western education.²

Western education, being an act of colonialism, serves its purpose by causing a friction even within the family unit. There emerges a clash between a native’s mentality being absorbed in its own tradition and the mentality of his child being influenced by western education giving no value to the native’s culture and tradition, relegating them to a lower or subordinate state adhering completely to western beliefs and thinking. Through such influenced mentality, the native is rendered helpless in condition, servile in attitude and, ultimately, bound to depend on the colonial master.

Language and empire must be considered as the two aspects of the same coin. Colonialism, to strengthen its establishment, needs to have a strong control on social, political, economic and legal spheres of the native place. Such kind of control is indispensable without employing a body of strict rules and policies. Such an employment may come into being through the documentation and dissemination of the respective body only.

As documentation requires a language, the colonial master quite cunningly employs his own language for this purpose so as to be able to keep the native under control. He replaces the native language with colonial master’s language in all the official transaction to disable the native to raise a voice against the imperial force. Such an employment of the imperial language displays a subtle strategic movement of the colonial master because speech is one’s power to question or oppose any unjust move. When one’s language, which is a medium of one’s speech, is snatched away from him, he is deliberately silenced to raise any voice against injustice done to him. In this way, English language not only serves the purpose of the colonial master of keeping the native under control with the formulation and employment of rules but also by producing some (mis) information about the native through this imposed language.

The fact, that there has been a strong relationship between language and power, has also been seen in the case of English language, through its being a dominated one before coming to the status of the representative of imperialism. Before English, Latin had acquired the status of the language of power, reputation and scholarship. In this way, English itself had suffered at the hands of Roman empire with the rise of Latin language. After this, along with English, a number of other languages emerged on the international horizon with their spread across the national boundaries, such as Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish into Asian, African and south-American regions, with the project of imperialism. In this way, language can be considered as a powerful tool for the colonial masters to dominate over non-European countries. Later on, with the expansion of British empire, English replaced other imperial languages such as Portuguese and Spanish gradually, their being rendered as the weaker colonial powers.
Thus, in the realm of linguistic imperialism, English becomes the most powerful imperial language.

This is the reason why post-colonial writings choose to explore the language factor in the project of colonialism. The focus of their study mostly is on subjects of language as the European language’s domination on the native ones, the assimilation of both the languages producing a hybridized language; as a result, the only idea to be centered on is the politics of language. Gandhi had suggested that, the dissemination of English language, through the installation of English education system in India, caused an oppression and enslavement of the native Indian people. As he says: “To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us.”

Post-colonialism deals with several factors related to language; as which language a post-colonial writer should choose to use in his works, considering the social and cultural points in the selection of language. It is also to be considered whether the use of the colonial master’s language will continue colonization; can the effect of colonialism be removed with the conversion of the colonizer’s language into an indigenised form; can a native be able to resist against the colonizer and project his cultural identity in the colonizer’s language; does a post-colonial writer’s writing in his mother tongue display a reactionary form of his cultural adherence. According to the present condition, English is considered to be a global language, therefore, in such a situation can a post-colonial writer assert his ideas rejecting English and considering it

as the language of the colonizer; and if one overlooks this colonizing factor of the English language and presents the post-colonial ideas through this language only, can then he be able to preserve his cultural identity.

Globalization causes controversy over the issue of English. During imperialism, English played the role of an oppressive power. Now the countries, which had been the victims of imperialism and suffered their cultural loss through English Language, definitely take it as a challenge because English now is evidently a global language, its being used at world level business, trade, debates, negotiations and management. In this way, there can be seen two contradictory images of English language. On one hand, it is considered as a language of the colonizer being a symbol of the oppressive forces, contaminating native’s cultural values, while on the other hand, it is taken to be the language of Globalization, which is considered, in today’s time, everyone’s requirement to deal with the International issues. This is the reason why:

Postcolonial writers across the world have had an uneasy relationship with the language of the colonial master. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o began writing in English before switching to his native Gikuyu. The argument made by people like Ngugi is that one cannot simply use a language – to use a language is to adopt and accept (and therefore legitimize) its cultural and political values too, in this case, the colonizer’s.⁴

This shows the ideology of the post-colonial writers who try to give more importance to their native language in place of the colonizer’s. This is the reason why they prefer writing in their mother tongue to English but as discussed earlier, English being the language of Globalization can be a good option for the production of any writing so as to be able to reach a large group of readers across the world. Considering both these contradictory factors of English language, the post-colonial writers sought a middle way. This middle passage is seen in the form of pidgin English or the nativised English. “Pidgin English – a mixture of local languages with English – becomes a standard in itself, the ‘new’ language of the postcolonial.”

How to ‘talk Indian’ in English has been a concern and topic of conversation by the native writers for a long time. This concern causes the birth of pidgin English. The evolution of pidgin English is evident as a resistance against the imperial English. In this way:

Indigenization of the language here marks a process of postcolonial resistance (through adaptation and rejection of standard language)... Most importantly, such local dialects and vernacularized forms become stable and the hallmarks of that culture – like the language of reggae or calypso in the Caribbean and Indian metropolitan English. It becomes the postcolonial

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agenda to defend this ‘version’ of English as their own, as a marker of their cultural identity.\(^6\)

The same is seen in the plays of Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar. The concern of both the writers is the same as that of projecting and promoting Indian sensibility through their writings. This is the reason why the writings of both these post-colonial Indian playwrights are possessed with the idioms and ideology projecting decolonization. Idioms represent the language they use in their writings and their ideology is reflected in the themes they choose for their works. It is noteworthy that both these writers have written in their mother tongue. Though, later, they have got their works translated into English to reach a wider audience. Interestingly, it is noteworthy that they have translated their works in the indigenized English only, using so many Indian words in them.

Every writer has an ideology with which he writes; and it is projected through the themes which he takes for his writing. It can be observed in the case of both these playwrights also. On the one hand, Girish Karnad goes back to the ancient Indian folks, myths and history to base his writings on or to take his themes from so the language, he uses in his plays, is suitable to them with long idiomatic sentences; while, on the other hand, Badal Sircar takes the most relevant contemporary social issues as the themes for his plays, so, he employs an emphatic language comprising small, fragmented and repetitive sentences. Therefore, language differs according to themes. Though apparently both of them must be looking quite different from each other in the choice of

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their themes and the pattern of their writing yet the ultimate purpose they want to serve with the help of their writing is almost the same and that is of establishing a distinct place of Indian theatre.

A stylistic analysis of any text is required to understand it properly. Stylistics is divided into two branches: linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics. An appropriate stylistic study of a text should be done at both these levels together. On one hand, linguistic stylistics deals with language structure and its concern is with the way the signals of the writer are constructed; while, on the other hand, literary stylistics is concerned with the underlying message which an interpretation of the signals reveals. In other words, its purpose is to explain the individual message of the writer. A stylistic analysis of the writing pattern of Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar used in their plays will prove to be a good attempt to understand their ideology contained in the themes of their plays as a particular kind of writing pattern or language is used to deal with a particular kind of theme.

For instance, the writing pattern of Karnad suits his themes taken from Indian mythology, folklores and history with the help of such a language which produces long, dramatic sentences; while, Sircar’s writing pattern suits his socially concerned themes. As Sircar had been influenced by the great social dramatists like Bertolt Brecht and Richard Schechner, there is seen an absurdist element in his writing. The burning social issues are perfectly projected in his emphatic, fiery and highly symbolic language, presenting most of the elements of absurd theatre, which, at the first sight, looks to be quite meaningless with the display of short, incomplete and fragmented sentences,
displaying discontinuation, but, in reality, is replete with a grave meaning. As characters are in number and they are also limited, they play different roles. All the plays taken for the study can be analyzed at some stylistic level or the other as some particular features are prominent in particular plays.

There are some words as ‘blood’ and ‘cold’ which are symbolically quite significant, used in Sircar’s play *Bhoma*. Stylistically, analyzing at the lexico-semantic level, the words ‘blood’ and ‘cold’ have great connotative meanings signifying the sacrifice of Bhoma and the indifference of human-beings towards Bhoma’s sacrifice respectively. As is see in the given dialogues:

TWO, FOUR, FIVE, SIX. Red blood in the veins.

ONE. Red blood drips black on the soil clots black on the soil.

TWO, FOUR, FIVE, SIX. Drips black on the soil clots black on the soil.

ONE. Red blood in the eastern sky on the morning sky.

TWO, FOUR, FIVE, SIX. In the eastern sky on the morning sky…

ONE. Red blood is cold.

TWO, FOUR, FIVE, SIX. Has gone…

ONE. Cold…”

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The hard work of the poor peasants is suggested through the turning of their blood from red to black on the earth. The poor peasants work very hard on land to produce a good harvest to feed everyone still they are not provided with even the fundamental requirements such as seeds, fertilizers, water, etc. Earlier the blood of man used to be warm as man used to possess the feeling of brotherhood. Now the man has been so much busy and involved in his own life that he does not care about the problems of other man, consequently, his blood has been cold.

Foregrounding, a prominent stylistic feature is well evident in the form of repetition of certain words as michhil, ‘cold’, ‘blood’ etc. to project or emphasize a certain idea from Sircar’s plays Procession and Bhoma. As ‘procession’ is the English translation of the Bengali word ‘michhil’ which is also the title of the play so, definitely, it is quite symbolic and significant to serve the motive of the playwright. Similarly, the words ‘cold’ and ‘blood’ also work as the vehicle to carry playwright’s suggestive ideas. As in the above quote from Sircar’s play Bhoma, there is seen the repetition of words ‘blood’ and ‘cold’, one can check out an instance of foregrounding in form of repetition of the word ‘michhil’ in Sircar’s play Procession. It is the centre of attention as it is only through this that Old Man and Khoka are guided to their real home. This is the reason why this word is often repeated in the play as Old Man says, “it’s the Michhil, Michhil, Michhils for food and clothes, Michhils for salvation, Michhils for the revolution, military Michhils, Michhils of refugees, Michhils for flood relief, mourning Michhils, protest Michhils, festive Michhils, star-studded Michhils.”

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Procession of Sircar is basically a play having a Calcutta-oriented origin. As Ella Dutta says about it:

For a long time, Sircar had had the idea of making a kind of montage on Calcutta: scenes of Calcutta streets, people chatting in teashops and in the coffee houses, different scenes in the offices. (He has probably captured that very well in the very first speech in procession). Then, suddenly, the idea of Calcutta as a city of processions came vividly upon him: ‘It is one of he very few plays where I had the idea of the production even before I began writing it, articulaly the procession idea.’

Thus, Sircar adopted ‘procession’ or ‘michhil’ as the medium to present several problems existing in society. It is the reason why the word ‘michhil’ or ‘procession’ is emphasized being repeated again and again in the play.

Karnad in his play Tughlaq employs some words as chess, python, vulture and rose etc. which can be analyzed at the lexio-semantic level to convey their connotative meanings. Tughlaq, a skillful chess player, is seen in the play, playing chess not to pass his time but to find out some ways to solve the complicated problems, as he says, “I have just solved the most famous problem in chess. Even al-Adli and as-Sarakhi said it was insoluble. And it’s so simple – ” Here the connotative meaning of the word ‘chess’ symbolically presents the manipulative and crooked nature of Sultan. Just like the game of chess, Tughlaq deals with his enemies quite cunningly. He takes his rivals and

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opponents like the pawns of chess which he can use according to his own wish. He perfectly plays the political chess using Sheikh Imam-ud-din as his pawn against Ain-ul-Mulk to solve the problems created by both of them. Tughlaq’s complex kingdom, being full of problems, is also symbolically presented through the game of chess.

The passage of Tughlaq’s fort is symbolized as a hungry python. As a python crushes and kills its prey by twisting itself round and round, in the same way, any living being who enters the fort is swallowed up and does not come back. Old Man says to the curious Young Man about the passage of fort that “it’s a long passage, a big passage, coiled like an enormous hollow python inside the belly of the fort....”\(^{11}\) The python symbolizes Tughlaq’s crafty political tricks which he employs to trap his rivals rebelling against him. It also symbolically presents the fierce, brutal and inhuman nature of Sultan.

The ‘vultures’ symbolize the rebels in Tughlaq’s kingdom who keep thrusting their beaks in his flesh and do not allow him to stay in peace. As Sultan says in dejection, “Don’t you see- This patient, racked with fever and crazed by the fear of the enveloping vultures, can’t be separated from me ?...”\(^{12}\). The vultures also symbolize Sultan’s ambitions, desires and revengeful ideas which deprive him of any satisfaction.

Being a man of learning, Tughlaq is attracted towards the poetry of Sheikh Sadi of Persia which influences and inspires him to plan a rose garden. Later on, his beautiful


\(^{12}\) Ibid., 56
garden is left just as a place heaped with counterfeit coins. At this, the conversation between Sultan and Step-Mother is marked in this way:

STEP-MOTHER: What’s wrong with you: You spent years planning that rose garden and now-
MUHAMMAD: Now I don’t need a rose garden, I built it because I wanted to make for myself an image of Sadi’s poems. I wanted every rose in it to be a poem. I wanted every thorn in it to prick and quicken the senses. But don’t need these airy trappings now ; a funeral has no need for a separate symbol. 13

The rose garden that Sultan had planned is symbolically presented as the garden of ideals which has dried by towards the end.

To deal faithfully with the traditional themes of his plays, Girish Karnad employs a symbolic, figurative and idiomatic language. A few instances of that can be mentioned. The play Hayavadana is replete with figurative expressions. An instance of hyperbole is found in Bhagvata’s description of the status of Padmini and Devadatta as he says: “In her house, the very floor is swept by the goddess of wealth. In Devadatta’s house, they’ve the Goddess of learning for a maid.” 14

Along with this, there is seen the use of simile in the dialogue of Devadatta and Kapila admiring the beauty of Padmini:

13 Karnad, Girish. Tughlaq. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1975. 63-64. Print
DEVADATTA. How can you even talk of them in the same breath as her? Before her they’re as . . .

KAPILA. . . . as stars before the moon, as the glow-worms before a torch. Yes, yes, that’s been so fifteen times too.\(^{15}\)

Devadatta had fallen in love fifteen times during the course of two years. When Kapila finds him lost in his own thoughts, he gets aware of the fact that, once again, he has been attracted towards any girl. When he asks him about her as who she is, Devadatta describes her beauty in a figurative language, which Kapila was already aware of, as Devadatta had earlier admired every girl in the same way.

An instance of metaphor is available in the later description of Padmini through Devadatta and Kapila in these words:

DEVADATTA [slowly]. How can I describe her, Kapila? Her forelocks rival the bees, her face is . . .

[All this is familiar to Kapila and he joins in, with great enjoyment.]

BOTH. . . . is a white lotus. Her beauty is as the magic lake. Her arms the lotus creepers. Her breasts are golden urns and her waist . . .\(^{16}\)

Another instance of metaphor is marked in the description of Kapila about himself before Devadatta when the former offers the latter to help him approach Padmini, as he


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 13
says: “My dear Devadatta, your cloud messanger, your bee, your pigeon is sitting right in front of you…”  

When Kapila meets Padmini, he gives his views regarding her with the use of simile like this: “But this one is fast as lightning – and as sharp.”

A combination of simile and personification is seen in the speech of Bhagavata: “Why do you tremble, heart? Why do you cringe like a touch-me-not bush through which a snake has passed? The sun rests his head on the fortunate Lady’s flower. And the head is bidding good-bye to the heart.” Through this metaphoric speech Bhagavata suggests the dejection of Devadatta when Padmini gets ready for the trip of Ujjain against his wish.

There is also found a specific Indian imagery in Padmini’s description of the dawn in the forest with the use of personification like this:

Long before the sun rises, the shadows of twigs draw alpanas on the floor. The stars raise arati and go. Then the day dawns and the fun begins. The circus in the tree-tops and the cock-fights in a shower of feathers. And the dances! The tiger-dance, and the peacock-dance, and the dance of the sun’s little feet with silver anklets on the river. In the heart of the forest stands the stately chariot of the shield-bearer. It’s made of pure gold – rows of birds

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18 Ibid., 19
19 Ibid., 24-25
pull it down the street, and rows of flames of the forest salute it with torches.\textsuperscript{20}

The use of some idiomatic and proverbial expressions are also evident in the play \textit{Hayavadana}. When Padmini tries to remove Devadatta’s doubt about her longing for Kapila, she manipulates him by saying: “Really you have no sense of humour.”\textsuperscript{21} At this, Devadatta gives vent to his anger and frustration in such a reply: “It’s humour for you. But it burns my insides…” Similarly, when Padmini does not find Kapila getting ready for the Ujjain trip she shouts at him this way: “Why are you standing there like a statue?”\textsuperscript{22}

Apart from this, the play \textit{Yayati} also contains an idiomatic language. Devayani gets enraged by Sharmistha’s description that Yayati married the former only in order to get \textit{sanjeevani} from her father. Then Devayani asks Yayati whether it is right. At this, Yayati starts praising her highly. Then Devayani replies idiomatically like this: “Don’t play the fool, please. I must know.”\textsuperscript{23}

When Yayati comes to know that it is Sharmistha who had poisoned Devayani’s ears, he warns the former in his idiomatic statement like this:

Well, let me not beat about the bush. It is not proper that I am sen conversing with- someone like you. So let me come to the point.

\textsuperscript{20} Karnad, Girish. \textit{Hayavadana}. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1975. 52-53. Print
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 21
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 24
My son, Pooru, arrives today with his new bride. On this auspicious day, with my family deity as my witness, let me give you my word. If you behave yourself for one more month, just till the next full moon, I shall see that you are sent home.\textsuperscript{24}

Stylistically, a text also needs to be analysed from the coherence’s point of view as coherence accounts for the meaningfulness or relevance of a text; and in Sircar’s plays, there is seen lack of coherence among dialogues at many places, for instance:

ONE. Everyone everyone two rupees and five going for eight – take one, sir, it’s house full – full fighting full fighting – eight rupees eight rupees – want one? Want one...

TWO. One cutlet for table number two. Two cups of tea for number seven, two rupees forty. Two fish fries. Clean up the table. Three rupees sixty.

THREE. (practicing). Sa re ga, re ga ma, ga ma pa, ma pa dha...

FOUR. (playing tennis). Thwack. Fifteen love. Thwack. Thwack. Thirty fifteen...

FIVE. Why were you so glum yesterday? \textsuperscript{25}

From the above dialogues, one can analyze that not any of the dialogues are connected to each other. All of them have a different context. In this way, they are

\textsuperscript{24} Karnad, Girish. \textit{Yayati}. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2008. 16. Print

lacking coherence. The incoherence of these dialogues suggests contemporary hectic life-style in which everybody is deeply involved in his own life and activities without getting affected by the others’.

At the graphological level, too, one sees that the playwright has tampered with the morphology of a few words to create some effect. For instance:

OLD MAN. Khoka is lo-o-o-st.

CHORUS. Khoka, come ba-a-a-ck.

OLD MAN. Khoka’ll never come back ho-o-o-me no mo-o-o-re.


OLD MAN. Never again to the old home, if he comes back it’ll be to a new home, true home, truly true ho-o-ome.

CHORUS. Khoka-aa-aa, come ba-a-a-ack come ba-a-a-ack come ba-a-a-ack.²⁶

A lot of stress has been given on a few words tampering with their structure such as ‘lost’, ‘back’, ‘home’ etc. Doing this, the playwright tries to emphasize the point that Khoka, representing the innocent youth, has been lost in this corrupt world and will not come back to the old home which is lacking human values but to the new one, which is assumed to be full of humanity.

At the phono-graphological level, one can look at a feature known as intonation. As intonations are of two types; rising intonation and falling intonation. There is seen an instance of rising intonation in the play *Evam Indrajit* as:

WRITER. So you are not married yet?

INDRAJIT. No. never had the time for it. You?

WRITER. The same.

INDRAJIT. What about the others?

WRITER. The others?  

Though a few statements in these dialogues do not start with an interrogative word yet in the end just the question mark turns them into questions. This feature is known as rising intonation. At the time, when Writer and Indrajit meet after a long period of around seven years, they talk on various past issues. At the same time, when Writer asks him about his marriage, Indrajit denies but this question makes him curious to know about Writer also and, thus, he instantly asks with rising intonation. After this, when Indrajit wants to know about Amal, Vimal and Kamal, he refers to them as ‘others’. Writer gets confused as whom Indrajit was inquiring about. Thus, the reply of Writer with rising intonation shows his confused state of mind. In the play *Tughlaq* also when all the opponent *Amirs* hatch a plan of killing the Sultan during the prayer, they talk of the arrangement of smuggling arms stealthily into the palace for this purpose. Then one of

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the *Amirs* asks in an apprehensive manner through rising intonation in this way: “You are sure?”28

Parallelism, a syntactic feature is most evident in Sircar’s plays, as an instance is taken from the play *Bhoma*:

TWO. What’s that?
THREE. What’s that?
FOUR. What’s that?
FIVE. What’s that?
SIX. What’s that?29

This parallelism is seen when One utters Bhoma, and, as no one is aware of Bhoma, they all interrogate suddenly which shows their surprise. There are some other examples as well of the same type in which there is seen parallelism to focus on a particular point or catch the attention of the reader to that very point.

An element of echo, after the famous motto of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose ‘Give me Blood, I will Give you freedom’, is observed in the speech of character Five when he says “Give me blood, I’ll give you jobs...give me blood, I’ll give you permits...Give me blood, Ill give you a kingdom.”30 This imitation is presented in the form of a satire on the cunning techniques of the contemporary corrupt leaders as how they

30 Ibid., 77-78
misguide and persuade the innocent masses against their political rivals under the guise of the devoted statesmen and serve their own purpose of benefitting themselves.

Making a syntactic analysis of their plays one finds ellipses in dialogues which are taken to be the most prominent syntactic feature as they are able to create and maintain a kind of suspense throughout the play. It is an important feature of drama as it is demanded to be exciting throughout to tempt the reader or viewer to be clung to it upto the end. The play *Yayati* is replete with ellipses out of which a few can be illustrated, as in the very starting of the play one comes to know that there had been some argument between Swarnalata and Sharmishtha, in which Devayani mediates. Both are Devayani’s maid servants. As Sharmista was a *rakshi* and had been her childhood friend Devayani tries to be lenient towards her, which is seen in the under given dialogue, displayed elliptically:

DEVAYANI (calmly) : Why do you try so hard at being nasty? I feel sorry for you sometimes. It won’t help to...

SHARMISHTHA : Help? I am afraid I don’t know what ‘help’ madam can possibly mean. I may not be able to provide all that Swarnalata so freely provides, but...

Later, during a fiery argument between Sharmishtha and Devayani, the latter gets enraged and states in an elliptic manner to show her deep anger: “Bitch! I’ll kill you. I’ll feed you to the...” At another place in reply to Yayati, Sharmishtha makes an elliptic

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32 Ibid., 13
statement in order to display her disbelief on Yayati like this: “What absolute rubbish! Don’t ... Stop uttering such...” This syntactic feature is also noticeable at the time when Yayati asks Pooru to take back his youth. Pooru interrogates for such an offer in a confusing manner. His confusion and tiredness is presented with the help of ellipses, as he says: “But...why? There is so much you have to...Oh, this crushing exhaustion! No, I don’t want my youth. But may I sit down? I...I...” Similarly, at the arrival of Chitralekha into the palace when she finds the queen’s pendant lying by the side of bed leg, she feels upset and then inquires about that from Swarnalata and the latter finds it so hard to describe which is evident through her elliptic reply: “Please don’t ask me about it, Madam. I don’t know how to...” Then in the same conversation, when Swarnalata is unintentionally offended by Chitralekha’s calling her Swarnu in a familiar manner as it reminds her of some past grief, out of which, she is unable to express herself completely, her unrest is seen in this elliptic reply: “It’s just ...just...” In the play *Hayavadana* when Kapila, Devadatta and Padmini had a plan to go to Ujjain and later the plan seems to get cancelled considering Padmini’s health, then there is seen the display of elliptic dialogues:

KAPILA. But if you aren’t well, we won’t...

PADMINI. What’s wrong with me? I’m perfect. I had a headache this morning. But a layer of ginger-paste took care of that. Why should we cancel our trip for a little thing like that?

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34 Ibid., 69
35 Ibid., 52
36 Ibid.
[Devadatt opens his mouth to say something but stays quiet.]

[to Kapila] Why are you standing there like a statue?

KAPILA. No. really, if you have a headache...

PADMINI. I don’t have a headache now!

DEVADATTA. But, Padmini…

Kapila gets disappointed, when he comes to know about the cancellation of the programme, that is why, half-heartedly, he replies elliptically like this. When Padmini says that she is all right and there is no change in the programme, Devadatta gets surprised which is displayed through his elliptic statement. Similarly, after the exchange of their heads, there is seen an argument, taking place between Kapila and Devadatta, regarding the claim of Padmini’s husband. While Padmini starts leaving the place with Devadatta, Kapila impedes their way. Then Devadatta threatens Kapila in an elliptic statement like this: “Will you get out of your way or should…” One another instance can be seen from the play Tughlaq when Sultan’s opponents were hatching a plot to kill him during the prayer, arguing on the point, that he himself had his father and brother killed during prayer, one of the Amirs from them shows his apprehension elliptically in this way: “That’s true. But…”

Coming to Sircar’s plays to analyze this feature, one finds that in the very starting scene of the play, Procession, there is pitch dark out of power cut and six characters

38 Ibid., 37
39 Ibid., 36
are seen to be confused as they are unable to see anything on the road, so, they are afraid of thieves and pickpockets, and their fright is seen in the elliptic statement of a character as he says: “Guard your pockets, guard your pockets. This is just the kind of…”  

That moment, all the characters hear a death scream so there is seen some more confusion among them which is displayed through their assumptive statements with the help of ellipsis as one of the characters says: “No, no, someone must’ve fallen into a hole. They’ve dug up the whole street and made a …”  

In the play, Stale News, the atrocities of the government done to the ‘santhas’ are described elliptically as: “The hands of a schoolgirl was cut off and…”  

Talking about the same inhumanity later we find another instance of the same kind as: “Almost all the santhals arrested were mutilated all over with bullet wounds. The Santhals…”  

A conversation, being held between Indrajit and Writer, in the play Evam Indrajit, displays an elliptic reply of Indrajit to Writer in this way: “Oh! Her! But she isn’t Manasi. Her name is…”  

The latter calls his cousin with the name Manasi, which is not her original name. Once again, even being told earlier, Writer calls her Manasi. Indrajit, similarly, replies elliptically, which shows his anxiety because of Writer’s same question being asked again and again: “Her name isn’t…”  

When Writer asks Indrajit about Manasi as why they people did not get married together, Indrajit replies that both of them used to have so many plans together but: “One day it just happened that…”  

and after this elliptic reply, the playwright presents the picture of the same sort of true conversation being held between them.

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41 Ibid., 15
42 Ibid.161
43 Ibid.162
45 Ibid.17
46 Ibid.39
going in flashback. In this way, this elliptic reply of Indrajit serves as a medium to go to flashback. The elliptic statements are basically used to present the state of hesitation, confusion or surprise of the character and, the same purpose, they serve here in the above mentioned dialogues.

Now focusing on the point of decolonizing the Indian theatre one should consider over the language of ‘New Theatre’. ‘New Theatre’ evolved during a passage of time after independence. In this way, the post-colonial Indian English theatre is known as ‘New Theatre’ with some distinct features which are seen in its particular language and themes. Both the playwrights, Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar, must be taken as the representatives of ‘New Theatre’ as they contribute to this with the use of indigenized English and totally Indian themes. Their themes have already been discussed in the earlier chapters in detail. Now it is the turn to focus on the indigenized English which has been used in the English translations of their plays. In other words, one can say that they have translated their works in the Indian English using local Indian words in it. An indigenized English language comprises the local words of a particular place to distinguish it from other indigenized English languages.

In Badal Sircar’s play Procession, one can observe Hindi sentences being used by the characters at many a places, for instance: “Jao bhai thik hai!” Some other examples are there in which these Hindi words have been used without being converted into italics but getting completely amalgamated into English with their very accent also,

such as: “Paan – bidi – cigret! Paan – bidi – cigret!” and “Cha! Cha-grram! Cha!” A patriotic Hindi songs is also employed as: “Saare jahaan se accha Hindustan Hamara”. Similarly, some Hindi slogans are also used as:

FOUR. Karenge ya marenge.

FIVE. British Imperialism, leave India!

*One suddenly leaps to a point and shout.*

ONE. Ladke lenge Pakistan. We’ll win Pakistan by force.

*At once, the Chorus splits into two groups confronting each other.*

ONE PART OF THE CHORUS. Allah Ho Akbar!

OTHER PART OF THE CHORUS. Vande Mataram!\(^5^0\)

Another instance of it is seen arousing the feeling of patriotism with emphatic slogans, being replete with strong Indian fervor, projecting the spirit of decolonization such as:

ONE. Yeh azadi jhoota hai! This freedom is a phoney freedom!

CHORUS. Bhoolo mat! Bhoolo mat! Never forget! Never forget!


\(^{49}\) Ibid., 31

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 30
Slogans followed by singing – a song declaring that the freedom gained is no freedom at all. It could be songwriter Salil Chaudhary’s ‘Naaker badeley narun pelam/ tak doom-a-doom doom/ jaan diye jaanoar pelam/ Laglo deshey dhoom.

Slogans again.

ONE. Vande Mataram!

TWO. Jai Hind!

CHORUS. Glory be to Lord Krishna, avatar of the markets.\

Here, in these dialogues along with these patriotic Hindi slogans and Bengali lyrics, a Hindi word avatar is also illustrated. Likewise; in the play some other Hindi words as Sura, Somarasa, Daru and duniya have also been exhibited. There is also seen the most popular patriotic slogan: “...Inquilab zindabad – zindabad zindabad!...” Similarly, in the play Bhoma, Hindi words like hasil and abaad have been used. In the play, Stale News, Hindi names of the planets have been used such as the character Three says: “Venus! Moon! Rahu! Ketu!” In the play, Evam Indrajit, words like pooja, dampati, jampati, jaya-pati, mosambi and namaskar have been employed excellently.

Karnad’s plays are also replete with Indian words as, in Hayavadana, words like pooja, rishi, punyasthana, pativrata and sati have been used. Patriotic Hindi songs are evident here as Jhanda Ooncha Rahe Hamara, Sare Jahan se Acchha Hindostan


\[\text{Ibid., 47}\]

\[\text{Ibid., 116}\]
Hamara and Vande Mataram. In the play Yayati, words as rakshasi, devi and pooja are illustrated; while in the play Tale-Danda, Hindi words as arati, bhakti and pooja are frequently displayed. Some expressions in Kannada language as Ayyo and Hindi expression of spitting as thoo have also been employed. Notably, the play Tughlaq ends with a long Urdu prayer as:

MUEZZIN (off-stage): Alla-Ho-Akbar! Alla-Ho-Akbar!

Alla-Ho-Akbar! Alla-Ho-Akbar!

Ashahado La Elaha Illilah

Ashahado La Elaha Illilah

Ashahado Anna Muhammadur Rassol Illah

Ashahado Anna Muhammadur Rassol Illah

Haiyah Alis Salaat – Haiyah Alis Salaat

Haiyah Salil Falaa – Haiyah Salil Falaa

Alla-Ho-Akbar! Alla-Ho-Akbar!

La Elaha Illilah……54

In this way, Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu and some other local Indian words, used in the plays of Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad, project not only some stylistic motivations of these writer, as they use them when they want to emphasize some ideas through those

54 Karnad, Girish. Tughlaq. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1975. 86. Print
emphatically suited words only, finding no other substitute of them in English language, but those words also reflect the deliberate employment of pidgin or indigenized English to make the meaning much more effective. So, the use of such words, phrases and sentences serves two significant purposes; first they are used to be foregrounded to emphasize the motive of these writers and secondly, they reflect indigenized English.

Hence; considering over all such stylistic features in the form of linguistic and literary stylistics and the language used in these English translations of their plays, the conclusion which comes out is that the earnest efforts of both these playwrights, from the very starting point, have been to decolonize the Indian theatre by their using the traditional and social themes, in their plays, through employing a language known as Indian English, comprising a mixture of English and local Indian words.