

Nepalese English (Nenglish): Diverse and expanded assortment of Standard English

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Abstract

Nepalese English is a new version of Standard English which is developed due to the effect of the Worlds Englishes. When the English language is expanded, the consequence has been seen in the use of English according to the socio-cultural context of the countries. The use of English either in spoken or written form is also seen differently from the Standard English in Nepal. To uncover this change in the use of English in Nepal, I studied two fictions (novels) written by two Nepalese literary figures in English based on qualitative analysis of the authors' practice in the use of Nepalese English in writing fiction and found that there is the influence of Nepalese socio-cultural, socio-political, social norms and values in English literature. The finding also illustrated that Nepalese words (characters, location, kinship and taboos terms) are making their entries, complete sentences in Nepali are written, English suffixes are being attached to Nepalese words and vice versa, the word order of English is changed in Nepalese English (Nenglish), the literal translation of Nepalese proverbs are being introduced in English literature. The practice of writing English literature using Nepalese English is being extended to create its own features in English language which leads to develop Nepalese English as a separate variety in the field of language study.

Keywords: World Englishes, Nepalese English, novels, qualitative analysis, Nepalese characters and location, kinship and taboos terms

Introduction

Nepal is a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic country with a wide range of ethnic groups and indigenous languages. People are not only related to one language to another within the country but also outside the world because of the influence of globalization. Mufwene (2010) claims that today's world is economically and culturally more globalized because of the rapid development of transportation and communication. As globalization is the process of becoming global or homogenizing the world (Keohane & Nye, 2000), it has affected various aspects of the world such as education, development, technology, the economic condition of people, life style of people and the use of language and literature in the different parts of the world. Clement (2011) mentions that "English today is used in various contexts around the world, as the native language of millions, the official language of numerous nations, a lingua franca in a multitude of international dealings, and the language of literature" (p. 5). English is regarded as an international language and it has a dominant role in various countries of the world.

Shrestha (2016) concludes that the spread of English is rapid in Nepal due to its significant role in education, diplomacy, mass media, technology, tourism, literature and classroom pedagogy (p.111). Nepalese people's attitude is shifting, preferring to speak and writing more English compared to any other local languages. Karn (2006) admits that a large number of books, journals and periodicals are produced in English in Nepal. Likewise, Nepali literary creation such as poems, stories, essays, novels and dramas have been translated into English to extend its access to broader audience. In a paper Pandit (2013, as cited in Sharma,

Joshi & Teijlingen, 2015) reports that “‘English or Englishes’ which includes Nepalese English as a separate entity is different from Indian English” (p. 188). Nepalese English is really started with some kind of Nepaliness according to Nepali soil, Nepali culture and Nepali accent (Karn, 2006) that may call Nepali English ‘Nepenglish’, or perhaps less clearly ‘Neplish’ or ‘Nenglish’ or ‘Nepalese English’. In this paper, I have tried to analyze two novels written by two Nepali literary figures to observe their practice in the use of Nepalese English in different settings of English literature.

Literature Review

The focus of this paper is how Nepali authors use Nepalese English in fiction writing i.e. novel in English literature. For this, I draw on the notion of world Englishes, English in Nepal and Nepalese English (Nenglish) to understand what and how the authors are using Nepalese English in English literature. In what follows, I discuss the theoretical backgrounds of the study.

World Englishes

English and other major languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish have been spreading around the world day by day. It is important to emphasize that the status of a language as a ‘world language’ is not determined by demographics alone because Mandarin Chinese, Hindi and Arabic language have a numbers of speakers but they do not have that status of lingua franca in the world. It is found that there are numerous varieties of English language which are spoken in the whole world today. Mufwene (2010) asserts as “Some linguists have thus claimed that a ‘global English’ is bound to emerge which should facilitate communication world - wide, alongside – or perhaps superseding – ‘indigenized’ or ‘world Englishes’” (p. 31). As English has developed as ‘global’ language, however, it incorporates characteristics of the local languages that are used in the different parts of the world (McArthur, 1998). Kachru (1985) argues that English has been indigenized in India as well as other countries including Singapore, Nigeria, Malaysia, and India. Thus, Jenkins (2009, as cited in Khan, 2012) believes that “World Englishes is not inter languages but is the legitimate varieties of English with their own norms of use like “standard” British and American English. The accents, not only have “correctness” and “pleasantness” variables, but also have now “acceptability for international communication” (p. 90).

Halliday, Macintosh and Stevens (1964) claim as “English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans, but an international language which increasing numbers of people adopt for at least some of their purposes [...] in an increasingly large number of different varieties” (p.293). Kachru (1985, as cited in Kilickaya, 2009) argues that the rapid spread of English as a language of communication has no doubt stimulated interesting but at the same time controversial debate about the status of English in its varieties, which are commonly called World Englishes. World Englishes is the emergence of localised or indigenized varieties of English, especially varieties that have developed in nations colonised by Great Britain or influenced by the United States. Phillipson (2008) mentions that world Englishes may vary according to the culture or nation in which they are spoken and resultant convergences with that nation’s native language. Bolton (2013) opines that the term ‘World Englishes’ has been widely used to refer to localized forms of English found throughout the world. It is generally accepted that promotion and acceptance of the world Englishes paradigm has fundamentally changed the study of English linguistics.

The world Englishes approach has been adopted by many linguists in North America, Europe, and Asia as well as a number of 'third world' scholars (Bolton, Graddol, & Meierkord, 2011). Baumgardner (1993) affirms that "World Englishes form a unique and variegated sociolinguistic mosaic, and each variety, whether already standard or in the process of standardizing, is an integral part of this unprecedented international phenomenon" (p.50). Lau & Lin (2014) claim that "English as lingua franca is often conceptualized as a kind of 'contact language' used in situations where interlocutors do not share a common native tongue or a common culture, and English is chosen as the medium of communication" (p. 38).

Kachru's widely accepted conceptualization of the geographic and historical spread of English as three circles is helpful. In the most frequently cited version of the model (Kachru, 1992, p.356), the circles are oval rather than circular and presented vertically, rather than concentrically, with the lowest circles representing the earlier versions of English. As summarized by Lauder (2008, p. 10), in the model, the inner circle refers to the "traditional bases" of English: the UK, USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The outer (or extended) circle refers to the earlier spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become a part of the country's important institutions, and it plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting: it includes Indonesia's neighbors Singapore and Malaysia, India, and over fifty other territories. The expanding or extending circle refers to nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, but which were not colonized by the countries of the inner circle, and which have not given English any special official status. In these countries, English is taught as a foreign language. Linguistically, Nepal is an Expanding Circle country, as is China, Japan, Greece, and Poland. English is becoming an important language in business, science, technology, and education in these countries. Markee (2010) alleges that the field of World Englishes is concerned with describing the linguistic characteristics such as (discourse/pragmatics, grammar, lexis, phonology, and spelling) of new and emerging varieties of English in widely different geographical locations. Enokizono (2000) reminds as:

... various people in various countries and regions use English; its forms vary from people to people as well as from place to place. To be specific, Englishes in many places get influenced by the local languages and, consequently, develop their own local and original features. (p. 36)

In this context, Crystal (2003) maintains that English has no official status in the South Asian context like in Nepal; however, it is used as a medium in international communication (p. 29). But, Philipson (1992) utters that "English has retained its privileged position in the education process in Asia" (p. 28). Ammon (2001) emphasizes that as a global language and the dominating language of commerce and science, English-words and phrases have crept into many languages. Sharma et al. (2015,) avows that "English is a living language and different native and non-native speakers developing English in slightly different ways"(p.188). Likewise, in Nepal it is found that English is used based on Nepalese social and cultural context.

English in Nepal

English language is practiced in Nepal since the Rana regime. It is used in various sectors such as diplomacy, business, tourism, education, trade, literary creation, media, and as medium of instruction in educational institutions. According to Shrestha (2016, p.106),

“Despite Nepal is a relatively small geographical area with a large number of languages, the international language English is considered the dominant language in this country due to its massive spread and use “. Uttering the influence of English in Nepal, Lauder (2008) observes that English has played an important role in education as it is a compulsory subject in schools and the university students cannot complete their study without being studied some courses in English. Likewise, exploring the use of English in Nepal Eagle (1999) exposes that “one encounters street peddlers, bicycle rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers, trekking guides, porters and street children who speak surprisingly fluent English who are unschooled” (p. 308). Gazing at the increasing sway of English in Nepal Sharma (2006) mentions:

The use of English in Nepalese society has become a marker of culture and civilization. No aspect of Nepalese social life remains unaffected by the ubiquitous impact of English. The educated people use full-sentence English in their conversations and expressions whereas less educated / uneducated ones use words and phrases but no conversation and no expression goes without some touch of English. (p. 24)

Moreover, Bhattarai (2006) justifies that the significance of teaching English in Nepal as that it helps Nepalese people grow and grab different opportunities available within and beyond the borders developing their attractive career with quality of education, and knowledge about the wider world. Equally, appropriating the significance of ELT Kansakar (1998) argues that “Since the teaching of English in Nepal has assumed greater importance in view of the developmental needs of the country” (p. 72). Making clear the use of English in the world Rai (2006) suggests as:

Today English is being used globally so much so that there are more nonnative speakers of English than its native speakers. With its global use, English is losing its Englishness, and the native speakers sometimes have a hard time to understand English spoken by nonnative speakers [...] Nepali English is beginning to show the signs of its peculiarities. Nepali writers have started creating literature in English and that too shows the special features of Nepali English or Nenglish as it is known among the ELT practitioners of Nepal. (p.34)

The English language is affected by the local features of the countries in which it is spoken. No language can be pure in this globalized phase of the world. Likewise, English language is influenced by the features of Nepali language and the local accent and tone of the Nepalese people which create the separate variety of English language, Nepalese English (Nenglish).

Nepalese English (Nenglish)

In this concern, Fritz (2007) realizes that language changes over time and new variants such as Indian English, Australian English, American English and British English have grown apart. Daniloff- Merrill (2010, as cited in, Karn, 2011, p.34) advocates for the recognition of Nenglish as Nepalese learners express their identity through it. With the analysis of essays by Nepalese students, she shows that Nenglish is an established variety of English through its use in essays. Correspondingly, Karna (2006, as cited in Dawadi, 2011, p.46) asserted:

The Nepali variety of English, or Nenglish, shows not only remarkable disparity from the native dialects like British, American varieties but also from the Indian English, comically known as Hinglish (as it is influenced immensely by the Hindi

language). As a matter of fact, English spoken in Nepal has considerably changed over the years. It has been observed that the way Nepalese speak English differs from the way other nationals speak, not only in terms of vocabulary but also structure and meaning and pronunciation.

Any language is used in the society by paying attention on the socio-cultural system such as appropriateness of language, gestures, social distance, values, mores, taboos, habits, social institutions, registers, and dialects of the country. In the context of use of English language in Nepal, it is to be considered the Nepalese cultural values and norms which is known as world Englishes in the context of Nepal. McArthur (1998) employs the phrase 'Nepalese English' as a sub-variety of South Asian English (p. 97). This is perhaps the biggest recognition of the Nepalese socio-cultural facets in English in Nepal. Similarly, Brett (1996) had used Nepali English to differentiate it from other varieties of English. Rai (2006) called the new variety of English in Nepal, Nenglish considering the influence of Nepali upon English. Making a lot of discussion in the use of the term for the English that is used in Nepal Karn (2011, p.34) referred the term "Nepalese English", not Nepali English, Nenglish, Nepenglish and Nepaenglish. Nepalese English is an extended and nativized model of English of Nepal which has different kinds of spoken as well as written form from Standard English.

Method of the Study

This study was based on qualitative analysis of the authors' practice in the use of Nepalese English in writing fiction. It also contained accounts of previous studies conducted across the region at different times which emphasize the study to use the exploratory research design to conduct the research. To observe the use of Nepalese English in the literary works of Nepalese literary figure, I have selected two novels written in English by two Nepalese literary figures (1 male, and 1 female) purposively. The first is *The City Son* which is written by Samrat Upadhyay, and the second is *Seasons of Flight* by Manjushree Thapa reflecting the figure of Nepalese society in these novels. I have chosen these two novels because they depict the current practice of the use of Nepalese language in English literature.

Samrat Upadhyay is a new generation Nepalese writer who writes in English. He is a professor of creative writing. This Nepali-born fiction writer writing in English is the first to be published in the west. He was born and raised in Kathmandu and then went to the United States at the age of twenty-one. His books portray the current and hot issues of Nepal. *Upadhyay* is popular among the young generation as the storyline of his novels and stories are subject of interest for the younger generations. He deals with the contemporary subject matters of relationships as well as sexual content in his works. He has written many fictions including *God in Kathmandu* (2000), *The Guru of Love* (2003), *The Royal Ghosts* (2006) and *Buddhas' Orphans* (2010) and *The City Boy* (2014).

One of the most prominent Nepali writers, *Manjushree Thapa* is an established writer in English in the field of Nepali literature. She was born in Kathmandu in 1968; she grew up in Nepal, Canada and the USA. Gurung (2018) maintains that "Manjushree Thapa is one such Nepali writer in English who engages in Nepali diaspora and subaltern studies" (p. 176). Her books of fiction include *Forget Kathmandu* (2005), *Tilled Earth* (2007), *A Boy from Siklis: The Life and Times of Chandra Gurung* (2009), *Seasons of Flight* (2010), *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinion on Nepal* (2011). She includes the emerging

issues in her literary creation. She gives minute details of the locale, polity, society and life of people in Nepal in her literary works.

As the both authors include the Nepalese culture and context in their literary work I have selected their work to study for finding the use of Nepalese English in English literature. I have gone through the two novels to find the use of Nepalese English in details. After reading the novels, I have made a list of the words, utterances, sentences and proverbs which bear the characteristics of Nepalese English. And then, I have developed separate themes to analyze the listed chunks.

Findings and Discussion

The use of Nepalese English in the novel reveals that the authors have endeavored various allegorical approaches to add Nepalese spirit in their fictional writings. On the basis of the study of two novels written in English by the Nepalese writers, the finding of the study is discussed under the following five thematic areas:

Use of Nepalese Characters and Locations

The City Boy has the characters with Nepalese names such as Didi, Amit, Sulochana, Masterji, Apasara, Sumit, Mahesh, Rukma, Tarun, sanmaya, Priya Basnet, Sahara, Lakhey, Chhori, Kanchha, Ram Bahadur. In the same vein, in the novel *Seasons of Flight* has also use of Nepalese characters such as Prema, Bijaya, Kanchha, Rajan, Narahari Bohora, Sushil, Trailokya, Harihar, Neeru, Meg and Susan.

The settings of the novels are various locations of the Nepal such as Kathmandu, Asan, Thapathali, Annapurna, Bangemudha, Kathmandu, Bagmati bridge, Tripureshwar, Kupandol, jawalakhel, Ratna Park, Kamalachhi, Tapathali, Pokhara, Putalisadak, Dakshinkali Temple, Aryaghat, Dharahara. Thapa gives minute details of the locale, polity, society and life of people in Nepal. At the very beginning, through the dialogue of Prema with an American in Los Angeles, she clarifies the geographical location of Nepal as a country surrounded by the Himalayas and it is the place near the Mount Everest. The deliberate selection of Nepalese characters and settings and events in the stories play a crucial role in demonstrating Nepalese socio-political and cultural attributes (Karna, 2012). The entry of Nepalese characters and location in English novels helps to develop the Nepalese English in English literature. The widely used Nepalese characters and location expands the horizon of the use of Nepalese English in English literature.

Use of Nepali Kinship Terms

It is found that there is widely used of Nepali kinship terms in the novels such as dai, bhai, bhauju, dulahii, didi, nephew, sasu, chhora, chhori, thuldai, bahini, Da, Ba, mastersaab, phupaju, *Saaila, Kanchha, Maldaju, Kaka, and Fupas*. Both Upadhyay and Thapa borrow Nepalese kinship terms in their novels from Nepali. Though the settings are alien in *Seasons of Flight*, a Nepalese character struggles to keep intact her original identity even while conversing with Americans. The use of Nepalese kinship terms in English literary works extends the Nepalese English in the world. Generally, it is found that only English kinship terms are used in English literature but now-a-days, it is also found that Nepalese kinship terms are also used in English literature which shows that Nepalese words are also accepted in English literature which is the result of the influence of the Nepalese English in the English literary world.

Use of Nepali Cultural and Taboo Terms

Many Nepali cultural and taboo words are used in the novels such as, The Bhagvad Gita, the Mahabharata, The Ramayana, Shiva-Parvati temple, Shaligram, Vishnu, Nepali bhajan, bahunani, guruputra, peeda, tika, Teej, sindur, sahani, namste, gagri, bhakundo, mohi, gagro, anarsa, sel, kheer, maalpuwa, haluwaa, titaara, achar, lungi, khaini, randikochhoro, murkha and some vulgar Nepalese cultural words. The entry of Nepali culture and taboo terms help to develop separate Nepalese English. It provides Nepalese flavor in English literature. The uses of such words create separate identity as Nepalese English in the world. The use of these cultural and taboo terms enhances the status of Nepalese English (Nenglish) in the field of English literature and the more use of these terms provides the validity of Nepalese English. The English language is used according to the cultural context of the society and the use of these Nepalese cultural and taboo words also prove this fact. This can be considered as diverse variety of English language.

Use of Complete Sentences in Nepali

Complete sentences in Nepali are also used in the novels such as, Kasto kura nabujheko bhanya., Oo tyahi samma jana lageko., kahan harayau timi? Harey! Yasto bheedmaa., Aafno khyal rakhnu parchha., Yo ta timro matra kura hoinani., La, muji mero thuk nil., Agultole haneko kukur bijuli chamkida tarsanchha., khanajaan la? Bhitra aanus., suruwal kholnus. Kale! Kale! Ta gadha. Herdinas goruharu tirkhako? The complete use of Nepali sentences is another trait of Nepalese English that I found in the both novels. Such types of use of language assist to create different feature of English. Language is used on the basis of the interest of the people of the certain society. They can use their mother tongue during speaking or writing foreign language. The same thing happens in English literature as the full sentences of Nepalese English are used in English literature. It denotes that Nepalese English is extending day by day in the western world.

Use of Nativized Form

Both novels are heavily nativized from linguistic perspective. I have observed some expressions found in the novel written by Upadhyay (2014, pp. 1-243) and Thapa (2010, Pp. 1-223). First of all, I have listed the expressions found in Upadhyay's novel *The City Son* as:

Is anybody home?

Are you women named Sulochana?

A sickley feeling has started in Didi's stomach.

Sometimes I feel like my heartis goingto break.

A few days later Didi appears with Amit and Sumit in tow in Bangemuhaatmasterji's new flat.

You know Ram Bahadur? Yes?

Didi tells the masterji, " don't you then to take care of him as if he's indeed your son?"

"One minute I'm away."

"Your new home, da?"

"Your mother fine?"

"you're like my lover (labar)".

He'd heard her utter Nepali version of English words-pilastic, taybul, restooran, iskool, labar sounds too filmy.

I was sweet as barfi.

Stay for a while, bhauju.

"She's too beautiful," Didi says. Too much.

"Today was Bangemudha—"

"Go go, it'll do both of you good to get some fresh air."

Similarly, Thapa (2010, Pp. 1-223) has also used a lot of nativised form of utterances in her novel *Seasons of Flight*:

Tch, tch, tch, you must be freezing, Bahini!

What you don't know is that foreigners aren't like us, Bhaini

Ah, it's your tea, Didi, it keeps us wanting more.

What automatic guarantees are you promising, eh, Kanchha?

La, ta. Trailokya shrugged affably.

What's two hundred rupees for a sir like you?

Why not live together the way foreignness do?

The himals are not visible from the bazaar but foothills ringed the north.

'A letter sister! A letter for you from an Americane

Ba, I am going to America.

Dal-bhat, she asked.

The expressions mentioned above show that English language is not pure. It not only belongs to Britain, America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, but also belongs to the whole world. I can claim that English has not only the feature or assent of Britain and America but has different features of socio cultural properties of the countries where English is used as a second language. The authors have transferred nativized form of Nepalese language to the English language. Such transformation process in writing literary work creates different varieties of English language based on socio-cultural context of the society. This is also shown in the two novels studied in this study which are written by Nepalese writers. They have used a lot of Nepali words, Nepalese culture and they have tried to nativised the English as Nepalese English.

Conclusion

After analyzing the utterances used in the two novels it is found that there is the use of Nepalese English in fiction to express cultural attitudes of Nepalese society. The recognition of Nepalese English can develop local erudition in English. It is revealed that the Nepalese social norms and values and social, cultural, political aspects are included through Nepalese English in English literature. Actually it is brought into being the Nepaleseness in the English texts. According to Nepalesese culture the names of elders and seniors are addressed "with – ji". All most all kinship and address terms are used in Nepalese socio-cultural setting through which the foreigners also understand our culture as well. Many Nepalese words are used in the novels which are regarded as code-switching. They have often switched their code from English to Nepali because it is impossible to be express in English aesthetically to reflect the

cultural factors. The old saying, proverbs and metaphors are repetitively in the novels which enriches the novels to replicate the Nepalianness.

As Nepali speakers, most of the time Nepali characters in the novel ask questions in affirmative form rather in question (yes/no or wh-question). This is also a feature of Nepalese English. Concerning on the use of Nepalese English in these two novels it can be said that Nepalese words are making their entries, English suffixes are being attached to Nepalese words and vice versa, word order of English is changed in Nenglish (Nepalese English), literal translation of Nepalese proverbs are being introduced in Nepalese English literature (Rai, 2006). It divulges that there is uniqueness in Nepalese English literature. In this regard, Gargesh (2006) noted that South Asian writers contextualize their English to the extent that the connotations and semiotics that exist in their local languages are imported into the medium used. The use of Nepalese English in English literature is increasing because of the influence of the socio and cultural context of the Nepalese society. This trend develops a new variety of English as Nepalese English among the different assortment of English language.

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