DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNICISM: A CRITICAL STYLISTIC STUDY OF LONDONSTANI

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ABSTRACT

The current study is aimed at exploring and analyzing the discursive construction of 'ethnicism' in Gautam Malkani's Londonstani. The study is an attempt to analyze the issues through the application of critical stylistics. Conceptual framework for the study includes the relevant views of Van Dijk. Analysis of the selected data unfolds the stylistic tools and techniques used by the novelist in construction of cultural, linguistic and religious differences, sense of relative deprivation and biased role of media in spreading racist ideology and mindset. The current research also exposes the effects of this issue on society by not only generating violent conflicts and ethnic disputes in society, but also causing threat to peace and security of the whole region. Furthermore, the study suggests significant views for eradicating ethnicism from society. Such suggestions are to formulate laws against verbal and non-verbal abuse of minority group members, to apply principles of egalitarianism in society, to raise a unified voice against abuse of power and to control the biased use of news media. Findings of this research can contribute to a better understanding of ethnicism, which may be used for more effective policy making and broader knowledge, when addressing these issues on different levels.

INTRODUCTION

Keeping in mind the emerging global ethnic crisis and the effective role of literature and linguistics in analyzing discourse and shaping one's point of view, the current

study is designed to investigate the social mosaic and linguistic polyphony of ethnicism and holds an attentive ear to emerging changes in language use. Gautam Malkani's Londonstani is the bildungsroman of teenager Jas, who is the narrator of the novel. He is nineteen years old, living in Hounslow London and an ex-honor student. Jas struggles to convert into a rude-boy group and together with Amit and Ravi becomes part of Hardjit's gang and narrates stories of his new life. Set in Hounslow, London, few years after the September 11 attacks, these rude boys (or desis) are attempting to remove themselves from the mainstream culture. Through a series of experiences, such as fighting between groups, family issues, his first love affair with a Muslim girl, his indulgence in illegal business, his interactions with seniors, Jas grows up to be a man.

Ethnicism is an important contemporary issue in modern literature. Ehnicity is the outcome of subjective perceptions, that is, personal identification based on some objective characteristics, such as physical attributes, presumed ancestry, culture or national origin. It not only includes biological inheritance, but also affiliation with a particular racial group (Yang, 2000). This multidimensional nature of ethnicity is also found in Padilla and Borsato's (2008) study about race, ethnicity and language from psychological perspective. According to them, if an individual identifies himself/herself in his/her mind, with a particular ethnic group, then he/she is willing to be perceived and treated as a member of that group (cited in Fishman & Garcia, 2010). For Tajfel, this social identity is defined as ". . . part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [sic] membership of a group or groups together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (cited in Baxter & Wallace, 2009, p. 413).

The concept of ethnicism grew farther from biological reality and psychological perception to a social construction, used on the one hand by oppressors as a "legitimizing ideological tool to oppress and exploit specific social groups and to deny them access to material, cultural and political resources, to work, welfare services, housing and political rights," and on the other hand, the oppressed use it for an alternative positive self-identification, on the basis of which they fight for their political rights and independence (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005, p. 2).

Language plays a vital role in the construction of ethnicism. Ehtnolinguistic identity theory states that when the ethnic group identity becomes important for individuals, they display their distinction through language (Tajfel, 1978). Moreover, different forms of socialization practices take place through the language of home and community. Language gives meaning and significance to the existence of an ethnic group because it connects the past with the present through its history, oral traditions, customs, literary forms and music. Therefore, when a person's language is threatened, rather than submitting to an elite and powerful group, the ethnic person forms union of resistance with others of the same ethnicity, who seek to undo the threat. Giles and Johnson state that individuals, while interacting with the other groups, may adopt certain psycholinguistic strategies of distinctiveness by switching to their in-group language in order to enhance their self-worth and

highlight their different collective identity (cited in Beswick, 2007).Thus, this stereotypic externalization of prejudices not only strengthens the sense of belonging and simplifies communication within one's own group, but also delineates the out-group, especially during the periods of inner resistance and social change (Quasthoff, 1978).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Briefly touching the etymological history of the word ethnicism, Ratcliffe states that ethnicism is taken from a French word Ethnie, which refers to people who share a common life style and culture, but do not necessarily occupy their ancestral territory or homeland. According to online oxford dictionary, "Ethnicism is the consciousness of or emphasis on ethnic identity or culture; ethnic self-determination or nationalism; ethnic separation." Ethnicism can be considered as love, solidarity and realization of one ethnic origin or identity. However, the term encompasses a lot more than that. Pieterse says that differentiation means discrimination, which leads to ethnicism (Pieterse, 2004) which further leads to ethnic conflict. It can be seen that "ethnic conflict is a worldwide phenomenon" and despite the long war against racism, it is still with us (Howrowitz, 1985, p. 3). The terms, ehnicism and racism, are often used interchangeably. Bulmer comprehensively defines race in terms of "common ancestry", "memories of a shared past" and aspects of group identity based on "kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance" (Bulmer, 1986, p. 54) However, "because of its confusing usage and its questionable scientific validity, many sociologists and anthropologist have dispensed entirely the term race and instead prefer ethnic group" (Lentin, 2011, p. 84).

Asanabi pointed out five features associated with the concept of ethnicism while discussing ethnicity and ethnicism in Nigeria in his research paper. Firstly, the concept of ethnicism is more pronounced in a plural state. Secondly, the feeling of cultural superiority is part of a common consciousness. Thirdly, there is a sense of competition among individuals and groups for scarce public resources. Fourthly, it is a widely used political tool to canvass for political support and emotional sympathy. Finally, it is a situational consciousness which changes in its form, role and place as the social process demands it (Asanebi, 2017).

Wetherell and Potter (1992) state that racist discourses should not be considered as static or homogeneous, but as dynamic and contradictory. Even the same person can contradict his opinion about an issue at another time (cited in Ratclifee, 1994). Moreover, it is even subject to fractionalization on the basis of other factors, such as class and gender. Not only does ethnic consciousness change over time, it also varies with respect to social context. No doubt, ethnicity originally referred to common descent. The largest ethnic group was called as tribe. Therefore, an ethnic group was relatively small, shared a common culture and traced descent to a common ancestor. In this modern era, societies and groups are constantly exposed to external influences due to migration and colonization, as well as majorly through the mass media. According to a recent estimate, "the world's 184 independent states

contain over 600 living language groups, and, 5,000 ethnic groups" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 1). This changing context over the years has given a new shape to the meaning of ethnicity.

Ethnicism is closely linked with language. Cameron (1997) drew her analysis that speech is the repeated stylization of the body, or in other words, people are who they are because of the way they talk. Therefore, discourse analysis is used in formal settings in order to elicit detailed insights about identities and relationships. It is often analyzed discursively as a social practice and as an ideology. Prejudiced discourse attributes or denies certain generalized qualities or behavioral patterns to a particular class of persons. Uta Quasthoff, one of the first discourse analysts, categorized prejudiced discourse as attitudes, convictions, prejudices and stereotypes (Quasthoff, 1978). She defines 'attitudes' as the action or reaction towards a group of people such as the expression of dislike or sympathy. 'Convictions' are the qualities ascribed to others and often rationalize negative attitudes (e.g. that 'blacks smell bad'). On the other hand, 'prejudices' are mental states of stereotypic convictions or beliefs, resulting in negative attitudes towards social groups Moreover, she also defines 'stereotypes' as the verbal expression of a specific conviction or belief commonly associated with a social group (cited in Reisigl & Wodak, 2005, pp. 19-20).

Furthermore, Liebkind's study suggests that ethnolinguistic identity and language behavior do not necessarily correlate with each other (Liebkind, 2006). Many studies show that language loss does not mean loss of group membership (Verkuyten, 2005). People might change their culture and even language, but still stand for their ethnic identity in order to maintain their connection with the past. Consequently, many groups manage to continue living as distinct groups even after communicative language shift. Blommaert maintains the need of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics to go beyond the traditional concept or idea of languages as autonomous codes, to understand the complex ways in which linguistic and other semiotic resources act and interact in multilingual settings (Blommaert, 2010).

Van Dijk emphasizes the 'rationalization and justification of discriminatory acts against minority groups' illustrated as 'the 7 D's of discrimination.' They are "dominance, differentiation, distance, diffusion, diversion, depersonalization or destruction, and daily discrimination" (Van Dijk, 1984, p. 40). He presented the concept of 'elite racism' and integrated the concept of 'ideology' into his sociocognitive model. He analytically distinguished between social cognition, discourse and society, after thoroughly investigating newspaper editorials, school books, academic discourse and interviews with managers, political speeches and parliamentary debates. His basic assumption was that racism is produced and reproduced by the 'the elite,' and is then implemented in other social fields (cited in Reisigl & Wodak, 2005, p. 24). Kress in his social semiotic theory discussed the communicative potential of visual devices in media. According to him, the societal role and status of semiotic practices has currently changed because instead of national institutions, the semiotic production and consumption is mainly regulated

by the global corporations and semiotic technologies (Kress, 2009).

Siegfried Jäger and Margret Jäger conducted interviews in Germany about their attitude towards foreigners and Jews. Their main focus was not only on everyday racism, but also media analysis. Their primary interest in the newspapers was the coverage of criminal acts. According to a recent analysis, most of the papers tend to individualize the Germans with criminal backgrounds. On the other hand, the foreigners, who are guilty of criminal offences, are not only generalized, but also marked by reference to their national or ethnic origin (Jäger et al., 1998). These prejudiced statements against "the others" project a positive self-image of one's "own" in-group as "we-are-better-than they" or that "we are democratic, enlightened, non-patriarchal, non-sexist, correct in our sexual contacts, and all have equal rights." Margret Jäger, therefore, concludes that such ethnicist sweeping generalizations can be countered to some extent by intricately unfolding the relevant discourse and highlighting the ethnicist remarks embedded in them (cited in Reisigl & Wodak, 2005, p. 25).

RESEARCH METHOD FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The current study explores the discursive construction of ethnicism in the novel under study from the conceptual perspective of Van Dijk (1987a, 1993, 2000, 2002). The essential elements of Van Dijk's framework may be summarized in the following multidisciplinary triangle: (a) a socio-cognitive approach towards racist and nationalist ideologies, (b) a theory of elite racism as a form of ethnic dominance and inequality, and (c) a complex multi-level analysis of text and talk in context.

The tools of Critical Stylistics, presented by Lesley Jeffries (2010), are applied on the text under study. The ten tools include, naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, equating and contrasting, exemplifying and enumerating, prioritizing, implying and assuming, negating, hypothesizing, presenting others' speech and thoughts and representing time, space and society.

Naming and describing involves a simple choice between two or more ways of referencing the same thing. A noun phrase may be analyzed in the text under study for the choice of nouns, that is, the kind of words used to indicate a referent; noun modification, that is, the kind of modifiers used in the noun phrase, to determine the nature of the referent; and finally, nominalization, which means the decision to use a name and present it as an entity, rather than a verbal process.

Representing actions, events or states involves the choice of verb used. The author may present the situation according to his desires, by presenting information in the form of action, depicting what is being done (mostly by living beings); event, what is happening (mostly by inanimate things); or state, what simply is.

Equating and contrasting may also be ideologically significant by attaching strand of meanings to a word. Equivalence has fewer triggers, such as appositional equivalence, parallel structure and intensive relational equivalence. Apart from the

straight forward triggers, metaphors and similes can be used in many ways to textually construct equivalence. The creation of opposites, on the other hand, is more complex. Some of the main types are: negated opposition (X not Y), transitional opposition (Turn X into Y) and comparative opposition (more X than Y).

Exemplifying and enumerating add a sense of completeness and reliability to the text. Enumerating lists all the cases of a category, whereas, in exemplifying not all the cases of a category are listed. With prioritization, the writer can highlight specific information for persuading the reader.

Implying and assuming also helps in smooth transfer and acceptance of the writer's ideas. The existential presuppositions refer to some fundamental assumptions, necessary for the working of a language. Logical presuppositions logically indicate an assumption. Besides assumptions, implicatures are also used to embed implied meanings in a text.

Negating can be used for creating and interpreting the non-existent versions of the world or some sort of absence or lack of action encoded in the text. Some of the main ways considered here are: syntactic (isn't), semantic (lack) and morphological (undone) processes.

Hypothesizing in texts may present the writer's or speaker's view of the world as it is, or how it should be, or how it ought to be. The choice of modality plays a vital role in hypothesizing ideas in texts. Presenting others' speech and thoughts considers power of the narrating voice, mediating the words and thoughts of the participants, whose viewpoints are discussed in the texts by the use of direct or indirect speech.

Finally, representing time, space and actions analyzes the deictic fields, by means of which the fundamental features of time, space and society are constructed for a text world. These include place deictic, time deictic, person or social deictic .The deictic system of English divides the context of interaction into proximal deixis (close) and distal deixis (remote) centered on the speaker, called the 'deictic center' of the speaker.

Analysis of Discourses on Ethnicism

The lines under study are a collection of various dialogic engagements between characters and the narrator's personal and judgmental view of the constructed issue of ethnicism.

Then he sticks in an exclamation mark by kickin the white kid in
    the face   again. –Shudn't b callin us Pakis, innit, u dirrty gora . . .
    Call me or any a ma bredrens a Paki again an I'ma mash u an yo
      family. In't dat da truth, Pakis? (Malkani, 2006, p. 3).

Identification and Labeling of Critical Stylistic Tools

Naming and Describing:

"exclamation mark," "kid," "gora," "Pakis" (choice of noun), "white," "dirty" (noun modification), "an exclamation mark," "u dirty gora" (noun phrase) (Tool No. 1)

Representing Actions/States and Events:

"sticks," "kickin," "Call," "mash" (MAI) (Tool No. 2)

Equating and Contrasting:

"Exclamation mark" (metaphor) (Tool No. 3)

Hypothesizing:

"Shudn't" (deontic modality) (Tool No. 8)

Presenting Others' Speech and Thoughts:

NRSA, Direct Speech (Tool No. 9)

CRITICAL ANALYSIS
In these lines, Hardjit is beating the white boy for calling him a Sikh boy, 'Paki.' First, he verbally warns him not to call him 'Paki' again. Then, it is followed by a non-verbal action of beating. His kicking of the white boy, like an exclamatory mark, expresses his emotions of contempt and aggression. The repetitive use of the word 'Paki' by the novelist, in the beginning of the novel, foreshadows ethnic conflicts in course of the novel. The pre-modifying adjective 'white' refers to the global ethnicism against the black community. All the negative associations with the word 'white' in the postcolonial context, such as the superior race, are automatically transferred to this white kid, without being challenged, justifying Hardjit's reaction. The 'gora' being pre-modified by the use of an adjective 'dirty,' is readily assumed to be dirty. The transitivity choices also depict the point of view of Hardjit. He warns the white boy not to call him 'Paki' again. The use of MAI (call) may refer to the planned or purposely conducted racism. Hardjit expresses both his strength and anger later in the sentence that if the 'gora' is not warned, then he will not only mash (MAI) him, but also his family. The writer has depicted his strength by making him capable of material action intentionally.

Moreover, a hidden image of an exclamation mark is created underneath the physical action of beating the white boy. The kicking of the white boy is equated to putting an exclamation mark after a verbal comment. An exclamatory mark is used to indicate strong feelings, also high volume or emphasis. Similarly, the

kicking of the white boy by Hardjit expresses his emotions of contempt and aggression. Ideologically, this metaphorical comparison with an exclamation mark emphasizes the reaction of Hardjit. It metaphorically presents the emotions of the immigrants towards the ethnicist behavior of the West. The sticking of the exclamation mark increases the volume of the narrator, so that it becomes audible to all the readers. The narrator also seems to exaggerate the violence he sees. After the unfortunate incident of 9/11, Muslims in general and Pakistanis in particular were targeted. Therefore, their nationality, Pakistani, which is a source of pride and honor for them, was reduced to a commonly used abuse, "Paki," connotating the negative associations of Pakistanis being strangers, immigrants, foreigners, terrorists, etc. The writer disapproves of such a behavior and warns others not to use such disrespectful and offensive words. The deontic modality "Shudn't" adds a lot of weight to it in the minds of the readers. Thus, the sentence constructs an immigrant's ideology in a foreign society, where he encounters racist behavior and responds to it aggressively. It emphasizes the perceived authority of the writer as a proponent of anti-racism. Likewise, the lines can be seen as evidence of racism because in Van Dijk's views such "accounts of minorities" or their personal experiences are "crucial indicators of racism." The verbal abuse "Paki" attributes "negative characteristics" to the minority group. The social strategy underlying such discourse may be in Van Dijk's words "attack, marginalization, problematization or inferiorization" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 30). The following passage is in continuation wherein Hardjit further clarifies the terms and conditions of calling anyone 'Paki.'

The passage under study is a discourse on ethnicism wherein Samira is speaking to Jas about his father. The passage under study seeks to answer the designed research question.

what did you think, just because you're not Muslim my dad's going to grab a butcher's knife and turn you into halal meat? You've been watching the news or listening to all those Hindu elders too much, Jas…We're not monsters. Of course, my daddy's going to be chilled with you. He's always tellin my brothers to stop getting so hung up on whether someone's Muslim or Sikh or Hindu or Christian or whatever. He has this whole speech ready for it, says he's lived in this country long enough and lived in this world long enough to know that we're all brothers (Malkani, 2006, pp. 251-252).

Identification and Labeling of Critical Stylistic Tools

Naming and Describing:

"Muslim," "dad," "knife," "meat," "news," "elders," "Jas," "monsters," "Sikh," "Hindu," "Christian" (choice of nouns), "butcher's," "halal," "Hindu" (noun modification) (Tool No. 1)

Representing Actions/Events and State:

"think," "know" (MC), "grab," "chilled," "tellin," "lived," "watching" (MAI), "listening" (MP) (Tool No. 2)

Exemplifying and Enumerating:

"Muslim or Sikh or Hindu or Christian" (four-part list) (Tool No. 4)

Assuming:

to stop getting so hung up on whether someone's Muslim or Sikh or Hindu or Christian or whatever" (logical presupposition, state of verb) (Tool No. 6)

Negation:

"not" (syntax), "stop" (lexis) (Tool No. 7)

Representing Time, Space and Society:

"Long enough" (time deictics), "we are all brothers" (social deictics), "this country," "this world" (place deictics) (Tool No. 10)

Critical Analysis

The line of demarcation and sense of otherness is enhanced in the novel by inter-religious romance. Samira tries to remove the stigmas associated with the Muslim image. She clarifies to Jas that her father is a Muslim, but possesses an enlightened approach and understanding mentality. The choice of words, like "butcher's knife" and "Halal meat" depict the negative and inhumane image of extremists and terrorists, associated with "Muslim" or "Islam." The writer also uncovers the source, which is involved in spreading such negative propaganda, that is, "news" or media and "Hindu elders" or the stereotypes. In the words of Samira, the novelist has pointed towards the emerging Islamophobia in the west post 9/11. Muslims are accused all over the world for killing people. Therefore, the novelist has made a fine comparison between the image of a Muslim to have become similar to that of a Butcher. The moderate attitude of Samira's father is a blow on the face of the people or media that spread a negative image of Islam without considering facts. The text further shows that he advises the same to her brothers, and in fact has a whole speech ready for it. However, what is significant at this point is the construction of the deictic field in the speech of Samira's father. The repetition of proximal space "this country" and "this world" draws the reader towards the text. The time deictics "long enough" further pulls the reader towards opinion of the character (Samira's father). The deictic field sets ground for the reader to easily accept the speech's main message, which is, that "we are all brothers." Due to the

social proximity towards the end of the speech, together with the proximal space deictics, the recipients empathize with the text and its participants.

Jas expected negative reaction from Samira's father towards their relationship. One possible reason behind Jas's assumption may be the News media. This supports Van Dijk's views on racism in news media. According to him, only negative stories about the minority groups are paid "specific attention, both by the journalists and by the readers" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 127). The discourse constructed about minorities in news tends to be persuasive and aims at molding the opinion and attitude of the audience. Jas is portrayed as one such character that has fallen target to the hidden conspiracies and agendas of the biased media.

CONCLUSION
In the novel under study, ethnicism has been expressed in language, religion, traditions, institutions, dress, music, lifestyle and even food. The detailed analysis of the text reveals that specific stylistic devices played a significant role in representing ethnicism in the novel. The novelist has used the stylistic tools of nominalization, verbalization, equating, contrasting, exemplifying, enumerating, prioritizing, implying, assuming, negating, hypothesizing, presenting others' speech and thoughts and representing time, space and society to frame the contents of the text according to his objective. For instance, ethnic communities show signs of solidarity and self-awareness, which are often expressed by the name of the group, e.g., the way the group of rude boys call themselves "desis" (Malkani, 2006, p. 5). The novelist wants his readers to accept his claims as true facts and supports ideas contrary to their beliefs.

Basides discourse, several other factors also contributed to the construction of ethnicism in the novel. The most common factors are sense of relative deprivation or social exclusion. It means the experience of being deprived of something to which one believes one is entitled is quickly followed by feelings of discontent. The researcher discovered three main factors causing instances of ethnicism in course of the novel: ethnic factors, like different languages and religions in multiethnic societies, sense of ethnic deprivation and social exclusion due to cultural, social and political injustices and prejudiced use of news media.

Analysis of the novel not only led to the identification of stylistic structures used for projecting ethnicism and their dangerous consequences for the readers and society in general, but also provided practical tips for eradicating ethnicism from the society. For instance, naming and describing others with negative attributes or verbal abuse should be avoided. Similarly, exaggeration of one's positive qualities and other's negative attributes results in inequality and resentment. Also, inactive and passive listeners encourage racist discourse. Therefore, whenever required, the victims should raise their voice, step forward, question and clarify the false information or news, etc. (See Malkani, 2006, p. 127 for more details). One's self-respect should not be compromised at any stake, just as the boys logically invert the common racist dichotomy of "white" and "colored" in the novel (See Malkani,

2006, p. 3 for more details). In-group solidarity is also significant for standing against the external oppression. The news media needs to be under serious control to stop spreading fake news or creating negative images. Just as Samira points out in the novel that Muslims are not monsters, and those, who think so, must be watching the news too much (See Malkani, 2006, pp. 251-252 for more details).. Moreover, we need to free our minds of all kinds of racist bias and discrimination. Awareness needs to be spread against ethnic differences. Proper steps must be taken on both personal and national levels to stop the injustices that emerge as a result of adherence to such non sense, ignorant and biased mentalities, e.g. the difference in the position and status of Brahmin and non-Brahmin, etc. (See Malkani, 2006, pp. 239-240 for more details). The "Gandi-fied way" as suggested by the novelist is the best solution to end all kinds of violence and ethnicist practices (See Malkani, 2006, p. 108 for more details). Similarly, Samira's father also concludes his life's learning that we all should live like brothers. Love, peace and harmony must prevail for a happy and prosperous society (See Malkani, 2006, pp. 251-252 for more details), epecially in the present time because the population of the world is getting more diverse, and we are moving towards a more multicultural pluralistic society wherein we should respect all people, regardless of the color of their skin, religious background, country of origin or their language.

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