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Hybrsyntactic Appropriations in the ‘Third Space’; A Case Study of English-Tamil song “Kolaveri D”

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Abstract

The focus of Psychologists has been aimed at the segregation of structural differences among languages, specifically in bilingual context. The former colonized communities differ in exhibiting language polarities and the trends of Intrasentential switches and Intersentential switches. The aim of this paper is to investigate these intrasentential or Intersentential switches in syntactic understandings. The Bhabha’s third space of being ‘Hybrid’ is theoretically acknowledged. The code-switching, being initially a bilingual phenomenon, pays attention to sociological interpretations, socio-pragmatic concerns or discourse functions. The focus of present research converts the researchers’ attention towards a ‘third space’ in syntactical langue of the bilingual speakers that emerges without having any definite patterns or constraints. The paper analyzes one Indian Song, ‘*Why this Kolaveri Kolaveri Kolaveri D*’, in terms of syntactic experiment to investigate a Hybrsyntactic structure in the minds of the bilingual speakers. The linguistic choices and language alternations create structures within the bilingual or multilingual communities and express emotive functions of the language even when the structure confirms to none of languages the bilingual/multilingual speaker knows. The brief research calls for a reconceptualization in the third space that engenders new possibilities and blurs limitations of creative ability.

Introduction

Locally, people learn a language because of the benefits, usually socioeconomic... that they hope to derive from them rather than because of whether or not they feel connected to the outside world... [There is a] utilitarian

dimension of languages, as assets that one accumulates only if they have local market values that are significant to them (Mufwene, 2008, p. 11).

Homi K. Bhabha, the renowned postcolonial theorist propagates his theory that enculturated the colonizers and the colonized in the periphery of a third space. This inbetweenness for both the colonizers and the colonized seeks out their enhanced understanding in comprehending structures of both the languages, even creating a third one in the alternative space. This alternative space engenders new possibilities in every socio-cultural and economic domains.

A boundary is not that at which something stops, but as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its essential unfolding (Heidegger, 2008). Bhabha's effort in providing insight into the creative unfolding led literary scholars seek new meanings of hybrid and nature of being hybrid. The sociocultural development of the entities in the process of creating something hybrid in nature also calls attention for new linguistic possibilities and Intrasentential and Intersentential switches within the structures.

Bhabha propagates the concept of a new cultural form that emerges from multiculturalism, or atleast biculturalism. His theory fundamentally focuses on the relation of the masters, and the marginalized. When the master and the marginalized experience a cultural collide, a potential form is created, allowing the practitioner to develop and create new form of cultural implications and linguistic possibilities. In *Location of Culture*, Bhabha assembles his concept of identity emerging from the liaison of colonizers and the colonized.

Bhabha's concept of the Third Space, a hybrid zone, details that such "cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent" (Bhabha, 2007, p.77). His perspective of cultural production is punctuated as power relations that exist between the dominating and the dominated. This liminal Third Space is the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation (2007, p. 38) that occurs in indeterminate spaces between the colonizers and the colonized.

Identities of both the colonizer and the colonized in this liminal space are constructed in relation to multiple, or even contradictory significations in terms of meanings where mode of articulation engenders new possibilities. Rutherford comments,

For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'Third Space', which enables other positions to emerge (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211)

For Bhabha, culture is never dualistic, or even unitary, it has a tendency to be interpreted in new meanings and perspectives. He also negates the notion supporting the argument that culture is fixed, or can be transmitted unaltered. He says, "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" (p.55). He comments, "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure the meaning and the symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (p.55). The encounter between the colonizer and the colonized originates hybrid interactions resulting in hybrid culture in the third space, that can no longer be associated with the roots of either of them. Such hybrid interactions create process of interpretations and reinterpretations. Ika

and Wagner comment, "the encounter of two social groups with different cultural traditions and potentials of power as a special kind of negotiation or translation . . . takes place in a Third Space of enunciation" (2009,p. 2). This place allows the users of the social group to construct their identities in relations to a system of meaning that is often varied and contradictory. Ilan Kapoor aptly theorizes third space as "non-dialectical space standing in between the binary structures of orientalist representations and imperial power" (2003,p. 566). Similarly, Bill Ashcroft comments, "this space is also a transcultural space, a 'contact zone,' . . . that space in which cultural identity develops. . . . the space of postcolonial transformation" (2009,p. 108).

The concept of "Colonial Mimicry" is also propagated in the fourth chapter of Bhabha's book. For him, the mimicry is a resistance strategy used by the colonized as a tool for anxiety (1994). Colonial mimicry is "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (1994,p.122). Mimicry is thus, a sort of double articulation "a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the other as it visualizes power" (p.122). "The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (p.126). Mimicry, for Huddart is n "an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas. This exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition with difference, and so it is not evidence of the colonized's servitude" (2006,p.39). The present paper is an attempt to locate such exaggerated copying of language, manner, ideas and culture alike. The transformation of the local expression in the language of the colonized is analyzed in terms of syntactic ambiguity.

Language, being a universal phenomenon for human communication, has its structures and description along constraints. Every language, in its own unique way, has its peculiar features and characteristics. These elements of the structures are combined by the users who produce new structures in new utterances. This development in the language undergoes in connection with the third space interaction of the colonizers and the colonized. The tendency to change and produce novel structures are not restricted to the morphological level, rather, the shift confirms itself in the domains that are semantic, and syntactic in origin.

Languages, in general, are subject to change in their structural properties and interpretations with the passage of time. The old script of language is replaced by the new script while local language is confronted by the structures of the dominant language. The constituents of the language interact with the elements of the other language and form a third space of morphological and syntactic appropriation and meaning are conveyed in communication and in arts as well. Such appropriations are used as artistic pledge for the user of the third space, creating hybrid structures and linguistic variations. The colonized, in attempt to mimic the colonizer, translate aboriginal knowledge into colonial discourse. The grammatical as well as phonological system of a language has its own framework of meanings and structures. In one of the articles, "Caliban's Voice: Writing in the Third Space", Ashcroft (2009) termed third space to be the most appropriate space for the colonial relations to grow and interact.

Bhabha (2007) coins "creative heterogeneity" to be the tendency of the peoples' aboriginal knowledge in contact with the traditional colonial knowledge. The product of this encounter and interaction claims to a distinct entity, having no roots of either of the communities. Similarly, the

process of interpretation and reinterpretation kept ongoing. The ethnic heritage and indigenous culture are subject to modification and metamorphosis in terms of individual’s creative ability.

Bhabha comments:

It is in the emergence of the interstices-the overlap and displacement of domains of difference-that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated...Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively (2007, p. 2)

The locations where different cultures converge, the choices regarding language, identity and culture are confronted with the speakers/users. They develop hybrid language in response to their local indigenous expressions, renegotiating their identities and cultures. They move beyond binaries of local versus global, colonized versus colonizer and attain a hybrid space. The capacity to ‘create’ is driven by the principles, to be taken into consideration, and those which fall in the domain of being bilingual or multilingual. The integration of language structures embed the rule-governed mechanism and form a matrix language. For Bhabha (1990), hybridity is about the fact that “when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them” (p.216). This extension of the third space provides articulation of language in the face of ambivalence and the state of hybridity.

The present study focuses on the ability of the ‘colonized’ in creating hybrid structures in the song and confirming to the influence of ‘each’, on the ‘other’.The aim of the present research is to investigate the facet of bilingual creativity, appropriating a third space in syntactic options, grounded in the competence of the competent bilinguals. The analysis of the song *Kolaveri D* involves introspective grammatical competency data(both English and Tamil) and experimental data.

Syntactic Structure of Tamil Language

Syntax, being the study of sentence structure, analyzes the way constituents are combined. The syntactic pattern in the sentence is analyzed by breaking the constituents into words and phrases. The syntactic form also varies in its approach towards usage and meanings.

Like Urdu, Tamil is also a word free order language. Generally, Tamil sentence has a Subject Object Verb (SOV) pattern. At times, specifically in literature, this order can be transformed into SVO or OSV, which are usual. These transformations are possible to a certain extent. Tamil, being a morphologically rich language, takes case markers attached as suffixes to nouns. Sometimes, the position of Nouns, in accordance to its case inflection, does not hamper its role as a subject or an object. In some patterns, Tamil sentences can be composed only of NPs. Presence of verb is not mandatory, though it (the copula verb) may be assumed to be in the deep level.

Phrases are formed by putting words together in a linear relation. This relation is pertinent for its correctness as only certain categories or constituents in a phrase can follow or precede some other category in a sentence. For instance, almost in all languages, adjectives qualify a noun and so on. Like English, Tamil phrase is also formed by a head word, or accompanying other category words. The phrase is likely to be changed where the head word segregates the class of the constituent. Tamil has same pattern of phrases as in any other language, comprising

Noun Phrase (NP), Adjectival Phrase, Verb Phrase (VP), Adverbial Phrase and Prepositional Phrase (PP).

Syntax studies the processes and the principles by which construction of the sentences are made possible. The investigation of the syntactic structures in a given language has a goal of viewing the underlying structures that produce sentences. The aim of such an analysis is to give theoretical underpinning to the process of ‘forming a grammar’ and construct hierarchy of grammars.

Analysis of the Song, Kolaveri D

yo boys i am singing song ,soup song, flop song

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

rhythm correct

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

maintain this

why this kolaveri..di

distance la moon-u moon-u

moon-u color-u white-u

white background night-u nighth-u

night-u color-u black-u

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

white skin-u girl-u girl-u

girl-u heart-u black-u

eyes-u eyes-u meet-u meet-u

my future dark

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

maama notes eduthuko

apdiye kaila sax eduthuko

pa pa paan pa pa paan pa pa paa pa pa paan

sariya vaasi
super maama ready
ready 1 2 3 4
whaa wat a change over maama
ok maama now tune change-u
kaila glass
only english..
hand la glass
glass la scotch
eyes-u full-aa tear-u
empty life-u
girl-u come-u
life reverse gear-u
lovvu lovvu
oh my lovvu
you showed me bouv-u
cow-u cow-u holi cow-u
i want u hear now-u
god i m dying now-u
she is happy how-u
this song for soup boys-u
we dont have choice-u
why this kolaveri kolaveri kolaveri di

Discussion

The morphological curiosity arises when the song starts abruptly with a cataphoric expression; soup song, flop song. The listener is triggered as the comparison is made, a flop song, soup song where flop song makes a sense while soup song, generates curiosity as to what does it mean? Soup in Tamil language refers to young men who experience failure in love after having beautiful relationship. The other word that initiates the morphological crisis in the minds of the listeners is

Kolaveri itself. *Kolaveri* is murderous rage and is employed as a constituent in the English structured sentence.

Another feature incorporating indigenous phonological pattern at the end of the word like girl and in , ‘White skin-u-girl-u-girl-u, Girl-u-heart-u-black-u’, ‘moon-u color-u white-u’ was enough to appropriate the English accent in Tamil phonological patterns. The non-Tamil listeners, who have no access to the Tamil implicatures, enjoy the song, even if the meanings are unknown. Another line- you showed me bhouve-u depicts the phonetic synchronization. The repeated phrases in the song are suggestive in creating musical information processed in the minds of the audience. *Kolaveri D* is itself repetitive coupled with punctuated beats. The lyrical pattern of the song is simply structured that enables repetition. It is itched cognitively and portray unexpected situation of uncertainty. The song can be termed as Tanglish (Mixture of English and Tamil). The local experience is well articulated in Tamil flavor and ads to the popularity of the song. Funky music, along with the blend of English and Tamil, the song became a hit without any contemporary thought of glamour or so, it appeals to the adaptation of a new concept that transcends the language barriers. The lyrics of the song are mostly English, sung in Tamil fashion and still comprehensive to the listeners worldwide.

The distinct feature of the song is creation of hybrsyntactic structures. The syntax of some of the lines shows a different pattern of constituents ‘syntaxed’ together. The lines for the analysis have defamiliar effects on the listeners as the syntax deviation invites the ability to understand the thought in a different manner. The lines have no such structure and the only constituent is Noun.

distance moon-u moon-u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun

moon-u color-u white-u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun

white background night-u nighth-u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun / Noun

night-u color-u black-u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun

white skin-u girl-u girl-u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun

girl-u heart-u black-u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun

Life u reverse gear u

Noun/ Noun/ Noun

The first line connotes that the moon is situated far. The distance in the sentence is not accompanied by a preposition, and the repetition of the word *moon u moon u* in Tamil fashion also connects to the emphasis on the thought. The next line *moon u colour u white u* again displays an unusual structure in its entirety. The message in English must have been something like, the colour of the moon is white instead of a shuffled thought constituted in a linear order of Nouns.

The next line *night u colour u black u* is another instance in this regard. The line says in English that the colour of night is black. Where the colour occupies the notion of a subject, a noun, ‘of’ a preposition, ‘night’ is a noun, ‘is’ a verb and ‘black’ is again a noun, being an object. Here in the line, every constituent is noun, even in the repetition. The same pattern is followed in most of the lines in the song. The syntactic structure marks Noun, Noun, Noun instead of a combination of constituent of different class. Another line, *white skin girl u girl u* confirms to the pattern of nouns syntactically. The following lines also have the same pattern of Nouns like *girl heart black u black u* and *life reverse gear*.

Conclusion

Tamil language, the language of the colonized, has a nature of perceiving the world with remarkable features. The phonological patterns are much transferred in the target language with stimulating tone and constant shift. The structure created in the third space allows the colonizers, and the colonized alike to comprehend the contents of the lines artistically. The message in the lyrics is well understood and the process of meaning making is well led. The third space enables the minds of the consumer to detect the message, even in a shuffled order that Bhabha narrates to be constructive, beneficial and mutual. The third space is what depends on the colonizer and the colonized as they are not independent or separated. In spite of their differences, the naturally constructed third space enables them to live peacefully, rather artistically. This mimicry strategy is also one of the stances of the colonizers to avert resemblance. They are interdependent on each other and it is better to survive by sticking together.

This hybersyntactic property of the colonized is exciting and promising domain of research in term of linguistic polarities where orientations of the ‘others’ interact. This phenomenon excites a host of stimulating issues like mixability of structures and the complexity of processing bilingual performances. The research in the syntax in terms of generative aspect is still strange in

bilingualism. Even the apparent relation between the colonizer and the colonized is emphasized much, the creative ability to produce something hybrid within the conflicts and collisions is to be given weightage. The third space regulates both the parties to exist side by side and emphasizes mutual, constructive, beneficial and reciprocal relationship between them. They depend on each other and the third space is thus naturally constructed.

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