



Research Article

CO-EXISTENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND NATIVE CULTURE IN R K NARAYAN AND RAJA RAO'S WRITINGS

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ABSTRACT

One language sets you in a corridor for life and two languages open every door along the way” -Frank Smith.

The paper titled ‘Co-existence of Foreign language and Native culture in R K Narayan and Raja Rao's writings’ looks at India as a destination of many international migrants and it has a history of migration.

The English language was once considered as a foreign language, a language for the privileged and elite class where in only British English was prevalent but pioneers like R K Narayan and Raja Rao have led a legacy which has merged the English language with Indian culture, tradition, mythology and history thus giving English a new form known as ‘Indian English’. Their writings such as "Swami and friends", "A horse and two goats" and "Cow of the barricades" not only addressed the elder sections of the society but also the younger section which also led to the development of children's literature in Indian English language. Once known as "foreign language" which is the lingua franca of the present world is seen as a bridge language between all the people across the world.

R K Narayan and Raja Rao both have adapted this form of writing to showcase the common man and the rural background of India. The English language has become one of those sources of self-expression, which leads to creativity by the non -native users.

The paper is an attempt to show the co-existence of the language English with the Indian culture through the writings of RK Narayan and Raja Rao.

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INTRODUCTION

India has a vast history of migration. It started with the khasi's migration in first millennium BC. The three most eminent waves of migrations which effected the population along with the food traditions and culture of India is parsi's from Iran, Africans and South Asians. Apart from all these, one of most prominent migration was of the Europeans which resulted in colonization of India. Indians had to go through a lot of violence and hardships for this forcible relocation. On the contrary, English language was one of the perks of the European migration. So we have seen India as a land of many international migrants.

English language was once considered as a foreign language as it also migrated with the British to India. People used to study English language as British English, so then it was the language for the privileged and the elites of that era. India is currently having 1652 languages in total and 22 official languages for administrative purposes (including English). It took a lot of efforts by great pioneers like R.k Narayan ,Raja Rao and many more phenomenal writers to adapt the English

language and make it a part of our current system R.K Narayan and Raja Rao chose English as a medium to express their creative expressions and gave birth to a new form of language which later came to be known as Indianised form of English.

R.K Narayan ,Raja Rao have had a legacy who have merged the English language with Indian culture, tradition, mythology and history through their phenomenal works giving us an Indian English language. R.K Narayan's stories have a rural background with a touch of western civilisation in it. In his writings we can see an imaginary town in South India as Malgudi, which is a microcosm of India. He created a platform or place where Indian people can familiarise with the conditions and situations within the English language. The most prominent works of these legends are Swami and friends, A Horse and two goats, and Cow of the barricades. These stories have captured the centre stage in the literature genre.

Horse and the two goats written by R.K Narayan speaks of a village Kritam in Tamil Nadu which means crown, a thing which is seen foremost but here we can see the wit of Narayan ,as this village is nowhere to be seen in the map of India. Major two characters-Muni and the American guy represents two cultures. Through Muni we can see the rural background of India and the American guy portrays the American way of life. The story has many conflicting elements which are-the

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languages, their mentality, upbringing and their living conditions. Muni was a picture of a poor person among the poorest and the American was a mediocre of his place who can throw away his return airways ticket for a souvenir of a country. In this story the most striking object is the telling of Indian myths through Muni's mouthpiece. Narayan uses such devices so that readers have something to relate to. Through this story we can see the assimilation of two languages and it is a good example of Indian English. On second we have Cow and the barricades by Raja Rao, who was a committed writer wherein he brought the Gandhian principles in his writings. He showed us the impact of the modern Indian resurgence with west. In this story we can see a figure of ahimsa as the master (teacher) of the village who upheld the virtues of Gandhiji. This story is the essence of the traditional India, in which the promising title becomes the climax of the story. Rao living amidst the 20th century portrays the impact of modern Indian resurgence with west, which was not void of Indian culture and tradition. People still prayed animals and considered cow as an avatar of god of that village. We can also see how an ordinary animal becomes the protagonist of the story by breaking all the invisible borders or walls among the people and then she was immortalised forever. Last but not the least, 'Swami and friends' written by R K Narayan is one of his masterpiece where he takes out the extraordinariness out of the ordinary setting. Swaminathan, a 10 year old boy growing up in a fictional town Malgudi at the time of pre-independent days of India, is the central character of the story. His mischievousness, innocence and commitment towards his friends form the base of the story. Swami and friends includes a series of events occurred in young Swami's life in those days. Swami's grandmother like any other Indian grandmothers tells stories whereas his newly made friend, Rajam is exactly like an European, who can act like one and speaks proficient 'European English', who wears 'fur cap and coat', here the contrast of west and Indian culture is very much visible.

In this story, Narayan uses his skill full etched characters, the Indian culture and his wry sense of humour to attract the audience and to understand the text. His main motive was to build a story in English language where the non-native people, along with the younger sections of the story can have something familiar and so that they can themselves adopt several creative measures to express themselves.

So we can clearly get that English language wasn't a part of us. It was a foreign language which was only for the elite sections and for the privileged. It was basically a luxury or so called extravaganza in the early centuries but now English language has become lingua franca or bridge language among the people across the world. This bridging of the gap between foreign language and native language was necessary to develop a sensitive society which is not just educated enough understand the changing demographics of the country with the world scenario but to develop a sense of tolerance to accept and respect the other cultures. This was made possible because of the contributions of our writers like Raja Rao and R K Narayan and many more.

The paper wants to discuss the importance of 'Co-existence' it was necessary that India had to accommodate itself with the changing times and these pioneers had understood that there was no point in condemning and developing pessimistic attitude amongst the coming generation towards the changing scenario, but develop a sense of mind which knows to

accommodate the changes without having to leave the roots. Thus these writers used English language with Indian culture through their writings. They have successfully shown us that English language or a second languages can co-exist with the first language or the mother tongue and also represented the idea towards the Indian society that 'No language can replace the importance the mother tongue/ native language and the culture that we are born with'.

The modern schooling system was brought in India through English language. English language has become a major part of Indian educational system. According to the sources, in the year 2013 around 90 thousand books were published in India, in which 24% was written in English language, it is approximately 22 thousand books and with the advances in the prevailing years the percentage of the books in English language is continuously growing. Our most favourite publishers like Westland, Rupa & co & penguin publishers who produce amazing writings of individual talented writers, publish their works in English language only.

English has become a part of our day-to-day schedule and life style. Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan have shown their sincere intentions in their works, where they wanted India to be versatile and adaptive towards this language. The paper gives references to their writings which mesmerised a lot of people and helped them to understand the value of their own language, tradition, culture, history and mythology along with the English language.

Thus it also led our writers to discuss about our rich culture to the global citizens. Fictional towns like Malgudi and the 32 simple stories in it, portrays the facet of life of the people of rural area in English language. So referring to their works is to show the essence of co-existence of English along with the native language was not just to represent the idea of tolerance in the Indian minds but to represent India at the international level spreading the idea of tolerance and brotherhood and tell the world that there is no harm in knowing more or gathering more knowledge. Learning a second language along with our first language should be more helpful than harmful.

Many pioneer writers threw light on breaking out the peripheries of the prevailing world. Michael Madhusudan Dutt wrote in English (a travelogue) in India for the first time, then in 1930s R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand contributed towards Indian fiction in English language. Their target audience was not only the elder sections of the society but also the younger sections. They envisaged the future of India where English would take an important role so they started encouraging the English language from that period. Children are the representatives of the future so they made sure that they will be tolerant towards English language and they would adapt it. Tolerance played a major role in bringing the English language in the scenario of India. In today's world the present generation are not alienated from English language and we can cope up with the advancing and changing times just because of the efforts made by the writers like R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand.

In the current scenario Indian English Literature has contributed best of best works not just at national level but at international level too. But still there are problems such as the fear in few people is that English language will replace the native language of the Indian people. English language can never overpower the native language. Mother tongue or native

language is something that we have inherit but English is an acquired language, but still our coming generations and the present generation should not be bereft of Indian virtues or traditions or culture. There can be many alternative solutions but one of the effective solutions is, mother tongue or native language should be made the first and most compulsory language, then English language as the second language and Hindi as the third language in the educational system. This will help the roots of the Indian tree to get stronger than ever. Mother tongue or native language helps the person to always stay connected with his /her own native culture or tradition or beliefs and the other two languages help the person to widen the knowledge of the people.

The paper wants to throw light on those people who had foreseen our future and contributed according to it. The journey of English language is fascinating, from a foreign language to a second language. English is known as lingua franca in today's world and it bridges the gap between the non-native people. The progress of English language is inelible and people also can expect a huge advancement in the field of English language as well as interdisciplinary studies. Pioneers like Raja Rao ,R.K Narayan will always hold a firm place in the hearts of the Indians and through their writing, people will always be attached with the Indian myths ,culture ,tradition and history. We can see how R k Narayan represents Dashavatara or the ten primary avatars of Vishu in his story 'A Horse and Two goats'. Sarayu is said to be a sacred river in the Ayodhya city and R.K Narayan uses the reference of the Sarayu River in his Malgudi days and again gives his mythical touch to his stories. Raja Rao also uses myths, history and traditions of Indians in his stories. In cow and the barricades we can see how a cow was worshipped by people and even merchants used to think the cow as goddesses Laksmi. Doddabasavanna (the big bull god) is also referred in this story and it is shown how the cow saves the life of the people by breaking the barricades and so it was immortalised forever.

CONCLUSION

The paper discusses the importance of tolerance and co-existence because it strongly believes in the idea that India has always been a country which has believed in the idea of world peace. The ancestors of India have always preached the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- the world is family', and writers like R K Narayan and Raja Rao have rationalized these ideas using English as medium for creative expression for all the non native users across the world and the native users too.

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