

Structural Deviations in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*.

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Raja Rao, RK Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand are three stalwarts of Indian English Fiction. His first novel *Kanthapura* is one of the most popular novels in Indian English Fiction. This novel has been acclaimed as the classic work in Indian English literature. In this novel he uses Indianised English which is different from the British English. Since the advent of British English in India, it has undergone huge changes of experimentation from the Indian writers in English. By the term Indianisation of English, it can be said that it involves the advent of English in India, how it spreads and finally assimilates itself into the fabric of Indian languages. There is no denying the fact that English has been accepted and used as functional English language which has been Indianised from all the structural and grammatical points of view. Barring the stages of its spread and use in India, it has also gone changed structurally. This British English has been used by a large number of Indians for whom it is alien. In this process, there is no doubt in it that a number of major and minor changes takes place in the structure of this original language.

It has been found when English is used and spoken by non-native speakers, it is influenced by the first language of those speakers. As far as the Indian speakers of English are concerned, they belong to different regions and speak different accents. So by the term Indianisation of English, we may take into account this fact also that this Indianisation takes place in several parts of India where languages with different accents and pronunciations are spoken and used. Naturally, a Bengali English will have Bangla influence in it; a Tamilian's English will be affected by Tamil features while a Punjabi's English will reflect the influence Punjabi accent. Now these changes may be termed as the Banglaised or Tamilisation or Punjabisation of English. Further, these regional Indian languages leave enough impact on the grammar and lexicon (vocabulary) of British English which gets turned into typically Bangla, Tamil or Punjabi English.

As far as the use of structural deviations by Raja Rao in *Kanthapura* is concerned, he employs third person narrative in it. The narrator is an old woman named Achakka, who talks in the western style having Indian flavor. Further, to highlight the difference of language used by a literate person and illiterate man, Raja Rao explores the use of popular Indian words and phrases which are supposed to be typical to the language of India. Rao also highlights the difference in the use of English language by a literate person as well as an illiterate person. He further goes on to use a number of popular words and phrases which are typically spoken by Indians.

There are a number of full length expressions picked up from Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* are structurally more Indian than English in tone and temperament both. Let us study the following passage from *Kanthapura*:

'Tell me' said Venkamma one day to Akamma, bringing forward her falling sari over her shaven head, 'Why should our family feed theirs? If her parents are poor, let them set fire to their dhoti and sari and die. Oh, if only I could have had the courage to put lizard-poison into their food'. 'Why should a widow, and a childless widow too, have a big house like that? And it is not her father that built it. I've two sons and five daughters and that shaven widow hadn't even the luck of having a bandicoot to call her own. And you have only to look at her gold belt and her Dharmavar sari. Whore! (Kanthapura 5)

The phrase *falling sari* is a deviation from the English phrase *lowering*. In the same manner the phrase '*put lizard-poison into their food*' is a structural deviation for the English phrase '*poisoning their food*'. The use of Indian words such as '*sari, bandicoot*' in the above mentioned paragraph also creates the impression of structural deviation from the use of English words.

Let us study the following passage:

He was not like corner-house Moorthy, who had gone through life like a noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent and brahmanic, a very prince, I tell you... He (Patel Range Gowda) was a Fat, sturdy, fellow, a veritable tiger amongst us, and what with his tongue and his hand

and his brain, he had amassed solid gold in his coffers and solid bangles on his arms. His daughters, all three of them, lived with him and his sons-in-law worked with him like slaves, though they owned as much land as he did. But then you know, the tiger, his words were law in our village. 'If the Patel says it', we used to say 'even a coconut leaf roof will become a gold roof'. (Kanthapura 6-9)

In this passage, Raja Rao uses expressions such as '*corner-house*, *noble cow*, and *coconut leaves*' and '*gold roof*' purely as Indian expressions in Indian structure of language. In the same manner, in the following description, he uses '*bad rains*' '*sick cattle*' as Indianised structure:

..... and Bhatta answered it all by saying how very busy he had been, what with the bad rains and the sick cattle, and the manuring work and the hoeing work and the weeding work, and to top it all, these bonds and bonds and bonds to sign, really, if the very devils wanted to take his place, he would say, 'Take it! And bless those generous souls.' Really, aunt, this business is terrible. One cannot even go and see if one's relations are dead or alive. How are you all, aunt?' 69 (K 37)

The following dialogue has been based purely on Indian structure of narration:

'Do you know in the city they already have grown up girls, fit enough to be mother of two or three children, going to the Universities? And they talk to this boy and that boy; and what they do amongst themselves, heaven alone knows. And one, too, I heard, went and married a Mohomden. Really, aunt, that is horrible!' ... But Rama-Rama, really if we have to hang the sacred thread over the shoulders of every pariah ... it's impossible, impossible. (Kanthapura 38-39)

There are a number of dialogues and paragraphs which have absolute Indian style of spoken English. In the following extracts taken from *Kanthapura* all the examples and quotes have been used in the way Indians speak:

She told us, too about the stars that are so far that some have poured their light into the blue space long before you were born, long before you were born or your father was born or your grandfather was born; and just as a day of Brahma is a million million years of ours, the day of the stars is a millian millian times our day, and each star has a sun and each sun has a moon, and each moon has an earth, and some there are that have two moons and some three, and out there between the folds of the milky way, she told us out there, there is just a chink, and you put your eyes to a great tube and see another world with sun and moon and stars, all bright and floating in the diamond dust of God. (Kanthapura 41-42)

Then Rangamma's sister Kamamma came along with her widowed daughter Ratna, and Bhatta rose up to go, for he could never utter a kind word to that young widow, who not only went about the streets alone like a boy, but even wore her hair to the left like a concubine, and she still kept her bangles and her nose-rings and ear-rings, and when she was asked why she behaved as though she hadn't lost her husband, she said that that was nobody's business, and that if these sniffing old country hens thought that seeing a man for a day, and this when one is ten years of age, could be called a marriage, they had better eat mud and drown themselves in the river.

The other women would speak of the coming Rampur Temple festival or of the Dharmawar sari which young Suramma had bought for her son's haircutting ceremony, and when Kamamma was gone they would spit behind her and make this face and that, and throwing a handful of dust in her direction, pray for the detruction of the house. Kenchamma protected virtue and destroyed evil. She would work the way of Dharma...It's for nothing you put forth into the world eleven children, if you do not even know what your very beloved son is always doing. I will tell you what he is doing: he is mixing with the pariahs like a veritable Mohomedan, and the Swami has sent word through Bhatta to say that the whole of Kanthapura will be excommunicated. Do you hear that? A fine thing, too, it is You with your broad ash-marks and your queer son and his ways. If he does not stop mixing with the pariahs, this very hand - do you hear? - this very hand will give him two slaps on his cheeks and one on the buttocks and send him screaming to his friend, the pariahs. Do you hear? And I have daughters to marry, and so has everybody else. If you have none, so much the worse for you. And we shall stand none of

this pariah affair. If he wants to go and sleep with these pariahs whores, he can do so by all means. But let him not call himself a Brahmin, Do you hear? And tell him, the next time I see him in the Brahmin Street, he will get a jolly fine marriage welcome with my bromm-stick'. (Kanthapura 53)

But Narsamma would not listen. 'Oh, Moorthy, if your departed father was alive what would he think of you, my son, my son?...'. And she hastily entered the river and took a hurried bath, and just wetting her clothes, she said she was going home. But Rangamma said, 'Wait, aunt I'm coming with you, and they walked by the river-path and over the field-bunds and by the mango-grove, and at every step Narsamma cried out this was a sin and that was a sin, and she began to weep and to beat her breasts; but Rangamma said nothing was the matter and that, when Moorthy came from town, everything would be settled; but Narsamma would have nothing of it. 'Oh, they'll excommunicate us-they'll excommunicate us, the Swami will excommunicate us.' she said, and she rolled on the floor of her house while Rangamma stood by the door, helpless as a calf. (Kanthapura 55)

The day dawned over the Ghats, the day rose over the Blue Mountain and, ensuring through the grey, rapt valleys, swirled up and swarmed across the whole air. The day rose into the air and with it rose the dust of the morning, and the carts began to creak round the bulging rocks and the coppery peaks, and the sun fell into the river and pierced it to the pebbles, while the carts rolled on and on, fair of the Kanthapura fair—fair carts that came from Maddur and Tippur and Santur and Kuppur, with chillies and coconut, rice and ragi, cloth, tamarind, butter and oil, bangles and kumkum, little pictures of Rama and Krishna and Sankara and the Maharma, little dolls for the youngest, little kites for the elder, and little chess pieces for the old—carts rolled by the Sampur knoll and down into the valley of the Tippur stream, then rose again and groaned round the Kenchamma hill, and going straight into the temple grove, one by one, with lolling bells and muffed bells, with horn-protectors in copper and back-protectors in lace, they all stood there in one moment of fitful peace; 'Salutations to Thee, Kenchamma, goddess Supreme,'—and then the yokes began to shake and the bulls began to shiver and move, and when the yokes touched the earth, men came out one by one, travellers that had paid a four-anna bit or an eight-anna bit to sleep upon pungent tamarind and suffocating chillies, travellers who would take the Pappur carts to go to the Pappur mountains, the Sampur carts to go to the Sampur mountains, and some too that would tramp down the passes into the villages by the sea, or hurry on to Kanthapura as our Moorthy did this summer morning, Moorthy with a bundle of khadi on his back and a bundle of books in his arms. (Kanthapura 56-57)

Another aspect of structural deviation can be found in the way Raja Rao transfers the Indian cultural contexts such as the caste system, mythological story-telling, social behaviours etc into his novel. All these contexts are mostly not present in any English-speaking society. In *Kanthapura* Raja Rao also incorporates the meanings and sense of a number of lexical items of the native speakers into his Indianised English. For example, the phrase '*compound flower-bed*' has its association with something like gardening while Raja Rao uses the same compound word in the sense of a bed which has been decorated with flowers for newly-wed couple at their nuptial night. Raja Rao goes on to use this compounding sometimes in longer speeches, clauses, sentences or phrases. There is scattered a very large number of phrases like '*turmeric ceremony*', '*salt giver*', '*three-eyed*', '*fall at your feet*', '*a lick of your feet*', '*a dog is a lion in his own street*'.

We also find a number of sentences which are written purely in Indian way of writing:

You are the son of my woman/ concubine.

You will get a marriage greeting today.

Purnayya has a grown-up daughter who will come home soon.

Now my seenu too, was going to go with him.

He wanted me to be his dog's tail.

Sometimes, Raja Rao mixes the cultural contexts with compounding of phrases and sentences into his structure of narration. At another times he goes on to combine the typically Indian words with the specific formal units British English and transfers them to back Indian English. The phrases such as '*you goose-faced minion*', '*you shall not light your kitchen fires*', '*a sinner may to the ocean, but the water will touch only knees*'. etc come under this category. In the following dialogue which takes place between Moorthy and his mother we find the Indian idiom of English:

I wish I had closed my eyes with your father instead of living to see polluted. Polluted! Go away, you pariah!

But what is all this about, Mother? '

'What? Don't talk like an innocent; Go and stand on the steps like a pariah. Let not your shadow fall on me-enough of it.'

'But why, Mother?'

'Why? Go and ask the squired on the fence! I don't know. Go away and don't you ever show your face to me again till you have been purified by the Swami'. (Kanthapura 58)

The following description abounds purely in Indian structures of English:

The Skeffington Coffee Estate rises beyond the Bebbur Mound over the Bear's Hill, and hanging over Tippur and Subbur and Kantur, it swings round the Elephant Valley, and rising to shoulder the Snow Mountain and the Beda Ghats, it dips sheer in to the Himavathym, and follows on from the Balepur Toll-gate Corner to the Kenchamma Hill, where it turns again and skirts Bhatta's Devil's fields and Range Gowds's coconut garden, and at the Tippur stream it rises again and is lost amidst the jungle growths of the Horse-head Hill.

Nobody knows how large it is or when it was founded; but they all say it is at least ten thousand acres wide, and some people in Kanthapura can still remember having heard of the Hunter Sahib who used his hunter and his hand to reap the first fruits of his plantation; and then it began to grow from the Bear's Hill to Kantur Hill, and more and more coolies came from beneath the Ghats, and from the Bear's Hill and Kantur it touched the Snow Mountain, and more and more coolies came; and then it became bigger and

bigger, till it touched all the hills around our village, and still more and more coolies came-coolies from below the Ghats that talked Tamil or Telugu and who brought with them their old men and their children and their widowed women-armies of coolies marched past the Kenchamma Temple, half-naked, starving, spitting, weeping, vomiting, coughing, shivering, squeaking shouting, moaning coolies-coolies after coolies passed by the Kenchamma Temple, the maistri before them, while the children clung to their mothers' breasts, the old men to their son's arms, and bundles hung over shoulders and arm and arm and shoulder and head; and they marched on past the Kenchamma Temple and Up to the Skeffington Coffee Estate-coolies from below the Ghats, coolies, young men, old men oldwomen, children, baskets, bundles, pots, coolies passes on -and winding through the twists of the Estate path-by the Buxom-pipal over the Devil's Ravine Bridge, by the Parvatiwell Corner- they marched up, the maistri before them, the maistri that had gone to their village, and to the vottage nest to their village, and to the village nest to that, and that is for away, a day's journey by road and a night's journey by train and along the

Godavery's banks, by road and by lone and by footpath, he came and ffered a four-anna bit for a man and a two-anna bit for a woman, and they all said, 'Is there rice there?' and he said, 'There is nothing but rice around us'; and they all said, 'That is a fine country, for here, year, after year, we have had neither rain nor canal-water, and our masters have left for the city'; and so he gave them a white rupee for each and they said, 'This is a very fine men, and they all assembled at night, and Ramanna the elder said, 'Now we will go, a four-anna bit for a man and a two-anna bit for a woman, and they all said, 'There, there's rice'; and the pots became empty of water and the sacks began to grow fat with clothes, and pots on their heads and the clothes in their arms, they marched on and on by the Godavery, by path and by lane and road; and the trains come and they got into them, and the maistri bought them a hendful of popped-rice for each and a little salted gram for each, and he smiled so

they all said, 'It will be fine there a four-anna bit for a man and a two-anna bit for a woman , 'and the maisiri said, ' You will just pick up coffee seeds , just pick them up as you pick pebbles by the river.-Is that all, maistri? - 'Of course what else? 'He there! What are you waiting for? Nobody's marriage procession is passing. (Kanthapura 64-68)

Thus we can say that Raja Rao makes structural deviations in British English for his own use so that the Indian masses may find their own living idiom as compared to the sophisticated structures of British English. He, in a way, gives a new structure to Indian English for the purpose of reviving the dead language that is used in Indian religious world.

Works Cited

Rao, Raja. *Kanthapura*, Oxford University Press, 1984.

