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LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC STUDY OF "INTERPRETER OF MALADIES" BY
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ABSTRACT

Born to Indian parents, two time winner of DSC prize for South Asian Literature, Jhumpa Lahiri is the current luminary in the literary world. Lahiri is widely known for her four works, 'Interpreter of Maladies', 'The Namesake', 'The Unaccustomed Earth' and 'The Lowland'. Critics have been full of praise for all her works since the publication of her first work 'Interpreter of Maladies' in 1999. It sold out millions of copies and received the Year 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the O'Henry Award. 'Interpreter of Maladies' is a collection of nine short stories. The stories are about the Indian immigrants who are caught between the culture they have inherited and the one they have to adapt to. All the stories almost retain the same theme but the ideas; still they differ in their perspectives. They present Indian immigrant people in different and variant roles and situations. Being herself the child of immigrant parents, living in the United States, Lahiri's characters are also portraiture of such people, torn between two different national identities. All her works have been appraised through doctoral theses, dissertations and research papers throughout the world. Many research thesis have explored varied themes of her works, like nostalgia, diaspora, home, belongingness, silence, female identities, cultural displacement, existentialism, the image of Bengal and Bengalis, new generation realism, cultural dilemma etc. It is indeed ironical that though she is so much acclaimed for her language, yet no specific study on her language is available. This paper intends to fill up this gap through lexical and syntactic study of 'Interpreter of Maladies'.

KEYWORDS: Lexical, syntactic, analysis, acclaimed, Interpreter, Maladies, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

'Interpreter of Maladies' is a collection of nine short stories. The stories are about the Indians, caught between the culture they have inherited and the one, they have to adapt. All the stories almost remain the same in themes yet ideas differ in their perspectives. They present Indian immigrant people in different and variant roles and situations. Being herself the child of immigrant parents, living in the United States, Lahiri's characters are also portraiture of such people, torn between two different national identities.

All the works of Lahiri have been appraised through many doctoral thesis, dissertations and research papers throughout the globe. Many research thesis have explored many aspects of Lahiri's works: nostalgia, diaspora, home, belongingness, silence, female identities, cultural displacement, existentialism, image of Bengal and Bengalis, new generation realism, cultural dilemma etc.

OBJETIVE

Although many thematic aspects of her works have been researched till now, yet the tool of all work dynamics her language, still remains to be explored. The researcher finds it very fascinating that even though after being a very well known, popular and widely read author, JhumpaLahiri's language has been untouched till now. So, the objective of looking at her work within the light of lexical and syntactic analysis, will definitely bring about new outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The observation and analysis of linguistic device, make the author's intention and meaning clear to a reader. So, it's essential to carry out such analysis. Such analysis adds another perspective which opens new windows to look and observe the author more intimately.

Now the paper will focus upon the lexical and syntactic analysis of 'Interpreter of Maladies'.

Lexical Analysis: Lexical analysis refers to the study of lexis or words. It will focus upon the variety of lexis used by Lahiri in 'Interpreter of Maladies'. The study of this book collection brings out the following types of lexis listed below with examples from the texts.

Hyphenated Words: tree-lined street, brick-faced stores (pg.7) cross-legged (23) Part-time (27) six-thirty (31) three-story (41) mid-july (43) Forty-six (45) fifty-two miles (47) three dimensional(70) flat-building (72) egg-shaped(87) good-bye(95) twenty-two(86) double-parked(101) baby-sitters(111) drum-shaped(112) Post-it(136) peanut-tears(139) vermilion-painted fish(160) zoo-garden(161)

Compound Words: Snowstorm (1) Armchair (6) Flashlight (9) countertop (25) telephoto (48) rosewater (71) stairwell (71) woodwork (99) sunglass (130)

Blending: Basmati rice (6) Benarsi silk (163) Semolina halwah (118) drawstring pyjamas (175) Rasbihari Avenue (187)

Code Mixing: Bazaar(9) Konark(47) Bechareh(72) Dallas(48) Zamindar(73) Boori Ma (70) Durwan(73) Almari (71) samosas(150) Bhetki(123) halwah(118) paisas(176) pazamas(197)

Antonyms: Good and bad (6) truth or dare(13) spring and summer(24) Hindu & Muslim(29) forward and backward(47) in&out(80) Buttoning and unbuttoning (48) grief or joy(116) back & forth(121)

A look at the types of lexis chosen by JhumpaLahiri reveals that she has used hyphenated words to make her meaning clear. Along with hyphenated words, Lahiri has also made much use of numerical hyphenated words. In fact it is a very prominent feature of her writing. The significant thing about the opposite words is that they depict Indian setting, culture, season, religion, ethics, philosophy etc. They depict Indian sentiments.

Lahiri has given abundant space to Indian words. It reveals that Lahiri has been carried away by her mother's narrations about India and her own personal experiences.

Syntactic Analysis: This analysis will illustrate the types of sentences Lahiri has taken in use. The text is rich enough to find varieties of such sentences.

Very Short Sentences:

"I'll be down." (6)

"I don't know. A little poem. A joke." (12)

"I nodded." (35) "Science." (46) "Five years." (46) "Our linens were muslin." (74) "No thanks." (87)

Very Long Sentences:

"THE NOTICE INFORMED THEM that it was a temporary matter: For five days their electricity would be cut off for one hour, beginning at eight p.m." (1)

"He was a compact man, and though his feet were perpetually splayed, and his belly slightly wide, he nevertheless maintained an efficient posture, as if balancing either hand two suitcase of equal weight." (27)

"While Mr Das adjusted his telephoto lens, Mrs Ds reached into her straw bag and pulled out a bottle of colourless nail polish, which she proceeded to stroke on the tip of her index finger." (48)

"She shook the quilts once underneath the letter boxes. Where she lived, then once again at the mouth of the alley, causing the crows who were feeding on vegetables peels to scatter in several directions." (70)

"She had silver eyes and skin as pale as paper, and the contrast with her hair, as dark and glossy as an espresso bean, caused people to describe her as striking, if not pretty." (87)

Wh Type Questions:

"What is it, Lilia?" (25)

"Where in America do you live?" (46)

"Why demand specifics? Why scrape time from a betel leaf?" (72)

"What can I get you, honey?" (86)

Yes-No Type Questions:

"Is this book a part of your report, Lilia?"

"No, Mrs Kenyon. " (33)

"Did he smoke cigarettes?"

"No." (51)

Dialogue Form:-

"Let's do that," she said suddenly.

"Do what?"

"Say something to each other in the dark."

"Like what? I don't know any jokes."

"No, no jokes." She thought for a minute. (13)

Quaesito:

"What exactly do they teach you at school? Do you study history? Geography?" (26)

"How do you mean? How could it be?" (51)

"Why demand specifics? Why scrape lime from a beetel leaf? (72)

"Would there be other children in the apartment? Had Mrs.Sen cared for children before?" (113)?

Use Of But:

"But then one day he saw her standing before the bathroom mirror, solemnly applying, with the head of a thumbtack, a fresh stroke of scarlet powder, which she stored in a small jam jar," (117)

"But I can cook something with the vinegar." (137)

"But then a new treatment was prescribed for Bibi." (161)

"But there was no ship's deck to escape to, no glittering ocean to thrill my soul, no breeze to cool my face, no one to talk to." (175)

Lahiri has used very short and very long sentences, as combination of her Indian as well as American living. She has used wh, yes-no questions and tag questions according to the Indian setting. All these devices present Indian emotions and way of behaviour. Lahiri has used two ways of conversation—dialogue form and Quaesito. It shows her knowledge that Indians are very talkative. Both the devices express Indian emotions profoundly.

Lahiri has presented the Indian sensitivity very well through these devices. It portrays Lahiri herself as a highly sensitive person. JhumpaLahiri's use of 'but' brings out the strong sense of opposition in her as an author towards thing, she uses it in a very sound way to reflect parents concern about their children.

Lahiri's Indian way of looking at things is evident from her use of sentences and questions borrowed from India.

Thus, the paper concludes that even though Lahiri has given space to combinations from both the cultures but the abundance of Indianisms has its way into found more in 'Interpreter of Maladies'.

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