

Code-Switching as an Expression of Polyphony in Zadie Smith's Novels

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Abstract

This article sheds light on interrelation of code-switching, polyphony and multiculturalism in fiction. Zadie Smith's multicultural and multilayered novels are a rich well that gives an insight into different mentalities, cultural idiosyncrasies and social peculiarities. Linguistically, multicultural novels throw light on various conversational forms and styles that commingle or diverge depending on the context. There are different examples of situational and metaphorical code-switching and code-switching as a social process. Language focus is intertwined with literature as these styles and forms are voices of different characters with their outlook and philosophy. The multiplicity of voices and the convergence of languages constitute a polyphonic story evolved by M. Bakhtin who underscored the dialogical nature of any discourse. Zadie Smith's novels *NW* and *White Teeth* are exemplary in terms of their polyphony and multiculturalism, thus extracts with code-mixing have been analyzed to demonstrate the overlapping and interdependence of language and context. Contextual, stylistic, interpretative and comparative analyses have been employed to demonstrate the internal undercurrents of linguistic and communicative forms and their power stemming from the context and determining the context at the same time.

Keywords: code-switching, dialogue, multicultural novel, polyphonic novel, social practice