



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**A COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN AKESPEAR'S  
*THE TEMPEST* AND FRIEL'S TRANSLATIONS**

**MARYAM ATAOLLAHI ASHKOOR**

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*THE TEMPEST* AND FRIEL'S *TRANSLATIONS***

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**MASTER OF ARTS  
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2008**



## **DEDICATION**

**For my parents, Sekineh Shamsadini and Reza Ataollahi**



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LANGUAGE IN SHAKESPEAR'S  
*THE TEMPEST* AND FRIEL'S *TRANSLATIONS***

**By**

**MARYAM ATAOLLAHI ASHKOOR**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
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Of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

**A Colonial and Post-Colonial Assessment of Language in Shakespear's  
*The Tempest* and Friel's *Translations***

By

**MARYAM ATAOLLAHI ASHKOOR**

**December 2008**

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This study examines the significance of language in connection with both personal and national identity. Language and identity have a power to fix thoughts and beings. It roots a nation to a past. Language bridges between a contemporary society and its dead ancestors. Language contains elements of culture, human interaction, environment, working of the human brain and identity. People are marked by the language that they speak. Britannia recognized this significance. Therefore, it could have power not necessarily through physical control but mental control as well. It could change the colonized countries into mimic people who just copy British values, cultures, beliefs, and identities.

First, through establishing binary oppositions, Britannia began to justify its settlement in the natives' lands and Ireland. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, binarism emerged as lack



of moral sense/ moral sense or good/evil and savage/civilized. Prospero introduced herself as a man who is civilized and moral whereas, Caliban is a native who is a barber and has no moral sense. Education was exercised through language. Therefore, Prospero introduced himself as a compassionate “schoolmaster” who had a burden to teach Caliban his language. Under Prospero’s education, Caliban loses his identity. He loses his freedom and changes into a slave that Prospero dares even to insult but in Friel’s *Translations*, binarism emerged as modern/archaic and standard/nonstandard. Britannia introduced its National schools which are modern, advanced, and new whereas, Hedge schools were traditional and archaic. They also claimed that Irish lands were not standard, without boundaries and map whereas, English villages, towns, and cities were mapped and standard. They introduced themselves as compassionate teachers and cartographers who attempted to modernize and standardize Irish schools and lands.

Second, by comparing and contrasting Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Friel’s *Translations* from different periods, the process of imperial justifications are disclosed. This study presents that Britannia adopted imperial justifications in accordance with the situations and necessities. For instance, Caliban’s situation differs from the Irish. Prospero in *The Tempest* could introduce Caliban as a savage but Britannia could not claim that the Irish were savages like the natives in the New World.

Third, they disguised their justifications in accordance with modernization and standardization. However, imperial justifications differed from period to period with language playing the main role for all of them. Teaching, mapping, christinizing,



modernizing, and standardizing relied on language. In this study, language is the base for imperial superstructures (justifications).

Fourth, this study discusses that a person loses his language; he will change into a mimic character. He forgets his essence, values, cultures, and identity. In *The Tempest*, losing identity is depicted through humiliation and demoralization as Prospero has nothing for Caliban but nasty words. In *Translations*, it is depicted through mimicry.



Abstrak tesis yang diajukan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai Memenuhi keperluan Ijazah Sarjana (Sastera)

**MENCERAKIN BAHASA DAN IDENTITI DARIPADA SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST* KEPADA FRIEL'S TRANSLATIONS**

Oleh

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Pertama, kajian ini meneliti kepentingan bahasa dalam hubungannya dengan identiti personal dan nasional. Bahasa dan identiti mempunyai kuasa untuk menentukan fikiran dan insan. Ia mengembalikan sesebuah negara kepada sejarahnya. Bahasa merupakan jambatan antara masyarakat kontemporari dan nenek moyangnya. Bahasa mengandungi unsur budaya, interaksi manusia, persekitaran, minda manusia dan identiti. Seseorang itu dikenali daripada bahasa yang dituturkannya. Britannia menyedari akan kepentingan hal ini. Oleh itu, ia berkuasa, bukan sahaja dari segi kawalan fizikal, malah juga mental. Ia dapat mengubah negara-negara yang dijajah supaya meniru nilai, budaya dan





kepercayaan dan identiti orang British. Negara-negara tersebut hanya merupakan boneka. Britannia memberi arahan dan mereka akan akur.

Britannia memantapkan bahasa mereka langkah demi langkah, secara sengaja, dan tidak secara spontan dan tanpa perancangan. Kedua, melalui pemantapan oposisi binari, Britannia mula menjustifikasikan penaklukannya di Ireland. Dalam karya Shakespeare ' *The Tempest* ' binarisme wujud sebagai ketiadaan pertimbangan moral dan ketamadunan. Oleh itu, Prospero memperkenalkan dirinya sebagai lelaki Eropah yang bertamadun dan bermoral, manakala Caliban, rakyat natif, sebagai tukang gunting dan tidak bermoral. Prospero mempunyai tanggungjawab untuk mendidik moraliti dan tamadun. Pengajaran tentang moraliti dan tamadun memerlukan bahasa. Prospero, oleh itu, memperkenalkan dirinya sebagai guru yang penuh belas kasihan yang bertanggungjawab untuk mengajar bahasanya kepada Caliban. Melalui pendidikan Prospero, Caliban kehilangan identitinya. Dia kehilangan kebebasannya dan berubah menjadi hamba yang sentiasa dihina Prospero. Dalam karya Friel ' *Translation* ' binarisme wujud sebagai moden atau kuno dan standard atau tidak standard. Britannia memperkenalkan sekolah - sekolah nasionalnya sebagai moden, maju dan baharu, manakala sekolah-sekolah di negara taklukannya sebagai tradisional dan kuno. Mereka juga mendakwa bahawa tanah orang Irish tidak standard, tanpa sempadan dan tanpa peta, sedangkan perkampungan, bandar dan pekan orang Inggeris telah dipetakan. Mereka juga memperkenalkan diri mereka sebagai guru yang bertanggungjawab dan kartografer yang cuba memoden dan menstandardkan sekolah dan tanah orang Irish.

Ketiga, dengan mengkontras dan membandingkan karya-karya yang berbeza ini dari zaman yang berbeza, proses justifikasi imperial telah dapat diuraikan. Kajian ini

mengutarakan bahawa Britannia mengamalkan justifikasi imperial, selaras dengan situasi dan keperluan. Sebagai contoh, situasi Caliban berbeza dengan orang Irish. Prospero dalam *'The Tempest'* memperkenalkan Caliban sebagai ganas, manakala Britannia tidak mendakwa bahawa orang Irish sebagai ganas seperti natif di Dunia Baharu. Oleh itu, mereka menyembunyikan justifikasi berdasarkan modenisasi dan standardisasi. Walau bagaimanapun, justifikasi imperial berbeza dari zaman ke zaman, namun bahasa memainkan peranan bagi kebanyakan keadaan. Pengajaran, pemetaan, penamaan, modenisasi, dan standardisasi bergantung pada bahasa. Dalam kajian ini, bahasa merupakan asas untuk superstruktur imperial (justifikasi).

Keempat, kajian ini membincangkan apabila seseorang kehilangan bahasanya, dia akan berubah menjadi karektor mimik. Dia melupakan kewujudan, nilai, budaya dan identitinya. Dalam karya *'The Tempest'*, kehilangan identiti digambarkan sebagai penghinaan apabila Prospero tiada apa-apa untuk Caliban, kecuali kata-kata yang biadap. Dalam karya *'Translation'* pula ia digambarkan melalui ajukan.



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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 9 October 2008 to conduct the final examination of Maryam Ataollahi Ashkoor on her Master of Arts thesis entitled “Deconstructing, Language, and Identity in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Friel’s *Translations*” in accordance with University Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and University Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for questions and citations which have been duly acknowledge. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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**MARYAM ATAOLLAHI ASHKOOR**

**DATE:**



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This study examines the significance of language in both colonial and post-colonial movements as represented by the selected works and its connection with personal and national identity. Language is the heart of this study. The significance and connection between language and identity are presented through the political sphere. Language is not merely a tool of speaking and communication, but as the most significant element in culture, history, religion, philosophy, and national identity. In the colonial movement, language is an imperial tool to aid Britannia to justify its settlement in the colonized countries and pursue colonial agenda. On the other hand, language is a post-colonial tool to aid Irish people to demand their national ambition and identity. This study also introduces the process of imperial justifications as illustrated in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Friel's *Translations* to present how imperialists adopted their justifications in accordance with the necessities of the colonized societies during different periods. Through these justifications, they could settle in the natives' lands and pursue colonial agenda. For instance, *The Tempest* was written in "... November 1, 1611" (Scott and Williams 280). This date was paralleled with the Elizabethan era. During this period, **people were fascinated by exploration, the New World, and the natives.** There was also a social hierarchy. Everyone was ranked and had his class. Political and religious figures employed it to pursue their purposes. For instance, the English politicians established binarism through savage/civilized. They thought of themselves as Lieutenants of God on earth and lack of moral sense in the natives.



The lack of moral sense a “sub-human characteristic” is employed by the colonists. Schneider remarks: “Colonialists always excuse their barbarity by attributing sub-human characteristics to the native population.” They invented legal burdens to come and settle in the natives’ lands. They introduced seemingly themselves as compassionate priests and teachers who attempted to educate and christianize the natives. In *The Tempest*, Caliban is depicted as a savage native who does not have moral sense, nor is he civilized. Prospero is depicted versus Caliban. He is good but Caliban is evil. Prospero has moral sense whereas, Caliban has no moral sense. Prospero is a civilized and educated man whereas, Caliban is a barber. “From the 16th through the 20th century, the deep textual roots of traditions of salvation and enlightenment were constantly invoked to justify brutal regimes, invasive projects, and pervasive hierarchies” (Errington 12).

In Friel’s *Translations*, the movement of modernism was flourishing. “The time [of *Translations*] is 1833” (Barnes 171). This date was paralleled with modernism. Scholars identify the date of modernism “...before 1860 and World War II is generally considered to mark an end of the movement’s height” (Galens 175). During this period, the concepts like advanced/ retarded and modern/tradition were current. Therefore, they established a new binarism: modernization and standardization. They changed moral and educational burdens into cartography and modernization.

Friel’s *Translations* starts from these justifications (modernization and standardization). First, Britannia attempted to dismantle Irish national identity through National schools because the Irish were Catholics who were threat for the English as Protestants. They also attempted to usurped Irish lands through cartography. They claimed Hedge schools were held in barns and were not modern whereas National



schools were modern and advanced. Britannia seemingly wanted to modernize Irish schools. But in the National school the Irish were forbidden to speak Gaelic. “‘*Translations*’ is primarily a tale of how the Irish lose their identity and part of their culture as they were forced to give up their native tongue and lived under the imperial hand of their foreign invaders” (Harrah).

Britannia wanted to usurp Irish lands through mapping and translating the names of places. They claimed that standardization of Irish lands because there **were no boundaries whereas all villages, cities and towns in England** were standard and had boundaries. Gilbert and Tompkins remarks of imperial agenda and standardization for Irish lands in this way: “British military’s attempts to anglicize Irish place names in accordance with the imperial standard. ..., the Gaelic-speaking Irish in *Translations* converse freely in unaccented English, as do the British soldiers” (175).

Since “...imperialism, colonialism and the differences between them are defined differently depending on their historical mutations” (Loomba 11) and “...imperialism has in fact been placed and located by history...” (Said, *Postcolonialism* 32) this study firstly begins its discussion with historical events to present the process of imperial justifications and how language emerged as an imperial tool. By following the process of imperial justifications from the moment of colonization to the contemporary period, this study manifests how Britannia adopted its justifications in accordance with the necessities of different periods. In fact, “...it is **not possible to create or recreate national or regional formations wholly independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise....**” (Tiffin 95)

Shakespeare’s time was significant in English history. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, England emerged as the most significant naval and commercial power of the Western world. Some elements such as navigation, commerce, discovery, and



adventure aided England to emerge as a colonizer. Exploration was the first element which resulted in colonization which was started by navigation and commerce.

Technological development in navigation had an extraordinary effect on the development of colonialism. England which was always a ship-raising country, during this period emerged as colonist country because fast sailing ship made it possible to sail to distant parts of the world. Indeed, it was the beginning of discovery and exploration.

In the Elizabethan era, Englishmen had an extraordinary enthuse to discover other parts of the world. The New World provoked adventurers. The Elizabethan Age was also called the Age of Discovery. Re-discovery and discovery resulted in adventures. Adventurers reported their stories and encouraged others to sail to other parts of the world and discover New World and new men. The European started to explore other parts of the world "...by land to the 'East', and by sea across the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic"(Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Key Concepts* 95). They started to travel and discover new lands to have more trades and colonization. Abram explains the importance of adventure in England and that the English founded a company which later aided them to have more explorations:

...by the end of Edward VI's reign the Company of Merchant Adventures was founded, and Englishmen began to explore Asia and North America. Some of these adventures turned to piracy, preying on Spanish Ship that were returning laden with wealth from the New World. (400)

The reports about the New World and its natives provoked the colonizers to go to these new lands. They also discovered the sources of trade and commerce in the New World. England started to compete with other countries like Spain and France to have more power over the New World. The English started to justify their settlements in the natives' lands.



They exercised their colonial agendas step by step. First, they presented the natives as wild and barbarism men. For instance, Columbus described them as cannibals who were wild, naked and ate human flesh. They had an eye in the middle of their foreheads. Peter Hulme records Columbus's descriptions about the cannibals: "That this land was very extensive and that in it were people who had one eye in the forehead and others whom they called 'canibales'" (16-17).

He also introduced the natives through the lack of civilization and barbarism. Second, in his descriptions, the natives were evil. The natives could not recognize what was wrong and right, because they ate flesh of their own kind. This action indicated the lack of moral sense in the natives. The natives had no civilization and morality. "...These people ate them and because they are very warlike" (Hulme 17)

Therefore, imperialists could settle in the natives' lands legally. They had two tasks there: christianizing and educating the natives because they were savages who have had no civilization and morality. Joseph Errington presents the task of christianization in this way: "...Valladolid, where I visited the cardinal and informed [about] him the Indian's language...[and] their ability and the right they had to become Christians." (28) Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin also discuss that education was an imperial tool: "British colonial administrators provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education" (3). When Britannia landed in the New World and discovered the natives whose languages, appearance and ways of living differed from theirs, they thought that "...they were speechless..." (Hulme 17). Therefore, the imperialists recognized them through physical control and mental control, they would have more power over the natives as well. Therefore, they recognized language as a tool to have

mental control. Joseph Errington remarks: "...it is not surprising that colonists produced text about languages over four countries...which made languages objects of knowledge, so that their speakers could be made subject of power" (3). The imperialists established binarism through savage/civilized and good/evil to invent the burden for them. The natives were introduced as men who did not have civilization and morality. They were in the lowest rank of civilization. Galens remarks: "However, Britain also viewed its imperialistic expansion as a moral responsibility, using Darwin's theories of evolution as a rationale for exerting greater control over India, Africa, and China" (234) During Shakespeare's time, Europeans had disrespectful views and full of ignorance towards the natives. When the European colonists landed in the New World, they explored people of a different race. They described the natives as barbarians, savages, and cannibals. The natives had no civilization. Russell Lowell explained the natives in this way: "The savage through familiarized with habits of civilization, reverts with easy recoil to his barbarian license; and the highest happiness which the tamed monster of the island could conceive of, was once more to range in unrestrained liberty, digging up the pig-nuts with his long nails, or following the jay and the nimble marmoset over rock and tree. (310)

In the Elizabethan Era, there was a social hierarchy such as that of the nobles, gentlemen, knights, esquires, laborers and vagrants. They emphasized on order in social hierarchy. It maintained a functioning society. People regarded the social hierarchy standpoint with the king or Queen. All politicians and priests had been provided their status from the highest authority, God. Therefore, the Britannia which was competing with the other colonizers introduced its representatives as compassionate priests and teachers who attempted to educate and christianize the rest



of the world. “British also viewed its imperialistic expansion as a moral responsibility, British writer...referred to this responsibility as ‘the white man’s burden,’ meaning that it was the God-given duty of the British to civilize and christianize people who were obviously incapable of governing themselves” (Galens 234). Therefore, Britannia attempted to educate and civilize the natives. The natives had to learn and speak the English language. “[T]he English language [was] a tool of power, domination and elitist identity and of communication across continents” (Kachru 291). The English considered themselves as the most qualified individuals who had permission in a position of authority above the natives. They encountered their position as God’s lieutenants on the earth and it was their burden to educate the natives. Loomba explains the European’s view towards the natives: “The late medieval European figure of the ‘wild man’ who lived in forests, on the outer edges of civilization, and was hairy, nude, violent, lacking in moral sense and excessively sensual, expressed all manner of cultural anxieties”(53).

Indeed, imperialism attempted to exercise its power through mental control and its tool was language. Language and identity are so interwoven that it is not possible to emphasize on one with the ignorance of the other. Language has a close connection with culture, oral history, identity, and ambition of a country. “Integrally associated with language is the speaker’s sense of autonomy and dignity, both of which are diminished when the colonizer denies the linguistic validity of indigenous languages” (Gilbert and Tompkins 165). When a country loses its language, it will not have access to its identity and essence. The dignity and ambition of a country will not have any meaning by the lack of its language. Identity has a connection with culture as well. Ahluwalia and Ashcroft remark the connection between imperial agenda and



culture: "...the institutional, political and economic operations of imperialism are nothing without the power of the culture that maintains them." (85)

The play, *The Tempest*, was written during this period: "There is general consensus that Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* some time during the year prior to its first recorded performance, which occurred November 1, 1611" (Scott and Williamson 280). The period, in which *The Tempest* was written, is the age of exploration. The play could be read as Shakespeare's commentary on European exploration of new lands. *The Tempest* supports colonial justifications and it was considered as a colonial work. "...Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (far from being a romantic fable removed from the real world) is implicated in these discursive developments and in the function of colonial discourse..." (Galens 66).

Shakespeare was alert of England standing on the verge of a social revolution and progression in profit, business, and laws. Shakespeare was also alert of the prejudices of his time towards the natives. For instance, his people were fascinated by the natives. "American Indians were frequently exhibited in England during this period, either dead or alive" (Griffiths and Joscelyne 490) Shakespeare presents how Britannia thought of itself as the rightful leader of the natives, just as Prospero thought of himself as the rightful master of Caliban. Shakespeare exemplifies wisdom, justice, and super-human good judgment in Prospero's character as if regarding him as a lieutenant of God in the island. Through Neoplatonic concept, Curry presents how Prospero's soul assimilates with gods: "Prospero would now engage in that prayer which frees from all faults and fits man who be alone with the gods: (359). On the other hand, Caliban was shown as a corrupted character who tries to rape Prospero's daughter. Therefore, Prospero has a burden. In Caliban there is no moral sense. He is a barbarism and corrupted. Prospero's position in an island is an