

The Phenomenon of Hinglish

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ABSTRACT

English has become a global lingua franca, but new contestants are emerging to shake English, particularly in rich multilingual contexts such as India. Classicists contend that language skills must meet international criteria, but experience suggests that addition of local languages gives unprecedented results. One of the most interesting aspects of creative writers in Indian English is their use of English language with the texture of Indianness. The influence of mother tongue on authors who use English as second language for their creative endeavour is considerable, particularly in India where the influence of ancient culture, religion and tradition among the intelligentsia is great. Indians continue to present a great diversity in their spoken form of English. But acquiring fluent English involves consistent and rich language exposure. In India, this is chiefly restricted to the urban upper classes. Together, two influences like limited English access and the desirability of becoming an English speaker could mean that a form of English which is more easily accessible to the masses, such as Hinglish, grows faster than English.

Key words: Hinglish; Indianness of Indian English; Indian writing in English.

Introduction

One of the interesting aspects of Indian English creative writers is their use of the English language. The Indian creative writers' use of English provides numerous illustrations of Indianness of Indian English, the kind of English used by Indians in a non-British cultural context to express the special features of the native Indian sociological context. The influence of mother tongue on authors who use English as a second

language or as a language of choice for their creative endeavour is considerable, particularly in India where the influence of Indian culture, religion, and tradition among the intelligentsia is great and phenomenal. There are at least 22 major Indian languages (including English) recognized by the Constitution of the Indian Republic and about 800 dialects. Thus, India has a lot of verbal resources to offer. It is no exaggeration to say that, despite the unifying effect of radio, television, the press

and other instruments of mass media, Indians continue to present a great diversity in their spoken form of English and to a much less extent in written forms of English as well.

The question whether India, as a part of the English-speaking world and member of the Commonwealth, should evolve its own distinctive form of spoken and written English has assumed importance in recent years. A. N. Jha made a strong plea when he passionately asked, "Is there any reason why we need to be ashamed of Indian English?" He also pleaded for the recognition of Indian grammatical usage based on vernacular structures/forms in case of deviation from the norms of English of native speakers.

Hinglish in Indian Writing

British and American writers have had an advantage over their Indian counterparts. English is their first language. They use the same idioms as those of men and women of their creation and hence the evocation of local colours poses no problems for them. They are, therefore, able to experiment freely with the technique of the novel or the short story. Indian writers, on the other hand, have to face certain challenging problems in their use of the English language. It is not the first language either of their own or of their characters. They find it extremely difficult to translate the Indian idioms into English with ease and also to present their country in its true colours.

So far as the use of the English language is concerned, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Journal of English Language Teaching LXI/6, 2019

Raja Rao, Khushwant Singh, and many other Indo-Anglican writers have carried out experiments in this field.

Mulk Raj Anand's English is what Khushwant Singh calls 'Mulkesse', liberal and evocative use of Indian words, liberal translation of Indian idioms and abuses. Mulk Raj's English is a fine specimen of Indian English. He once wrote "I found while writing spontaneously that I was always translating dialogue from the original Punjabi into English." He freely uses abusive expressions in his novels and short stories, like 'son of a pig', 'ohe-ohe', 'scoundrel of a sweeper's son', and so on. His English seems to spring from the Indian scene; the Indian manner of gesture and speech absorbs it and yet suffers no distortion. Word, phrase or sentence structure, the shift, and the modulations all grow from that root. And it is English, chaste English, not borrowed and applied but taking the shape of the new material. The fluent, simple prose has a harmony which is the first of a complete interpenetration of matter and manner.

Raja Rao's main contribution to the Indo-Anglican novel is that he has evolved Indian English, which is correct and idiomatic and yet forcefully expresses Indian ways of thinking and feeling. He uses English like a master. He has so much command over English as one normally has over one's mother tongue even if English ceases to be important in Indian life. His novels and short stories will continue to be read in India and other parts of the world for the way in which Indian sensibility has been expressed in a language which, while reproducing the

rhythm of Sanskrit, is undistorted, creative and natural. The credit of bringing name and reputation to Indo-Anglian fiction goes to a few contemporary writers such as R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and Nirad Choudhary. They are four wheels of the contemporary Indo-Anglian fiction. Other luminaries who have enriched the Indo-Anglian fiction are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamla Markandeya, Anita Desai, Khushwant Singh, Pravar Jhabvala, Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, and others.

Raja Rao has created an Indian-Sanskrit rhythm in the syntax of English. Raja Rao says, "We cannot write like the English. We should not, we can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression, therefore, is a dialect, which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the British or the American. Time alone will justify it." It is, quite naturally, getting rid of that 'alien spirit' that hovers over him while using this language. Sometimes Indianness, 'the pull of the mother tongue', however, overcomes him and hampers the easy glide of narration. It may be due to his eagerness to present the actuality of the life lived in the Indian socio-cultural context. Raja Rao says, "I think I am interested in making the English language yield to the Indian needs; that is a very hard task in terms of both rhythm and associated values." According to V. Y. Kantak, "Raja Rao's use of English has made us regain our faith in the creative use of English."

Khushwant Singh, like some other Indian English writers, makes use of vernacular

words in his writings to evoke Indian social and cultural scenes. He has borrowed Indian words and used transliterations, literal translations, and parallelisms, translations from scriptures and Indian proverbs and idioms to convey the cultural nuances of Indian life. Khushwant Singh's use of transliteration and transcription of Hindi and Punjabi expressions are salient characteristics of his style and may be called 'Punjabism'. Furthermore, we find literal translations of Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi expressions. Singh's Indianisms, curses, abuses and swear words catch the precise nuances of Indian speech. "Singh's style," as M. K. Naik points out, "is hard and vigorous, employs colourful Punjabi expletives and terms of abuse while his irony is honed like a Sikh sword."

So, now it is perfectly acceptable and natural to speak in English and add tadka of your native base with regional languages, shedding their 'vernac', 'verny', and 'vern' labels; the urban at heart are quickly adopting Desi-English.

Indian English Goes Hinglish

Hinglish, as the definition goes, is arbitrary usage of Hindi and English combining both in one sentence. This is more commonly seen in urban and semi-urban centers of the population but slowly spreading into rural and remote areas. It is said that "the death of the language is when it ceases to evolve and ceases to mirror the changing attitudes of society. It is Hinglish, there is Benglish (Bengali English) hybrid and occurs not because people want them to,

but they are the best way to express oneself when either of two separate languages is unable to convey one's meaning effectively on their own"

Surya Shankar Ray, the former director of the Institutes of English (Kolkata) and publishing secretary of Asiatic Society says "the primary aim of the English language teaching expert in our country is to help students to communicate. As long as the students can communicate, the expert doesn't have any problem if they are using vernacular words. The focus is not on teaching students, literature or grammar".

Video Jockey Sophia says "We use lots of Hinglish words (terms) on MTV as we want to be seen as a mass channel. So when we talk, we sprinkle and garnish our sentence with lots of words which are like 'accha', 'arrey', 'yaar'.....etc." Today communication is important and using a few Indian words in English helps to set a comfortable mood in any situation almost immediately, no guesses why commercials aimed at the young and jet-set use of lexicon of the time. From Pepsi's 'Yeh Dil Mange More to Tata Sky 'Isko Laga Liya to Life Jhingalala'.

Avijit Gupta, senior lecturer in Jodhpur University, department of English says "A language should never suffer from the curse of untouchability. It is good that English is open to accept new words and there is no reason to feel impoverished by such addition. It only goes on to strengthen the language."

Conclusion

The purity of English has become localized.
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Hinglish has become the best medium to communicate among youth to garnish and add local tadka. It is also becoming an accepted form of English. In the western world people like to use Hinglish. You can find several programs on Discovery, National Geography and History channels, by using this upcoming vernacular. Tomorrow you might find Pinglish, Tinglish or Binglish words in vogue. The fact that English has become localized just shows how popular English is with the masses. In fact, if we become an economic power of the world we might soon be speaking Hinglish. Whether Hinglish goes mainstream or not is immaterial. What matters is that no longer it is limited by the rules of language and it focuses on communicating effectively. Apparently, the 'Chalta-hai' outlook has its plus points also.

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