The Impact of 'Indianism' In English in India

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Abstract: **Indian English is a group of English dialects, or regional language varieties, spoken primarily in the Indian subcontinent. Though English is one of modern India's two official languages, the other being Hindi, only a few hundred thousand Indians have English as 'their' language. Indians have made English into their own with its own linguistic and cultural ecologies and socio-cultural contexts. Indians have a lot to gain from knowing English and the world has a lot to gain from English knowing Indians. This article highlights how we a global language like English has been made use of by different people of our country with its phonology and morphology.**

Keywords: **Syntax, Lexicon, Morphology, Academic, Ecologies, Phonology.**

1. Introduction

English has been with India since the early 1600's when the East India Company started trading and English missionaries first began their efforts. A large number of Christian schools imparting English education were set up by the early 1800's. The process of producing English knowing bilinguals in India began with the Minute of 1835, which officially endorsed T.B Macaulay's goal of forming "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern a class of persons, Indians in color, in opinion, in morals and in intellect". English became the official and academic language of India by the early twentieth century. The rise of the nationalist movement in the 1920's brought some anti-English sentiment with it, even though the movement itself used English as its medium. With India's massive population, India is among the top four countries in the world with the highest number of English speakers. English with Hindi made Hinglish, with Telugu Tenglish, with Tamil Tanglish, with Malayalam Manglish so on. English confers many advantages on the influential people who speak it which have allowed it to retain its prominence despite the strong opposition to English which rises periodically.

2. Distinguishing Characteristics of Indian English

Indian English is a distinct variety of the English language. Spanish and Mexican accents are considered sexy. European accents are, at the very least, considered different but tolerable, even exotic. But when an Indian opens his mouth to speak English, he could sound plain or ridiculous to the western ears. Many Indians claim that it is very similar to British English, but this opinion is based on a surface level examination of lexical similarities. Of course, one must keep in mind that not every linguistic item is used by every Indian English speaker and that a great deal of regional and educational differentiation exists. Even so, items can be identified which are widely used. These operate on various phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic levels.

3. Phonology

Phonology is a system of contrastive relationships among the speech sounds that constitute the fundamental components of a language. Indian accents vary greatly. Some Indians speak English with an accent very close to a standard British accent (though not the same) others lean towards a more vernacular , native-tinted, accent for their English speech.

4. Morphology

Morphology is the study and description of how words are formed in a language. Indian English morphology is very creative and it is filled with new terms and usages .Indian English uses compound formation extensively, as in English-speaking classes or convent going. The compounds cousin-brother and cousin –sister allow the Indian English speaker to designate whether their cousin is male or female a function which is inherent in the terminology of most Indian languages. Others include chalk-piece, key-bunch, meeting notice and pin-drop silence. Indians also pluralize many English mass nouns and end up with words such as litters, furnitures and woods. Indians also shorten many words to create commonly used terms. Enthusiasm is called enthu; as such, it can be used in new ways. One can say "That guy has lot of enthu". While this is simply an abbreviation, enthu can also be used as an adjective where enthusiasm cannot, as in "He's a real enthu guy". When bringing Indian words into English, terms such as roti which are already plural, will be pluralized for English by the addition of –s (rotis).

5. Lexicon

Lexicon is the word used in a language or by a person or a group of people. The Indian English lexicon has many distinct terms which are commonly used by its speakers. Some arise through the use of old and new morphological features; many terms from Indian languages are utilized and new usages for

English words or expressions are created. It must be noted that many of these terms and usages are specific to the population of Indian English speakers who are currently between twenty and thirty years of age.

Examples of the use of acronyms include:-

MCP = Male Chauvinist Pig
FOC = Free Of Charge
MPK = Maine Pyar Kiya(a popular movie)
ABCD = American Born Confused Deshi
FOB = Fresh off the Boat

FOB is actually used by Amercian – born Indians who come to America and tease them for being ABCD's.

6. Hindi Terms and Expressions in Indian English

Some items are directly related to characteristics of Indian languages. Indians will often ask, "What is your good name?" which is a somewhat literal translation of "Aapka shubh naam kya hai?" Shubh means auspicious or good, and it is basically used as a polite way of asking for someone's full name. An Indian English speaker says today morning (aaj subha) or yesterday night (kal raat) to mean this morning and last night. Indians also run the risk of offending U.S. Americans when they use certain literal translations which have the intended meaning but which also have offensive connotations.

When Indians use English, it is often a mixture of English, Hindi and other languages. Commonly used Hindi terms and expressions include the following:-

Masala - risqué, spicy/hot
Teek hai – okay
Yaar – buddy
Bus – that's it
Hazar – a ton

These are just a few of the most common ones. One must be fairly conversant in these and other terms and expressions if one wants to follow discussions between Indians completely.

7. Supra- Segmental Features

English is a stress – timed language, and both syllable stress and word stress, where only certain words in a sentence or phrases are stressed, are important features of Received Pronunciation. Indian native languages are actually syllable-timed languages, like Latin and French. Indian- English speakers usually speak with a syllabic rhythm. Further, in some languages, stress is associated with low pitch, whereas in most English dialects, stressed syllables are generally pronounced with a higher pitch. Thus, when some Indian speakers speak, they appear to put the stress accents at the wrong syllables, or accentuate all the syllables of a long English word.Some English phrases used by the Indians which the world knows nothing about

1) First class!

Indians refer to anything they like or that is really good as being 'first-class'. So anything from a movie to a pani- puri could be 'first-class' in the country.

2) Prepone

What do you do when you do not want to postpone a meeting but reschedule it ahead of its intended time? Simple. You prepone it! Literally using the antonym for post-, Indians derived this simple way of stating something will happen ahead of time.

3) I have a doubt.

While in the rest of the English world, to harbor a doubt is generally associated with doubting someone's ability, in India, to have a doubt means you have a question about something.

8. Syntax

Hindi syntax affects Indian English syntax in several ways. There is a seemingly arbitrary use of the articles 'a' and 'the', which do not have parallels in Hindi. Certain verbs are used in Indian English in the same way as they are used in Hindi. Indians use 'kolna' and 'bandh karna' when asking someone to turn a light on or off; the literal translations is retained, so some Indian English speakers say "open the light" and " close the light." Indian English speakers often use certain verbs in many ways that are confusing to speakers of other English varieties. 'Keep' is used for put, so one finds Indians saying things like "keep the ball there" or "keep the ball back" to a person who is still holding the ball.

9. Conclusion

Do Indians appreciate their own English? Ultimately, the answer is 'Yes'. Indians have made English into a native language with its own linguistic and cultural ecologies and socio-cultural contexts. Indian English is very much Indian's language. Its special functions have engraved English into the cultural life of India, and it is very much a part of the experience of being Indian—even if one does not speak it. The Indian writer and philosopher Raja Rao wrote,

"Truth, said a great Indian sage, is not the monopoly of the Sanskrit language, and the   more universal, the better it is. If metaphysics is India's primary contribution to world civilization, as we believe it is , then must she use the most universal language foe her to be   universal….And as long as the English language is universal, it will always remain Indian….It would then be correct to say as long as we are Indian—that is, not nationalists, but truly Indians of the Indian psyche—we shall have the English language with us and amongst us, and not as a guest or friend, but as one of our own, of our caste, our creed, our sect and our tradition" (Kachru 1986,p.12).

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