



## **Indianisation of English Language: Reasons and Impact of Indigenous Languages**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the second half of the eighteenth century the British came to India and ruled for nearly two centuries. During this period the British brought English language and western education so that they can create a class of Indians who could serve as communicative link between the rulers and the masses. Although colonized countries hated British empire and its influence but still after the falling off the empire, its inheritance in the form of English language is still governing the global sphere. Indians use English language as an important language, but its form has been Indianised. It is not used in the standard form but instead it is chutnefied. The combination of the two languages – Hindi and English has taken to the formation of Hinglish or English and regional language has taken form of Indian English. The chief aim of this paper is to understand how this evolution has started taking place, what were the reasons behind it and whether Indianised English is justified.

**Keywords:** Indianised, Colonised, English language. Regional languages

### **Introduction**

English language has earned its importance in the world as a global language. In India English is considered as a second language rather than a foreign language. Most of the people in India learn English and use it for various purposes and functions, for example in Education, Business and administration, Media and publishing, Inter-regional communication and Intra-regional communication. English constantly co-exists and interacts with Indian languages in Indian ' socio-cultural contexts. The forms and

structures of English have been affected by Indian languages and a new variety of English came into existence which is known as Indian English.

English got its importance as a global language in the post-colonial era. Whether it is consequence of colonial past or the reason that it is used as a common language for the growth of an essential global communicative system; in both the cases social changes are responsible to enrich the language. In the context of Indian-subcontinent, a situation arose when the people were using as well as despising the language. Some people welcomed English as it was considered the language of the elite while others tried to attack by mimicking the language.

Whatever the purpose was it led to enrichment and Indianisation of language. As Rushdie writes in his *Imaginary Homelands*, "What seems to me to be happening is that those peoples who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it.". This relaxation is responsible for the Indianisation or the mixing of the language. Also, the authors who were using the language of the colonizers to resist or write back to the empire were enriching the language. Further, day-by-day addition to the vocabulary in the English dictionary and their addition of acceptance of Indian words is responsible for glorifying both English as well as other local languages.

To understand the topic of Indianisation of English we must look into the politics of nation formation, what went into making up of this chutnefied or mixed version of English. To understand the development of the language first we should be familiar with these two terms, colonial and post-colonial. As in the words of Ania Loomba, "Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and good." (8). Colonialism is considered as the policy by which a nation exercises political and nomic control over a less powerful independent region or nation. Colonialism in the modern world is the political control by an outside power of a country through the domination of its economy.

Thus, the developing countries, though supposed to be free and independent are rather being regulated by the hegemony of the superpowers and colonial ruled still by colonizing the minds of the people. While talking about colonialism and imperialism we come to see that today the world is divided into species and race one belongs to. As Spivak observes in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* that the contemporary international division of labor is a displacement of the divided field of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism. In simple words, a group of countries called the first-world are in position of investing capital, another group, generally the third-world, provide the field of investment. She also believes that subaltern has no history, and it cannot speak. Ania Loomba is also of the same view. She says in her work *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*:

“Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered- it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries.”

In the present era of neo-imperialism, the country with better economy and power tries to dominate the developing countries in an indirect way. Thus, imperialism is all about psychologically dominating the eastern countries. Therefore, post-colonial literature demands a rethinking. So, the condition of India is very much clear. It has been dominated by the colonial rule and still in the post-colonial era its influence is seen.

English, being global language or the language of the colonizers has been famous in our country. Now we have reached to a stage where some criticize it while others have imbibed it. The people criticizing it can be represented by the thoughts of Caliban, a character in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, when he rebukes at the language of the colonizers by saying: "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" Like Caliban for some of the people English language is the language of the colonizers. It is looked at with contempt but it must be accepted that always keeping up the anti-colonial view must be avoided. As in the words of Salman Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands*, As of myself, I don't think it is always necessary to take up the anti-colonial-or is it post-colonial?-cudgels against English. What seems me to be happening is that, those peoples who were once colonized by the language are now remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the ways they use it-assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers.

Thus, according to Rushdie, English is used as an Indian language in India. Rushdie even goes up to the extent saying that in India sometimes English is used as a bridge between north and south India because it is a language which neither of the party hates. ( I.H. 65) When we ponder more on Rushdie's views we see that he advocates change in the attitude towards English. He suggests the remaking of the language according to the need of Indian themes. Rushdie even adds up and says that, 'to conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free.' (I. H. 17) Not only Indians are using English as their own language but the vocabulary of English has also been enriched by the addition of new hinglish words. We come to find about this in *Hobson-Jobson*, the legendary dictionary of British India. In these pages of the work intermixing of the Indian languages with English can be observed. For example the word cash has originated from the Sanskrit word *karsha* (a weight of silver or gold equal to 1/400th of a tula) or the word shampoo originated from *champna* or *champo*. (81)

There is a long list of such examples and it must be noted that day by day many such Indian words are included in the English dictionary and is increasing the broadness of the language. Rita Kothari's book *Chutnefying English: the Phenomenon of Hinglish*, is a book which deals in detail with the subject upon hybridization of these two languages. The book deals with the pros and cons of the topic in detail, whether chutnefied/mixed language should be adopted or should it be curbed and its parent languages should be given privilege over its offspring.

In January of 2009, Dr. Rita Kothari, at the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad, organized the global conference called, "Chutnefying English," calling in various stakeholders from different walks of life-academics, scholars, researchers, actors, cultural producers, authors and consumers to critically examine the growing phenomenon of Hinglish and how it intersects with our globalised life. Many discussions took place in the seminar and a lot of such debates are going around the world, but the important point to notice is that the way this Hinglish form has been adopted by Indian people, it cannot be changed easily and also it is necessary to Indianise the English language that can suit our themes and subject matter it is. We can find many examples of such usages in the books of the trio writers Rao, Anand and Narayan who were writing at the time of Indian independence. They have done many such experiments with the language. Some contemporary writers like Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie have also done experiments with the language.

In India English ceases to be an alien language. From the status of vernacular language to become acknowledged as second language we see long association with English. In the course of time, it is being utilized in various domains and its use becomes less restricted. In the beginning, the language acted as a mode of interaction between British people and the Indians. Indians picked up English from country and this can be visible in earlier Indian writings. In India where there is diversity in cultural and regional languages, English emerged as a link language. Usually Hindi or English acts as interconnecting language among the people from different states.

Except Hindi none of the Indian language has earned that much grace to become the link language throughout the country. Also, it's been noticed that sometimes people don't want to use other states language, this factor plays a vital role in making English a link language in India; e.g. the people of southern part of India choose to communicate in their own regional language or in English. In normal situation they are not comfortable in using the other regional language. That's why; they like only their regional language or English as a medium of communication. Thus, to overcome the language issue, the states of eastern and southern part of India (Group - C) are advised to use English to interact with Union Government and

authorities. This reveals why English is playing the powerful role of link language within the country.

In conclusion we can say that Indianisation of English is nothing but a way of resisting as well as using the best of a language. The use of Indianised English is increasing day by day which is increasing the vocabulary as well as the importance of the language.

Thus according to my view this trend of Indianisation of English is not to be afraid of as we use it the way it suits us and matches with our lives. Also, it's been proved that Indian English is flourishing as a separate form of English which primarily follows the principles and regulation of ordinary British English. It's also an undeniable fact that among all the countries of the planet, India has the greatest number of English speakers and users who follow the principles of the language in a much better manner. But due to some situations, need or time English users provides it slightly of Indianness.

Indian English has its scope and importance not only in India but also in various other countries of the globe. Authors of English of several other countries also employ several Indian words in their writings. To feature to the current status, several Indian words have also acquired their place in almost every world-famous English dictionary. Due to this, English vocabulary is getting richer day by day. Indian English has also emerged as a separate style of English Language. It follows the foundations yet has several unique features specific to Indian languages, cultures and conditions. If several of those features had not been involved within English the aim of language and communication couldn't be achieved and fulfilled.

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