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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INDIAN ENGLISH-AN OVERVIEW.

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Abstract

The English vocalized on the subcontinent has some typical features that puts it apart from other international varieties of English. These changes are as a result of a long period during which English was in constant contact with dialects spoken natively in India. As a result, the variety of English spoken on the subcontinent is frequently called as Indian English. This Indian English is unique, and this uniqueness should be valued and appreciated.

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Introduction:-

English as a foreign language is used by Indians in the same way as other speakers of English do it. They adapted it to fit their native language concepts. The new vocabulary items were formed by using the material, without bothering much for grammar. Indian English has now come to be recognised as a feasible and self-generating vehicle for expressing Indian feeling in an Indian atmosphere [1]. It is now a natural product of an alien medium developed in interaction and interference in native language and native culture. Given India's diversity, however, there is indeed a general homogeneity in syntax and vocabulary that can be found among speakers across South Asia. In upper-class families, English is typically very close to Received Pronunciation, while still retaining hints of a uniquely Indian flavour. The form of English that Indians are taught in schools is essentially British English, Indian English had established itself as an audibly distinct dialect with its own quirks and specific phrases. However, due to the growing influence of American culture in recent decades, American English has begun challenging traditional British English as the model for English in the Indian subcontinent [2]. The American English is spreading among Indian youth. American English spellings are also widely prevalent in scientific and technical publications while British English spellings are used in other media. British English or American English is the more practical dialect for emigrating Indians to adopt. It must be stressed, however, that British English retains its hold on the majority of Indians, particularly those of the older generation and the younger generation in smaller cities and towns [3].

Differences in Vocabulary:

English vocalized in India has been under the main impact of the native languages of the subcontinent, which is reflected in its dictionary. Various words from Indian native languages have been presented into the global English language spoken worldwide; some notable examples being jungle, bungalow, punch and shawl. There are some words which are unique to speakers from India and instances of misunderstanding are not uncommon. Such words are air dash which is used for someone who is in a hurry, or badmash which denotes a hooligan. Sometimes, speakers of English in India add a new level of meaning existing words. For instance, if a person wears a hi-tech outfit, it does not mean that they are equipped with the latest digital gadgets. Instead, a hi-tech outfit stands for

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fashionable and modern, following the latest trends. It often happens that a word from Hindi replaces an English word. If you hear achcha in the middle of conversation led in English, do not be surprised. It only means good.

Differences in Pronunciation:

Alterations in vocabulary are not the only features that make common statement more difficult. Certain differences in pronunciation are also distinct. For instance, the speakers of English in India do not make any change when it comes to the sound “v”, which is produced using one’s lower lips and top teeth; and sound “w” in the production of which both lips are used. Also, the two sounds “θ” and “ð” are usually replaced by “d” and “t”. The reason for this replacement is because these sounds do not exist in Indian languages and therefore, they are harder to master. Another characteristic of the sounds used by speakers of English in India is the replacement of two adjacent vowels by a single long vowel followed by “r” sound. So, beer becomes “bir” and pear is pronounced as “per”. Following all this, there is no doubt that the English language spoken on the subcontinent bears its own special qualities. It is vibrant and follows its own rules of development. However, in order to maintain proper communication and transmit the message in a correct manner, every speaker should try to follow the rules of the target language at least when it comes to pronunciation [4].

Features of Indian English:

English has a distinct position in India. English has spread in our daily life, apart from having a place in the public institutions of the country, in parliament, the law courts, broadcasting, the press and the education system. English plays a crucial role in professional relationships between foreign and Indian establishments. English represents in Indian minds better education, better culture and higher intellect. Indian English comprises several dialects or varieties of English spoken primarily in India. Indians mingle English with Indian languages [5]. Stylistic influence of Indian local languages is a particular feature of Indian literature in English. Indian English speakers often mix Hindi and other languages with English. Variations in the pronunciation of several phonemes are affected by the regional tongues. Several idiomatic forms crossing over from Indian literary and vernacular language also have made their way into the English used by the masses. The distinct evolution of regional variations in contemporary usage has led to terms such as Hinglish (Hindi + English), Tanglish (Tamil + English) and Minglish (Marathi + English). Below are some of the special features of Indian English which are accepted in India.

1. “What is your good name?” basically used as a polite way of asking someone’s name.
2. “Today morning” or “Yesterday night” to mean this morning or last night.
3. “shut up” which is generally used more causally in Hindi, but it is offending term in America.
4. “you people” used to address more than one person, but it carries with it racial connotation.
5. “general mai” (in general) and “ek minute” (one minute) are prevalent in Indian English.
6. Use of *yaar*, *machaa*, *abey*, *arey* in an English conversation between Indians, mainly by people of native Hindi-speaking origin.
7. Use of “off it” and “on it” instead of “switch it off” and “switch it on.”
8. Use of “current went” and “current came” for “The power went out” and “The power came back”
9. Use of word “wallah” to denote occupation or ‘doing of/involvement in doing’ something, as in “The taxiwallah overcharged me.”
10. Use of “Can you drop me?” and “We will drop her first” instead of “Can you drop me off?” and “We will drop her off first”
11. “Out of station” to mean “out of town”.
12. “Tell me”: used when answering the phone, meaning “How can I help you?”
13. “order for food” instead of “order food”, as in “Let’s order for sandwiches”.
14. Titles (of respect; formal) Referring to elders, strangers or anyone meriting respect as “jee”/“ji” (suffix) as in “Please call a taxi for Gupta-ji”
15. Use of prefixes “Shree”/“Shri” (Mr) or “Shreemati”/“Shrimati” (Ms/Mrs):
16. Use of suffixes “Saahib/Sāhab” (Mr) and “Begum” (Mrs) (Urdu) as in “Welcome to India, Smith-saahib.”
17. Use of “Mr” and “Mrs” as common nouns. For example, “Pooja’s Mr stopped by yesterday” or “My Mrs is not feeling well”.
18. Use of “Ms” with first name.
19. Use of the English words ‘uncle’ and ‘aunty’ as suffixes when addressing people such as distant relatives, neighbours, acquaintances, even total strangers (like shopkeepers) who are significantly older.
20. children or teenagers addressing their friend’s parents as Mr Patel or Mrs Patel (etc.) is considered unacceptable, perhaps even offensive—a substitution of Sir/Ma’am is also not suitable except for teachers.

21. Use of Respected Sir while starting a formal letter instead of Dear Sir. Again, such letters are ended with non-standard greetings, such as "Yours respectfully", or "Yours obediently", rather than the standard "Yours sincerely/faithfully/truly".
22. Use of "Baba" (father) while referring to an elderly male, such as "No Baba, just try and understand, I cannot come today".
23. Use of interjections Arey! And acchha! to express a wide range of emotions, usually positive though occasionally not, as in "Arey! What a good job you did!", "Accha, so that's your plan." or "Arey, what bad luck, yaar!"
24. Use of the word "chal" (Hindi for the verb "walk") to mean the interjection "Ok", as in "Chal, I gotta go now" at the end of a phone call.
25. Use of T-K in place of O.K. when answering a question, as in "Would you like to come to the movie?" -- "T-K, I'll meet you there later." ("theek hai", literally "fine is", meaning "okay")
26. Use of oof! to show distress or frustration, as in "Oof! The baby's crying again!"
27. Use of "Wah" to express admiration, especially in musical settings, as in "Wah! Wah! You play the sitar so well!"
28. "Paining" used when "hurting" would be more common in Standard American and British: "My head is paining."

Supra-segmental features:

English is a stress-timed language, and both syllable stress and word stress, where only certain words in a sentence or phrase 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 Indian languages, stress is associated with a 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. Certain Indian accents are of a "sing-song" nature, a feature seen in a few English dialects in Britain, such as Scouse and Welsh English.

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