
UNIT 1 EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to locate English as language and literature within a multi lingual culture/ country like ours. It also focuses on the need to create a space for the interaction of a variety of discourses in not only English and other disciplines but also between English and the vast literary tradition that is available to us. Additionally, the unit traces some of the issues related to the discipline of English Language Teaching (ELT) and the future of English Studies in India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In multilingual societies, different languages perform functions different from one another. In such a scenario, the domestic language is not the same as the languages of profession, entertainment, pedagogy or commerce. It is common that children in these societies acquire more than one language. Thus at the beginning of school education, an Indian child is already proficient in two or three languages. This means that the learning of English in the school as the 'first' or the 'second' language actually indicates that the child is probably learning a 'third' or 'fourth' language. Moreover, in a country like India a child is exposed to a variety of literary traditions. It should, thus, be possible to cultivate a meta-linguistic awareness among children through a comparative study of languages in their repertoire.

Sadly, education in India has not taken advantage of the aforementioned rich co-existence of languages in a classroom and has given an undue stress on the learning and acquisition of English. We could have come a long way towards translating the multilingual and multicultural Indian ethos into concrete classroom transactions if we helped our children to reappraise and respect each other's language and culture. Whether in terms of geography or climate, moral values or social ethos, flora or fauna or the network of human relationships, an Indian child remains alien to British literature. Not only that, an Indian child gets deeply frustrated when s/he realises that studying English over a long period of time has not equipped her/him to grasp successfully the day-to-day transactions demanding the use of English. The future of English in India is, therefore, largely dependent on relocating English in the multilingual context of India, that is, children should have a functional knowledge of the language as well as the linguistic competence to read English (not just British) texts (not just literary texts) independently. We need to create a space for an authentic interaction between a variety of discourses in English and other disciplines. Any language teaching project, first, second, or foreign, including ELT in India, should

not end up just being an exercise in enhancing linguistic or communicative proficiency. Mere tolerance of different languages in a society perpetuates the status quo where the languages of the powerful and the elite remain associated with domains of prestige and social mobility whereas languages of learners survive only on the margins.

We have for a long time associated proficiency in English with acquisition of knowledge and solution of our problems. It is now becoming increasingly clear that this emphasis on English not only obstructs development but also breeds unhealthy negative stereotypes among learners about their own languages. For over a period of hundred years teaching of English in India meant the paraphrasing and interpretation of 'respected' canonised English texts, in particular the Elizabethan, Restoration, Augustan, and Romantic texts, involving largely a reproduction of *accepted* critical opinions. Most classroom lectures and examination scripts are often bad reproductions of easily available *kunjis* (guide-books). The ability to note with discrimination day-to-day social encounters demanding the use of English and the ability to read texts critically in a socio-historical context is rarely witnessed in pedagogical practice.

However, recent developments in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and literature teaching have brought in a number of much needed changes. While the development of the communicative approach or suggestology, monitor model or the total physical response approach, procedural syllabus or task-based curriculum, has brought the learner at the centre of language pedagogy. The advent of theoretical models such as *postcolonialism*, *nativism* and diasporic writing has shifted the attention from canonical texts in English literature to more indigenous varieties of writing in English. Moreover, these approaches and models have questioned the hegemonic presence of English in the curriculum and subverted its importance by focussing on the nexus of power and knowledge that exists in the learning and teaching of English in India. They have largely contributed to the process of nativisation of English in India and are no more dependent on the structures of hierarchy that English was meant to create in accordance with the **Macaulayan** model. However, a great many changes need to be incorporated to fully revamp the existing myth that learning of English is synonymous with prestige and social power. From here, we can take a step towards the process of evolution of English in India in the post-independent era. How did English come to be adopted and adapted by the 'natives'? The next section will analyse this aspect.

1.2 NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH IN POSTCOLONIAL INDIA

English that became the language of the elite during the colonial times retained its supremacy after independence in India. Despite efforts by early politicians, and most notably by **Mahatma Gandhi**, the Indian languages could not compete with the imperial and coercive nature of English. Thus, English became the language of the elite and therefore of prestige and power. It must be remembered that the English that we had inherited from our colonial masters is not the English that we see spreading creatively all over the sub-continent today. It was soon realised that English had to be reformulated according to the needs of the Indian ethos and had to develop an idiom that could satisfactorily express the emotions and feelings of a large section of the population in times of nation building and development. **Raja Rao's** famous statement (in the foreword to *Kanthapura*) captures the dilemma of English India:

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word

'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as a part of us.

With the advent of independence, it was keenly felt that our relationship to English should be redefined. The goals and priorities that were to be set in education had to take into consideration the large body of indigenous languages that existed and that had been seriously neglected during the colonial times. The fact, however, is that English education in postcolonial India has been a continuation of the colonial experience and did not take into account the nativisation process that **Raja Rao** envisaged. English is still the language that examines students in universities, conducts through its use foreign affairs, and transacts business with the world outside. The numbers waiting to learn English are increasing everyday.

Units III and IV of Block I have already dealt with the **Radhakrishnan Commission** and the other Commissions that followed. Suffice it to say that the first education commission set up in free India was the **University Education Commission**, called the **Radhakrishnan Commission** (after its chairman, **Dr S Radhakrishnan**). The Commission submitted its report in 1949. It was the tertiary level that received attention first. The **Committee on Primary Education** was appointed only in 1951 and the **Secondary Education Commission**, a year later. It is again an interesting fact that given the composition of the first Education Commission which consisted mostly of educationists and liberal intellectuals, it should have conceived the role of university education in broad, universalistic terms rather than in relation to the immediate social, political and linguistic needs. In other words, the Commission did not go into details, contenting itself with general, often, vague formulations like the awakening of the innate ability of men and women 'to live the life of the soul by developing wisdom.' The **Secondary Education Commission** (1952-53) was perhaps the first official body to concern itself with methods of teaching, materials for teaching and the evaluation system. This is what the Commission had to say about the educational method:

Any method, good or bad, links up the teacher and his pupils into an organic relationship with constant mutual interaction....Every teacher and educationist knows that even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remain dead unless quickened into life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers.

The Commission insisted that 'the emphasis in teaching should shift from verbalism and memorisation to learning through purposeful, concrete and realistic situations and for this purpose the principles of 'Activity Method' and 'Project Method' should be assimilated in school practice.' It is hard to understand why many of the recommendations of this Commission have not been fully implemented.

We notice that things started moving after a while. Language planning in India arrived at a crucial stage during the sixties. After more than a decade of independence, the relative status of English, Hindi and the other regional languages (both as official languages and media of instruction) was still not clear in the minds of the people or even in official documents. The anti-Hindi riots in the South (especially in Tamil Nadu) as well as the 'Angrezi-hatao' campaign in some parts of the North lent urgency to the problem. The conference of the chief ministers in 1961 recommended the use of the three-language formula in all schools. This meant:

1. The regional language, or the mother tongue when different from the regional language;
2. Hindi, or any other Indian language in Hindi-speaking areas; and
3. English, or any other European language.

The intentions behind the three-language formula were noble but unrealistic since they did not take into consideration the lack of motivation among students in the Hindi-speaking areas to learn any other Indian language, and perhaps consequently, the continuing political opposition in Tamil Nadu to the introduction of Hindi. No wonder that the three-language formula was not uniformly adopted, at any rate not in the areas where it mattered most.

The **Kothari Commission** (1966) reiterated the three-language formula. From the 1960s to the 1990s English language teaching received a new impetus from the various establishments of English Language Teaching Institutes (first in Allahabad in 1954 and then in Hyderabad in 1958, the latter being called the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages) all over the country in collaboration with the British Council.

The next landmark in the history of English education in postcolonial India was the **National Policy on Education** and the **Programme of Action** (1986). However, this policy was not very different from the recommendations of the **Kothari Commission** and emphasised that 'a major effort will be directed towards the transformation of teaching methods' and that 'urgent steps will be taken to protect the system from degradation.' The **Acharya Ramamurti Commission** appointed to review the 1986 **National Policy on Education** and the **Programme of Action** submitted its report in 1990. The Report must be commended for making, for the first time, a frank analysis of the problems in the implementation of the three-language formula. It observed, however, that whatever the difficulties or the unevenness in the implementation, the three-language formula had 'stood the test of time' and that it was 'not desirable or prudent to reopen it.'

This brief survey of the development of English teaching and learning in postcolonial India provides us with a paradigm shift from learning the language for its 'humanistic' values to learning the language for special purposes. The English that **Macaulay** wanted to teach with its imperialistic agenda has given way to a more native curriculum and methods of teaching. However, the stranglehold of English on contemporary education is still quite strong and we, as thinking citizens, must undertake a searching scrutiny of the crisis in contemporary English education in India caused by lapses in our cultural memory. Let us now try and examine the aims that informed the teaching of English in contemporary India.

1.3 GOALS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

What are the long-term goals of learning English in the modern world? It would be better if in answering this question, we define the objectives on the basis of what the learners themselves so obviously want. We should perhaps start with the question, why is English education becoming a large-scale industry in postcolonial India? Why is there such an increase in English-medium schools? Why do students opt for English, even in states where it has been made optional? Why is there such a big market for institutes of spoken English with their crash courses and 'English Made Easy' programmes?

Macaulay might have thought that the knowledge of English was essential for civilising Indians along with their earlier generations that might have thought English was necessary for the shaping of individual character or the development of 'humanistic' values. But the present generation is convinced that English is needed for mobility and social and economic advancement. English is the language of opportunities because it takes one outside one's own community to places (within or outside India) where more opportunities are available for professional and economic

growth. That is why there is a great demand for English; it has a lot of 'surrender value' and learners rightly want to cash in on it.

Our students have realised that English not only gives us 'information advantage'—it provides information in every conceivable branch of knowledge—but also the power to understand our social environment. In other words, English is the language, not of Westernisation, but of modernisation. This is why English is the language of our agricultural universities though not of our agriculture. Students of English in India have realised that English is necessary if they have to talk about their identity, their languages, their literature, their science and technology, their society and economy and polity, their values and culture so that the world outside will get to know what they are. We need English to project and interpret India to the rest of the world. For example, we have to talk about **Panini, Bhartrhari, Patanjali, Nagarjuna and Sankara** in English so that the world may know that there is a rich tradition of language philosophy in India that can engage the latest in modern Western thought. We must be in a position to talk about our writers, both ancient and modern, or our filmmakers or about our achievements in the industrial and economic aspects.

The 'empire' should talk and write back in English. We need, moreover, to translate; there is a great market for competent translations and adaptations of Indian books, classical as well as contemporary, in English. Only then can a meaningful interaction take place between English and the variety of Indian languages; only then can English be turned into an instrument of subversion. It would not remain anymore the vehicle of transmitting knowledge; it would become a medium for transforming knowledge. Let us examine the pedagogy of teaching English and its fallouts in the next section.

1.4 THE PEDAGOGY OF TEACHING ENGLISH AND ITS FALLOUTS

The initial obsession with language correctness and a great amount of stress on classical texts has marred the project of English Language Teaching (ELT) in India during its inception. Till recently, all ELT materials had a kind of Englishness about them. Anthologies of English poets, playwrights and short story writers were especially prepared to introduce Indian learners to the 'best literature and culture' in the world. A play by **Shakespeare**, poems of **Milton, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Keats** and **Eliot** and novels of **Fielding, Meredith, Lawrence** and **Hardy** would constitute essential components of any undergraduate or postgraduate curriculum. The focus of teaching was always on reading, comprehension and on a critical appreciation of the work of these authors that more often than not, ended up just being the reproduction on the part of students the ideas of these authors in the final examinations. However, the disdain that one witnesses for the native languages of learners today in most approaches to language teaching was not present in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in India. Translation was very often used as a reliable tool of language teaching. Most of the second language teaching materials across the world were bilingual in nature and could often be used to learn either language. What the learner already knew was at least implicitly seen as an asset. In addition to translation, grammar, memorisation of paradigms and vocabulary building constituted the backbone of language teaching.

In post-independent India two parallel traditions of language teaching established themselves. The English medium convents and public schools generally located in an urban area or metropolitan centres (or hill stations) catered to the needs of the elite and the powerful. English language teaching in these schools focussed on the spoken skill than on reading or writing. The British accent of these children set them apart as a class fit to be recruited in the army and the administrative services. In the ordinary vernacular schools that catered to the needs of the masses, English was often not the

medium of instruction and was taught only as a subject. The facilities available were minimal. The focus in English language teaching was on reading, comprehension, grammar, translation and précis writing.

Before the advent of such methods as the 'Direct Method' or the 'Audio-lingual Approach', the English language teaching scene in ordinary government schools of India generally looked as follows: primary education was through the mother tongue or the dominant regional language; English was introduced in Class V as a subject and it became the medium of instruction for science, mathematics, and social sciences in the higher classes. English was taught largely through the mother tongue to begin with and gradually one moved to the reading of poems, short stories, and one-act plays by well-known British authors. Translation, grammar and vocabulary were extremely important components of the programme. Those who excelled in English were supposed to be good at essay and précis writing. The scene was of course quite different in convents and public schools where children were immersed in English language and culture.

In borrowing language-teaching methods from the West, we have often borrowed the jargon and the slogans rather than the spirit. Have we carefully examined the issue whether methods evolved predominantly in monolingual and mono-cultural societies will be suitable for the complex and fluid multilingual situation in India? The 'Direct' and the 'Audio-lingual' approaches in fact make very heavy demands on the teachers and also require rich audio-visual support. For the English language teachers in India, it simply meant rejecting the languages of their students.

In the past few decades, however, the learner has come to the centre of most methods of language teaching. These approaches give importance to the creativity of output, active learner involvement in interesting tasks and situations, authenticity of materials and the facilitating role of the teacher. In India, these approaches have arrived recently and are being carried out on an experimental basis. In this context, it must be kept in mind that an uncritical acceptance of Western procedures and treating English as 'an international language' to acquire Western knowledge is fraught with dangers of its own and must be examined within the parameters of multiculturalism and multilingualism in India. The next section will examine an alternative system of language pedagogy.

1.5 TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM OF LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

We need to evolve alternative materials that will be in tune with the new perceptions, changing realities and postcolonial objectives. A conventional English textbook, for example, may contain a number of essays by English essayists, a few short stories and a one-act play. However, the students may not need to study these pieces at all since the entire testing system is based on the pattern of a catechistic question-answer that does not evaluate the reading abilities or language acquisition of the learner, but a simple correspondence between the asked and the answered. Thus, all that a student requires to do is to memorise the answers that his/ her teachers dictate to him/ her in the class and reproduce them in the examinations without ever really reading a single line of the pieces included in his/ her syllabus! One of the major reasons why this occurs is the treatment of the students as passive listeners.

The conventional prose and poetry anthologies necessarily elevate the teacher to the position of a 'performer' and reduce the student to the level of a 'receiver'. The student is expected to receive the right answers, memorise and reproduce them, using whatever method s/he can adopt during the examination. The system promotes neither critical thinking nor even an attempt at original writing on the part of the

students. A non-conventional approach has to look beyond the classroom, beyond the textbook, and beyond the examination based on 'prescribed books'. Ideally, only skills and abilities should be specified without the prescription of any texts. Unfortunately, teachers and students are now so used to the idea of the prescribed textbook that they would not know what to do in a class without a textbook. Let us realise that even a conventional textbook can be used to elicit thought-provoking responses. The text can always be used as a sort of pretext to probe the imaginations of the learners. The supplementary activities possible with a text can be multifarious and infinite. The activities should be designed in a manner that they encourage the students to read intelligently, respond critically and write creatively to use the language in situations other than the ones in which it was learned.

For instance, in an experiment conducted in an autonomous college, the students were asked to respond to a modern fable by **James Thurber**, *The Little Girl and the Wolf* where, at the end of the short text, the writer states the moral: "It is not so easy to fool little girls nowadays as it used to be." The students were asked to compare the old story, *Little Red Riding Hood* with the modern story and to answer some critical questions by way of responding and expanding on the text. One of the questions was:

Can you visualise how a modern woman would have acted in the following situations?

- a) When Draupadi was about to be dishonoured by Dushasana.
- b) When Rama asks Sita to enter the fire.

Such awareness-raising questions not only help the students relate an 'alien' text to their immediate surroundings but also help them understand a text in the context of its wider implications and situatedness.

The pattern of evaluation should, too, serve these objectives of expansion and creation and not reduction and reproduction. If the students can interpret intelligently what they read, respond critically and write creatively, testing their memory becomes unnecessary. English education would then truly be meaningful and inventive to serve the purposes of the learners.

1.6 THE PEDAGOGY OF INDIANNESS IN INDIAN ENGLISH

What makes Indian English 'Indian'? Though later units would specifically deal with this problem as regards the sound patterns, word formations, sentence patterns and grammar, and intelligibility of Indian English, here we would have a brief overview of the issues concerning the Indianness of English.

How can a language that was forcibly imposed upon a nation by an imperialist power claim to be a native language? Well, there are two ways of looking at the problem. **Firstly**, if we consider English to be a Western language then obviously we would have to define what we mean by 'western-ness'. That English was the language of imperial rule cannot be denied, but it would be wise to remember that it was also the language of our nationalist struggle for independence. It was the language that united the South with the North. It was also the language through which the nationalist leaders communicated with one another as well as the imperial rulers. In a way, the function of English that was originally meant to create a slave race out of us was subverted by our *appropriation* of it. The language was moulded and suited to serve our purposes in a way that the colonial rulers could not even imagine.

It must however be remembered that English has also played a largely divisive role in our country by creating a distinct separation between the English-knowing class and

the non-English-knowing class. Thus, it is also the language of prestige and social power. It is this nature of the language that has to be countered by our accepting it as only *one* of the many languages in India and not as the *only* language of social recognition.

Secondly, it must also be remembered that the study of English is an international industry. Tens of thousands of scholars engage in it throughout the world, teaching a student population of millions and producing innumerable books, periodicals, monographs, dissertations, papers, articles, reports, conference proceedings, class notes, course books, newsletters, and Internet contributions. Their total contribution is more than any of them can ever hope to digest, and in many cases few will see every publication or other document that touches on their area of special interest. This would imply that at present, there are umpteen number of Englishes disseminated around the world without any standard protocol or accepted pronunciation, or syntactic patterns. If we consider Indian English as only one of such innumerable varieties of Englishes, then it would probably reduce the undue importance accorded to English in India. It is the language of dispersion and dissipation and it would probably be best studied so. Moreover the teachers of English should be equipped to teach the language as a functional one required for certain specific purposes rather than as the language of aesthetic beauty and greatness. After all, English in India is used only for a limited number of purposes with the local language or the mother tongue taking care of more intimate needs. It is therefore imperative that English be taught as the language of vocation and as a language for specific purposes rather than through meaningless **Shakespeares** and **Miltons** who are contextually so far located from the learner that they lose all interest in learning a language because of its difficulty and distance in time.

Also, it is necessary to instil in the learner the feeling that like any other language English too is an Indian language and can be learnt as students learn Hindi or any other regional language. The Indianness (dealt with in detail in **Unit II**) has to be specified and the language as long as it is intelligible should be treated as such without a hankering for 'correct' pronunciation or usage. After all, language is a dynamic subject and change is an intrinsic part of it. What is, therefore, *Indian* in Indian English, has to be built into the curriculum by introducing learners to Indian writers in English, pointing out to them their special use of language within an Indian context.

Finally, literature has a constructive role to play in any form of language learning. It can also be used as a tool to question the ways in which colonialism established its roots in a country like India. Moreover, it is the repository of authentic language use. Hence it provides us with a convenient source of content for a course in foreign language. To create a truly functional syllabus it has to be structured around concepts and subject matter that develop in complexity. Literary works meet this need more easily than any other material. In our case thus, a foregrounding of Indian literatures—both originally written in English and translated texts—may be used to root the learners in the notion of Indianness as well as to give communicative competence to them in the language. What then is the future of English in Indian pedagogy?

1.7 THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH PEDAGOGY IN INDIA

That English is going to stay as an essential part of the curriculum is a fact we have to live with. What should be our approach towards its teaching? Here are a few suggestions:

- a) It would be essential to design a variety of courses tailored to the needs of the consumers. This would include producing new materials, introducing function-based training programmes, and bringing in changes to our attitude towards the language and its learners.
- b) The focus must shift from teaching as a unidirectional, teacher-centred, knowledge-oriented activity to learning as a participatory activity.
- c) The teaching and learning of English as a second language may be treated as two mutually defining aspects of the same process, for the teacher is not just a giver but also a receiver and the learner is not just a passive recipient of 'made-to-measure' packages but also an active participant.
- d) Each teacher, in the process of teaching, should create an atmosphere, which can help learners 'learn how to learn' and to engage themselves in those activities which produce knowledge: defining, questioning, observing, classifying, generalising, verifying and applying.
- e) Learners must be equipped to operate language as a finite system of rules and use these rules in a variety of socio-cultural settings. They need to know that many different forms can be used to perform one function and also that a single form can serve a variety of functions.
- f) English should be taught as a transactional language rather than as a formal classroom language meant to write answers on literary topics alone. What must be kept in mind is that exposure to a rich variety of linguistic and socio-cultural materials with its focus on 'what to say when and how' are of paramount importance.
- g) A realistic reconsideration should be made about the role of literature in language teaching. The reading of literary texts can be a powerful stimulus to further effort provided that the learners have the linguistic competence to do so. In other words, **Miltons** and **Shakespeare** probably would not be the ideal texts for introducing a learner to a new language. In order to learn Sanskrit, one does not begin with **Kalidasa** or **Panini**!
- h) Since India represents a socio-linguistic area with a variety of cultural patterns, this rich diversity should be used as one of the tools of language teaching. Too often, the multicultural ethos of this country has been considered as a hindrance to language learning. This view has to be revised.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Where do all these considerations leave us with regard to the position of English in our educational system? It seems its role has to be redefined here too. It is quite clear that we need to retain English and, if anything, strengthen its teaching. It is felt that a dynamic *status quo* is required if we are to learn and teach English in this country. This means that English cannot be totally eliminated as a medium but should be seen in the light of that aspect of its role as a medium where it is most useful. For classroom instructions, English proves to be a dead weight rather than an active participatory language. It is necessary that we redefine our boundaries vis-à-vis English in the language curriculum.

1.9 QUESTIONS

1. What should be our approach towards English in the post- Independence context? Explain.
2. Elucidate the ways in which English can be usefully 'nativised'?

UNIT 2 NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH IN POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA: FUNCTIONS OF ENGLISH

Structure

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Domains of English in India
 - 2.2.1 The Domain of Family
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 - 2.3.3 Linguistic Region
 - 2.3.4 Professional Status
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 - 2.3.6 Reading Habits
 - 2.3.7 English Use in the Family
- 2.4 Introduction to Functions of English in India
 - 2.4.1 Social Function
 - 2.4.2 Educational And Professional Functions
- 2.5 Functions As A Link Language
- 2.6 Code-Mixing in the Functional Use of Language
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will try and examine the Indianisation of English following independence. It will attempt to analyse the role played by English as a language and look at the function of English in post-independence India. It takes up particularly the function of spoken English and does not deal with written English.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of Indian English (IE) in the past fifty years has produced a large amount of critical literature with a view to explaining its phonology, syntax, lexis and style. A large amount of work in the area of applied linguistics has been done on the use of Indian English in various socio-linguistic areas. Surprisingly, not much work has been done on the functional aspect of IE—who speaks English, for what purpose and to whom—although a need to study this aspect has been felt. In order to present a profile of IE an empirical investigation into its functions has to be made. One has to understand with reference to educated bilinguals what the domains in which English tends to be used are and what other domains tend to use the mother tongue.

It is a very common phenomenon in India to have educated speakers switch from one *code* to another. An educated Indian English bilingual is generally proficient in both

the languages—the mother tongue and English. S/He finds it quite easy and often convenient to indulge in *code switching*. Any investigation in the functions of English in India has to keep in mind this significant factor. In this regard, certain generalisations can be made at the beginning. Firstly, in the case of an IE speaker, a pattern can be seen in his/her use of languages. Only one of the theoretically co-available languages would be chosen for a particular social situation. This implies that a broad allocation of societal functions to English and other languages generally exist. Secondly, the IE speakers are generally aware of such functional allocations and do not use them arbitrarily. In other words, an IE speaker would instinctively know the appropriateness of the use of a certain language for a certain social function. Thirdly, English is generally used for more formal situations and higher domains and the mother tongue with certain informal situations and 'lower' domains. Finally, educated IE bilinguals show a positive attitude towards the use of English.

The use of English by an Indian bilingual may often vary due to certain other socio-cultural factors. A wide difference may exist due to the economic background of the speaker, the age-group s/he belongs to, the professions that one is in, the reading habits that one has developed, the status of the mother tongue in the culture of the IE speaker, internal migration etc. These factors often determine the functional aspect of the English spoken and govern its spread. Generally speaking, the speech repertoire of an educated Indian comprises two languages—English and the mother tongue. However, there are several educated Indian men and women who know more than two languages. The number of languages that an individual would know depends on several factors such as, place of birth, work and education, mobility and personal interest. Moreover, an IE speaker may use more than one language from a cline of formality to that of a non-formality according to the changing situation. Thus within a certain speech event, an IE speaker may consistently change his/her language as the functional demands of the situation changes.

It would be vital to remember that the functions of English in India would differ significantly from its functions in, say, England or America. The obvious reason is that while English in India is only one of the many languages available to educated speakers here, in countries like Great Britain and America it is the *only* viable language of communication. Thus, while Indian speakers of English learn the language primarily as a second language, for British or American speakers, English is the mother tongue. Moreover, a multilingual country often offers a larger variety of language functions than a monolingual country. Since in a monolingual country, states of formality or informality would have to be built in within the same language, in a multilingual country, the formal and informal functions of language may be distributed between different *languages*. Finally, since English has been sufficiently nativised in the Indian context, the functions of English in India often would not tally with the functions of English in a mother tongue situation. The next section shall deal with the various domains of English in India.

2.2 DOMAINS OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

When we refer to the functions of English in post-independent India, we are primarily dealing with English as a spoken language. The functions of written English would perhaps be in sharp contrast with that of spoken English. In spite of attempts of successive central governments to impose Hindi as the language of the officialdom, most bureaucratic and administrative work in India is still carried out in English since it is still the most viable *lingua franca* available to Indians. Moreover, more formal the situation the more preferred language is the English language, especially in the drafting of official letters and semi-official correspondence. Moreover, written English is supposed to carry a bit more *weight*, a greater amount of prestige than an Indian language, especially in the affairs of the state.

Spoken English, on the other hand, has a more restricted use in certain educated circles. Thus, while written English is probably more widespread English as speech is limited in its use. The mushrooming of various *Spoken English Institutes* bears ample proof of the fact that there are fewer opportunities to learn spoken English. In other words, English as spoken in India is limited to certain contexts and socio-cultural backgrounds. It is common in India to have a thorough knowledge in written English, while lacking any sort of competence in the production of speech. Thus, this unit refers only to spoken English and not to the written variety. The functions listed here are functions of English as spoken in certain domains.

Another useful theoretical construct to understand the functional aspects of Indian English is the concept of **domains** of language behaviour. In many bilingual speech communities such domains as the *church*, the *school*, *employment*, and *government* have been verified and found to be associated with a language or variety. Hughes (1970:103) terms this phenomenon "linguistic division of labour" and observes that

In a society where two languages are used, they are not used for precisely the same purposes, one being used more in certain contexts and for certain purposes than the other. The two make a more or less complete system of communication in that community.

The concept of domains thus helps us understand that language choice in a bilingual setting is related to such variables as topic, situation and group membership. The following functions would thus be divided into different domains of their usage in India.

2.2.1 The Domain Of Family

The family domain is always crucial for the study of language in bilingual societies. In India, the mother tongue stands out as the dominant language in the domain of the family for oral as well as written communication. However, the mother tongue used by the speakers varies from the greatest in interaction with their mothers with the least in the interaction with their children. In the domain of the family of an educated Indian bilingual, the IE speakers tend to use more English with their children than with their parents. In Indian cities especially, because of the rapid rise of English medium schools and colleges, educated Indians tend to use English while talking to their children about their education, or in discussion of technical subjects like science and technology. Moreover, since the urban areas offer a more cosmopolitan atmosphere, English tends to be a lingua franca among families. In a survey conducted by **S V Parasher**, as much as 70% IE speakers tended to use English with their children while switching over to their mother tongue while communicating with their parents.

2.2.2 The Domain of Friendship

The domain of friendship in India however, presents a very different picture. In this domain, although the mother tongue, English and the regional language are used, English turns out to be dominant. It must be remembered however that this functional aspect of English is restricted to urban educated IE bilinguals. If formality or informality is taken into account, then the friendship domain can be considered more formal than the family domain presupposing the fact that the use of English indicates more formality, while the use of the mother tongue indicates informality. However, the use of the mother tongue in the friendship domain is also considerably high. In the case of written communication however, an IE bilingual in this domain almost exclusively uses English. The function of English as a medium for maintaining friendly relations thus is more to be seen in the written form than in the oral form, the latter using both the codes equally. One of the reasons that an IE bilingual tends to use more English with his/her friends is that an IE speaker may not often share the

same mother tongue with his/her friends. Moreover, the topics of discourse too determine the choice of the language. In a multilingual situation like this, English becomes the language of choice.

2.2.3 The Domain of Neighbourhood

Though neighbourhood ties are generally quite well maintained in India, no language is generally dominant in this domain. However the neighbourhood language may vary considerably according to its composition. A neighbourhood that has a cosmopolitan background with speakers that have different mother tongues, English tends to be used more due to the lack of a common language. In a neighbourhood that shares a common mother tongue, the language of conversation tends to be the mother tongue. Differences in this domain may also occur due to the topography of the neighbourhood. A South Indian neighbourhood having speakers of different mother tongues would tend to use more English than a North Indian neighbourhood since Hindi is not an accepted language in the South. In the same situation a North Indian neighbourhood may use Hindi as the language of informal conversation.

2.2.4 The Domain of Transactions

Since this is a large domain including everyday situations like bargaining at shops, ordering food etc in restaurants, talking to a doctor, making enquiries at public places, asking one's way in a new city and addressing strangers, the variables affecting such transactions may be large in number. If we take an educated IE speaker in an urban situation as the standard, then English tends to be the dominant language. One probable reason is that in an urban situation, the language for a stranger would tend to be a link language rather than the local language due to the multicultural and multilingual setting of urban centres. However, the local language may also be used in certain situations depending on the social class, age, or sex of the correspondent. It is generally agreed that an educated IE speaker would tend to use English as the language of more prestige and then revert to Hindi as the most widely spoken *lingua franca*.

2.2.5 The Domain of Education

Undoubtedly, in the domain of education in the case of the IE bilingual, English is the most dominant language. This language is used not only to communicate with the school/college authorities in connection with children's education but also in terms of professional trainings. Moreover, the overt prestige attached to education in an English-medium school may also be responsible for this. The scenario may change drastically if we consider semi-urban or rural areas where the language of instruction is the local language and English is studied as only one of the many subjects in the curricula. But it cannot be denied that English education enjoys an amount of social prestige even in semi-urban and rural areas and generally is considered to be the language of social mobility.

2.2.6 The Domain of Government

In the domain of government, due to the lack of another viable option, English turns out to be the language of dominance. Although several attempts have been made to use Hindi and regional languages in government work, IE bilinguals continue to use English. In written communication, it is perhaps the only language used in government circles. The reason for this dominance of English in government is because the bureaucrats in high positions are used to functioning through the medium of English. Though, a number of initiatives are taken by the government from time to time to initiate Hindi or the regional languages, it has not met with great success.

2.3 SOCIO- CULTURAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE CHOICE

In the previous section we have seen the domains in which English is generally used in India. In this pattern, only one of the co-available languages in the bilingual's speech repertoires tends to be used in a particular situation type. We can thus say that there exists an awareness of functional allocation of the 'subjects' languages to situation types or domains. In other words, the functions of the mother tongue and English are clearly demarcated particularly in the domains of education, government and employment that is dominated by English. In terms of societal functions, we can term English as the *high* language and the mother tongue as the *low* language. This phenomenon in socio-linguistics, the presence of two standards in, a 'high' language used for formal occasions and in written communication, and a 'low' language used in colloquial conversation, is termed as *diglossia*. In other words, we can say that English exists in a *diglossic* relation with the mother tongue in these domains of language use. However, what are the defining factors that determine the choice of a certain language in a certain situation. This section would look into those factors that formulate the use of a certain language in a given situation in a given domain.

2.3.1 Degree of Formality

We would all agree that the domain of the government is the most formal domain that we have investigated and the domain of family the least formal amongst them. We have also seen that the use of English increases with the level of formality— in the domain of the government, English tends to be used extensively, while at the level of the family, it is restricted only for certain purposes. Broadly speaking then, English can be considered as the language of formality and the mother tongue the language of informality. Thus, the choice of language in a particular situation can be said to depend on the formality or informality of the situation.

2.3.2 Topic of Discourse

Another factor that seems to govern language choice in India is the topic of discourse. Certain topics tend to elicit a certain kind of language while some other topics seem to combine with another language. Thus, topics like children's educational performance at school/college, official topics related to work/profession, topics related to science, technology, medicine, space travel and politics, would generally use English, while more informal topics related to family affairs or discussing one's health or gossiping with the neighbour would use the local language.

2.3.3 Linguistic Region

Since India is a multilingual nation divided into several linguistic regions, the choice of a certain language also depends on the bilingual's placement in his/her own linguistic region or outside it. It would not be an exaggeration to say that since the local language in India enjoys a certain amount of prestige and also demands a kind of loyalty, an IE speaker within his/her own linguistic region would tend to use more of his/her mother tongue even in domains of formality. However, since internal migration is quite a common factor in India, it is quite common to find a bilingual speaker outside his linguistic region. In such instances, English tends to be used more according to the cline of formality already discussed.

2.3.4 Professional Status

One of the major factors determining language choice in India is the professional status of the IE speaker since it is also a determinant of the social status of a person.

The use of English in India seems to be directly related to the professional status of an IE bilingual. Higher the social ladder, more the English. Another reason for this phenomenon may be the kind of social contacts that such speakers make. Since they are exposed to a varied range of mother tongue speakers and are more often open to international fora, the language they use more is English since it serves as a link language. Another reason may be the extensive use of English in the written medium in professional organisations that determines their language choice.

2.3.5 Education

Educational attainment and the medium of education play an important role in the use of English in a certain situation. An IE bilingual is wont to use more English if s/he has undergone education through the medium of English, than a person who has attained education through the medium of mother tongue. However the bilingual's use of English is also dependent on other variables like English in the family, the nature of work and the medium of education. A large number of IE bilinguals are equally adept in the use of English as well as the mother tongue. It is also generally noted that a bilingual who has undergone training in English would probably be unsure in the handling of the mother tongue in literary and formal situations that demand the use of mother tongue and *vice versa*.

2.3.6 Reading Habits

Although reading is a receptive skill, it reflects the individual's preference for a language. As reading habits are directly related to the use of a language, it may be safe to say that one's preference for a certain language of reading reflects one's preference for using the language. Where the reading habits do not have a direct correlation with the use of a language, this can be generally taken to be true of most of the IE bilinguals.

2.3.7 English-Use in the Family

The use of English in the family is also a determining factor in a bilingual's language choice. Families that are largely cosmopolitan in nature tend to use more English than traditional or conservative families. Moreover, in families where the parents tend to use more English, the children too prefer English to their mother tongue. It is also true that in families where the spread of English education is quite high, the preferred choice of language is English.

We can thus safely posit the following points about the preference of English in India among the IE bilinguals:

- English is associated with formality and the mother tongue with informality and intimacy
- Certain topics such as science and technology, educational and professional matters tend to be discussed in English
- Geographical mobility influences language choice
- Bilinguals tend to use more English when they move out of their linguistic region
- There is a correlation between high status jobs and use of English
- The children of English-knowing parents tend to use more English than whose parents did not know English
- Reading habit is an important determinant of language choice.

All said and done, English as a language serves several important functions in India, some of these functions will be examined in some detail in the next section.

2.4 INTRODUCTION TO FUNCTIONS OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Although certain domains favour the use of English and certain others the use of the mother tongue, language choice is socially determined. What language (or variety) will be selected in a particular situation depends on where the speaker is, what the speaker's and the addressee's social, cultural and educational background is; whether the relationship between the addresser and the addressee is formal, informal or intimate; and above all, what social norms of appropriate linguistic behaviour the interlocutors share. Another important factor that determines language choice is the speaker's attitude towards the language that s/he knows. The functional aspect of English has long been under review and the functions allocated to the language have changed over a period of four hundred years. While no one can deny the importance of English in our national struggle for independence, since Independence the attitude towards the language has been ambiguous and often ambivalent. In fact, there exists in India a strange love-hate relation towards the language. While it has slowly gained importance globally as the language of international trade and commerce and more importantly as the language of knowledge, there has been an urge to learn the language and a certain air of inevitability about acquiring it. On the other hand, there is also a strong reaction from the intelligentsia about the downgrading of Indian languages and their slow disappearance against the inexorable onslaught of English. There is an emerging consensus that English in India is now no more a question of choice but a question of necessity. *This is primarily due to the following functional roles that English plays in India:*

- It acts as the link language between the different states, especially between the states in the north and those in the south. Thus, it has an important role to play in national unity
- Since the rapid influx of computers and information technology and the subsequent globalisation of English, it has become a language of information and knowledge
- For quite a long time English has played the role of the intellectual language in India and is still looked upon as one

There is a strong current of thinking that English has been sufficiently nativised to be claimed as one of the Indian languages. The cline of bilingualism that exists in the country can range from Butler English to Educated English. Thus, it is not true that the language is restricted to only a chosen few and has created a wide platform in the country.

English is not only the link language in India but also of communication globally and therefore has a major functional role to play. It has also long been the language of technical and technological advancement and thus is required to keep pace with the ever-changing nature of today's world. Due to a lack of political consensus, English has long played the role of communicator between different political spectra. It has also long been the preferred medium of instruction in higher education and research areas. Moreover, Indian writers in English have charted a rich course in terms of creative writing in a language that was primarily the legacy of the British but was soon indigenised enough to suit our needs. We can thus say that the functional aspects of English may be divided into various social, political, economic, technological, educational, and creative domains. In the next section we shall cast a brief glance over each domain and examine the functional role that it plays in that domain.

2.4.1 Social Functions

English plays a major role in inter-subjective communication in urban as well as semi-urban areas. We have seen that in the domain of the family, neighbourhood and

other social spheres, IE bilinguals use English quite extensively. Moreover, it is often the preferred language of communication in multicultural and multilingual gatherings. It forms a common bond between speakers of different languages. Such interaction is limited to a certain class of people belonging to a certain social position in a certain geographical area. A sort of *pidgin* English is gradually developing in the sub-culture of the cities and even semi-urban areas. This English primarily serves the purpose of communication between semi-literate or illiterate speakers and literate or English-educated bilinguals who may not possess the local language. We will look at such instances of **code mixing** in one of the later units.

Another aspect of the use of English for social purposes is the ready attention and respectability that it confers upon the speaker. English is considered to be the language of social importance in a number of circles especially in those social situations that demand a language that is essentially the language of the elite. Thus, the social function of English is essentially a class oriented one and is to be found within a limited sphere of activity.

2.4.2 Educational And Professional Functions

One of the major reasons for the spread of English in the Indian subcontinent has been the insistence on English education all over the country. The famous **Macaulayan Minute of 1835** that envisioned the creation of a class that could effectively act as a buffer between the ruling class and the subjects was based on the premise that this buffer class would be English-educated and therefore a touch removed from the non-Anglicised natives. It is for this purpose that various colleges, schools and universities were set up in India to boost the designs of imperialism in the country. However, India has come a long way from the **Macaulayan** era and has nativised a language that was primarily an imposition. Moreover, this nativisation has also been reflected in the educational institutions in most of the states that follows a three-language formula. Along with the learning of the regional language and Hindi, English too is learnt as one of the languages. Moreover, English has been introduced in most of the states at the primary level since the importance of English is felt not as a language to serve the interests of the ruling-class, but as a language that has global implications. In most of the Indian schools, English serves the function of second language.

There is still a wide chasm between the introduction of English at the primary level and the training accorded to teachers for ably handling the language. Thus, in rural and semi-urban areas the lack of a proper pedagogy as well as certain apathy towards the language has led to a severe dearth of English-users at the secondary or the tertiary level. While the theoretical function of English is to open a window to the world, the way it is taught in most of the schools has led to it being viewed as a language of complexity and difficulty. In order to address this problem, serious steps should be taken on the part of the government as well as individuals to improve the pedagogic practices of the curricula. After all, English is no more a luxury, but a necessity in today's globalised and privatised world.

The international language of reading today has become English. From computers to science, from space to household products, English is everywhere. This ubiquitous nature of English has to be grasped since information or knowledge is no more bound by space or time, but is increasing in quantum leaps. In order to process this amount of knowledge that is most of the time freely available (for example, on the internet), one needs to have access to the language. This is also a major function that English plays in India.

A large number of professions that are linked with the educational set up demand the use of English at the secondary and the tertiary levels. High prestige professions such as doctor, lawyer, university teacher, and certain others not considered to be high on the prestige scale such as postman, policeman, factory worker, farmer etc require English at all levels. It must be remembered that the knowledge of English in these

professions is useful and often more paying. Though sometimes the usefulness of English in certain professions is prerequisite in certain others such is not the case. But it is an inevitable fact that English is required for success in almost all spheres of Indian life keeping in view the recent trends of globalisation and communication explosion. Moreover due to the rapid increase in the fields of specialisation, English has become one of the most important professional and technically viable languages of the world.

2.5 FUNCTIONS AS A LINK LANGUAGE

One of the major 'language issue' in India has been the debate over inter-state communication. Two languages—English and Hindi—are generally discussed in this connection. Strong opinions are held for and against. Those who support Hindi say that Hindi should be the only language for establishing link between the various states of the Union of India and also between India and foreign nations. The argument is that since the European countries too have not adopted English (the French communicate in French, the Russians in Russian), Hindi should be made the link language. The problem with this argument is that while the European nations are monolingual countries where only one standard language is spoken, India is a multilingual country where various languages vie with each other. Thus, use of Hindi might seem to be a sort of imposition by users of other languages.

It is primarily due to this debate that English was accepted as the 'associate official language' in the Constitution of India. English plays an important role, especially in administrative and bureaucratic spheres, as the official language that establishes a bridge between various intra-state and inter-state departments. Moreover, since English has been sufficiently nativised we might as well claim it as our own language and make use of it in international communication. After all, we do not speak as the Americans or the Britishers do. We have our own indigenous variety of English and there is no reason why it should not be used in national as well as international fora. Thus, one of the major functions—one that serves a nationalistic as well as internationalist purpose—is the use of English as a link language.

2.6 CODE – MIXING IN THE FUNCTIONAL USE OF LANGUAGE

Our discussion of the functional aspect of language would not be complete without the widespread use of *Code Mixing* and *Code Switching* that is found in the use of English among the IE bilinguals in this country. *Code Switching* entails the ability to switch from code A to code B and is determined by the function, the situation and the participants. In other words, it refers to categorisation of one's verbal repertoire in terms of functions and roles. Code-mixing on the other hand, entails transferring linguistic units from one code into another. Such a transfer (mixing) results in developing a new restricted or not so restricted code of linguistic interaction. It may so happen that *Code Switching* may lead to code-mixed varieties. A multilingual or a multidialectal person is generally able to associate a function and an effect with various types of language or dialect mixes. The code-mixed varieties thus, provide socio-linguistic indicators of various types. For example:

Tum nahin janti, he is Chairman Mr. Mehta's best friend. Yahan do char din ko aye hain. Maine socha, I should not miss the opportunity. bhej do. Another fifteen minutes and I am off to the station. Lautne tak kaphi raat ho sakti hai. Khane ke liye wait mat karna.

[Taken from Lalla, Y K and Srikrishna, eds. 1975, *Hindi Lekhikaon ki Shreshth Kahaniyan* (Best Short Stories of Women in Hindi), Delhi]

In both the examples cited above, one code has been mixed with another—in this case, Hindi with English—indicative of a certain social class and a certain level of education. This is what can be termed the *westernisation* of India.

Both these devices are extensively used as communicative strategies with various motivations. In discourse, **Code Switching** may be used as a device to mark, among other things, an identity, an aside, or a specific role. **Code Switching** may be used to reveal or conceal a region, class and religion. In conversation it is used to make an aside, or to indicate non-membership of a person in the inner group. Often both devices are used with a clear effect in mind: for example, in Bengali, a professional discussion may be marked by **Code Mixing** with English, and a switch from that may indicate change of context. One might mention four functions, among others, in which **Code Mixing** is used as a communicative strategy.

The first function being its use for register identification before we further our discussion. For example, it is quite common in administrative discussions to have English words interspersed with the regional language since it definitely locates the discussion within a specific context. Second, **Code Mixing** provides formal clues for style identification. This is a major feature of mixing in India since it is quite common to have *Sanskritised*, *Persianised* or *Englishised* versions depending on the context. Third, it is used as a device for elucidation and interpretation. For example, instead of the more Sanskritised *apekshit ghanatva*, it is quite common in Science classrooms to mix it with *relative density*. The fourth function, is the role of **Code Mixing** for *neutralisation* with a view to using lexical items which are attitudinally and contextually neutral. In other words, they do not provide contextual clues and thus language is used to conceal various types of identities. Since, many words in English carry a neutral connotation, they are preferred to Indian words that may indicate regional, caste or religious identities.

Code Mixing with English is pan-South Asian. In attitudinal and functional terms it ranks highest and cuts across language boundaries, religious boundaries and caste boundaries. It is a marker of modernisation, socio-economic position, and membership of an elite group. In stylistic terms, it marks a deliberate style. The widest register range is **Code Mixing** with English. It continues to be used in those contexts where one would like to demonstrate authority, power, and identity with the establishment. The phenomenon of **Code Mixing** and, in a lesser way, **Code Switching** is slowly gaining the upper hand in terms of acceptance in social and cultural circles. This indicates the pliable nature of Indian culture that admits all counter-currents and is able to nativise it by giving it a new form. It is perhaps this language of code-mixing that would remain as the language of the future where all languages co-exist with English and English is accepted as one of the many languages in the subcontinent not accorded a special status or prestige.

2.7 LET US SUM UP

As regards the functions of English in the Indian subcontinent, a few generalisations can be made on the basis of what we have discussed till now:

A broad allocation of societal functions to English and other languages constituting the 'IE bilinguals' verbal repertoires exist;
The IE bilingual is aware of this functional allocation and is able to report it;
English is used with formal situations and higher domains of social control, and the mother tongue with informal situations and lower domains;
The IE bilinguals have a positive attitude towards English and an awareness of its uses;
The IE bilingual is often involved in Code Switching and Code Mixing as a strategy of exclusion and power in situations of social control.

Moreover, in addition to the degree of formality-informality, certain other variables, namely, topic, linguistic region, internal mobility, professional status, educational background, reading habit, and the background of the family *vis-à-vis* English condition the IE bilingual's language choice. The choice of English is also related to high status jobs: the higher the status of an educated bilingual the greater the amount of English she/he uses. More highly educated tend to use more English. The use of English tends to be frequent in case of those IE bilinguals who were educated through the medium of English. Reading habits and language choice are also co-related. Certain topics such as scientific, technical, educational and professional matters tend to be discussed more in English than in any other language. All this indicates that the uses and functions of English in India are determined by a large number of 'extra-linguistic' factors.

Finally, English is often used as a means of social control and as a matter of prestige. However, the elements of code-switching and code-mixing that has found a wide acceptability in the metropolitan centres also has helped to nativise the language in India. Nowadays, it is widely used over radio stations, Television ads, serials and films representing a certain kind of social class. Thus, we can safely say that it is perhaps this code-mixed language that would gain ascendancy in the IE bilingual's language repertoire and, who knows, would probably become a language in its own right!

2.8 QUESTIONS

1. What role does "prestige" play in the choice of English as a means of communication?
2. Comment on the nature of relationship between English and an Indian language.

UNIT 3 NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH

DISCOURSE: SYNTAX, MORPHOLOGY, PHONOLOGY

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Indianness of Indian English
 - 3.2.1 Transfer of Context
 - 3.2.2 Transfer of L1 Items to L2 Items
 - 3.2.3 Transfer of Form- Context Component
 - 3.2.4 Formal Equivalence of IE and BE Items
 - 3.2.5 Indian English Collocations
 - 3.2.6 Hybrid Formations
 - 3.2.7 Context- Bound Indianism
- 3.3 Syntax And Grammar
 - 3.3.1 Syntactic And Grammatical Variations
- 3.4 Morphological Innovations in Indian English
 - 3.4.1 Innovations In Single Items
 - 3.4.2 Hybridised Items
 - 3.4.3 Classification of Hybrid Items According to the Units and Elements which Operate in their Structure
 - 3.4.4 Indian English Collocations
 - 3.4.5 Style Features
- 3.5 Phonetics and Phonology: Indian English
 - 3.5.1 Segmental Phonemes
- 3.6 Non- Segmental Phonemes
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Questions
- 3.9 Glossary

3.0 OBJECTIVES

What constitutes Indian English? Is it a mere conglomeration of certain grammatical, semantic, lexical and morphological features that govern its use, or a channel that opens out to a wider world—a world that entices the learner and the user with promises of greater prestige and power? English in India is used as a medium of communication by more than eighty million people, an estimate which far surpasses the speakers of English even in Great Britain. That too in a country where there are nineteen other official state languages along with numerous dialects crossing the thousand mark. Could we talk about a distinctive idea called 'Indian' in English spoken in this country? What is this 'Indianness', in other words can we trace certain linguistic features that could set apart the language spoken in this subcontinent from that spoken in say, Australia or Canada or the Caribbean?

In the course of this unit, we would look at the distinct patterns of 'Indian English' that probably distinguishes it from other varieties of English. The chapter would deal with not only the linguistic features that characterise Indian English as a distinct variety of English, but would also throw light on the discursive features of this variety. But before we embark on that journey, it would be best to remember three features of Indian English that puts the entire study of Indian English in perspective. First, Indian English (IE) is primarily learnt as a second language (L2) in India after one has acquired the mother tongue (L1) resulting in interference with or transfer from L1. Secondly, Indian English is primarily used in a different socio-linguistic context, that is, the use to which English is put in India demands an understanding of the social and the cultural factors that govern such use. Thirdly, one cannot really talk

about monolithic 'Indian English' since the practice of English in India entails a number of variations depending on region, ethnicity and proficiency. Therefore, we may have 'Bengali English or Benglish', 'Gujarati English or Gujlish', 'Hindi English or Hinlish', etc.

The regional variations of English may be dependent on the primary language of the region that determines the pronunciation or intonation of the English spoken. Therefore we can have Tamil English, Marathi English, Punjabi English etc. The ethnic variation cuts across regional or dialect boundaries and is the characteristic of a particular group, e.g., Anglo-Indian English. Variation according to proficiency is a topic that would be dealt with in details later. It is for this purpose that this unit would deal with general features of Indian English rather than with specific variations within the English spoken in the country.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

English in India has such variations that it represents a multicoloured spectrum rather than a single whole. How then can we trace the features of a language that has no commonalities either across regions, ethnicities or proficiency? To compound the problem, Indians learn English rather than acquire it. This is an important distinction since learning indicates a certain kind of formalisation, while acquisition would point to a natural appropriation of a language. Most of us learn English as a second language (L2) after acquiring our mother tongues. Moreover, Indian English speakers constitute only 3.5% of the population and even within this marginal population there may be differences that are too difficult to bridge. One could perhaps talk about Indian Englishes rather than one Indian English. Yet isn't it also true that an educated Indian bilingual (IE) would intuitively recognise another Indian English speaker as a standard speaker or not. How does that happen? What are the features that are intrinsic in educated Indian English that provides the 'Indianness' to the language that we speak? In order to answer this question, one has to define what one means by an 'educated Indian English speaker?'

A Standard (or educated) IE bilingual may be defined as one who is intelligible not only to other Indians in different parts of the subcontinent, but ideally speaking, to the educated native speakers of English, too.

In other words an IE bilingual uses English as a *lingua franca* intelligibly and coherently. But before we proceed, any further a brief look at the history of English bilingualism in India may be enlightening. Since it has already been dealt with in detail in the first two blocks, here I would restrict myself to the basics of this historical development.

There are four distinct phases of English bilingualism in India: the missionary phase of proselytisation when English was used as a tool of conversion and translation to gain understanding of the basic Indian religious, cultural, legal and literary texts and then retranslating them to suit the needs of the proselytisers; the Bengal phase when the 'demand' for English by prominent Indians such as **Raja Ram Mohan Roy** and **Rajunath Hari Navalkar** led to the infamous *Seal of Approval* by **Lord Bentinck** on **Macaulay's Minute** on 7th March, 1835, that finally led to the institutionalisation of English education in India; the establishment of Universities and schools for English education which then led to the development of English-educated Indians who became instrumental in subverting the aims and aspirations of the British Empire; and finally, the literary phase that led to the refashioning of English in the hands of novelists and poets to give the language a typically 'Indian' idiom. This last phase was the phase of appropriation and indigenising the language that led finally to the acceptance of 'Indian English' as a distinct variety as vibrant and fertile as American and the Irish varieties of English. This unit would chiefly deal with the third and the final phase of the development of English bilingualism in India with

special reference to its syntactic, morphological and phonological characteristics. However, it would be helpful to start with general features that distinguish Indian English from other standard varieties of English. The next section shall examine the Indianness of Indian English. How Indian is the English that is spoken in India?

3.2 INDIANNESS OF INDIAN ENGLISH

One of the major concerns of linguists has been to locate the general features that create a clear demarcation between the Indian variety of English and other varieties. While many variations in Indian English are context-dependent, that is, would depend on the actual use of the language within a specific spatio-temporal coordinate, there are certain factors that may be safely labelled 'typical Indian English'. These variations or deviations however should not be understood as errors or mistakes by the Indian English bilingual but as a representative of the distinct voice that s/he possesses. The deviations in this unit are marked against Standard British English though it would not necessarily mean the Received Pronunciation.

3.2.1 Transfer Of Context

One of the most common deviations in Indian English is the transfer of cultural patterns, which are absent or different from those cultures where English is used as the first language (L1). Commonest examples are use of terms related to caste system, social attitudes, taboos, superstitions, notions of superiority, inferiority, etc.

3.2.2 Transfer Of L1 Items to L2 Items

This transfer of mother tongue meanings to items of Standard English may be lexical in nature or may involve even higher units of description like sentence, clause, phrase, etc. For example, the word *flower-bed* is often used in Indian English to indicate *nuptial bed* (phoolon ki sej) though in Standard English almost always invariably means a garden plot. The transfer at higher levels may involve sentence, collocation or compounds not usually found in the Standard variety. For example, the compound 'salt-giver' in British English (BE) would indicate a man who gives salt, while in Indian English would mean 'a person who provides subsistence'. Thus, cultural semantic values are transposed onto the BE.

3.2.3 Transfer Of Form-Context Component

This transfer involves transfer of those formal units from mother-tongue languages that are context-bound and cannot be otherwise used in B E. This involves a double transfer. First, the formal unit is translated into Indian English literally and then transposed onto the regular syntax of conventional English. Good examples of this category are speech-functions such as 'abuses', 'curses', 'greetings', 'blessings', 'flattery', etc. Expressions like 'May thy womb be dead', 'bow my forehead', 'let the sindur-mark ever trace the parting of your hair', 'cherisher of the poor', etc are a direct translation of the mother-tongue expressions. It is however important to note that the difference between the first variation and this one is that while the former involves an extension of the register range in IE and adds a new contextual unit to the language, in the latter it is not necessarily so.

3.2.4 Formal Equivalence of IE and BE Items

Formal equivalence may involve two processes:

- a) Translation: This involves transfer of L1 items by maintaining a structural equivalence in IE, for example, the word *dvija* (dva + ija) into twice-born, 'go-puja' into cow-worship etc. They may again be rank-bound or rank-shifted, for example 'car-festival', 'caste-mark', 'cousin-sister' etc. are all rank-bound translations,

while 'dung-wash', 'dining-leaf', 'sacred-paste', 'sitting-planks' etc. are examples of rank-shifted translations. In the latter type of translations no structural equivalence is maintained.

b) Shift:

In this, no attempt is made to maintain formal equivalence and is generally an adaptation of an underlying Indian item into IE. For example, 'may the fire of ovens consume you', 'a crocodile in a loin-cloth', etc. See that the two forms 'fire of ovens' and 'consume' are seldom linked in BE, or in the latter example the forms 'crocodile' and 'loin-cloth' are never put together in BE. Generally in this kind of shifts, the underlying Indian source item is a fixed collocation of an Indian language.

3.2.5 Indian English Collocations

This is the largest supplier of Indian English words to the vocabulary of English language. There can be various forms of collocations and details of those would be taken up while we deal with morphological characteristics of IE. However, an interesting process that greatly aids the formation of these collocations is the process of deletion. For example, it is quite common in Indian English to reduce standard phrases in B E like 'a bunch of keys', 'an address of welcome', 'love of god' etc to 'key-bunch', 'welcome address', or 'God-love'. The most commonly found examples are perhaps the collocations 'America-returned' or 'Britain-returned'.

3.2.6 Hybrid Formations

These are commonly found items that have two or more elements where at least one element is from English and one from an Indian language. For example, 'attar-bottle', 'police-raj', 'Congress-pandal', etc.

3.2.7 Context-Bound Indianisms

These can be of two types: formations that involve a semantic shift in Indian English; and formations that are typically Indian. This will be discussed later.

3.3 SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR

Indian English demonstrates a number of features that shows that the language of the colonial rulers has been appropriated and nativised over a period of two hundred years since its formal introduction. Nowhere is this seen more than at the level of syntax and grammar. Indian English has a number of features that are intrinsically its own and sharply define its identity as compared to other varieties of English. There are many factors involved in these grammatical and syntactic shifts, the primary one being the influence of indigenous languages on the grafted language. Moreover, to understand the Nativisation of English in India it is necessary to realise that English is spoken with different purposes, in different contexts, and with varying proficiency levels that **Kachru** calls the 'cline of bilingualism'. In India, the proficiency level of the speaker may vary from person to person even at the level of educated Indian English speakers. Thus accordingly, we may have a wide range of speakers varying from the educated variety to *Babu English*, *Butler English*, *Bearer English*, *Kitchen English*, *Legal English* etc. These Englishes can actually be graded according to their usage and can form a 'cline' from an extremely proficient speaker of English to a relatively poor speaker of English. However, there may be common factors found

even in the educated variety that may not accord with the standard usage. In the following sections we shall see how certain changes have been institutionalised in the use of English in India at the syntactic and the grammatical level.

3.3.1 Syntactic and Grammatical Variations

We list below some of the most common syntactic and grammatical variations in Indian English:

- a) In constructions such as verb + particle (or in phrasal verbs, e.g. 'dispose of'), the particle is added to such verbs as normally do not take the particle (For example, 'rear off' or 'eat off'). It is quite common for an Indian to say, "He died off". In Gujarat, for instance, death is referred to as "being off". One of the reasons for this is the strong influence of the use of ancillary verbs in Hindi or even the Dravidian languages. For example, *Woh mar gaya/gaye*.
- b) As regards the word-order (SOV or SVO), most educated Indian speakers may instinctively identify an 'unacceptable' word-order. However, there may be deviations in terms of positions of adverbs and adverbials. For example:

"The heavy lab work that I have now here is forcing me to stay back."
 (Instead of the more standard 'here now')
 "I will be definitely joining." (Instead of 'definitely be')
 "Cosmic ray methods also should be tried" (instead of 'should also be')
- c) There is a tendency in Indian English to use postpositive adjectives attributively. For example: "The concerned authority should take appropriate action" or "The concerned person should immediately collect the check from the bank", instead of 'authority concerned' or 'person concerned' which is more acceptable in standard British or American English.
- d) There is a strong tendency in Indian English to use the present perfect tense for the simple past. For example: "Funds have been received last year" instead of "Funds were received last year". However, this tendency is also becoming a part of British English today: "He's played for us last year".
- e) There is also a tendency to use the present progressive for the perfective aspect of the present progressive. For example: "I am running a school for the past four years" instead of "I have been running...."
- f) As for the use of prepositions, IE has a tendency to
 - i) add, for example in 'mention about', 'discuss about' which is not a part of the standard British variety
 - ii) modify, for example in "This nutrition is helpful for animals" instead of "helpful to" or "These books can be classified as literature" instead of 'classified under'.
- g) There is also a tendency to use adverbials or nominals, which a BE speaker might find redundant. For example,
 - i) "The letter was (duly) signed by the Director.
 - ii) "The allopathic (line of) treatment.
 - iii) You may receive the journal from next year (onwards).
 This tendency is however more to be seen in officialese than in common conversation.
- h) There is a tendency to use the more formal if + were subjunctive, than the indicative if + was construction. This is true at least at the school level where

students are asked to write essays on 'If I were the Prime Minister of India' etc.

- i) In terms of negatives, Indian English prefers to use explicit negations, while British English, when choices are available, prefers implicit negations followed by raising. Explicit and morphological negations are used in Standard British English only when the preferred alternatives are not available. For example, an Indian English speaker is more likely to say, "I think Satish is not likely to come" (Explicit Negation) than "I think Satish would probably stay away" (Implicit Negation) or "I don't think Satish is likely to come" (Raising).
- j) One of the most interesting deviations in the use of Indian English and an intrinsic characteristic of its nativisation is its use of 'yes' or 'no'. The choice of 'yes' or 'no' in an answer depends on

- a) the form of the question;
b) the facts of the situation.

If both of them have the same polarity, that is, both are positive or both negative, the answer is 'yes'. For example,

Q: "Didn't I see you yesterday in College?"

A: "Yes, you didn't see me yesterday in College."

In this exchange the form of the question is negative (Didn't I see you...?). Since the answer also is negative, that is, the responder was not in the college, the answer takes the 'yes' form.

On the other hand, if the polarity is not the same, the answer is negative.

- k) Indian English might tend to use an excess of polite forms primarily because the kind of English introduced in India was meant for administration and law, both of which use polite registers. Later, they became a part of conversational Indian English. For example, "I would be greatly obliged by your munificence."
- l) There may be a use of excessive conversation-openers, for example, "well", "you see", "I think", "I hope" etc.

English as we know was the language of the imperialists that was imposed on us and has now come to stay. No doubt the English that is spoken in India has its own unique characteristics and its own history of evolvement. Let us now examine the morphological innovations that have been made in Indian English.

3.4 MORPHOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN INDIAN ENGLISH

When **Sir Thomas Roe** presented his credentials as **Ambassador of James I** at the Court of **Jehangir** in Delhi in 1615, the **East India Company**, which had already been in India for some fifteen years, had established factories at Surat and other places, and had brought the English language to the shores of India. In the beginning, i.e. in the early years of the seventeenth century, communication between the **East India Company** and the Indian people with whom they had to deal must have been entirely through the help of middlemen. There was, however, in the seaport towns of India, a kind of *lingua franca* that had grown up with the establishments of the

Portuguese who had been in India nearly a hundred years before the **East India Company** came to stay. Not only the natives speaking to Portuguese, but also Europeans of different nationalities speaking to one another used this pidgin Portuguese. Thus, in the first phase of the contact between Indians and the English merchants and sailors, many Portuguese words in their Indianised form or Indian application, and many Indian words in Portuguese orthography and pronunciation, were adopted in English. Many words of Portuguese origin, and also several Arabic words in their Portuguese form, were adopted by Indians into their own languages and then incorporated in the vocabulary of 'Indian' English. Gradually, as the **East India Company** became more and more influential, and the importance of English grew with the gaining of the political power by the British, the vocabulary of Indian English also grew.

By the time **Warren Hastings** became **Governor General of Bengal** (1773) the number of Indians who had acquired the knowledge of English had increased rapidly, and English was the language of administration and law. The **East India Company** did not come up with an educational policy till 1813, and Persian was still 'the language of diplomacy and high society'; but schools for the teaching of English had already sprung up, and Western missionaries who arrived on the scene helped to meet the growing demand of English. With the establishment of the first Universities in 1857 English for all practical purposes became an Indian language.

Indian English has certain special features. Its vocabulary contains a number of words not found in British English: *words of Portuguese origin* such as *almirah*, *ayah*, *caste*, *cobra*, *mosquito*, *peon*; *Indian words via the Portuguese*, such as *betel*, *bamboo*, *coir*, *copra*, *mango*, *curry*; *Indian words representing names of things*, such as *chit*, *chintz*, *tussore*, *jodhpurs*; *administrative and functional terms*, many of them of Arabic or Persian origin, continuing from the Moghul period, such as, *mamlatdar*, *zamindar*, *mufassil* (*mofussil*), *chowkidar*, *sepoy*, *bandobast*, *davakhana*; a large number of *miscellaneous words of Asian*—(not necessarily Indian)—*origin*, such as *pyjama*, *polo*, *compound*, *bandicoot*, *bakshish*, *cushy*; and some *words of uncertain origin and hybrids* like *posh*, *blighty*, *mulligatawny*, *kedgeree*, *gymkhana*. However, along with these loan words that had highly interactive origins, Indian English also created a number of words that are not to be found in Standard British versions. This unit describes some of the processes involved in this creative process and the ingenuity with which the English language was nativised by Indian speakers in a course of four hundred years.

3.4.1 Innovations in Single Items

This process consists of a large number of word-formations that involves the transfer of a L1 item into Indian English. They are primarily loanwords that have been standardised and are now accepted in the main lexicon of British English (BE) or American English (Am.E). However, a distinction can be made as regards their use, i.e. the frequency with which they are employed in these languages. On the basis of language-use, therefore, we could divide these into two major sections:

- a) **Assimilated items:** This group would include items that have been accepted largely in the Standard British or American English and are used quite regularly and frequently. Moreover, these items are not context-specific, that is, they do not require an Indian context for their use any more. Thus words like *advaita*, *almirah*, *aranyaka*, *bawarchi*, *pardah*, *chintz*, *muslin*, *jungle*, *raga* etc are assimilated in the lexicon of BE or Am.E.
- b) **Restricted Items:** This group consists of words that have a restricted use, that is they are context-specific and can be understood only in terms of India or the subcontinent. Moreover, they are bound by the region and have a high frequency in Indian English though they may not have semantic value in BE or Am.E. For example, *pradhan*, *panchayat*, *gaon sabha*, *vidwan*, *alapana*, *khayal*, *thumri*, *masti*, etc.

3.4.2 Hybridised Items

This group shows the maximum nativisation of English in India. The introduction of English in India was a political decision though largely supported by a section of the Indian intelligentsia. However, the language of the rulers was nativised to such an extent that these words became a part of the ruler's lexicon. One of the methods that was widely used to make English indigenous was the process of hybridisation. A hybridised item is a lexical item that has two or more elements, at least one from English and one from an Indian language. Since the contact of the British was largely with the Hindi-speaking belt of India and since leaders from this belt played a major role in the National Movement many of the words would have Hindi or Urdu items as one of their components. This large group can be divided into three major sub-sections:

- a) Hybrid Collocations: These items are restricted to one register both formally and contextually, in other words these items are not to be found in BE or AmE without a conditioning reference of India. For example, *Khilafat Committee*, *Sarvodaya Leader*, *Satyagraha Movement*, *Swadeshi cloth*, etc.
- b) Hybrid Ordered Series of Words (OSW): Ordered Series of Words are such items that are not restricted to one register and all members of OSW have one element in common. In other words, these hybrids can be found in different contexts and are not restricted to one specific use. For example, the head *angrezi* can take various modifiers like *-chair*, *-furniture*, *-proverb*, *-race*, *-sweet*, *-teapot*, *-woman*, etc.
- c) Hybridised reduplication: This is a rare instance when two or more components with an 'identical' lexical meaning in the languages are put side by side. Such examples are to be found in Anglo-Indian literature as well as novels set in the subcontinent by British writers. For example, *lathi-stick*, *cotton-kapas*, *curved-kukri*, etc.

3.4.3 Classification of Hybrid Items According to the Units and Elements Which Operate in Their Structure

The Hybrids in Indian English can also be classified in terms of the units and elements that operate within the hybrid term. Since a hybrid is a composite term comprising one English and one native item, there may be different ways in which they may combine and permute. In the following classification, the term that is the subject of the hybrid is called a head and the term that modifies this head is called the modifier. Thus, for example, in the hybrid *Sarvodaya leader*, the item *sarvodaya* would be considered as the modifier while the item *leader*, the head. Let us discuss a few.

- a) Native item as head and English as modifier: This set would include those heads that do not have an equivalent in the BE and therefore have to be retained in the hybrids. They are also often put to literary use to produce a distinct local colour. These items are also quite commonly seen in Indian journalism and other media. Examples of such hybrids are, *Christian sadhu*, *cotton-pyjama*, *tamarind-chutney*, *British sarkar*, *imperial raj*, *burning-ghat*, etc.
- b) English as Head and native item as modifier: These are a restricted group of hybrids that convey cultural and social meanings that are not to be found in BE or Am.E. However some of these items are being slowly recognised as acceptable in the main body of Standard BE or Am.E. Examples of such items are, *anjali salutation*, *bazaar musician*, *haldi invitation*, *beedi-smoking*, *ghee-fried*, *lathi-charge*, *janta express*, *shagan ceremony*, etc.

- c) **String Formations:** This set consists of two or more elements one of which may be a compound modifying a head either from IE or BE. For example, *state-wide hartal*, *homespun khaddar*, *high-class log*, etc. In these examples the first item is a compound in BE which then acts as the modifier for the Indian item that follows.
- d) **Hybrids and Derivational Suffixes:** One of the most common processes through which a large number of Indian English words come into existence is the combination of Indian or English words to suffixes that may either be Indian or British. A derivational suffix is a particle that transforms a verb into a noun or a noun into another noun or a noun into a verb. There is however a morphological pattern in these combinations. We may look at a few here.
- i) **Non-English Head + English derivational suffix:** There are a number of words in Indian English that combines a native term with an English suffix to give rise to another word. For example, *babudom* (*babu* + *-dom*), *sadhuhood* (*sadhu* + *-hood*), *goondaism* (*goonda* + *-ism*), *upanishadic* (*Upanishad* + *-ic*), *diwanship* (*diwan* + *-ship*); etc.
 - ii) **English head + non-English derivational suffix:** Often Indian English hybrids are formed by combining an English head with a non-English derivational suffix. Examples of such hybrids are *factorywallah*, *policewallah*, etc.
 - iii) **Non-English head + English negative prefix:** Examples of this can be numerous. In fact, the list can be never-ending. Example, *non-Brahmin*, *non-Adivasi*, *non-babu*, *non-diwan*, etc.

3.4.4 Indian English Collocations

There seems to be an underlying pattern in the formation of IE collocations. The collocations in IE can be formally deviant, that is, they may have no British or American equivalent and are therefore meaningful only in an Indian context. We have already seen some examples of lexical deviations in the formation of IE collocations such as 'salt-giver', 'three-eyed', etc. In these lexically-deviant collocations the unusual one lies in the two terms of the collocation coming together in Indian English whereas in British or American English such collocations would not be formally possible. Terms of abuses like 'sister-sleeper', 'dining-leaf', etc are examples of this type of collocation.

Another form of IE collocation may not be formally deviant but can be contextually deviant. Such collocations may also be found in British or American English, but the semantic context in which it is used in IE may be absent in those languages. An example of this is the collocation flower-bed which in British or American English would indicate a garden plot. However the term is extensively used in Indian English literature to indicate a nuptial bed of flowers. The latter context is completely absent from B E or Am. E.

Another kind of collocation that is quite common in IE is what **Kachru** calls 'phrase-mongering'. There is a marked tendency in Indian English towards phrasal collocations with a view to emphasising concepts. These collocations are often sighted in journalistic prose and demagogic speech patterns. Collocations like 'Himalayan blunder', 'nation-building', 'change of heart', 'dumb millions', etc fall into this category.

3.4.5 Style Features

- a) **Latinity:** Indian English tends towards a more formal structure of English usage. Thus, words that would be used in an extremely formal context in BE and Am.E would be used in a highly non-formal situation in IE. This primarily stems from the fact that English in India was primarily taught as a classroom language and not as a communicative language for practical use.

Thus the stylised form of language that text's contain tend to impose their structures even in informal or intimate situations. For example, it is quite common to substitute 'demise' for 'death' or 'pain in one's bosom' for 'pain in one's chest,' etc.

- b) Initialisms: There is also a marked tendency in IE, especially in its administrative and bureaucratic version, towards using initials. Thus, English used in the administration, law, politics etc. is sometimes a cryptic code that has to be deciphered. The most common is PM for Prime Minister, CM for Chief Minister, SP for Superintendent of Police etc. This may also extend to names of places like CP for Connaught Place, SN for Sarojini Nagar in Delhi, etc. The reason for this is quite simple. The language of the imperial administration was replete with such initials. However, with the passing of the Raj, the language in Britain lost its use for such initials and they were thus gradually discontinued with. However, the legacy of the British remained in the legal and the bureaucratic systems of India and the initialisms became a part of IE.
- c) Cliches: Use of phrases that have either disappeared or have become archaic in their usage in BE and Am.E, are still a part of IE and are often used in both formal and informal contexts. Thus phrases like better imagined than described, each and every, leave severely alone etc are quite commonly found in IE. The recent addition to this characteristic of Indian English is the kind of clichés used by **Navjot Singh Sidhu**, an ex-Indian cricketer and a commentator. For example, "The ball pierced the field like hot knife through clear butter."

The next section shall examine the phonetics and the phonological nature of Indian English.

3.5 PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY: INDIAN ENGLISH

A great amount of research has been conducted on the phonetic and phonological nature of Indian English in the last fifty years. There may be two reasons for this: first, due to the influence of structural linguists since the thirties, a great emphasis has been laid on the phonetic and phonological structure of the language and a great amount of research conducted in these fields; secondly, pedagogically, these studies were always considered to be primary and, therefore, a lot of pedagogic attention was devoted to the studies of these features.

While dealing with the nativisation of English in India at the phonetic or the phonological level, we would have to keep in mind the following factors:

- a) The phonetic deviation in IE is primarily based on the L1 spoken in the region. Thus, there is no uniformity in the phonetic deviations in Indian English. We may have a variety of phonetically deviant English depending on the regional context in which the language is spoken. We may have different sets of variations giving rise to phonetically deviant Benglish, Gujlish or Hinlish.
- b) The phonetic and phonological deviations in IE are essentially determined by the phonetic and phonological structures of the L1. These deviations are of two types, a) those of segmental phonemes, and b) those of non-segmental phonemes.

3.5.1 Segmental Phonemes

The segmental phonemes may be described in terms of their structural or in terms of their systemic differences. A structural difference involves the absence of one of the

structures of L1 in English. A systemic difference occurs when the structures of L1 and English may be identical yet may have differences in the elements of the structure. For example, in both Hindi and English CVC (Consonant Vowel Consonant) morphemic structure is possible. Thus in this restricted sense both these languages may be considered identical at the phonetic level. But, for instance, while /f, q, d/ do not occur in Hindi as members of any system, it results in transfer or substitution of English elements by L1 elements. In phonetic terms this transfer is of two types. First, it may involve a substitution of one or more phonetic elements in a full series of sounds, e.g., the fricative series, which is not absent in Hindi but which shows 'gaps' when compared with the same series in English. Thus instead of the above series an Indian English speaker would tend to pronounce these sounds as /ph, th, dh/. Secondly, there may be a complete transfer of a series, e.g., the whole alveolar series is replaced by a retroflex series in Hindi.

3.6 NON-SEGMENTAL PHONEMES

Though research on the deviations in Indian English and the extent to which IE has been nativised in terms of its non-segmental phonemic features is relatively poor, it has been observed that the main phonological features of IE that separates it from British or American varieties of English are dependent on stress, rhythm, intonation and related factors. All major Indian languages are syllable-timed languages as opposed to English that is a stress-timed language. For example, while scanning a poem in English the syllables contained in a line are secondary to the stress patterns that are there in a line. The rhythm in the poem is created through the distribution of stress and not through the distribution of syllable, leading to iambic or trochaic metres. However, a poem in Hindi for instance would create its rhythm through the distribution of its syllable and is not stress-governed.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Let us briefly go through the terrain that we have covered till now. As we have seen in the previous sections, the linguistic characteristics of Indian English are transparent in the IE sound system (phonology), sentence construction (syntax), vocabulary (lexis), and meaning (semantics). The reasons for these transparent Indian features are not difficult to find. In India, Indian English is generally used as a second language, which is acquired only when one has already learnt a first language, or what is usually called the mother tongue. This then results in interference or transfer from one's mother tongue in the second language. We see the same principle at work, for example, in the non-native varieties of Hindi. When we identify a person as a speaker of South Indian Hindi or Punjabi Hindi or Bengali Hindi, we are actually referring to such transferred characteristics. The problem of interference in Indian languages is however more complex, since the interference is caused by a large number of mother tongues.

The other reason for the existence of Indian features is that in India the English language is used in a different socio-cultural context than that of, say, United States or Australia or Canada. The distinct socio-cultural parameters with which English has been used in this country for the last four hundred years, therefore, has given rise to a distinct variety called Indian English and these large number of innovations are known as Indianisms.

The English prevalent in India however is not of a monolithic variety but has innumerable shades and gradations. For this purpose, Indian English has to be studied in the context of a cline of bilingualism that may contain a wide range of Englishes within its ambit. We may have a cline of Englishes ranging from educated Indian

English to varieties such as Babu English, Butler English, Bearer English and Kitchen English.

Finally, a word about the term 'deviation' that I have used in some of the earlier. It must be remembered that a deviation in no way consists a mistake. The term deviation serves a useful purpose when it refers to the linguistic and cultural nativisation of a variety of English. Nativisation is the result of the new 'unEnglish' linguistic and cultural setting in which English is used as a tool for communication. However, such deviations are not to be considered mistakes. Deviations are as much a part of one's own cultural identity as Americanisms or Australianisms or Canadianisms are part of a national identity.

3.8 GLOSSARY

Bilingual:	Individuals or communities speaking two languages.
Collocation:	Two or more words, considered as individual lexical items, used in habitual association with one another in a given language.
Context-bound:	Linguistic features that have meaning only in relation to the features of the external world, that is, a certain context.
Deletion:	The process or result of leaving out a part of a construction.
Derivational Suffixes:	A suffix which is used to form a derivation. For example, -ness in happiness or -ly in quickly.
Dialect boundaries:	A number of differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary in adjacent regions.
Elision:	The omission of speech sounds between syllables or words in connected speech, usually for ease of pronunciation.
Formal equivalence:	Equivalence between those features of language that can be used in linguistic analysis as a basis for setting up certain categories and units such as word shapes, sound patterns and word order.
Hybrid:	A compound word made up of components which originate from different languages.
Interference:	The errors made by carrying over the speech habits of the native language or dialect into a second language or dialect. The features of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary may cause interference when a person is learning to master the patterns of a second language.
lingua franca:	A language adopted by speakers of different speech communities as their common medium of communication.

Non-segmental phonemes:	Features of the spoken language such as pitch, stress, intonation etc.
Pidgin:	A mixture of elements from different natural languages in regions of intensive language contact, usually restricted to certain groups.
Postpositive adjectives:	An adjective that is placed after the noun that it governs.
Proficiency:	The ability to produce a language correctly and coherently
Rank-bound:	A translation is said to be rank-bound if there is a consistent 1:1 relationship between the source language and the target language texts at the word, group, clause or sentence level.
Rank-shift:	The process or result of a grammatical unit being moved down the hierarchical scale of rank from sentence and clause to phrase, word and morpheme.
Received Pronunciation:	Pronunciation of standard British English based on the speech of educated speakers of Southern British English.
Register:	A variety in a language used for a specific purpose as opposed to a social or regional dialect.
Segmental Phonemes:	The analysis of the continuum of speech into significant distinctive features of sound thus allowing it to be written with the help of a phonetic alphabet.
Semantic shift:	A change in the semantic value, i.e., meaning of a linguistic element.
Sense-stress:	Stress within a sentence on certain words to emphasize their semantic importance.
Speech-functions:	Linguistic terms in a language accorded certain functions in its social and cultural milieu.
Stress-shift:	Transfer of stress from one vowel to another within a string of words having the same root.
Structural equivalence:	Equivalence at the semantic, syntactic or phonological terms.
Transfer:	The process or result of carrying over grammatical forms from one language into another. In language teaching, for example, the patterns of the mother tongue may interfere in the acquisition of the foreign language.
Variations:	A linguistic form that does not follow the standard usage patterns.
Word-order:	The placing of words in a sequence according to the conventions of a given language.

3.9 QUESTIONS

1. What does nativisation of English mean in the Indian context? Explain
2. How does bilingualism influence the use of English in India? Illustrate with examples.

UNIT 4 INTELLIGIBILITY OF INDIAN ENGLISH GLOBALLY

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Variety Of Indian English
- 4.3 Barriers in the Way of Understanding Indian English
- 4.4 Intelligibility of Indian English
- 4.5 Attitudes Towards Non- Native Varieties Of English
- 4.6 Indian Literature in English-Intelligibility and Acceptability
- 4.7 Towards a Dictionary of Indian English
- 4.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.9 Questions

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The use of English in India for more than 200 years has changed the complexion of the language, through hybridisation, nativisation etc. The native speakers of the language may well disbelieve that the languages s/he speaks and the language spoken in large parts of the Indian sub continent are the same. What is Indian English? Why has it risen? How is it different from other varieties of English? How far is it intelligible to other speakers of English around the world? What attitudes/reactions do English speakers around the world have towards Indian English? Some of these have been taken up in the previous units. We will explore a few of them in this unit.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Various euphemistic names have been invented to describe Indian varieties of English – for e.g. *transplanted English*, *transported English*, or as **Meenakshi Mukherjee** says *twice-born English* since Indian English is “the product of two parent traditions” Indian and British. But the main impulse behind such imaginative naming is to convey the fact that the context in which these different varieties of English are used in India is not the same as that in Britain.

The *Indianess* in Indian English is the result of the acculturation of a Western language in a linguistically and culturally pluralistic context of the Indian subcontinent. The parameters of Indian culture and languages determine the extent of changes and adaptation in the English language. It should be remembered that Indian English (IE) is a cover term and does not in any sense imply that all Indian users of the English language have equal proficiency in understanding and speaking English. The variations in Indian English arise basically due to three reasons—regional, ethnic, and proficiency levels. The ethnic varieties cut across regional boundaries though there has been no extensive study of this phenomenon in India. From here we can work towards subsystems of these on the basis of Individual languages like Tamil, Hindi, and Malayalam etc. The features of Dravidian English or Indo-Aryan English can be abstracted on the basis of the features of these individual languages. In the next section we shall look at the concept of *Indian English*.

4.2 VARIETIES OF INDIAN ENGLISH

The issue of variation in proficiency is especially important in India where English is mostly learnt as a second language. It has been suggested that the English-speaking

bilinguals in India should be ranked on a scale - even an arbitrary one - so that one can differentiate them on the basis of competence. It can be better explained with reference to the *cline of bilingualism* given by **Kachru**. The cline comprises of three measuring points - the zero point, the central point and the ambilingual point. In other words there is a cline of Englishes in India ranging from *Educated Indian English* to *Babu English*, *Kitchen English*, *Cheechee English*, *Butler English*, *Boxwallah English* etc. An example of Butler English would be the following:

An Englishman wishing to assure himself that his orders have been carried out asks—Is that done gone finished, Appo? And Appo replies in the same phraseology—*Yes sare all done gone finished whole.*

Babu English is mostly associated with the work of clerks and is marked by extreme stylistic ornamentation, superficiality and verbosity:

The extreme stimulus of professional and friendly solicitations has led me to the journey of accomplished advantages to proceed with these elucidatory and critical comments; wherein no brisking has been thrown apart to introduce prima facie and useful matters to facilitate the literary pursuits of lily-like capacities.

(Kachru: 1988: 228)

Boxwallah English was mostly the language of trade and commerce used by hawkers/salesmen to sell whatever goods they carried. E.g. the language used by Kashmiri traders who come to the plains in winter to sell their goods.

Cheechee (CCE) *English* is marked by hybrid formations, especially in pronunciation. But some formations are peculiar to this sub variety, as illustrated by the following comparisons:

CCE

To blow ones' self
To get tossed
To cover
To roll a bird

English

to hit ones' self
to be thrown from a horse
to sleep under a sheet/blanket
to hit a bird with a stone

At one end of this cline/spectrum is Educated (or standard) Indian English and at the other we have *Kitchen English*. Other varieties like *Babu English* come at various points of the spectrum. These points present a gradation towards an educated form of Indian English. The *zero point* is the lowest point on the axis but it is not the end point at the bottom. In India and South Asia it is very common to come across users of English who have acquired restricted proficiency of English but cannot use the language in any serious sense. As **Randolph Quirk** had observed:

In the Indian and African countries, we find an even spectrum of kinds of English, which extend from those most like Pidgin to those most like standard English, with imperceptible gradations the whole way, issue of the global intelligibility and acceptability of IE.

(Kachru: 1988: 71)

Available research on educated / standard IE is rather sketchy. In spoken form, the term 'educated IE' is used in the same sense as suggested by the terms 'educated American English', 'educated British English' etc. However, all speakers of educated IE do not have the same levels of proficiency. In addition, an IE user reveals other characteristics through his /her speech- his/her mother tongue, regional affiliation etc. The phenomena of variation are not unique to IE. Following this logic we can say that there are *American Englishes*, *British Englishes* etc. But at the same time it is

worth pointing out that in spite of variations there are several common features shared by users of IE. An IE speaker recognises another IE speaker. Almost at the same time the classification of educated/standard and non-standard is done.

Kachru's cline of bilingualism has three measuring points of proficiency—the zero point, the central point, and the ambilingual point.

An English speaking Indian who ranks just above the zero point is considered a minimal bilingual. Such bilinguals may have some knowledge of the written/and or spoken aspects of English but they are not considered proficient in the language, the proficiency levels of travel guides and postmen in India being a good example.

The central point is an arbitrary point—for instance an individual with adequate competence in one or more registers of IE like the registers of the law courts, administration and science. This includes a large number of those Indian civil servants and teachers who learn English as their main subject of study and are able to use the language effectively in those restricted fields where English is used in India.

A standard (or educated) IE bilingual is one who is intelligible to not only Indians but also (ideally) to the native speakers of English. A standard user of IE is one who ranks somewhere between the central and ambilingual points on the cline of bilingualism. But mere intelligibility does not guarantee that the user's command of English is equal to the native speaker's command over the language. We shall take up these difficulties in the following sections of this unit.

4.3 BARRIERS IN THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING INDIAN ENGLISH

Available research on various varieties of Indian English is rather limited and superficial, mainly due to the attitude of Indian and non-Indian speakers towards Indian English. The first major barrier in the way of intelligibility is the differences in the consonant and vowel inventory of English and Indian English. The consonants {f, θ, δ} in English do not occur in the consonant inventory on any Indian language, a fact that leads to the substitution of {ph, th, dh} for those sounds in Indian English. This creates problems of intelligibility for native speakers of English. Secondly in Indian languages like Hindi and Urdu, consonant clusters like sk, sl, sp do occur but the distribution of these clusters in Indian languages is different. In Indian English as spoken in Hindi-speaking areas English words such as *school*, *stool* etc., are pronounced as {isklu:l}, {istu:l} because in Hindi the clusters do not occur in initial positions.

Thirdly, a complete set of consonants from an Indian language may be transferred into Indian English. Fourthly, deviation in the stress system may create problems of comprehension. English is a stress-timed language as opposed to Indian languages, which are syllable-timed. In the latter, the rhythm is based on arranging long and short syllables, while in stress-timed languages it is based on the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. This is one of the linguistic factors, which impedes intelligibility between an Indian-English speaker and a native speaker of English. Lastly, grammar also causes problems of intelligibility. It should however be noted that the deviations in Indian English should not be regarded as mistakes. As **Kachru** writes:

A mistake may be defined as any 'deviation' which is rejected by a native speaker of English as out of the linguistic 'code' of the English language...a deviation, on the other hand may involve differences from a norm, but such

Many of these deviations are variety - oriented (marking members of the Indian English speech community as separate from users of other varieties of English), register - oriented (e.g. politics). Some are author - oriented and may be present only in the works of Indian English writers who write about typically Indian contexts. Some deviations are text specific but cannot be generalised. For example the style of *Kanthapura* (written by **Raja Rao**) cannot be generalised as the style of **Raja Rao**. Formations like 'May the vessel of your life never float on the sea of existence' are as deviant as **Cummings** and **Joyce** in native English but they still create problems of intelligibility. The frequent use of the progressive tense where the native speaker would use the simple tense also makes Indian English stand apart. The habit of reduplication, which Indian English shares with West African and Black American English, is a problem for native speakers of English. In Indian English reduplication is used for emphasis and to indicate continuation, for example -hot, hot, tea, long-long, hair, he sells different-different things etc.

The use of English in India for over 200 years has nativised the association that English words traditionally keep in their native settings. The Indian linguistic and cultural context has extended the domain of native collocations or typically Indian English collocations have been formed. Constructions which are more English would sound less deviant but then they would also be less Indian and therefore, less effective. These Indian collocations naturally sound foreign to native speakers: after all they have to be understood in their Indian context.

4.4 INTELLIGIBILITY OF INDIAN ENGLISH

In India, English has blended itself with the cultural and social complex of the country and has become, as **Raja Rao** says, the language of the "intellectual make-up" of Indians. It is the language, which symbolises cultural and socio-political aspirations of Indians. Thus, a foreign language has become more culture-bound in India than Persian and Arabic were in the times of the Mughal rulers.

The linguistic implications of such acculturation of Indian English are that the more culture-bound it becomes, the more distance is created between Indian English and other varieties of English. In all discussions of Indian English and nativisation of English we have to pause and ask ourselves two questions. First, in spite of all regional variations, is Indian English intelligible to people all over the subcontinent? Second, is Indian English intelligible to educated speakers of English all over the world? Very little research has been done on this area of intelligibility of non-native varieties of English. The answer to the first question was attempted in 4.2, that standard /educated English has pan-Indian intelligibility. In spite of variations due to region and mother tongue, standard Indian English is more or less comprehensible to all. Yet even educated speakers of Indian English reveal some regional characteristics. In written speech, several pan-Indian registers have developed like the language of the newspapers, law, administration etc. These are distinctly Indian in their lexical and grammatical categories. Out of the seven daily newspapers in India, which have been in existence for more than one hundred years, four are in English, namely, *Times of India*, the *Pioneer*, the *Mail*, and *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*. A significant number of periodicals and magazines in English are published throughout India and English newspapers are published in every part of India.

The intelligibility of Indian English by native speakers forms a cline; some Indians are fully intelligible, others less so. Intelligibility cannot be judged exclusively from a

native speaker's point of view. A speaker of educated IE (and other non-native Englishes) may have repertoire of sub varieties that vary in their Englishness. Very little empirical research has been done in this area, one of which was done by **Bansal** in 1969, the conclusions of which are summarised below. It presents the results of tests for measuring intelligibility between the speakers of the following varieties of English-IE speakers and native speakers of American English and Received Pronunciation (RP); IE speakers and other non native speakers of English like Germans and Nigerians; IE speakers with other IE speakers:

Participants in test	highest %	lowest %	average
1. IE&RP speakers (group)	73	67	70
2. IE&RP speakers (Cline of intelligibility)	95	53	
3. IE & American Eng. Speakers	81	72	74
4. IE & German speakers	67	40	57
5. IE speakers & Nigerians	66	34	53
6. IE & other IE speakers	54	74	
7. RP speakers with Other RP speakers	100	95	97

(Kachru: 1988: 84)

As is evident from the above table, the educated IE speaker maintains his/her 'Indianness' without making any effort to mask his/her social or local origins and yet retains his/her intelligibility.

At the other end of the spectrum, towards the bottom of **Kachru's** cline, is *Kitchen English* or *Babu English*, which is often used by Indians with native speakers of English; native speakers use this language so that Indian speakers of this variety can understand them. It is an attempt to communicate in a variety of language that has undergone a process of pidginisation. A good example of this is provided by **Yule** and **Burnell**:

The broken English spoken by the native servants in the Madras Presidency; ...it is a singular dialect; the present participle...being used for the future indicative, and the preterite indicative being formed by 'done'; thus I Telling = I will tell; I done tell = I have told; done come = actually arrived.... The oddest characteristic about this jargon is (or was) that masters used it in speaking to their servants as well as servants to their masters.

(Kachru: 1988: 70)

So IE consists of all the varieties discussed above, from *Educated English* to *Kitchen* and *Babu English*.

In short it can be said that the closer the language is to standard or educated forms of English, the more intelligible it is to other speakers / hearers of English. The moment the language becomes culture-bound or culture specific, it will inevitably create problems of intelligibility. At the same time it should always be remembered that issues of intelligibility / acceptability are best solved by keeping in mind the formal and contextual conditions and the functions that the language is expected to perform in particular situations.

The contextually deviant forms may be unintelligible to the native speakers of English, but only because s/ he is not acquainted with the contexts of Indian culture. A similar parallel can be found in America and Australia where English-speaking settlers had to coin a large number of new words like- 'friar-bird', 'frogs-mouth', 'ground-lark', 'thousand-jacket' etc- to meet local needs. But the situation in India is different from that of America or Australia because in India it is not a group of new

settlers using their L1 in new settings. In this case it is a second language that is being used by Indians in their own context.

4.5 ATTITUDES TOWARDS NON- NATIVE VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

In recent years there has been a change in attitude, both of Indian and Western scholars towards IE and other varieties of Non-Native English. This phenomenon of 'linguistic tolerance' is mostly a post World War II development that gained further momentum after the Independence of many Asian nations during the 1940s and 1950s. Many of these nations decided to keep English as a link language and there was political support towards the continuation of English.

But on the other hand regional varieties of English were regarded as substandard, and were often called *Babu English* and *Cheechee English* in a derogatory sense. The thirties and forties were a time of pessimism of IE and other varieties of English in general. The gradual change in attitude towards IE and other non-native varieties of English can be traced from the following summary:

1. *Authoritarian View:* The first reactions were mostly monolithic asserting that despite its diversity there is only one 'good' or 'standard' English, which should be defended at all costs. Substandard dialects and Creoles were expected to eventually fade under the impact of universal education and media.
2. *Mildly Traditionalist View:* This school opined that though the varieties of English cannot be regarded as languages, they should however be acknowledged. It was in spite of the belief that Centre must hold and efforts must be made to educate people in the good/standard variety.
3. *The Liberal and Pragmatic View:* Both monolithic and pluralistic, they tried to reconcile opposed views—that English encompasses everything that has been identified with it, yet all cannot be regarded as languages simply because they are incomprehensible to others. It was realised that standard varieties are vital tools in the areas of education, law, media etc. and tend to sustain the standard varieties.
4. *Liberal, Egalitarian Response:* This regarded the monolithic worldview as outdated and believed in a more multicultural and decentered worldview, and considered diversity as good. All varieties of English were thought to be autonomous languages or a range of variations, which are a part of a mass of usage. Standard forms—local, national, and international—constantly need to be renegotiated and should not encourage the continuance of existing elites; nor should it lead to the formation of new ones.
5. *The Uncertain/ Confused Response:* Not sure of the intricacies of the debate, but aware of the importance of communication, the upholders of this response are inclined to change their opinion according to time and place. There is more of a wishful thinking that everybody should speak the same language. Traditionalists concerned with safeguarding the purity of the English language are not likely to have much sympathy today when people have started responding more positively towards the idea of multiple Englishes. As has often happened in the past, new generations have grown up wondering what the fuss is all about. These new generations find *an English* and *Englishes* no more controversial than *wine* and *wines*.

4.6 INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH- INTELLIGIBILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY

Intelligibility of Indian
English Globally

Responses towards Indian writings in English have ranged from ridicule, skepticism and cynicism to grudging acceptance and now outright praise and respect. Here distinctions have to be made between non-Indians (mainly British writers like **Kipling, Forster, Paul Scott** etc.) writing in English about India (called Anglo-Indian writers); Indians writing in English about India; Indians translating works from Indian languages into English (called Indo-Anglian writers). In the use of English as a medium, two distinctions are possible determined as they are by the reading audience. Thus on the basis of reader/writer relationship we have two types of IE-written in India: Those, whose reading public is mostly Indian; and those whose reading public is outside India. The growth in recent years of a new tribe of writers who are settled abroad (or spend most of their time outside India) and write about India cater to a foreign (mostly Western) reading public (**Salman Rushdie, Gita Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri** etc.) belong to this category. This distinction is important because the forms will vary in their degree of Indianness and use of Indianisms.

Indian writing in English was regarded with great skepticism and its creative worth questioned till about 1950. From then onwards however attitudes towards both (in India and outside) have changed. In the last few years a considerable body of work by talented writers like **Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Shobha De** and their likes have brought respectability (and money) to the profession of Indians writing in English. The amount and quality of work is such that it can no longer be ignored and Indian English literature has become a very important part of world literature.

The short history of Indian English Literature is mired in controversy and schizophrenia. Writers of literature writing in Indian languages suspect the integrity of those using an 'alien' language for creative purposes. They accuse their counterparts of commodifying India, having monetary motives and of pandering to the Western demand for the *exotic* East. Writers in other English speaking countries tend to marginalise them from the mainstream of English literature. The answer is, of course, that Indian English Literature is as much Indian as the works of **Thoreau** and **Hemingway** are American literature. Despite these controversies, Indian writings in English have found worldwide audiences and large publishing houses are making a beeline to sign up talented Indian writers. Indian English fiction is now a worldwide phenomenon.

The post-Independence period initiated a split among Indian English writers, living in and outside India. This has resulted in

...two different, and sometimes even hostile streams: the Aliens and indigenous writers...the Aliens (who often retain Indian nationality but prefer to stay abroad for a complex variety of reasons chief among them being the...possibility of finding a reasonably well-paying market), are in the final count contributing to the tradition of English literature, while the Indigenous writers are adding to the spectrum of Indian literature....

(Kachru: 1988: 88)

Of course not every agrees with this point of view.

The spectrum of use of Indian English has also widened – essays, political writings, journalism etc. that have found acceptance not only inside India but also elsewhere. The cynicism of the early years has given way to respect and IE literature has

increased both in terms of volume and quality. It has now been accepted both in India and in the English-speaking world as a whole.

As far as the issue of intelligibility is concerned, since IE writers are primarily writing about Indian situations, lack of understanding of Indian contextual situations may cause problems of intelligibility for the Western reader. The following examples will better illustrate the point:

*Welcome! My eyes have gone blind looking at the way along which you were to come to grace my house.
Why did you sit down on my footsteps?.... you have defiled my religion...now
I will have to sprinkle holy water all over the house.* (Kachru: 1988: 45)

The first is a *speech function* used in greetings in typically Indian situations and determined by the relationship of the participants. The second cannot be appreciated unless the *register of the caste system* and the contextual units are understood in the typically Indian sense. The uninitiated Western reader may find these usages funny and may have difficulty comprehending their meanings, both at the literal level and at the level of their function in the social and cultural contexts. The intelligibility of such items as *collocational deviations* and *semantic shifts* (adding or subtracting meaning to words than what they generally mean) for L1 speakers depends on the understanding of the appropriate Indian contexts.

Let us consider a few more examples:

1. *May we live to see ourselves tomorrow.*
2. *He has no chest.*
3. *He has no shadow.*
4. *What honourable noun does your honour bear?* (Kachru: 1988: 222)

From the native speaker's point of view, these examples are not only contextually deviant, but the lexical selection also seems odd and unintelligible. But from the non-native speaker's point of view, they form part of the communicative repertoire and make perfect sense. The contextual equivalent of (1) in native English would be *goodnight* and of (2) would be *He is timid* (3) and (4) taken from **Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan** may not be used in daily speech for they are author-bound and typically Punjabi in context. At first, these formations function like lexical innovations and seem unacceptable. But with time they gain currency, and no longer seem funny.

4.7 TOWARDS A DICTIONARY OF INDIAN ENGLISH

In the postcolonial period it has been realised that Non-native users of English constitute almost 35-40% of the English-using population, in diverse countries as India, Nigeria, the Far East, South Asia etc. The linguistic and literary contribution of these areas has been immense and can no longer be ignored. However, very few serious studies have been made on the lexicographical aspects of these varieties of English. Whatever earlier dictionaries had been made, had mainly intended to provide word lists, glossaries, and meanings for Englishmen and Americans visiting India for administrative, commercial and tourism purposes. These word lists were meant to serve as manuals for explaining un-English nativised lexical items. Thus lexicographical research was inadequate, keeping in mind the magnitude and importance of the task. Grammatical information about IE was not included in these early dictionaries—for example the proliferation in IE of constructs like *I am hearing, I am seeing, you must be knowing*; information about phonetic aspects of IE were also not included, chiefly because the British scholars and British trained Indian educators regarded the RP as the ideal—the desirable norm for Indian users of

English; semantics of IE (i.e. the process by which Words in IE came to mean more [+] or less [-] than the dictionary {native} meaning of these words)- was also ignored.

So any new research on the lexicographical aspects of IE must include information on of the following linguistic aspects– orthographical, phonetic, grammatical, semantic and etymological. The compilation of dictionaries for IE and other non-native varieties is a crucial step towards their standardisation. They are also important for descriptive and historical analysis. In short lexical research is a step towards recognising these varieties as distinct varieties of English. It should be remembered that, the discussions contained in 4.4 to 4.8 apply equally to the issues discussed in the unit entitled **Debate over Native and Non Native English**.

4.8 LET US SUM UP

IE is a cover term and it would be erroneous to think that it is a homogenous commodity and that users of these varieties are intelligible to users of other varieties. In fact, linguistic homogeneity is a dream of linguists and never a reality. The varieties within IE is perhaps more mind-boggling than the varieties in native English. As **Quirk** had said, these varieties:

are so widespread in a community and of such long standing that they may be thought stable and adequate enough to be institutionalized and regarded as varieties of English in their own right rather than on the way to a more native-like English.
(Kachru: 1988: 224)

In India we have Englishes that are used in different Indian contexts. These may be termed as national uses of English. The situation is such that English has come to be regarded as an Indian language though not it is not of Indian origin. There is, however, a substantial number of Indians who use English for international communication, speaking what may be called international English. The English used in these contexts is 'educated IE', which has close proximity with educated British, or American English. The distinction between national and international English and national and international uses is important to understand the issue of global intelligibility and acceptability of IE. Communicative competence of IE has to be seen with reference to the local, intra-national and international uses of the language.

It may well happen that for some communicative purposes the native speaker may have to unlearn some aspects of his native language and learn some features/characteristic of the local variety. Thus an Englishman/woman may have to de-Englishise him/herself and an American may have to de-Americanise him/herself. The rules before English pedagogy are complex – the educated/standard variety referred to in this unit emphasise a monomodel approach in the teaching of English. One should realistically aim at a polymodel concept– the choice of a model of language cannot be done in isolation from the functions of language and naturally appropriateness, implying thereby that acceptance and intelligibility cannot be isolated from the total pragmatic context.

4.9 QUESTIONS

1. Write a critical note on the communicability of English literary writing in India.
2. What should be our attitude towards an English that 'deviates' from the British norm of English? Explain with reasons.

UNIT 5 DEBATE OVER NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Native and Non-Native English
- 5.3 Standard English / Native English
- 5.4 Non –Native Varieties of English
 - 5.4.1 Dialects And Creoles
 - 5.4.2 Nativised Varieties And Anglo Hybrids
 - 5.4.3 Near-English / Fractured English
- 5.5 A Tripartite Model: ENL, EFL, ESL
- 5.6 The Diaspora of the English language
- 5.7 Changing Attitudes and the Future of English
- 5.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.9 Questions

5.0 OBJECTIVES

At present the position of the English language is unique in our world. It is used either as a mother tongue, as a second language, or as a foreign language by over a billion people all over the world i.e. by about a fifth of the human race. In this Unit we shall attempt to explore the vast body of what comprises Native and Non- Native Englishes and shall also place these different Englishes in the larger context.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The division between native and non-native English is in no way intended to divide the English speaking community on grounds of colour, or race. On the contrary, the terms are intended to highlight the “pragmatics of the new Englishes which have developed in new contexts, and to initiate linguistic, attitudinal and functional realism about their uses.”(Kachru: 1983:211) The non-native–Englishes are a legacy of the long arm of imperialism and colonialism. The language too has developed in ‘un-English’ cultural and linguistic contexts. Due to extensive colonisation in Asia, Africa, the Far East, the Middle East, among other places, the Queens’ English (so to speak) was called upon to function in very alien environments. In very un-English conditions the English language was called upon to discharge social, political, judicial, administrative, economic, and diplomatic functions. The next section looks into the debate between Native and Non- Native English.

5.2 NATIVE AND NON- NATIVE ENGLISH

English language in these very new conditions obviously had to undergo dramatic modifications to answer the new demands being made upon it. Any such discussion has to address crucial issues like the following:

- Factors which led to the growth of non-native Englishes in Asia and Africa;
- Reasons why English has been retained in these countries even after independence;
- Functional and pragmatic contexts in which these Englishes are used; the nativisation of the language (i.e. the lexical, phonological, syntactical and idiomatic changes);
- Growth of varieties within varieties; the interaction between native and non-native English.

The early years of the 20th century were marked by the rapid spread of the English language all over the world. Wherever people went, they were secure in the belief that they had a common means of communication through the English language. But millions of English speakers all over the world who had grown up with the belief that they are native speakers of English were suddenly brought up short on the issue of the intelligibility of the language they were using.

5.3 STANDARD ENGLISH / NATIVE ENGLISH

The spread of the English language in the early 20th century means the spread of what is known as Standard English. But what is this Standard English? Is it that which is held as the yardstick against which every other English is measured? The word 'standard' as used in the term Standard English has a military origin and started to be associated with language from the early 18th century. Of the various dialects, which were spoken on the British Isles—Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentish and West Saxon around 900 A.D. The dialect became widely used in course of time and soon gained ascendancy in courtly, literary and administrative matters. This happened first in England around the 15th century, next in Wales, Scotland and Ireland from the 16th century onwards and then throughout the English speaking diaspora from the 17th century onwards. The spoken form of this 'good' English developed by the 19th century and the concept of '**Received Pronunciation**' (RP) was introduced in 1925. Since the 18th century there had developed a tendency to regard the usage of the upper and middle classes (who had mostly studied in public schools) as more legitimate and real than any other English be spoken in any other part of England. This minority usage, which was also the usage of academic and professional writers in England soon gained the reputation of being the only *correct* English and was promoted to the status of Standard English. Through much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, English was regarded as the property of England or the United Kingdom. Communities using English elsewhere regarded themselves as the linguistic offspring of a "Mother Country" whose royalty, upper classes and cultural and media institutions served as exemplars and arbiters of good taste and good English. There has also been a long link between two expressions widely used for the English language—a **Standard Language** (whose norms and conventions closely follow the standards of education, print, administration and high culture) and a **Language Standard** (i.e. the level below which language usage should not fall). The phrase Standard English has come to mean a broad set of rules / standards/ norms available to anyone who goes to school for a sufficient number of years and whose general performance should not fall below a certain point. The phrase Standard English is sometimes used synonymously with another term **King's /Queen's English**, and has a reference to the language of the royal court.

It should be remembered that the very idea of a Standard English is a myth because as modern linguistics states, a dialect has as much intrinsic value as a so-called standard language. We should bear in mind that, however elevated and refined, present day English has its origin in a dialect, and was elevated to the status of a standard language by factors outside the scope of language.

Randolph Quirk has recently observed that English seems to be a language on which the sun does not set and whose speakers do not sleep. (McArthur: 1998: xiv) This implies that all users of English, irrespective of where they are, for the most part understand one another. Yet incomprehension, whether mutual or in one direction is a common state within English as a world language. In many a case, it often leads to the insistence that what the other is speaking is not English. In recent years observers have dealt with this problem by proposing **not one monolithic English** but a **range of Englishes**, with their own distinctive characteristics such as American English, Canadian English, Malaysian English, Indian English, New Zealand English, Nigerian English, Singapore English, etc. (each with their own sub varieties). It has also been observed that without the bridge of yet another English, **International Standard English**, many who speak English cannot communicate with one another. In their attempt to communicate with one another they come against linguistic barriers-usages which to them seem strange, broken / fractured English, not quite English, or at least not *my* English.

Scholars and users of English alike have been struck by the paradox in the use of English because in most cases of English use **stability and flux go hand in hand**. The stability (and centripetal tendencies) is largely related to Standard English while flux (and centrifugal tendencies) involves all other non-native/standard varieties whose nature and interaction with standard usage create all kinds of social, cultural and communicative problems. When people say that they speak English what they mean is that they can manage the grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary of the standard form. Such speakers are also fluent in one or more dialect or Creole. In most Anglophone countries (countries where English is spoken), the number of dialect / creole speakers is much more than the number of people who wholly or mostly function with Standard English, i.e. the English of the educational world, news and print media, government, law, business, administration etc. If indeed more people are regarded as speaking a dialect or a creole, the question emerges, whether they are speaking English at all? In most cases people in traditional English speaking world can speak the standard variety if the need arises, (due to schooling and media exposure). Such people are said, to use a *basilect* to fall towards the bottom of the social ladder. Those who mix local language with standard usage speak a *mesolect* and are higher up the social ladder. Speakers of something more or less resembling a standard language, the *acrolect*-come highest in the social order.

Flux and stability, homogeneity and heterogeneity go hand in hand and English even in the 17th century was not particularly homogenous. At the end of the 20th century experts tended to agree that several Anglophone nations have their own Standard English. The first standard variety, that of the United Kingdom, popularly known as **King's / Queen's English** was regarded as paramount at the end of the 19th century. The second standard variety that of the United States and its allies began to assert itself at the beginning of the 20th century. But by mid-century, joint entitlement was established for even the most conservative of linguists. Both the United Kingdom and the United States of America had extensive educational system publishing industries, print and electronic media dictionaries, grammars, etc. Soon both these varieties became legitimate while at the turn of the century only one had been accepted. In more recent times Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa are also in the process such language norms-institutions, publications, etc.- that it will make them appear independent of the norms of the UK and the USA. In other words they have become **endonormative** rather than **exonormative**. In addition, in countries like India, Singapore, Nigeria, Malaysia, etc. the process of standardisation has begun. Together these standardised varieties constitute what is variously known as Standard International English, International Standard English, World Standard English, or Standard World English.

All usage in English-speaking territories ranges from the **broad vernaculars** through the **local standard** to the **international standard**, often mixing elements of both American and British English with local elements. It is this international variety, which is the target of English teachers and learners of English as a foreign language, irrespective of whether the immediate target is American or British English. All native speakers and some non-native speakers fall somewhere in the language continuum mentioned in the previous paragraph. They are able to shift from the vernacular /local variety to the standard with a fair amount of ease. They are to a certain degree bidialectal or bilingual within the same language.

5.4.1 Dialects and Creoles

Far more people in the world speak non-standard English than Standard English. Most English-based dialects and creoles have retained some links with the standard form of the original, but several others are so distinct from Standard English, that in the opinion of some scholars they form separate languages altogether. Some of these varieties fulfil some criteria of a full-fledged language, the criteria of having their own typographical convention (writing system/script). Examples of this are the Scots varieties of Broad Scots, and Lowland Scots. The linked yet related histories of Scots and English make for very fascinating reading. Even if Scots is regarded as a language distinct from English, it is nonetheless *an* English language. Among other things Scots themselves refer to their language as *Inglish* (pronounced as *inlɪz*). Some experts have for some time referred to most Scots as *bidialectal*, especially because since the union of England and Scotland in 1707 the Scots have two distinct forms at their disposal – King's Scots and King's English.

The pidgin-cum-creole called Tok Pisin (Talk Pidgin) is so different from Standard English and the traditional dialects that it can be well regarded as a separate language. Yet the greater part of its vocabulary is derived from English. Thus *hapsait bilong rauwara* may sound and look entirely different from English, but actually reads as *halfside belong roundwater*. Both pronunciation and orthography (written script) are entirely different from Standard English, but if the written script were a little closer to Standard English, printed Tok Pisin would be much easier to read and comprehend. It would then be regarded as a non-standard variety of English and not a separate means of communication altogether. Thus, distinctive orthography makes Tok Pisin stand apart. Indeed it has stood out so successfully that it is now one of the three official languages of Papua New Guinea along with Standard English and the indigenous pidgin Hiri Motu. So Tok Pisin is both English and not English.

A better way of looking at the unique position of Tok Pisin is to regard it as *an* English language, without being part of what is called conventional English / Standard English. Both Tok Pisin and Scots have a unique place in any discussion on Native and non-native English-Scots because of its close links to the traditional home of conventional English, and Tok Pisin because it is one of the recent varieties, a distinct form born far from home but whose independent status legally and linguistically is beyond dispute. There are many English-based creoles and pidgins comparable to Tok Pisin, yet different from it and from one another. Most notable are *Krio* in Sierra Leone, *Kamtok* in Cameroon, *Sranan* and *Saramaccan* in Surinam, *Creolese* in Guyana and *Patwa* in Jamaica. In all there are **eight varieties** that are often called **kinds of English**, while being very distinct from conventional English—*Scots*, *Tok Pisin*, *Krio*, *Kamtok*, *Sranan*, *Saramaccan*, *Creolese* and *Patwa*. All are mostly or wholly unintelligible to speakers of conventional English and are therefore not regarded as languages in their own right despite their close links with conventional English.

5.4.2 Nativised Varieties and Anglo-Hybrids

In addition to dialects and Creoles, there are two more types of usage, so distinctive from conventional English that they pose problems of intelligibility. The first is called *nativised English* (or sometimes called indigenised English) and occurs in territories where it was not originally present but has been present now for sometime. Such a variety incorporates features of the regional language in terms of accent, intonation, grammatical structures, rhythm etc. Given below is an example of nativised English of Malaysia, nicknamed *Malenglish* or *Manglish* at an acrolect level in the form of a conversation between two women, one is a Tamil and the other is Chinese. Neither of them are native speakers of English or Malay. They have learnt Malay or English as their second or third language:

CHANDRA: *Lee Lian, you were saying you wanted to go shopping, nak porgy tak? (Malay: Want to go?)*

LEE LIAN: *Okay, okay, at about twelve, can or not?*

CHANDRA: *Can lah, no problem! My case going to be adjourned anyway.*

LEE LIAN: *What you looking for? Furnitures or kitchenwares? You were saying, that day, you wanted to beli some barang- barang (Malay: buy...things)*

(McArthur: 1998:11)

In the above case those who know English but not Malay may get the gist of the conversation, but if the speakers move to the Malay end of their linguistic spectrum they will soon reach a point where they will become unintelligible to non-Malay speakers, despite the fact that they are basically speaking English, a situation exemplified by the following conversation between two Malaysian women, one a Tamil and the other a Malaya, in London:

VIMALA: *Apa ini? (What's this?) What happened to you? I tunggu tunggu sampai dah (waited waited still already) fed up! Mana you pergi, (where you went) you joker!*

ZAINAB: *Nowhere-lah! (Emphatic article) I was stuck in computer room. Big queue there. Hanya (only) three computer, thirteen orang (people) line-up-up. If I keluar, (If I move out) I go back to the end of the line. Jadi sampai sekarang pun, (Therefore till now also) I'll still be there! Mana lah!*

VIMALA: *Okay, now you dah makan? (Already eaten)*

ZAINAB: *Not yet! Sampai nak pengsan. (Nearly wanting to faint) Come let's go to Nahar. Dekat saja, (Near only) much easier, faster (too) pun!*

(McArthur: 1998:11)

People in such situations have more than two languages at their disposal and can fluently switch systems from A to B. They have in fact a third system at their disposal AB in which A dominates and BA in which B dominates. If they have an additional language at their disposal, their hybridisation capacities are multiplied even more. In the US, along the Texas-Mexico borders, Latinos routinely mix Spanish and English into what is locally called *Tex-Mex* or *Border-Lingo* to form part of the larger complex whole called **Spanglish** which is spoken in California, Florida, New Mexico, New York, Puerto-Rico, Texas and elsewhere. In the Philippines the Anglo-hybrid is called **Mix-Mix** or **Taglish** (being a mixture of English and Tagalog, the main indigenous language of Metro Maniaa)

Developments of this kind constitute drastic changes in the way English, Malay, Spanish have been traditionally used and understood. Many names, often disparaging, have been coined to designate these hybrid varieties- *Chinglish*, *Frenglish*, *Swenglish*, *Russlish*, *Japlish* and so on. But now for the sake of convenience or lack of something more respectable, they have become virtually technical terms. The

hybridisation of English and the indefinite range of other languages that arise out of this phenomenon are at its most extensive form today. Contrary to general perceptions, English is simply flowing into them and endlessly creating new languages.

5.4.3 Near-English / Fractured English

The phenomena discussed above include dialects, creoles, nativised varieties, hybrids, etc. But the discussion can hardly stop here. Within the world English, there is another variety, often called *fractured English*, the aim of which is to get things done, somehow. Often the butt of many jokes, the following examples give a fair idea of what is fractured English:

- *American Dentist. 2nd floor - Teeth extracted by latest Methodists.*
- *The lift is being fixed for the next days. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.*
- *We are thankful to the professors of the English Department for their educational actions on us.*

(McArthur: 1998:19 -20)

The humour aside, these constructions are serious attempts at communication and such usages are becoming widespread across the spectrum of the English-speaking world. This fracturing of English happens every day at a very useful and vital level. **Tom McArthur**, quoting US journalist **Barry Newman**, says that what is called near English is being massively used across the globe to finalise business deals, for academic purposes, in legal affairs, in administration and so on.

Françoise Chevillet, Professor of English at University of Stendhalin Grenoble, France, has defined English as a *world language* while at the same time calling Spanish, Russian, even French *international languages*. **Chevillet** sets it apart not only from the prominent languages currently spoken but also from all languages ever. He also points to the inordinate speed at which the language has grown and expanded in the recent times, and to the fact that as the language has expanded, it has become more and more varied, leading some commentators to express the doubt that the language will soon break up into mutually unintelligible forms, much like what once happened to Latin. Traditionally most people have regarded languages as ethnic and communicative monoliths—that the French speak French, the Arabs speak Arabic and so on. The traditional thinking has been ‘to each nation its language’, rather than to each nation its *languages* (for example India, Canada, Singapore). In fact, the punch line should be ‘to each language its nations, (for example Arabic, French, Spanish) In addition, some languages are culturally, linguistically, ethnically, and geographically, so closely interlinked that it is difficult to decide whether they are *really* different. Swedish, Danish and Norwegian are cases in point. Despite the fact that they are separate languages, Swedes Danes and Norwegians communicate well with one another. The question arises: do they use different Scandinavian languages or different varieties of one Scandinavian language?

There is something comparable to the Scandinavian situation in **Chevillet’s** idea of bilingualism within world English. As the British scholar, **C L Wren** had observed nearly 50 years ago:

One effect of universal schooling is the weakening of regional dialects and the growth of ‘modified’ standard English in imitation of teachers and through their efforts after producing the ‘received pronunciation’. Many children now shew a sort of ‘bilingualism’, speaking one form of English at home and another at school.

(McArthur: 1998: 32)

5.5 A TRIPARTITE MODEL: ENL, NL, EFL, ESL

At the very outset it should be remembered that the terms *native* and *non-native* convey an impression of homogeneity, which is not at all the case. Among the non-native speakers, one must differentiate between those who learn English as a *second language* and those who learn it as a *foreign language* in both of which there are substantial variations of competence. Although there is nothing simple about the spread of English, in the 20th century, one relatively easy set of categories has been used by linguists and language teachers – a tripartite model described in 1970 by **Barbara Strang**, Professor of English and General Linguistics at the University of Newcastle:

At the present time, English is spoken by perhaps 300-400 million people who have it as their mother tongue. I shall call them A-speakers. There are many millions more for whom English may not be quite the mother tongue, but who learnt it in early childhood, and who lived in communities in which English has a special status These are B-Speakers found extensively in Asia...Then there are those English is a foreign language, its study requiredas part of their country's educational curriculum, though the language has no official or even traditional, standing in that country. These are C-speakers.

(McArthur: 1998:42)

Noted scholars like **Randolph Quirk**, **Sidney Greenbaum**, **Geoffrey Leech**, and **Jan Svartvik** have all agreed with this classification of English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a second Language (ESL)

English As A Native Language Variation

English varies markedly from one ENL territory to another. For example, within UK there are significant differences of accent, grammar, and vocabulary between the inhabitants of the island. Cockney is very different from the English that is spoken in and around London and both are again different from Scots in which Scots and English are routinely mixed. Similarly in the US of A, there are vast differences between White English, Black English, the English spoken in the south and that spoken in the north. So the ENLhood of a place is no guarantee of unhampered communication in English.

ENL Speakers in English As A Second Language/English As A Foreign Language Territory

Significant groups of native speakers of English have been found in certain ESL territories, for e.g. the Anglo Indian community in India and the British expatriates in Hong Kong and so on.

ESL / EFL Speakers in ENL territories

Similarly, there are significant numbers of non-native speakers of English in ENL territories as a result of immigration. This is exemplified by ESL speakers in the US, with Spanish as their mother tongue.

English based pidgins and creoles do fit into this tripartite model and run across the three varieties. Thus, they are founding ENL settings in the Caribbean, in ESL settings in West Africa, in both ENL and ESL settings in Australasia-Oceania and the EFL settings of Panama, Surinam, etc. The long-standing impression in the minds of the people about native and non-native speakers is native speakers vs. foreign learners. The contrast here is between a group defined by *birth right* and one defined by *acquisition*. In conventional definitions a native speaker is by definition prior (and implicitly superior) no matter how inept the native speaker and how adept the non-native speaker. But in recent years ESL and EFL speakers are increasingly challenging such chauvinism.

5.6 THE DIASPORA OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The English language has been in a sense always on the move. This will be obvious from the discussion in the next and the following sections.

The British Isles

As soon as the English language arrived in England from Northern Europe it spread around the British Isles— in Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria and Southern Scotland, traditionally the stronghold of the Celtic languages. After the Norman invasion of 1066 the language spread through the Scottish lowlands. From the 12th century onwards, Ireland gradually fell under English rule. Up to this stage, the movements of the English language were on a local scale. The first steps towards the development of English as a global language began towards the end of the 16th century with the beginning of the process of British imperialism and colonialisation. At that time, at the beginning of the reign of **Queen Elizabeth I** in the 16th century, the number of English speakers was somewhere between 5-7 millions. By the time of the beginning of the reign of **Queen Elizabeth II** (1952) the number of speakers rose to 250 million, the vast majority living outside the British Isles.

America

The first permanent English settlement in the Americas dates from 1607 when an expedition arrived in Chesapeake Bay. The colonists called the settlement Jamestown (after **James I**) and the area Virginia (after virgin **Queen Elizabeth**) and further settlements followed quickly along the coast. Then in November 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers arrived at Cape Cod Bay and established what is today known as Plymouth, Massachusetts. The two settlements – one in Virginia and the other in present day New England— had very different linguistic backgrounds. The southern colonists came mostly from England's 'west country', i.e. from Somerset and Gloucestershire and brought with them its characteristic accent with its voicing of *s* sounds, and strong *r* after the vowels. Echoes of this accent can still be heard in the speech of communities, living in isolated valleys and islands. These 'Tidewater' accents are said to be closest we will ever get to the sounds of Shakespeare's English. By contrast the Plymouth colonists originated from the eastern counties of England such as London, Kent, Essex, Nottinghamshire etc. These eastern accents were different, notably lacking the *r* after the vowels, and they proved to be the dominant force in this area. The later population movements across America largely preserved these dialectal differences that arose out of these early patterns of settlement. Huge waves of immigration in the 17th century further diversified the linguistic spectrum of America, for example Pennsylvania came to be dominated by the Quakers who originated from the Midlands and the north of England. People speaking different kinds of English found themselves' living together as the New York area increasingly

became the focus of settlement. As a result the sharp differences between regional dialects began to disappear.

The English, the Dutch, and the French contributed to the richness of American English. Germans, Italians, Central European Jews fleeing from Europe arrived at the cauldron called America. Within a generation or two most of these immigrants, through a process of assimilation, had begun to speak English resulting in a massive growth in the mother tongue use of English. According to the 1991 census over 86% (198 million) of the population spoke only English at home

Canada

The first English contact with Canada was as early as in 1497 when **John Cabot** reached Newfoundland. Following the US Declaration of Independence in 1776 thousands of loyalists fled to Canada and settled in what is today known as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and further inland. Many British people identify Canadian accents as American and many Americans consider it British while Canadian themselves prefer not to identify themselves with either. The presence of French as a co-official language, especially in the Quebec area produces a socio-linguistic situation, which is unique.

The Caribbean

While the English language was spreading in the Americas, a highly distinctive variety was emerging in the islands of the West Indies, chiefly due to the huge influx of Black African Slaves, transported there to work in the sugar and cotton fields of the South. The policy of the slave traders was to bring together people of diverse linguistic backgrounds so as to make rebellion impossible. The result was the growth of several pidgin forms of communication, and in particular a pidgin between the slaves and the sailors many of whom knew English. Creole forms of French, Spanish and Portuguese also developed and in turn interacted with the English Creoles.

Australia and New Zealand

Continued British colonialism in the 18th century led to the introduction of the language in the southern hemisphere. **James Cook** had first visited Australia in 1770 and within 20 years the first penal colony had been established to relieve the overcrowded prisons in England. 'Free' settlers also began to arrive and from the mid-19th century immigration rose rapidly fuelled by discoveries of gold. The British Isles provided the majority of settlers and thus had a major influence on the language. Many of the convicts came from London and Ireland and the Cockney twang of London English and the brogue of Irish English can be traced in the speech patterns of Australian English. The aboriginal languages as well as American English contributed extensively to the repertoire of Australian English.

Captain Cook Charted the island of New Zealand in 1769-70 and Europeans started there in the 1790s. Christian missionaries began work among the Maoris from about 1814 and the first official colony was established in 1840. Three strands of New Zealand's social history have influenced New Zealand's linguistic repertoire. Firstly in contrast to Australia the New Zealanders evince greater sympathy for British values and institutions and speak with an accent, which clearly displays British influence. Secondly, they emphasise their differences with Australia motivating the use of a distinctive New Zealand vocabulary. Increasing awareness of Maori rights has led to an increase in the number of Maori words in New Zealand English.

South Africa

Although Dutch colonists had arrived in the Cape as early as 1652, the first British settlement was not established until 1806 and settlements began in earnest from 1822 onwards. English was made the official language and attempts were made to anglicise the large Afrikaans speaking population. Initially there were certain number of regional dialects but in due course a more homogenous accent emerged, somewhat similar to the accents of Australia, which was also being colonised during the same period. English was used as a second language by the Afrikaans speaking population, which was carried to the northern parts of the country by Dutch colonists escaping British rule. An African variety of English also developed spoken largely by the black population, learnt in the mission schools and influenced by the language background of the speakers. Afrikaans, which was granted the status of Official language in 1952, was the language of the majority, including the whites and those in power. It is also the language of the majority coloured population. In recent years, people have increasingly become bilingual, with fluent command over a variety of languages ranging from Standard British English to languages strongly influenced by Afrikaans.

Debate Over Native and Non-Native English

South Asia

In terms of numbers South Asia ranks as the third largest, after USA and UK. This is largely due to the position that the language has come to occupy in India. (Explained in detail in Unit IV) Elsewhere in the region, in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan etc. the English language has come to occupy a very important place and the different varieties are collectively known as South Asian English. Largely due to its size and strategic importance Indian English has come to dominate South Asian English.

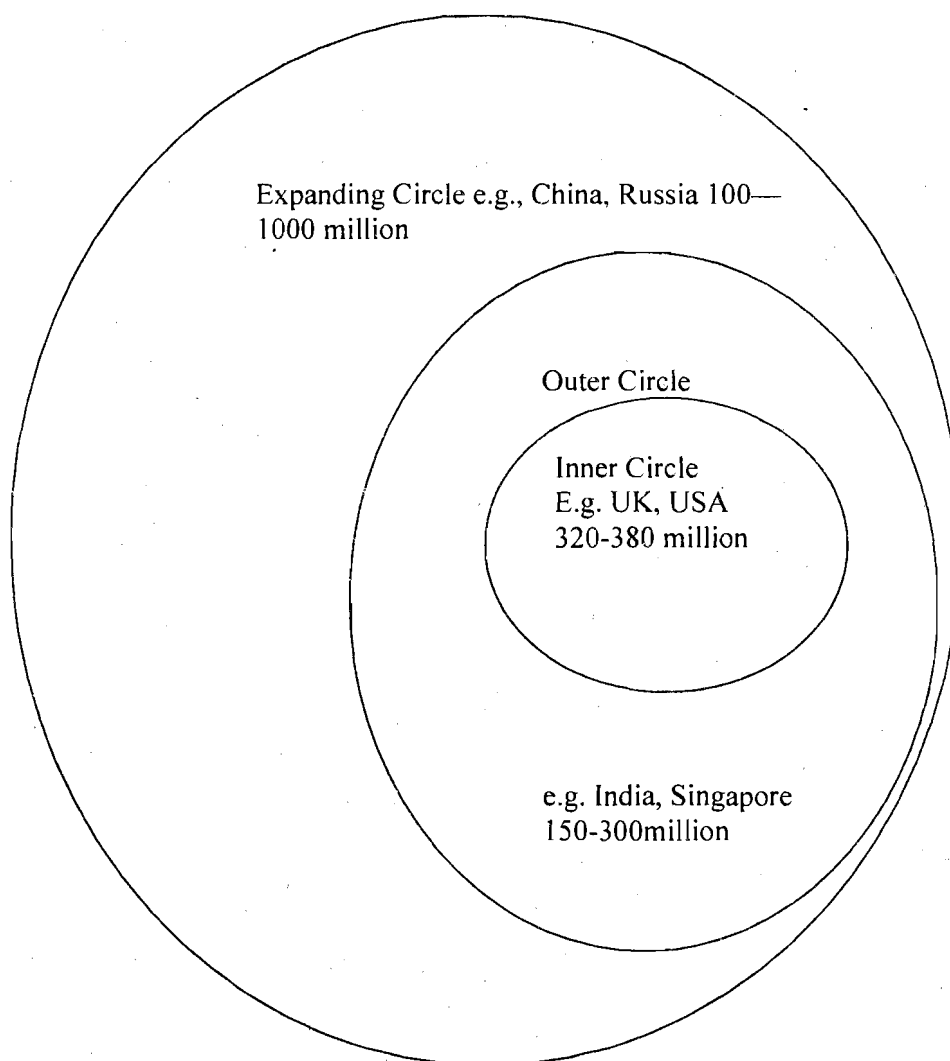
Africa

Despite several centuries of trade with Europe, by the end of the 18th century only the Dutch had established permanent trading posts. However by 1914 England, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, and Belgium had established colonies in Africa as a result of which the continent was cut up like a birthday cake. In most African countries English is popular as the second language or English based Creoles and pidgins serve as the *lingua franca* of the country.

South - East Asia and the South Pacific

The territories in and west of the south Pacific use an interesting mix of British and American English. Hawaii, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malacca, all came under American and British influence and borrowed their systems of law, education, administration etc. from one of these dominant countries. Increasing Chinese and Indian migration to these areas enhanced the importance of English and Standard English became the mark of social respectability and medium of opportunities.

Braj Kachru has observed that we think of the spread of English across the world in the form of three concentric circles. Although not all countries fall into this division, it has nevertheless been regarded as useful. The **inner circle** refers to the traditional bases and where it is the primary language - UK, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland. The **outer or extended circle** involves the earlier phases of the spread of English and plays the role of an important second language in a multilingual setting, as in India, Singapore, etc. The **expanding circle** includes those nations which recognise the importance of English as an international language but do not give English any special status-for e.g. China, Japan, Greece, Poland, Russia etc.



(David Crystal: Cambridge University Press: 1997:54)

The inner circle is the norm - provider, the outer circle is the norm modifier and the expanding circle is the norm follower.

5.7 CHANGING ATTITUDES AND THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH

Given the worldwide expanse of English, it is obvious that the future of English does not depend on any one English speaking -territory, whether the UK in terms of its tradition and empire or the USA in terms of its size, population and power, or even the 'white' countries in terms of their British heritage. The emergence of so many Englishes (discussed in 5.6) raises the **spectre of fragmentation –will English go the Latin way?** Will English eventually dissolve into a range of unintelligible languages much in the same way that Latin gave rise to the various Romance like French, Spanish and Italian? The whole topic is of very recent origin and it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions. English has indeed developed numerous varieties but they remain closely linked with one another. Problems of intelligibility do exist between (**Kachru's**) circles, but with the availability of international television, the continued presence of written Standard English in text books, newspapers etc. these variations can be overcome.

5.8 LET US SUM UP

Debate Over Native and Non-Native English

As has been discussed in this unit the whole debate over native and non-native English is a motivated one, started by the erstwhile colonial powers to preserve their fast dwindling power. What is defined as native /standard is as much a dialect as any sub/non native variety spoken in any part of the world. In the course of its spread throughout the world on the wings of imperialism and colonialism, the English language was called upon to perform many functions, which were very un-English. Naturally, the language had to undergo many modifications, which in many cases so drastically altered the language that they became different from the original. But mere difference does not entail inferiority. As long as the languages effectively perform the functions they are meant to perform there is no need to label any language inferior, or sub-standard.

5.9 QUESTIONS

1. Explain briefly the process of evolution of English as a world language
2. What does the term 'Englishes' mean as against: 'English' in the modern world? Elucidate.

UNIT 6 SPACE OF ENGLISH IN MULTILINGUAL INDIA

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 English In Colonial India
- 6.3 Consolidation Of English In Imperial India
 - 6.3.1 English In Post- Independence India
 - 6.3.2 Place Of English In The Indian Educational Set Up
- 6.4 Future Plans
- 6.5 Role Of English Literature In English Language Teaching
- 6.6 The Question Of Numbers
- 6.7 The Future Of English In India
- 6.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.9 Questions

6.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will study the introduction of the English language into the country, the circumstances and motives surrounding it, its position in pre and post-independence India, its role in the educational set up of the country, the problems associated with English learning and teaching in India, its relations with the Indian languages and finally the future prospects of English in India. The space of English in post-independent India cannot be de-linked from this phenomena. Any understanding of the status and role of English in present day multilingual India has to necessarily take into account the circumstances under which English studies were introduced in India and the direction English studies have taken since then.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Any discussion on the space of English in present day multilingual India is bound to be a very complex one because Indians among themselves do not agree or as to whether or not English is a foreign language. Many Indians feel that despite use of the language in India of over five centuries, English has not become an intrinsic part of the Indian social fabric. Yet some people continue to feel inferior for their lack of proficiency in English and are defensive and embarrassed about their vernacular or mother tongue education. But again there are some who feel the indispensable need for English in the country.

6.2 ENGLISH IN COLONIAL INDIA

The European languages arrived in India with the discovery of the sea route to the subcontinents by **Vasco da Gama** in 1498. The influx began with the Portuguese and the French, who later surrendered political power to the British. Through the 15th and 16th centuries the British quietly devoted themselves to the gathering of information about India, and once that was done they arrived in India with full vengeance and drove out all European competition very soon. Where the British were qualitatively different from the Portuguese is that while the latter language became a *lingua franca*

wherever the Portuguese set-up shop, English never interacted with the Indian languages in the same way, did not go through the process of creolisation and de-creolisation and remained more or less an elite phenomenon. The teaching of English in India dates back to the early 19th century and was initially associated with the energetical spirit of the missionaries.

The **East India Company** entered the picture when the **Charter Act** of 1813 made the **Company** responsible for the education of the Indians. It was at this stage that the issue of the medium of education took center stage. These early attempts at English language teaching in India were overshadowed by political compulsions. The efforts of the pro English lobby culminated in **Macaulay's Minutes** of 1853. **Macaulay's Minutes** of 1853 advocating English education in India reflects this limited perception of the rulers and their imperial design. Despite protests from vernacularists and orientalist, **Lord Bentick** accepted this proposal and directed all funds to be employed in imparting to the native population knowledge of English literature and science in the English language. **Lord Auckland** resolved the issue once and for all in favour of the English (in 1839). **Lord Hardinge** contributed his bit to the controversy by promising jobs only to those trained in English. This proved irresistible bait for Indians with the result that

The period from 1833 to 1853 is replete with the efforts to popularise English both by the rulers and the Indians themselves. English became the sine qua non for the scholar, the job seeker and the affluent in the society.

(Sood: P 24)

So a kind of three-language formula came in to existence. English became the most popular medium of instruction but existing facilities for oriental and vernacular education also continued. But obviously they did not enjoy the same status as English – e.g. while Persian continued in the Lower Courts, in the Higher Courts English continued. Language thus became a marker of social differentiation and the British rulers consciously tried to promote English to a position of prestige. This led to sharp divisions in the population between the English educated elite, the vernacular educated and the illiterate masses. The elite by virtue of their closer links with the rulers became absolutely alienated from the masses.

6.3 CONSOLIDATION OF ENGLISH IN IMPERIAL INDIA

As **Rajeswari Sunder Rajan** has pointed out, the consolidation of the English language in India coincided with the consolidation of the colonial power in India. Learners were introduced to a literary cannon comprising **Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Keats**, and the likes that were presented as the finest in literature. A shelf of these books was said to be worth all the literatures of the orient. So the net result of this brain washing was that, irrespective of whether Indians had knowledge of their vernacular literature or not, every educated Indian swore by this cannon, a fallacy which continued till very recently. To take care of its elite nature a series of reforms were introduced by the **Morley-Minto Reforms** (1909), the **Montague-Chelmsford Report** (1917) and the **Calcutta University Commission** recommendations (1919), but neither the English language nor the English model of education reached the masses.

The Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920 suggested that children should be withdrawn from English medium schools and be admitted to National Schools. Within a very short span of time, several national institutions, namely the Gujrat, Bihar, Kashi and Maharashtra Vidyapiths, the Quami Vidyapith of Lahore and the National Muslim University of Aligarh were established, with the clearly defined agenda of controlling Indian education and fostering love and respect for Indian

languages and culture. Through the 19th and 20th centuries several language associations developed—The *Brahmo Samaj* (1828), The *Arya Samaj* (1875), The *Satyashodhak Samaj* (1873) all of whom knew that they could far greater numbers of people through the Indian languages. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries voices continued for Indian languages and vernacular education, most notably Gokhale's famous **Bill for Compulsory Primary Education** (1910-12), and the **Zakir Hussain Committee Report** (1938) prepared under the influence of Gandhiji, who all insisted that mother tongue draws out the best in each child and should be made the basic tenet of all education philosophy.

Despite these efforts English continued to gain importance in pre-Independent India and English medium schools and colleges continued to multiply and flourish. English became an important weapon of the freedom struggle—the Indian leaders used the language of the colonisers against them and became a medium of sharing, collecting and spreading information in different parts of the country. As Agnihotri and Khanna point out

"It added another voice to the Indian multilingual repertoire, though a voice that did not rise from its grassroots nor perhaps a voice that could ever reach its grassroots."

(Agnihotri and Khanna:1997: 28)

6.3.1 English In Post- Independence India

English in India in the post-1947 period has passed through the same stages of development and controversy as in the Pre-Independence days. When India became free in 1947 the immediate task before the leaders of the country was to find a national language (*lingua franca*), which would serve as a symbol of national unity and integration. According to the first census of free India (in 1951) there were 845 dialects and 15 major regional languages belonging to different language families. None of these languages could claim superiority to the others and no consensus could be reached for some time. The battle came down to two languages—Hindi and English. Hindi was seen as a threat by south Indians. Those who had fought for India's independence however felt the presence of colonial rule in the retention and spread of English. It was obvious that a compromise needed to be evolved.

Finally in 1950 the Constitution of India stipulated that Hindi in the Devnagri script would be the official language of the Union of India and laid down a time frame of 15 years to effect the change over from English to Hindi. It was expected that by 1965 Hindi would become the language of mass communication and replace English in most of its domains. All this has been discussed earlier, so a brief mention will be sufficient. By 1959 it became obvious that proposed changeover from English to Hindi was not going to happen. In 1959, Prime Minister Nehru, in a speech in the Lok Sabha assured the non-Hindi speaking people that English would continue as long as they wanted it. But Nehru's death in 1964 rekindled the apprehensions of the non-Hindi speaking population leading to agitations and violence. Finally in 1967 The Official Languages (Amendment) Act, settled the issue by making English an associate language of the Union of India without any time limit.

In 1956 the **Academy of Tamil Culture** objected to the imposition of Hindi as the official language on the grounds that it is an unfamiliar language to a population of about one hundred million. Again in 1958 the All India Language Conference demanded "the continuance of English as the Union language without any time limit". Similar anti-Hindi agitations continued through the 1960s. While the anti-Hindi groups pressed for the retention of English, the pro-Hindi groups agitated for the introduction of a highly Sanskritised Hindi which made the language an alien one for even the native speakers of the language.

6.3.2 Place Of English In The Indian Educational Set Up

Do we need English in India and especially in the educational sector? Some experts argue that English has no place in rural India and that poor people can hardly afford English education. They feel that though English may serve as a link language and the language of opportunities, local or regional languages should be preferred. But such views are in a minority and most Indians regard English as an Indian language and a necessary part of everyone's development. They feel that English had made positive contributions to our freedom struggle and occupies a neutral position, thus making it more acceptable to the southern states. It is also supposed to be the language that will open newer worlds of knowledge and opportunities and power. It was the common consensus that English is here to stay. As Professor **Amitabha Basu** put it:

English is the language of the new global world. Wherever you go, you can manage with English. There is no point in wishing away the importance of English.

(Agnihotri and Khanna: 1997: 117)

Spread of democracy and expansion of educational opportunities have led to a phenomenal increase in the number of students, schools and colleges. Education is no longer the exclusive privilege of the upper classes. More and more students from the lower strata of society, from marginal groups and from rural areas are enrolling in schools and colleges. Most of them are first generation learners and do not have an environment conducive for learning, both in terms of technology (namely facilities for learning and teaching languages like T.V, radio etc.) and home and peer environment. Many of them are even unable to afford even basic textbooks, let alone extra reading material. They have very little time to devote to their studies, as they have to help their parents in the fields or at home. Most of them are from regional medium schools and cannot relate to English.

A vicious circle operates at the school levels-the socially and economically backward cannot afford to give their children expensive private school education because they are unable to complete at the national level, which in turn keeps them where they are. At the college level the teaching of English has been more commonly associated with literature than with language teaching. Initially, the majority of students seeking admission to colleges came from English medium backgrounds and had no problems in adjusting to the college atmosphere. But things started changing in the sixties when more students from the lower sections of society and from rural areas started seeking admission to the colleges. The medium of instruction in most Indian universities continued to be English though the **University Education Commission** had in 1949 recommended regional languages to be the medium of education.

The demand for English education has led to a phenomenal growth in the number of English medium schools and colleges, with their attendant problems. Education has become such a lucrative business that several erstwhile charity organisations have set up expensive private English medium schools. Minority rights guaranteed in the constitution have helped in these malpractices. Nothing prevents the minority institutions from admitting in their institutions children not belonging to minority communities. The vague three- language formula enables them to teach English as a mother tongue, even when it is not the mother tongue of anyone even remotely connected with the school.

The position of English in India is a complex one, made even more complicated by the varied condition under which Indian learners learn the language. English is not really a foreign language, more like a second language. Yet it is not really a second language in the sense in which it is used in the English speaking countries. So English language teaching in India is different from the teaching of English to immigrants in UK, US and other English speaking countries. Moreover the existence of a non-native variety of English, namely, Indian English, complicates matters.

Kachru has identified two broad categories of non-native English in India—the *institutionalised* and the *performance variety*. The performance variety is confined to a few functional contexts like tourism, commerce and other international transactions. It is the institutional variety, which had some educational and pedagogical value. English language teaching and learning in this context is a complicated affair because the learners in this situation are not exposed much to native varieties of English (i.e. material written abroad) but are surrounded by non-native varieties of English through radio, TV newspapers, journals etc. The non-native varieties naturally clash with the standard variety but it is this non-native variety that comes naturally to the students, not only because they are more exposed to it, but also because of the pull of the mother-tongue. So any future plans regarding the role and importance of English must keep these factors in mind.

6.4 FUTURE PLANS

One has to be realistic when planning the future of English in India. What one must aim at neither the native nor the non-native variety but a compromise between the two (i.e. the variety used by the educated non-native speakers using English as a world language). The aim should be to equip the learners with an ability to switch from the local variety to the standard variety whenever the need arises, not only in the limited sense of the formal features of the language, but in all those wider aspects which makes communication possible. This should be the realistic goal, rather than the idealistic goal of 'native-like' linguistic/communicative competence.

One fallacy in the English language teaching efforts till now has been the total banishment of the L1 from the English language classroom. Instead what should be done is to exploit the learners L1 competence to enhance their English competence. There may be more similarities between the two languages at the discourse level than there are dissimilarities at the formal/structural levels. What is needed is to equip the second language learner with the mental ability to translate at the discourse level from one language to another, provided of course they can also make the required formal/ structural changes in the language. Instead of regarding it as a menace, one has to positively exploit the learner's tendency to understand the target language in terms of his L1 or the target language systems already learnt.

The learners' needs have to be made primary and one way of doing so is the introduction of *English for specific purposes* (ESP). It entails the provision of English language teaching to meet the learner's particular needs; is related to the particular occupation or area of study; selective (and not general) language content. But ESP teaching is made complex by the fact that students at both school and college levels have little in common. They have varying levels of language competence, (having been exposed to English for anything from 2 to 7 years), gender, mother tongue, regional language etc.

Let us discuss the target and focus of English at the present time. *The target for ELT planners in India should be inculcating fluency and accuracy* among learners. Students should be provided enough opportunities for conversations and discussions in formal and informal situations so as to maximise the benefits from their limited knowledge of the language. Focus should be not only on RP (Received Pronunciation), intonation and stress. The aim should be not to teach rules and grammar but to enable the learners to convert and use the rules that they already know. 'Accuracy' teaching should be limited to the school levels, and after that learners should be made aware of the common errors that Indian speakers of English make. Integration of fluency and accuracy in English teaching will be more beneficial than the present focus only on accuracy.

The overall target should be the enhancement of the *communicative skills* of the learners. Conversation, discussion, writing, listening all will be covered under the umbrella skill of communication. The provision for fluency will take care of the conversational aspects but special measures will have to be devised to improve the comprehension, writing and listening skills of the learners. Writing skills are different from speech in as much the interlocutor is not present to make his/her contribution to the interaction. In a spoken situation it is possible to make adjustments and modifications and continue the conversation. But in written speech both the roles have to be undertaken by the writer, thus making the task more difficult. The same ability has to be used by the reader to comprehend written language.

At the same time provisions have to be made to teach *functional skills* to students if they decide to discontinue studies and join vocational courses or any job (as discussed earlier.) Functional skills can include items like reporting, correspondence, abstracting, summarising, narrating, editing etc. In this context ELT planning assumes crucial importance. No amount of syllabus changes will bring about significant improvements if the situation in the classroom does not change. Classroom activity is far more important than syllabus content. In India, school teachers, need to acquire professional qualification (i.e. a B.Ed degree) in colleges language teaching is entrusted in the hands of teachers having degrees in literature. This may not be enough for language teaching, particularly second language teaching.

The selection of teachers, the selection of textbooks also leaves much to be desired. Textbooks are selected without considering the cultural, linguistic backgrounds of the students, (and also the teachers) the beliefs and practices. For example prescribing **Henry James'** *The Ambassadors* for second year BBA students, hailing mostly from rural, non-English medium backgrounds is the height of foolishness. Moreover foreign, when prescribed are not properly edited making them unsuitable for both the learner and the teacher. Texts should be prescribed keeping in mind not only thematic appropriateness, but also style (i.e. who wrote it and for whom.) The aim should be to prepare material in such a way as to guide students to an awareness of the communicative requirements operating in that field in real life. A written text involves as much interaction between reader and writer as in a spoken face-to-face interaction situation. To understand the text the reader must engage in interpretive and decoding exercises. So when editing texts proper comprehension exercises must be framed in order to develop this understanding faculty.

6.5 ROLE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

In any discussion of the role of the English language in India one issue we cannot avoid is the role and relevance of English literature in the teaching set up. What is under fire today is not the teaching of English literature but the lopsided content which puts too much focus on British literature. It is recognised that literature can play a very constructive role in language teaching activities. Literature both foreign and Indian is a repository of masterful language use which no student of language can afford to ignore. Moreover, literature can provide the students with an opportunity of comparative study. Through literature it is possible to compare the values and attitudes of different countries and cultures. This widens the worldview of the students and makes them world citizens in the true sense of the term. Literature is the repository of the greatest thoughts of human kind and the most valuable parts of cultures of different nations. In addition, study of literature can foster in the students critical and scholarly habits, develop aesthetic and philosophical tendencies and in certain cases inculcate faith in collective life.

The benefits of literature study are undeniable. But what is needed is to reorient literature studies and modify the focus to keep it in tune with modern requirements. Out of the three aims of teaching (*i.e. giving information, imparting skills and changing attitudes*) literature teaching till now has remained limited to only the second. The drawbacks of this method is obvious- it presupposes the learners familiarity with the language; secondly with proliferation of *bazaar notes* it is possible for the student to pass all examinations without actual contact with the textbook; thirdly instead of encouraging the students to relate with the text on an individual level, the present system encourages them to mug up the sayings and opinions of critics and reproduce them verbatim in the examination without any personal addition whatsoever. As a reaction to the extreme subjectivity of literature studies the discipline of *Stylistics* developed but also could not survive for long due to its inherent drawbacks. But the welcome change was a greater focus on language. While literary focussed more on content, the linguists gave importance to language. Both come with their own dangers and when taken to extremes can defeat the whole purpose of teaching.

To sum up, literature has an important place in Indian language teaching endeavours, provided it is handled carefully and sensitively by keeping the learners, needs in mind.

6.6 THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS

Amidst all these discussions of Imperial designs and political compulsions, some important questions remain unanswered: How many people in India do speak English? What are the criteria for the definition of bi-lingualism as fixed by the Indian Census Office— is it a few words, some basic communicative skills or complete linguistic mastery? How many people *regularly and fluently* use English in their daily affairs?

The standards adopted by the Indian Census Office in themselves lack standardisation. Down the years the Census Questionnaire on language has undergone dramatic changes. The questions in 1901, 1911 and 1921 were confined to the respondent's knowledge of English only. In 1931 the aim was to find out the language which language the respondent uses most commonly in addition to the mother tongue. In the 1941 and 1951 the language question was repeated on the pattern of the 1931 question with the specification that only an Indian language could be mentioned as a subsidiary language and only that language was to be recorded which the respondent knew best. In the 1961 census two important changes were made to the concept of bi-lingualism, first that even a non- Indian language could be recorded as a subsidiary language and secondly instead of one, two secondary were recorded. Dialects of the mother tongue did not however qualify as mother tongue. In 1971 the same pattern continued except that the conditions regarding dialects were dropped. In 1981 only one subsidiary language was counted. So figures from different census are not comparable—for example the figure of English bi-lingualism declined from 25 million in 1971 to 2.6 million.

Year	Total population (In millions)	Total 7+literacy rate (In millions)	Bilinguals (In%)	Eng.Bi-lingls (In Millions)	population (In Millions)
1951	361	289	20	not recorded	not recorded
1961	439	344	30	45	11
1971	548	432	36	71	25
1981	685	556	44	73	3
1991	844	701	52	not recorded	not recorded

(Agnihotri and Khanna: 1997: 37)

English Bi-linguals constitute about 4% of the total bi-linguals in India. But unless more standardized and uniform methods of evaluation are developed census data will remain suspect. The 2001 census throws up interesting facts about the present position of English in India. English is nowhere among the top 15 languages in India, is not the first language among language in even the north eastern states, and at best qualifies as the second preference language for some speakers. The language data collected from the 1991 census gives a fairly correct idea of how many people actually speak English in India and at what level.

The 1981 census reported 13.3 percent of the population as bilingual. The People of India project of the Anthropological Survey of India, which assembled statistics on communities rather than on individuals, found that only 34 percent of communities reported themselves as monolingual. An Assamese who also knew Bengali, or someone from a Marathi-speaking family living in Delhi who attended a Hindi-medium school, might give Bengali or Hindi as his or her second language but also know English from formal school instruction or picking it up on the street. It is suspected that many people identify language with literacy and hence will not describe themselves as knowing a language unless they can read it and, conversely, may say they know a language if they can make out its alphabet. Thus people who speak English but are unable to read or write it may say they do not know the language.

English-language daily newspapers have a circulation of 3.1 million copies per day, but several people probably read each copy. There are estimates of about 3 percent (some 27 million people) for the number of literates in English, but even if this percentage is valid, the number of people with a speaking ability of the language is certainly higher than of those who read it. And, the figure of 3 percent for English literacy may be low. According to one set of figures, 17.6 million people were enrolled in English classes in 1977, which would be 3.2 percent of the population of India according to the 1971 census. Taking the most conservative evaluation of how much of the instruction would "stick," this still leaves a larger part of the population than 3 percent with some English literacy.

6.7 THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

As Khanna and Agnihotri (quoting Khubchandani) point out Language teaching and learning in the traditional Indian set-up was quite different. Education was mainly through *pathshalas* and *madarsas* and was an integral part of a complex social order of interaction and communication. The linguistic inheritance that the child brought to the school was not looked down upon. Instead the existing skills were

polished and a linguistic repertoire was built up which included styles ranging from local dialects to “highbrow styles”. For example a Sanskrit scholar could read Sanskrit not only in the Devnagri script, but also in Telugu and many other Indian scripts. This produced a linguistic heterogeneity that is perhaps unparalleled in the world. Linguistic variation instead of acting as a barrier to communication was actually facilitating interaction and communication.

Uncomfortable with this heterogeneity the British rulers imposed the English language to create a monistic solution for all India’s language problems. But as was apparent from the very beginning this could never succeed and voices of caution and protest continued to be raised throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. After Independence numerous committees and commissions were established in an attempt to find a solution to the vexed language problem. Without exception all these committees emphasised the importance of the mother tongue in the education of the child. This also was not the solution because it ignored the basic heterogeneous nature of Indian society where different languages are used for various occasions.

Despite repeated attempts to enhance the importance of the regional languages and mother tongue in the educational system of the country, it seems to be a losing battle. As can be expected in the present situation where English has become synonymous with power and prestige the importance of English has continued to rise. It has got tremendous ‘upmarket value’. Be it education (especially professional and technical), administration, judiciary, information technology, job opportunities in multinational companies, fluency in English is the primary requirement. English continues to be the language of commerce, industry, and banking and is. English continues to be the passport to higher professional and technical education by renowned institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Management (IIMs). It is the general belief that proficiency in English will open the doors of material prosperity and well being. The language remains associated with career advancement, social mobility and social status and prestige and power. It being a world language it will open windows of opportunity not only in India but also all over the world.

6.8 LET US SUM UP

There is a general craze for ‘convent education’ and this type of education has remained the exclusive privilege of the rich. Again, without exception the standard of English teaching in Indian schools (with the exception of a few elite schools) has fallen dramatically, chiefly because infrastructure has not been able to keep up with the exploding number of students. But the role and importance of English in the Indian society continues to rise unhindered. Vernacular and mother tongue education continue to be neglected. Thus, while Hindi remains the ‘official’ language, English continues to rule the roost. Problems caused by this phenomenon are indeed difficult to resolve.

6.9 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the importance and role of English in modern India.
2. Bring out the link between language teaching and the study of literary texts.

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