

## Hybrid Lexical Items in Indian English

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### ABSTRACT:

Indian English has come to be recognized as a variety of English. The borrowing of Indian words into English had started long before Independence. The Indianization of the English language after Independence has been studied by several scholars. Braj Kachru in his earlier studies has focused his attention on a number of productive linguistic processes characteristic of Indian English, especially hybrid lexical items. For Kachru, a hybridized item is simply a lexical item which is comprised of two or more elements, at least one of which is from a South Asian language and one from English. But according to Dr. Shastri 'hybridization', 'absorption' and 'assimilation' are distinct stages in the process of borrowing in languages. An attempt has been made to analyze hybrid lexical items from 'The Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English' following Kachru's model.

**KEYWORDS:** hybrid lexical items, Indian English, Kachru, assimilation, Indianization, linguistic, etc.

### INTRODUCTION:

Indian English has come to be recognized as a variety of English in its own right. The process of Indianization of the English language had, however, started long before independence. One of the major processes in this phenomenon was the borrowing of Indian words into the English language. Lexical borrowing in English has been discussed at length by a number of scholars.

In the present paper modest attempt has been made to focus on hybrid lexical items in Indian English. It also throws light on the significant contribution of the most influential works on the hybrid lexical items in Indian English by Braj Kachru and Dr. S. V. Shastri.

The first concerted effort towards a systematic and comprehensive description of Indian English may be said to be the building of 'The Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English' parallel to the LOB and Brown Corpora of British and American English by Dr. S. V. Shastri in the early eighties. It is a million-word computer corpus of Indian English intended to be a representative corpus of sample texts printed and published in 1978.

The present study is based on above mentioned corpus of Indian English. However, there is certain amount of inconsistency in coding of Indian English texts. While Indian words have largely been coded more consistently, the coding of hybrid expressions is rather very inconsistent. Given this structure of corpus and its strengths and weaknesses, we have made the best use of the material. We have briefly highlighted the contribution of the most influential works on hybrid lexical items in Indian English.

Kachru discusses various types of lexical extensions and innovations in his 'Lexical innovations in South Asian English' (1975). He does not treat these innovations merely as Indian but as South Asian. The examples discussed in this article are drawn primarily from Indian English texts i.e. press materials and creative writings.

In his earlier studies on SAE (e.g. Kachru 1961 and 1965 and later) he has focused attention on a number of productive linguistic processes characteristic of

Indian English. But this study is data-oriented and is restricted to 'hybrid innovations'. According to him the lexical aspect has serious implications for intelligibility-- both in the written and spoken modes-- between SAE users of other varieties of English. According to him, the deviations at this level are especially evident in the texts of SAE creative writing and journalism.

In this study he uses the term *lexis* in a rather restricted sense, referring to single lexical items. He classifies these lexical innovations under two groups:

- i) Those items which have become part of the lexical stock of English language. He terms these as 'assimilated items' or 'non-restricted lexical items'.
- ii) Those items which have not necessarily been included in the lexicons of the native varieties of English. He terms these as 'restricted lexical items'.

According to him, the borrowing of lexical items from South Asian language into SAE is not arbitrary. These are register - restricted and may be classified according to their semantic fields.

Thus, he makes a brief survey of single lexical items and mainly focuses his attention on certain productive processes employed by educated SAE users at the lexical level in producing hybrid lexical items.

According to him "by a hybridized lexical item is meant a lexical item which comprises two or more elements, at least one of which is from a South Asian language and one from English. The elements of a hybrid formation may belong either to an open set or to a closed system in *lexis*. An open-set item is considered 'open' in the sense that there are no grammatical constraints on the selection of the elements of the item, for example, *lathi-charge*; *kumkum-mark*. A closed-system item is 'closed' in the sense that at least one element belongs to the closed system of a South Asian language; for example, the suffix- *wala* in *policewala*".

There are certain structural and contextual constraints on hybridized items. By structural constraint is meant the possibility of 'element substitution. in the term '*lathi-charge*', '*danda*' is not substitutable for '*lathi*', although the two items are semantically 'identical'. On the other hand, there are other hybrid formations which are used interchangeably (of. *police thana*' and '*police-station*'). The question of contextual constraints on South Asian items in SAE is further discussed by him in '*Hybrid lexical sets*'.

Further the hybrid innovations are classified into three types by him:

- i) **Hybrid Collocations:** A hybrid collocation is composed of elements from two or more different languages; it is formally different and contextually restricted to one register in SAE. Examples are: *Khilafat committee*, *Sarvodaya leader*, *Satyagraha movement*, *Swatantra party* etc.

- ii) **Hybrid Lexical Sets:** A South Asian lexical item does not have contextual constraints in the same sense in which it has these constraints in SAE. Therefore, these may be termed hybrid, lexical sets. For example, the item *pardah* precedes only -women, -system, -lady. The item thus becomes register restricted and has a limited semantic range in Indian English. But in Hindi-Urdu '*pardah*' does not have any such register restriction. Among others, the following are contexts in which it occurs: *drapes*, *curtain* (of a movie, theatre), *layers*, etc. Other items such as *ahimsa*, *satyagraha* *Sarvodaya* are again restricted to one register (that of politics), while in Hindi-Urdu they have no such register - restriction.

iii) Hybrid Reduplication: Hybrid Reduplication items are those, in which the two individual items from two languages which combine have the same or at least a related meaning in the source language. The examples are: lathi-stick, cotton-kapas, curved-kukri.

Thus, Kachru's is the first concerted effort to identify Indian lexical items in (Indian) English based on actual data. It is obviously not a comprehensive survey.

Shastri's 'Code-mixing in the process of Indianization of English: A Corpus based Study' (1988) is an attempt to partly overcome this limitation. The analysis of code-mixing i.e., mixing of Indian items in (Indian) English is based on a part of a large data base which was in the process of being built at that time.

In this article Shastri proposes to distinguish between hybridization (not Kachru's 'hybridization') which may or may not survive and absorption on the one hand and assimilation on the other. However, as stated earlier for Kachru, a hybridized item is simply a lexical item which is comprised of two or more elements, at least one of which is from a South East Asian language and one from English.

But according to Shastri 'hybridization', 'absorption' and 'assimilation' are distinct stages in that order, in the process of borrowing in languages.

Further he illustrates the process of hybridization with examples from Indian English Corpus texts. He has also analyzed hybridized items.

Then he discusses the concept of absorption. According to him 'absorption' is a process of naturalization of the borrowed and hybrid items which become stabilized by gaining linguistic and socio-cultural sanction at the local or regional level. The language speaking community tacitly accepts them. Linguistically the phenomenon consists in borrowing items and treating them as if they were the stock of the receiving language at all levels phonological, morphological and syntactic: brahman (Indian) brahim/ 'brahmin' / (Anglicized) and then 'brahmins, brahmanic; brahmin ' priest, and 'born' brahmin and so on.

Further the process of assimilation is discussed. The term 'assimilation' is used for those items that become part and parcel of the native varieties of English. According to him, the need for assimilating Indian elements into English has arisen especially in the fields of philosophy and religion and in the field of fine arts. Though this is a recent phenomenon, a number of register bound items have already found their way into Standard British and American dictionaries.

According to him, more striking forms of assimilation are those that borrow the abstract concepts of Indian Socio-Cultural Phenomena and the Indian way of conceptualizing reality through the Indian language items, and use them to interpret the native English speakers' own predicament.

However, the article does not give a comprehensive list of items borrowed into English i.e., those which occur in the corpus.

#### Hybrid Expressions:

Kachru (1975) in his 'Lexical Innovations in South Asian English' has focused his attention on hybrid formations. He has grouped these formations into certain categories. Further he has also classified these hybrid formations into several semantic fields.

According to him, a large number of hybrid formations belong to the nominal group with two or more elements in the structure. Then he has divided these elements into the following two subgroups:

- 1) South Asian item as head

2) South Asian item as modifier

We have got several types of hybrid expressions in the Indian English corpus. As stated earlier, in the corpus the coding of hybrid expressions is rather very inconsistent.

However, a systematic and elaborate treatment of this phenomenon appears in Shastri (1988) which is based on a manual analysis of a part of the corpus data.

We have a limited number of hybrid expressions marked as such in the corpus. Following Kachru's model for the analysis of hybrid expressions, we have arrived at the following findings:

i) N + N: In this group the first component is from English and it belongs to the class noun, e.g., Blook Samiti (1180A11), Cycle – rikshaws (0190K27), doctor – sahib (1600L21), head-pundit (1110K23)

ii) English Prefix and Indian Stem:

e.g. anti-Brahmin (0920G32), ex-Shirastedar (1930606)  
non-Adivasis (1470F15), nonBrahmins (0960G32),  
non-Vedic (0380G43), proto-Brahmi (0210J56) sub-Taluk (0970F06)

iii) English noun and Indian suffix:

e.g. energywallas (1210H18), filmwallas (1510L05),  
supplywallas (1640N04), doctor-ji (1230MO2)

iv) N + N: In this group the first component is from Indian languages.

e. g. ghazal-line (0760E12), ghazal-writer (0710E12),  
karka-relations (1550J34), kel goat (0390E01),  
lati-charge (0080A34), makra motif (1520655),  
mundu-style (1560R02), Naibcourts (1380H26),  
Natak-Akademy (0910005), panshop (0130409),  
prana-mythology (1840D05) quwwali-lovers (0540E01), rupee-note (1720P13),  
Sahitya-Academi (0350H13), shawl makers (0540E01), sruti-interval (1830J68),  
svara-interval (1840J68), sufi-saints (1520C 10), sufi-poet (1310C10), wayu-kaptor  
(1360M01)

According to Kachru this class is most productive.

v) Indian noun functioning as adjective/adjective and English noun:

e.g. abeer-red (1390P08), mehndired (0060P08),  
vedic epic (0120F25) -- Note the analyzed adjective vedic.

vi)-ing as head,

e.g. bhajan-singing (0340C10), chapati-making  
(0550E36), chappal-throwing (0030B22), ghazal singing (0290E13),  
qawwali-singing (1510C10), paan-chewing (0460G218),  
shawl-making (0370E01)

vii) -ed as head,

e.g. bandish-oriented (0120005), dhoti-clad (0030K31),  
kohl-eye (0090E13), koel-throated (0400E13),  
kathak-based (1950005), khayal-based (1030004),  
rishba-based (0700002), sari-clad (0040K21), sari-fold (0430K12), tappa-oriented  
(0970004)

**CONCLUSION:**

Now, while Shastri's (1988) observations are based on manual analysis of a part of the corpus data, ours is based on the analysis of the inadequately coded instances. Hence neither is fully comprehensive.

However, they serve to point out the all-important feature-- hybridization in Indian English.

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