
THE LEXICAL INNOVATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPLEMENTED BY WORDS FROM INDIAN CONTINENT

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Abstract: India is a land of diversity, continuity and geographically unique with rich cultural heritage and extensive language variations. Since the inhabitants of India are originally immigrated to the continent, it is obvious that there are considerable differences and variations exist in the dialect of the people. Cultural integration has taken place rapidly and led to the intermixing of languages and dialects of the nation. In 1835, the English Education Act was passed by Council of India to spend on education and literature in India from British Parliament. "It is well known that the potential open-endedness of the English lexicon invites innovation and regional variation around the English speaking world [1]." This lexical innovation has widened, enriched and has encouraged the extensive use of English language worldwide. Such lexical innovations are a necessity since a newly loaned word can better describe the contextual meaning or can serve a particular purpose which is non-existent in borrower's language. Many words have been borrowed/loaned from Indian languages (from both Aryan and Dravidian) to English language. This paper explains in detail the words that originated from Indian languages and their position and usages in English language.

Keywords: Cultural Integration, Indian English, Languages and Dialects, Lexical Innovation.

Introduction: "It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the paltriest abridgements used at preparatory schools in England (Macaulay, 1835) [2]." Thus stated Macaulay because he has realized huge intrinsic value of Indian languages, its vernacular usages and precise conversion of descriptive meaning. Many a times, it is discussed the cultural and intellectual benefits imparted by the British colonizers to Indians, whereas seldom is spoken on the advantages reaped by the Britishers from Indian languages and literature. Many Indian words, mainly from Sanskrit and Persian language, were absorbed into the English language during the British colonial rule in India (for 200 years) and they took many words from Indian languages on the period known as the British Raj. As far as history is concerned, the following is found to be a really impressive statement on India prior to British Raj or rather considers it as a complement for Indian culture, values and languages by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay.

"I have traveled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in the country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation[3]."

As it is understood, English is the most global of all the languages used in the world and has been continuously enriched by other languages since the advent of colonization. The influence of Indian languages on English is evident from the number of Indian words that have made to the English dictionary. The English-speaking world is using more and more Indian words as a part of their regular communication. Many Indian words have made its way to the English vocabulary. More than five

hundred words of Indian origin were absorbed into English during that period and it has grown ever since. Currently the Oxford English Dictionary lists over 700 words of Indian origin. Lexical innovation has happened when Britishers have Anglicized names of places such as Madras, Calicut, Bangalore, etc., and activities such as Batta (allowance), Zamindari (Ownership of huge land) etc. Though, “no comprehensive dictionary of Indian English words is available in modern times. Earlier, in a supplement to the fifth edition and now in “the ninth edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, over 240 words from Indian English have been included. Many of these new words are commonly used in Indian kitchens, such as ‘keema’ (finely chopped meat), ‘papad’ (thin wafer) and cooking ingredients like ‘curry leaf [4].”

Borrowing and Hybridizing: Borrowing is considered the most frequent as well as common process in which new-words are formed by adopting words from any other languages along with the concepts or ideas they are used for. The borrowed term generally substitutes a native term or may remain in use with the native term in various different social contexts. Hybridization of language happens when owing to code-mixing of words or phrases of different languages. In some rare cases the grammar and sentence structure are incorporated to the vocabulary of yet another language for a meaningful description. As a result, a new word or phrase is formulated that has the quality of both the parent languages. Leadraan, Companiyan, filmain are some such examples. “Each word formation process will result in the production of a specific type of word. Consequently, an understanding of these processes is one way of studying the different types of words that exist in English [5].”

Some of the words which were less recognized or we can say they have an Indian origin which is being used in the foreign language such as English. Most of these words were taken from the Indian language during the period of 16th to 20th century mainly. Consequently, there are many words that have come to English language from French and Portuguese culture, which has indirectly been taken out from Indian language because the some of those words were absorbed by the French and Portuguese from the native of Indian language and of the words that came into English, there are certain characteristics that are easily recognizable that they have been taken from the Indian culture. The first of which that, most words did not have equivalents in English, such as yoga, swastika, khaki, sari and sati. Plenty of words were adopted and given a different meaning such as nirvana, kedgerie, Jodhpur. However, these words were rarely substituted to English words, as it happened during Old English and the Middle English periods, with Latin and French words. Moreover, the words that were borrowed which already had meanings were used to adorn a text or speech since it sounded different and fashionable, e.g., pariah, pundit, purdah. “The reason why many Indians often change, switch and mix one language to/with another is that India is a multi-lingual nation and more than one language is complementarily used particularly in the urban areas where people from different places get together [6].” Hence it shows that the regional language and English have co-existed for centuries and more than in other languages, the evolution in English has remained somewhat fluid, allowing for new words to be invented or accepted into the official lexicon.

Prominent Words Borrowed from Indian languages to English:

Avatar – A word taken from Sanskrit, descent of a deity from a heaven. The famous director James Cameron also made a Hollywood movie named as Avatar.

Baba - Baba has variety of meanings in English Dictionary. It is normally derived for an informal address to one’s father. Further, it is also a respectful address for an older man.

Bandanna- A large handkerchief usually figured and brightly colored. Portuguese from, Hindi bandulu (tie dyeing) and bandana (to tie): from Sanskrit bandana tying. This word was probably absorbed to Portuguese, when the Portuguese ruled over Goa, Bombay during the early part of the 17th century, and from Portuguese was absorbed to English.

Bangle - From the root word bangadi (Hindi). It is a type of bracelet that are big in size and generally worn by the women. This word has been taken by Author Anees Jung who is an Indian author to her story ‘Lost Spring: Stories Of Stolen Childhood’ in which the life of the bangle makers of Firozabad are

described. Moreover, this story is picked by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for the students of class 12th.

Bungalow - This word was used to denote a house and was generally considered as a word as a mixture of Bangla and Urdu languages which is absorbed by the English language.

Chai - A beverage made up of black teas, hot milk with sweet spices based on Indian recipes. Sweet spices include cardamom, ginger, etc., and widely used across India.

Chappal - It is a type of open sandals similar to a flip flop and is a recent addition to English.

Chit - This is another Hindi word which means a letter or note.

Dhaba - It denotes an Indian road side food stall.

Garam Masala - This is an interesting word adopted from Hindi and Urdu which converted to real English means hot mixture or spicy mixture.

Guru - It is a Hindi root word which denotes same as a Teacher and moreover it is also referred to as a honor to teacher.

Gymkhana - It is a place where sports activities were taken place and where the abilities and skills of an individual were tested. In English speaking countries, this is referred to a place where horses are trained. In general, this word has been reframed as only GYM where a person's abilities and skills are tested and trained.

Jungle - For your surprise the most common word of our English language to denote a large area covered with trees and undergrowth is Forest. But another word for that is the **Jungle**, which is a Hindi word taken by the English language. It is originated from the Sanskrit language. Although the real meaning of this in Sanskrit language is a dry land but in the Anglo Indian version on it means a dense forest. So most preferably, it led to the same meaning as that of the forest.

Karma- From Sanskrit, this is the result of a person's actions as well as the actions done by their forefathers. This is the term which explains the cycle of cause and effect done by them or to them.

Khadi- It is an Indian homespun cloth made up of cotton. It became a symbol of 'Swadeshi' movement during the independence struggle of India.

Panchayat- It is a village community in India. It comprises of a group of five people who are considered equivalent to a judge in rural areas.

Pyjama- It denotes the very loose fitting sleeping clothes, the English word pyjama was taken from the Hindi word *payajama*. Broken down, 'pay' means leg and 'jama' means clothing, thus referring to some very relaxing, loose and light in weight trousers with a waistband.

Loot- This word denotes to robbery, or a theft.

Samosa- A small turnover of Indian origin filled with vegetables, meat, hot veggies, or some fried rice. It is one of the most common snacks in India.

Shampoo- It is derived word from Hindi which was originally 'champoo' which meant to rub on something. This word is one of the most common words used in English.

Thug- it is denote a thief or con man.

Veranda- Generally in Hindi we call it as 'baramdaa'. So as far as we know it might have probably been changed to any other culture and then adopted by the English language. This word was used by Ruskin Bond in many of his short stories.

Yoga- This is the form of meditation which is being popularized worldwide these days. This was prevalent in India and is derived from the ancient ancestors of the Indian race. International Yoga Day is also celebrated worldwide on 21st June every year.

English As A Lingua Franca: "About 80 per cent of the English speakers in the world are nonnative speakers. They will have a great impact on the English language. The so-called center countries (e.g., the United Kingdom and the United States) will no longer be able to set the trends [7]."

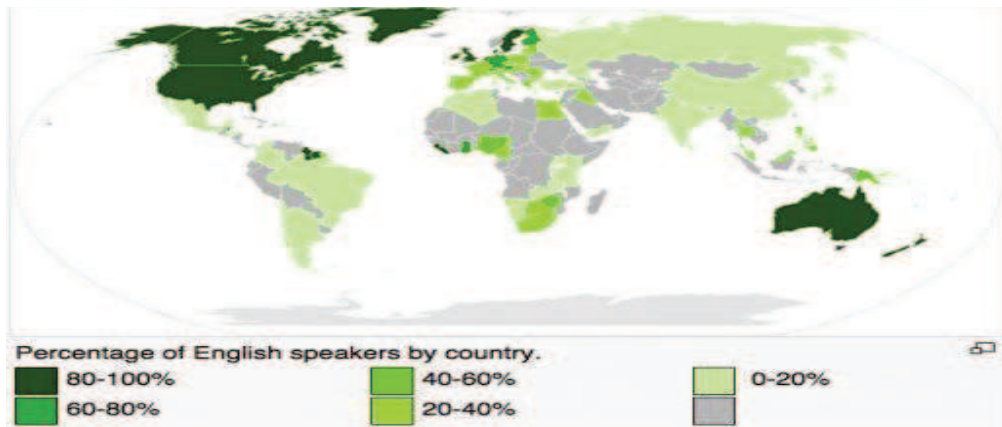


Fig. 1: Demonstrates The Global Expansion Of The People Who Speak In English

This shows that across the world, English has become the medium of communication. As far as India is concerned, it is the second largest country in the world in terms of the percentage of speakers in English. “Given the extensive spread of the language throughout a wide number of domains, as well as geographically speaking, it has become clear that users of English no longer include just monolingual native speakers (NSs), but increasingly more bilinguals or multilinguals, for whom English is a second or even third language, and who unavoidably bring to it many diverse linguistic and cultural influences [8].”

The following chart breaks down the most common origins of words that constitute the English language as a flexible whole. It shows that more than 70% of the English vocabulary is absorbed from other world languages. This rampant absorption from world languages to English has played a catalyst to expand this language worldwide. Since “language plays a major role as marker or indicator of one’s cultural identity, [10]” cultural context of the interaction and even the cultural cues carried by the language used need to be considered while forming or absorbing new words to the lexical innovation efforts of English language.

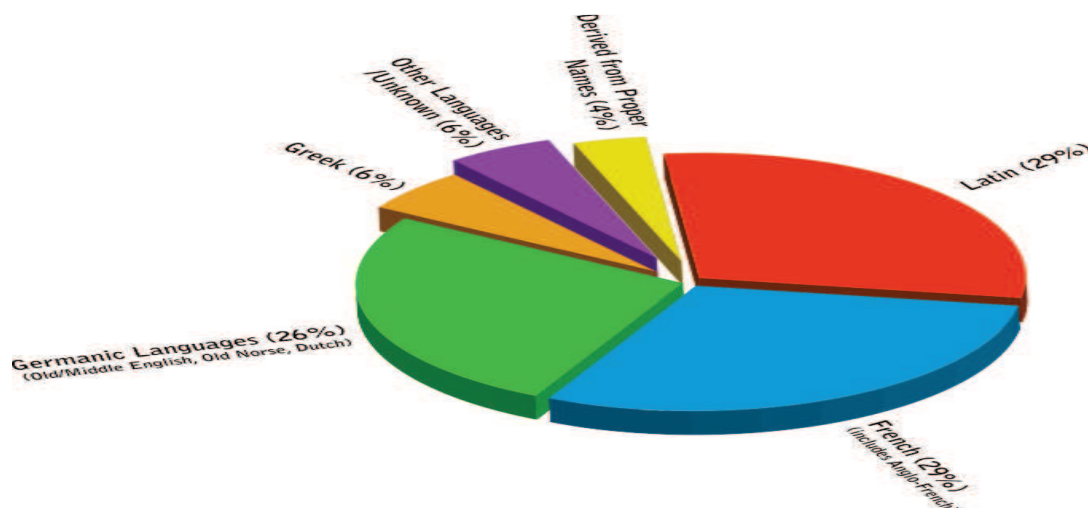


Fig. 2: Explains The Origin Of Words That Constituted English Language

Conclusion: The lexical innovation has widened, enriched and has encouraged the extensive use of English language worldwide. The intent of this study is to investigate and understand the popularity of English as a lingua franca bolstered by word absorption from other languages. “What a language is or is not depends on the historical and structural conditions for its maintenance and use, on the social conditions of its institutionalization, on the symbolic value attached to it and to its users, and the

support mechanisms available for its development, enrichment and promotion. [9]” When two cultures are exposed to each other over an extended time, their languages begin to influence each other and words from one language are assimilated into the other. The assimilation could take place with the same pronunciation as the donor language or a distortion depending on the pronunciation limits of the recipient language.

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