CHAPTER V

VOCABULARY
The vocabulary of a language is the sum total of the lexical items used in the language from time to time or at any given point of time. The total vocabulary of a language is always much larger than what the speech community uses in a particular context. Applying Saussure's concepts it can be said that the total vocabulary is the langue and the vocabulary that a person uses in a situation or during his lifetime is like a Parole. Although the statistics are not available it is generally believed that the words or lexical items used in spoken and written
forms of a language are only fragment of the total number of words, phrases and idioms that the language has. For example, it is said that the English language has about four million words, phrases and idioms. Out of which a few thousand words are in use in the life of the common man. It is said that Shakespeare used in all his works only 8000 words. Milton with all his scholarship used only 12000 words. The advocates of Basic English argue that all that we need for day to day communication of English is only 800 words. In spite of this, vocabulary of a language is the real strength of it.

The English language is considered to have the largest and richest vocabulary. The English vocabulary has been enriched from time to time from many sources. The basic vocabulary of English is of Saxon origin. But in course of its history English came in contact with various languages of the world and it readily borrowed words from all most all the languages. From the Scandinavian invasions the English borrowed the Danish vocabulary. The contact between the English language and Latin during
the Roman invasion of Britain gave a sizable number of Latin words into English. Latin words have been flowing into English ever since. Latin and Greek continue to provide with new terms needed for technological age. The English vocabulary has drawn on languages not only on languages of Europe but also from outside. The British colonialism brought the English language in live contact with many African and Asian languages. The list that follows would give an idea of the size and the extent of the borrowings and the variety of sources from which the English language enriched itself.

(1) **FRENCH** (often from Latin)

- anguish
- battle
- beauty
- beef
- chappel
- charity
- courtesy
- damage
debonair
delight
dinner
feast
flower
forest
govern
joy
liberty
marriage
mercy
miracle
navy
parliament
peace
people
pleasure
power
prayer
prince
prison
privilege
reign
religion
repent
riches
saint
soldier
state
tower
verdict
very
vessel
ballet
brochure
etiquette
group
naive
police
rendezvous
reprimand
ricochet
soup
camouflage
chic
cliche
elite
garage
liaison
menu
prestige
quiche
suede
a la carte
bete noice
coup d'état
cul de sac
esprit de corps
fait accompli
noblesse oblige
nouveau faire
sovoir faire
tour de force

LATIN (often via French)

accommodate
admire
estimate
exit
experiment
focus
fortune
forum
frigid
genius
glory
grand
honour
hospitality
interim
invention
justice
lens
library
literature
luxury
manufacture
manuscript
medium
miser
moral
municipal
nation
nature
orator
pagan
perfect
persecute
province
public
quality
quasi
republic
science
series
speciman
splendid
squalor
stupid
tedium
tradition
tribe
vacuum
verbatim
via
formation
ad nauseam
bonafides
curriculum vitae
quid pro quo
sine qua non
status quo
sui generis
terra firma

ITALIAN (usually from Latin)

arcade
balcony
bandit
brigand
bronze
cameo
caprice
caress
cartoon
casino
cello
colonial
corridor
dilettante
duet
espresso
fiasco
gazette
gelatine
grotto
incognito
infantry
influenza
malaria
manifesto
nepotism
pastel
piano
picturesque
regatta
replica
salami
scenario
sentinal
sonata
sonnet
spaghetti
squadron
stanza
stiletto
studio
traffic

ANGLO - SAXON

answer
be
begin
cheerful
child
clock
do
fast
fly
freedom
go
happy
hand
heart
help
house
kill
light
life
love
merry
night
old
pain
sad
ship
store
sorrow
thing
thick
time
twelve
upwards
us
wealth
wedding
where
who
work
year

Spanish (often from Latin)
aficionado
alfalfa
alligator
anchovy
armada
bonanza
booby
bravado
cafeteria
canyon
cask
cigar
cockroach
desperado
fiesta
grandee
lasso
macho
marijuana
mosquito
mustang
picaresque
patio
plaza
ranch
rodeo
siesta
sombrero
stampede
tornado

AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

chipmunk
hickory
moccasin
moose
papoose
pecan
possum
powwow
raccoon
stunk
squaw
teepee
terrapin
toboggan
totem
wigwam

SOUTH AMERICAN LANGUAGES

alpaca
cashew
cayenne
coca
condor
cougar
guano
guava
jacaranda
jaguar
petunia
piranha
poncho
puma
quinine
tapioca
tapir
vicuna

CARIBBEAN LANGUAGES
barbecue
cannibal
canoe
cassava
curare
hammock
hurricane
maize
papaya
potato
tobacco

AZTEC

avocado
cocoa
chilli
chocolate
coyote
tomato

WELSH

coracle
corgi
eisteddfod
flannel
flummery

DUTCH

boss
brandy
clink
coleslaw
cruise
decoy
deck
dock
drill (bore)
easel
etch
foist
gin
groove
hoist
keelhaul
kit
landscape
loiter
luck
maelstrom
schooner
skates
sketch
skipper
sledge
sleigh
sloop
splice
splinter
split
spool
trigger
waffle
wagon
yacht

NORSE (through the viking invaders)

anger
are
ask
beg
clumsy
crooked
die
egg
freckles
get
give
husband
knife
law
leg
neck
odd
ransack
rotten
sister
sky
slaughter
take
they
ugly
weak
window

SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES

fjord
geyser
lemming
mink
ombudsman
rug
saga
ski
smorgasbord
walrus

PORTUGUESE  ( often from Latin )

albatross
albino
auto de fe
brocade
cobra
corral
creole
dodo
marmalade
mandrain
pagoda
palaver
piccaninny
port (wine)
rusk
zebra

GAELIC

bard
blarney
bog
brat
brogue
cadge
galore
leprechaun
lock
plaid
shamrock
slogan
smithereens
sporran
spree
tory
trouser
whisky
INUIIT (Eskimo)

anorak
igloo
kayak
parka

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

banana
banjo
chimpanzee
cola
guinea
hoodoo
juju
okra
tango
tote
voodoo
yam
zombie
AFRIKAANS

aardvark
apartheid
boer
commando
kop
kraal
rand
spoor
trek
veld
wildebeest

TURKISH

bosh
caviar
coffee
horde
kabab
kiosk
ottoman
pilau
yoghurt

PERSIAN

bazaar
candy
caravan
check
divan
jackal
jasmine
lemon
lilac
magic
orange
paradise
scimitar
shawl
spinach
teffeta
tale
tulip
turban

ARABIC

admiral
alcohol
algebra
alkali
arsenal
artichoke
assassin
carafe
cipher
cotton
crimson
gazelle
ghoul
harem
hazard
jar
lute
magazine
masquerade
mattress
monsoon
racket
saffron
sash
sherbet
sofa
syrup
tariff
zenith
zero

MALAY

amok
bamboo
batik
caddy (for tea)
compound (buildings)
cockatoo
gingham
gong
kapok
launch (motor boat)
orangutan
paddy
sago
sarang

PACIFIC LANGUAGES

kiwi
mana
moa
taboo
tattoo (on skin)
ukulele

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

boomerang
dingo
budgerigar
kangaroo
koala
kookaburra
wallaby

**CZECH**

howitzer
pistol
robot

**RUSSIAN**

balalaika
borsch
commissary
knout
mammoth
pogrom
samovar
vodka
GREEK

academy
alphabet
anarchy
athlete
atom
automatic
character
chorus
climax
cycle
cynic
democracy
diagnosis
drama
echo
eclipse
emphasis
energy
hero
history
hysterical
idea
irony
machine
music
myth
ocean
orchestra
parallel
philosophy
physical
planet
poet
politics
rhythm
sceptical
school
technical
theory
tone
astronaut
polystyrene
schizophrenia
HUNGARIAN

coach
goulash
hussan
paprika
sabre

YIDDISH (from Hebrew or early German sources)

bagel
chutzpal
nosh
schlock
schmaltz
schmuck

GERMAN

blitz
carouse
delicatessen
dollar
glockenspiel
kindergarten
lager
loafer
nickel
noodle
poodle
rucksack
seminar
snorkel
spanner
swindle
waltz
zinc

CHINESE

ketchup
kowtow
kungfu
lychee
sampan
silk
soya
tea
typhoon
wok

JAPANESE

bonsai
futon
geisha
harakiri
judo
kamikaze
karate
kimono
origami
rickshaw
saki
shogun
tsunami
tycoon
HINDI (Often from Sanskrit)

bandana
bangle
bungalow
cheeta
chintz
chit
cot
cushy
dinghy
dungarees
juggernaut
jungle
kedgeree
loot
pyjamas
shampoo
thug
toddy
verandah
yogi
South Indian Languages

(especially from Tamil and Malayalam)

Catamaran
cheroot
coir
mugoose
mulligatawny
pariah
teach

Besides the foreign languages the varieties of
English across political boundaries where the language was
transplanted have developed new words to reflect the
conditions of the new country. Words were borrowed from
indigenous languages to refer to flora and fauna, the
landscape, the artifacts and the cultural items of the
region. The following are some of the dialects of English
outside Britain which have borrowed words from their
respective sources in those countries.

Australian English borrowed from their aboriginal
tribes words like 'Kangaroo', 'Kookaburra', 'Koala',
'boomerang' and 'billabong' (a waterhole).
Canadian English, like American English, is distinguished by its vocabulary items such as 'Cookie', 'elevator', 'freeway', 'gas', and 'thumbtack' in place of British words 'biscuit', 'lift', 'motorway', 'petrol' and 'drawing pin'.

Irish English, as is spoken in Ireland has lexical items which are not usually found in standard English like

- ashet (a large plate)
- burn (a stream)
- but-and-ben (a small-house)
- jeg (to prick)
- dishabille (untidy)
- wee (small)

South African English, besides other peculiarities, is characterized by its borrowings from local tribal languages as illustrated in the following list.

- aandag (attention)
- broscope (cinema)
- boctie (little brother)
cherry (girl friend)
china (friend)
dop (drink)
gogga (insect)
jammie (car)
jong (fellow)
klap (stike)
lekker (nice, fine)
sat (full, sufficient)
score (give)
skop (kick)
skyf (cigarette)
tune (tell)
waai (go)
zol (smoke, cigarette)
more (hit)
skelm (rascal)

Welsh English, (spoken in Wales) which has the peculiarity of showing some of the common features with standard English contains some words borrowed from Welsh dialects. For example,
del ( pretty one )
bach ( little one )
clem ( to starve )
lumper ( a youngster )
dap ( a bounce )

West Indian dialect of English has borrowed a sizable number of words from indigenous Carib languages of the region. Some of them are:

jiga ( an insect )
 kayman ( a crocodile )
 macca ( a thorn )
 bose ( proud )
 fufu ( pounded food )
 pinder ( a pea nut )
 omi ( water )
 unu ( you )

African English, like other transplanted varieties of the language, has borrowed words from indigenous tribal languages. These words reflect African culture. For example,

Kente ( a cloth made in Ghana )
ega (a boss)
fan (a chief)
safari
banana
banjo
chimpanzee
cola
voodoo

**Scottish English** which is a variety of English spoken in Scotland is greatly influenced by the local Scottish language called Gaelic in the sphere of vocabulary. The vocabulary reflects the influence of Gaelic on English language. For example,

ay (yes)
aye (always)
bonnie (pretty)
bairn (child)
canny (shrewd)
glen (valley)

words like 'gruesome', 'raid', 'rampage', 'stalwart' were absorbed into standard English from Gaelic.
The English Spoken in New Zealand has borrowed a sizable number of words from Maori language. Words like 'kauri', 'rata', 'rimu', 'totara', indicate the flora of New Zealand, which do not exist anywhere else.

Newspaper English is not a regional or international dialect. It is a kind of jargon used by journalists in their write up. Much of modern journalism contains some words coined to express new idea, policy or a concept. It is essentially different in style. In their quest for readability modern journalists have developed tabloid vocabulary consisting of short catch and graphic words. For example,

- hike (an increase)
- slam (to criticise)
- probe (to examine)
- critical (critically ill)
- bombshell (a surprise)
- to gag (to censor)
- supremo (a person having complete authority)
- to top (to exceed)
to vow (to promise)
to wed (to marry, or to get married to)

American English have borrowed or coined a large number of words which are expressive of the needs of the immigrants of America since the beginning of their settlement. These new added words to English vocabulary are far too many to be listed. It is rightly said that American English has many colourful expressions to make itself popular among the younger generations not only in America but in the entire English speaking world.

The regional or international dialects of English have added several lexical items to their vocabularies. What they have borrowed or coined is not only a part of vocabulary of the dialect, but it has become a part of the vocabulary of the English language as a whole.

With a view to clarifying the nature of Indian English vocabulary, we make a three way distinction. We feel that this kind of distinction would offer a better perspective of the kind of vocabulary used in Indian variety of English. First we shall talk of Indian words
in English - a concept that distinguishes Indian words in Indian English. Besides this, we devote a part of the chapter to the nature of Indian English vocabulary in general.

1. Indian words in English

The Indian words used by the English administrators and less often by the English writers were borrowed into English language during the colonial rule. They represent a measure of Indian influence on the English vocabulary. This constitutes a separate segment from those included in the following section chiefly for the following reasons.

a) These borrowings took place during the period from the East India Company to the colonial occupation.

b) These borrowings, spreading over nearly three centuries, constitute mostly culture items and words for material objects for which there are exact English equivalents.
c) These borrowings were meant for English officers at various levels for administrative convenience and sometimes for political reasons.

d) The borrowings are naturalized in English; in the sense that they underwent phonological, grammatical and semantic changes according to the genius of the English language and compulsions of English community in India.

e) The words in this category reflect "the historical and cultural relations of two races so dissimilar in their ways of life and thought as the English and the Indian. The Indian element in English tells us this story from the side of the English in an authentic, though inadequate, way. It indicates faithfully, on the one hand, India's contribution to the civilization of England; and, on the other, the reaction of the English to the social, political, economic, and religious life and thought of the Indians". (2)

The number of words of this category is not very certain. Generally it is placed at about 1000 basic words and several thousands of derivatives from them, notwith
standing the chronology and the purpose of such borrowings. They have become part of English vocabulary and represent the Indian contribution to the enrichment of English. Since the list of such words is rather too long, some representative words are given below which hopefully give a measure of an Indian element in English.

17 CENTURY

Achar
Anna
Areca
Arrack
Bajri
Baksheesh
Bandicoot
Bannia
Batta
Bazaar
Begum
Bengali
Betel
Bhang
Boy
Brahmin
Brinjal
Buddha
Bulbul
Bundook
Bungalow
Cabob
Catechu
Cha
Cheroott
Chop
Choultry
Chunam
Compound
Conjee
Cooja
Cooly
Copra
Curry
Cutcherry
Dal
Datura
Dewali
Diwan
Dhobi
Dhoti
Dubashee
Durbar
Fakir
Feringhee
Ganja
Ghee
Godown
Gomastha
Gunny
Guz
Hakeem
Hakim
Hindu
Hindustani
Hookah
Holi
Hulwa
Inam
Jaggery
kotwal
Lungi
Mahal
maharaja
mango
munshi
Nabob
Nair
Paddy
Pan
Pariah
Punkah
Raja
Ranee
Rupee
Ryot
Salaam
Shampoo
Shastri
Sheikh
Sudra
Tamasha
Tank
Tulsi
Vakeel
Zemindar

18 CENTURY

Anicut
Avatar
Bandobust
Bandy
Chatty
Dai
Devanagari
Dharma
Gunge
Jumma-bundi
Jute
Loot
Maistry
Pandal
Ragi
Sura
Swamy
Taluk
Tamil
Telugu
Veena
Zenana

19 CENTURY

Almirah
Amrita
Apsara
Ayurveda
Badmash
Beebee
Brahmana
Bustee
Camise
Chalan
Charpoy
Chela
Chokra
Chuprassy
Dacoit
Dekko
Dharma
Dravidian
Gupta vidya
Gymkhana
Himalayan
Jeldi
Kamala
Khaki
Khet
Kismet
Lathi
Mahabharatha
Mahatma
Maya
Mela
Moduga
Munsif
Nirvana
Poojah
Putwarry
Pyal
Pyjamas
Rishi
Sandhi
Sandhya
Soojee
Tahsil
Yama
Yoga
Zillah

20 CENTURY

Ahimsa
Ashram
Bande Mataram
Darshan
Gandhism
Gopura
Hartal
JaiHind
Kirpan
Kumkum
Mazdoor
Mukti
Pralaya
Indian English is relatively a new concept and chronologically belongs to post Independence India. After 1947 English survives in India for political, historical and administrative reasons. It has now become the integral part of the three-language policy of the country. English is studied today free from the colonial compulsions of the British India. There has been a great deal of activity in English in Modern India in the form of communication among government offices, private and public sector undertakings, in the form of journalistic writings and creative works. Studied as the second language, English has been producing the required reading material suitable to the Indian context. In the process English writers of all shades and hues have been using English words in their writings. The words that they use in free
India are treated here as a separate category for the following reasons.

   a) These words chronologically belong to free India and therefore free from colonial associations.

   b) Like the words mentioned in category I one above, these words represent the concepts of Indian culture and material civilization. But they are not borrowed but they are used by Indian writers.

   c) Words under this category represent the Indian-ness of English in India.

   d) Like those listed under category one, Indian words in Indian English add colour and stylistic raciness to the English language.

   e) Most of these words are used only in Indian context.

**Examples : From Sanskrit**

Aarathi
Abhayaranya
Abhinaya
Acharya

165
Adi-dravida
Adi Grandh
Advaita
Agraharam
Ahimsa
Akashavani
Alapana
Amavasya
Amritha
Ananda
Ananda Marg
Annapurna-sadapurna
Apsara
Artha Sastra
Aranyakas
Archaka
Asana
Ashram
Asura
Atman
Avatar
Avaidya
Ayurveda
Ayyappa
Baikunth (paradise)
Bhagavan
Bhagavat-Gita
Bhajan
Bhakta
Bhakti
Bharatha Natyam
Bhikshu
Bhoodan
Bhoomi
Bhoomipuja
Brahma
Brahmacharya
Brahmin
Champaka
Chandamama
Cardula Vikridita
Dakshina
Dakshina Murthy sthrotam
Darshan
Dasara
Deepawali
Devadasi
Devi Sarveswari Bhagavathi
Dhan
Dharma
Dharma Sastra
Gaambhiryatha
Ganga Jatara
Gangastakam
Ganesh-Jayanthi
Garuda
Gayathi
Gita
Guptadan
Harijan7
Harikatha
Hari,Narayan
Jatakas
Jaltarang
Kalabhairava
Kama
Karma
Karmayogi
Keerthan
Krodha
Kumkum
Lord Gopalakrishna
Mahabharatha
Maharaja
Mahatma
Mangalasutra
Mandukya Upanishad
Mani
Manthras
Mayavada
Mitya (illusion)
Mlechas
Moha
Muhurtham
Nadaswaram
Namaskar
Namaste
Nari
Nirvana
Om, Om, shanti deva
Pallavi
Pandit
Parayanams
Patanga
Pathsala
Payasam
Prabhu
Prana
Prasadam
Prayashchitta
Puja
Purana
Raga
Raga Deepak
Raga Meghamalhar
Rag vasantha
Raghuvaamsa
Raja dakshina
Ramayana
Rishi
Rudrakshi
Sadhu
Samadhi
Sankara-Jayanthi
Sanyasi
Saptapadi
Sastra
Sati
Satvik
Satyagraha
Sethubandh
Shilanyas
Shiva, linga
Shiva, Shiva
Shivoham
Sthala purana
Swamiji
Tamsik
Tan
Thali
Til
Tirtham
Upanayanam
Upavasa
Uttaramacharita
Vajra
Vandemataram
Varna
Vedantha
Vedas
Veena
Vidya
Viheras
Viman
Yama

FROM URDU

Aadaab10
Allah
Allah-O-Akbor
Ameen
Anjuman
Badshah
Baksheesh

Bazar
Begum
Biryani
Bismillah
Burqua
Darbar

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Fakeer
Fatehas
Shehennum
Hafiz
Hakeem
Havalidar
Harami
Haveli
Hijda
Hookah
Huzoor
Inquilab-Zindabad
Inshanallah
Irshad
Jahan panah
Khafir
Khababs
Khabardar
Kharif
Khusra (a castrated male)
Marhaba! Subhan Allah
Marquee

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Maulana
Maulisahib
Mubarak
Mullah
Munisif
Mushaira
Mussalman
Nafs
Nakhoon (both nails & noblood)
Namakharam
Nawabs
Nazrana
Pankha
Paradah
Pulov
Qawali
Salwaar-Kameez
Shamiana
Shehanai
Sherbat
Subedar
Surahi
Tahsildar
Taluk
Tauba
Ulema
Ustad
Yilayat
Wazeer
Zaildar
Zalim
Zenana
Zindabad
Zulum

FROM HINDI

Aaltoofaltoo
Abkari
Achar
Acheha
Adivasi
Agarbatti
Akali
Alu
Almirah
Amar Sonar Bungla
Amla
Anicut
Archaka
Ata
Awami
Ayah
Ayaram, Gayaram
Babaji
Baccha
Bachao¹²
Bagh
Bajra
Bahadur
Bahut
Bai
Baisan
Bakwas
Bandh¹³
Bandicoot
Bandobast
Bania
Baoli
Bap
Barfi
Basmathi
Bastee
Beedis
Benami
Beta
Bhabi
Bhago
Bhahu
Bhajia
Bhai
Bhandar
Bhang
Bharat
Bhavan
Buddha (old man)
Buddhoo
Budmash
Bulbul
Bundook
Burra babu
Busti
Chabi
Chacha
Chai
Chalan
Chalo
Chamcha
Chana
Chappal
Chappati
Charaka
Chaprasi
Charpoy
Chouki
Chela
cheekoos
Chokra
Choli
Chor
Chowringhee
Chowkidar
Chunam
Chup
Chutney
Cooja
Conji
Cushy
Daftar
Dal
Dekho
Devastanam
Dhanda
Dhanyavad
Dharam bhaís (brothers in faith)
Dharmasala
Dharna
Dhobi
Dhoti
Dhoti-topee
Divan
Dost
Dubash
Dupatta
Ek Dum Jao
Gadde
Ganatantra Divas
Garam
Shareeb
Ghats
Shee
Goonda
Goras
Gummastaji
Hamla
Hartal
Hatao
Hawa
Hindu-Muslim Bhai-bhai
Holi
Hundi
Inam
Izzat
Jaihind
Jaldi
Jalebis
Jamun
Janatha
Jao
Jee, Jeehan
Jeera
Jibba
Juldi
Jutka
Kachha
Kali
Kanjush
Khadi
Khadi Wallah
Khalsa
Khana
Khir
Kisan
Kismat
Kotwal Saheb
Krore pathi
Kurtha
Lakh
Lakpati
Lambardar
Lathi
Lota
Madarsa
Maleecha
Mali
Mamul16
Mardala
Marg
Mat maro
Mausi
Mazdoor
Mela
Mirgee (epileptic fit)
Mithai
Mochi
Murdabad
Nan
Navanathan Chattney
Oi (answering)
Pagal
Pan
Pan-beedi
Pani
Paratha
patel
Patta
Pukka
Purohit
Pyzamas
Rakhi
RamRam
Rath
Saithan
Sala
Salaam
Sammelan
Sarkar
Sarrees
Shadi
Sherwani
Shikari
Supari
Tabla
Tamasha
Tanga-wallah
Thali
zaildar
Zamin

Words From Other Indian Languages:

ASSAMESE
Kala-azar
Muga

BENGALI
Babu
Bengali
Bankshell
Bearer
Dhan
Jute
Munjeet
Satrangi

KANNADA
Bisi
Kunt
Mysore bajji
Rasam
Upma
Utappam

KASHMIRI

Hangal

MARATHI

Bummalo
Desai
Deshmukh
Buggolow
Gaekwad
Patel
Thug

MALAYALAM

Areca
Atoll
Betel
Coir
Teak

285
PUNJABI

Atta
Dili
Kirars
Kripan
Mustanda
Piechha
Sirghassas
Thothi

TAMIL

Anicut
Bonda
Cash
Catamaron
Cheroot
Chettiyar
Conjee
Curry
Dhoney
Fanam
Idli
Lungi
Modeliar
Olla
Palay
Pandal
Pappadam
Pyol
Sambar
Tyre

TELUGU

Bandicoot
Bandy
Boy (i)
Chatty
Chiranjeevi
Choultry
Dub
Garu
Moodooga
Mongoose
Paleru
Pallegar
Pollam
Tutenagd
3. Indian English Vocabulary:

The lexical items incorporated in this category are different from those in 1 and 2 above, on the following points.

a) They are not merely borrowed words from any language, but they are native English words used in Indian English.

b) These are not words of Indian origin borrowed before or after Independence.

Indian English vocabulary consists of all those words that have been borrowed from various sources, including the Indian, into the English language plus the English words. In other words Indian English vocabulary represents the entire vocabulary of English language. But there is something specially Indian in the choice of words and their frequency of occurrence. Indian English vocabulary is better described in negative terms before we come to the positive aspects of it.

a) The vocabulary of Indian English as used for various purposes shies away from words related to sex.
The four letter word is a universal taboo in Indian English. (However very few writers like Shasti Brata and Shobha Dey liberally make use of the words of this category). Such exceptions cannot however make a norm.

b) Indian English vocabulary does not lose slang which is used at various levels in societies where English is spoken as mother tongue. The want of slang in Indian English writings or speech is a linguistic strategy of creating Indianess in the language.

c) The university slang and the teenagers' language are generally not used by the Indian writers and speakers of English, perhaps because they have not been taught and are not sure of such expressions.

d) The language of the underworld (The language of criminals, drug addicts, alcoholics) is not used in Indian English.

Indian English vocabulary is essentially formal, conventional and cares for respectability of the word. Words which are on the periphery of acceptability of
Indian society are either not used or sparingly used by all those who use English in India.

The following passages selected at random from the writings of some prominent Indian writers in English, illustrate the nature of vocabulary of Indian English and the way in which English words are used in Indian contexts.

i) "Raju was waiting for his usual gifts and food. He had, no doubt, fruits and other edible stuff left in his hamper, but he hoped they would bring him other fare. He had suggested to them that they should try to get him wheat-flour, and rice-flour, and spices. He wanted to try some new recipes, for a change. He had a subtle way of mentioning his special requirements. He generally began by taking Velan aside and saying, 'You see, if a little rice-flour and chilli-powder could be got along with some other things, I can do something new. On Wednesdays—' He enunciated some principle of living, as that on a special Wednesday he
always liked to make his food with rice-flour and such spice, and he mentioned it with an air of seriousness so that his listeners took it as a spiritual need, something of the man's inner discipline to keep his soul in shape and his understanding with the Heavens in order. He had a craving for bonda — which he used to eat in the railway station stall when a man came there to vend his edibles on a wooden tray to the travellers. It was composed of flour, potato, a slice of onion, a coriander leaf, and a green chilli — and oh! how it tasted! Although he probably fried it in anything; he was the sort of vendor who would not hesitate to fry a thing in kerosene oil, if it worked out cheaper. With all that, he made delicious stuff, and when Raju used to ask the vendor how he made it, he gave him a recipe starting with, 'Just a small piece of ginger' and then it went on to this and that. While discoursing on Bhagavat-Gita to his audience the other evening, Raju had had a sudden craving to try this out himself — he
was now equipped with a charcoal-stove and frying-pan, and what could be more musical than a well-kneaded dough dropping into boiling oil? He had enumerated his wants to Velan as delicately as possible.

(THE GUIDE, by R.K. Narayan

Indian Thought Publications, Mysore 1985-p.91-92)

ii) "Nihal Singh walked out of the hall of Nandapur Station on a pair of sturdy legs which had grown cramped during the ten-mile journey from the district town of Manabad in a crowded third-class carriage.

As he emerged into the neat, sun-soaked compound, strewn with broken white pebbles and smelling of the fresh tar that was painted round the rim of the red-brick building, he halted for a
moment to see if any or his sons were there, for usually one of them came to meet him. But there was no one in the Court yard except the railway porter’s wife, (who was feeding her chickens with stale lentils).

He threw down the thick puthwar shoes which he had carried in his left hand lest they should be lost in the train, negotiated his feet into them with a mild frown on his swarthy, weather-beaten face, handsome in spite of the forty lines of seventy-odd years on his brow. And, adjusting the shapeless bundle tied up in a knotted white sheet on his bent back, he gripped his staff in his right hand and started on his walk to the village, a mile and a half away”.

(THE VILLAGE, by Mulkraj Anand, Orient Paperbacks, New Delhi. p.5)
"I was in ill-humour when I presented myself before Nawab Samsamudaulah. So it seemed was the Nawab Sahib. His nephew Mohammed Wasit pleaded with him to fix an allowance for me. The Nawab Sahib regarded me with his bloodshot eyes and said: 'Yes, we heard him last night. He is a deserving case. Besides we are beholden to his late father. Let him be paid one rupee a day. Next!'.

Before the next supplicant could open his mouth, I presented a parchment before him and said: 'Nawab Sahib may be pleased to put his order in writing.' Though young in years, I knew the ways of civil servants who never did anything without demanding proof in writing.

My simple request put the Nawab Sahib out of composure. He snapped in Farsee 'Waqt-e-Galaam Daannest - this is not the time of the pen-inkholder'. I stood my ground. 'Sir, I do not understand the way you have framed your sentence'. I said. 'If your honour had said, "This is not the time for singing", or that "the pen-and-ink-bearer is not on duty," I would have understood. But to say that "pen-and-inkholder have no time" sounds extremely odd. It is not an animate object and therefore does not have
proper or improper times; it can be brought at your honour's command'.

(Delhi, by Khushwant Singh, Viking Penguin Books(India) Ltd., New Delhi 1989 p.218)

iv)  'Kartik has come to Kanthapura, sisters—Kartik has come with the glow of lights and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods; white lights from clay-trays and red lights from copper-stands, and diamond lights that glow from the bower of entrance-leaves; lights that glow from banana-trunks and mango twigs, yellow light behind white leaves and green light behind yellow leaves, and white light behind green leaves; and night curls through the shadowed streets, and hissing over bellied boulders and hurrying through dallying drains, night curls through the Brahmin streets and the Pariah street and the Potters' street and the Weavers' street and flapping through the mango grove, hangs clawed for one moment to the giant pipal, and then shooting across the broken fields, dies quietly into the river and gods walk by lighted streets,
blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods, and even as
they walk in transparent flesh the dust gently sinks back
to the earth, and many a child in Kanthapura sits late
into the night to see the crown of this god and that god,
and how many a god has chariots with steeds white as foam
and queens so bright that the eyes shut themselves in fear
lest they be blinded.'

(KANTHAPURA - by Raja Rao Orient paperbacks,
Hind pocket Books (P) Ltd., Delhi p.118)

Passage (i) by R.K.Narayan is very formal in its
diction or choice of words and in its syntactic forma-
tions. There is no idiosyncratic way of using the lan-
guage which foregrounds his use of the English language
except that he makes use of Indian words like 'chilli',
'bonda', 'Bhagavat-Gita'. He also makes use of typically
Indian collocations of English words to signify the Indian
objects like 'wheat-flour', 'rice-flour','chilli-powder',
'frying-pan','charcoal-stove' and so on.
As in passage (i), in the present passage (ii) the words selected are all English. The passage is characterized by a great frequency of adjectives and participle forms like 'sturdy', 'grown', 'crowded', 'broken', 'shapeless', 'knotted' and so on. It also contains some of the typical Indian collocations of English words as illustrated below.

- ten-mile journey
- third-class carriage
- red-brick building
- sun-soaked compound
- weather-beaten face
- seventy-odd years

In all these words the first constituent is a compound word which serves as an adjective followed by a noun.

The words in passage (iii) again are predominantly English. But the way in which Indian words are strewn into the narration gives it a typical Indian touch.

Again the words in the passage (iv) used in this
narration are mostly English. Some of them are typical Indian compounds of English words. Examples are 'copper stands', 'banana - trunks', 'entrance - leaves'. This is highly experimental kind of narration where the novelist attempts to bring out the Indian rhythms in English words. By arranging them syntactically in a far different way from what the English writer would have done.

In all these passages words are predominantly English. A brief discourse analysis would show that there is strikingly original Indianness in the use of English words.

Indian English vocabulary is also characterized by what are known as Indianisms. Kachru defines Indianisms:

"as collocationally deviant from the native varieties of English and described as IE collocations. An IE collocation includes those formations which have Indian characteristics in the following three senses. First, they may deviate grammatically from American and British English formations. Second,
they may involve loan shifts from Indian languages. Third, they may be formally non-deviant and only contextually deviant (that is, if they have those contextual units assigned in Indian culture which are absent in those cultures where English is spoken as the L1". 23

Collocation is a kind of compound formation. The lexical items in each collocation are English but the meaning of such collocations is essentially Indian. The following are some such collocations favoured by Indian writers in English.

- flower - bed
- sister - sleeper
- dinning - leaf
- rape - sister
- welcome address
- key bunch
- foreign-returned
- salt-spoiler
- caste-mark
nail bed
forehead marking
caste-proud
nation-building
Himalayan blunder
kumkum-mark and such others.

By and large Indian English Vocabulary draws heavily from the glosses or lexical items of the English language. Since English is studied as a second language in India, it has not reached the common man (educated or uneducated) as it has in African countries like Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and so on. The words are consciously used with minimum deviation from the accepted norms of the English language. The way in which the words are syntactically arranged is modelled on British standard English. But Indian English, in spite of its predominant use of English words, is essentially Indian because of the frequent use of Indian words and phrases or their translations in Indian English. Since Indian English is a model in British English there are no drastic deviations from standard British speech. Indian words, Indian collocations and Indian syntactic constructions give the colour of Indianness to the Indian English.
1. For the information on foreign vocabulary in English, the Researcher is indebted to 'The Right Word at the Right Time'. Reader’s Digest Published by The Reader’s Digest Association Limited, London 1985.
   p.576.


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