CHAPTER I

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English in India: A historical perspective

The interaction between English and Indian languages is traced back to the ancient Greek tradition. It started initially in an encounter between the East and the West during Alexander's invasion of England. Since then the East-West contacts have been repeated and reinforced from time to time with varying degree of intensity. Between Alexander's invasions and Renaissance the interaction was chiefly in the form of historical and commercial intercourse. The interaction was not directly with English as a language and culture. The connection with English, if any, was only indirect through the ancient Greek language. The direct interaction between English
and India began in the wake of the East India company making it commercial inroads and a subsequent British colonization of India followed by the establishment of the British Empire. A group of London merchants pompously called themselves East India Company and Queen Elizabeth I granted them a charter on December 31, 1600. Through this charter the East India Company was granted a monopoly on trade of all kinds with the East in general and with India in particular. This apparently innocuous event was not suspected to have the potential for establishing an empire in many of the countries in the East. It opened the East to the exposure to the British contact initially in trade and gradually in other areas of life.

Since the advent of East India Company in India, The English language has been with us with varying degrees of prominence in different parts of the country. With the gradual establishment and expansion of British Empire, the English language developed its roots in Indian society. Kachru describes the situation of the language of the rulers developing roots beside the vernaculars as essen-
ially bilingualism in India. Three phases of expansion of English are generally identified. In the first phase, the Christian missionaries who moved to many interior places in the country began to spread English besides Christianizing the lower classes of society. In the second phase, in the 18th and early 19th centuries prominent Indian leaders like Rajaram Mohan Roy in Bengal and Rajunath Hari Navalkar in Maharastra made efforts to persuade the East India Company officers to introduce English education in India. What started as persuasive approach gathered considerable momentum and almost grew into a movement for the demand of English education and establishment of English medium schools and colleges in place of existing Sanskrit and Persio-Arabic schools. The primary aim of the movement was for the introduction of English at various levels of education so that it could be a gate to the world of science and technology in modern knowledge. The movement received a mixed response from the public. But it received the tension of the East India Company. One of the letters of Rajaram Mohan Roy to Lord Amherst dated 11th December 1823 is considered historic in relation to the controversy regarding the history of
education in India. Rajaram Mohan Roy expressed resentment at the establishment of a Sanskrit school in Calcutta while the demand was for

"employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other useful sciences, which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of the other parts of world." (2)

The establishment of the Sanskrit School in Calcutta and the demand of Rajaram Mohan Roy and his prominent followers for English education developed into a controversy which resulted in a long term debate on the relative merits of the traditional oriental education with its emphasis on classical languages like Sanskrit for the Hindus, Persian and Arabic for the Muslims, and the modern English education for the entire Indian society, with its stress on learning of English together with imparting of instruction in modern branches of learning. The English
community in India was divided into two well defined groups, one favouring the traditional method of education in India and the other advocating modern English education. In the same manner, the educated section of Indian community developed two short well defined opinions on the same lines. The early 19th Century was full of such debates in all the available fora of mass communication. Finally pro-Western education sections won the battle resulting in the famous or notorious Minutes of Macaulay on the introduction of English in India.

The year 1835 is a landmark in the history of Indian education as well as in the process of English establishing its firm roots on Indian soil. Macaulay introduced his Minutes on the 2nd Feb., 1835, in which he indicated that English education was designed to form a sub culture in India

"a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect."
On 7th March 1935 the Macaulay Minute was approved by William Bentick. An official resolution was passed endorsing Macaulay's Minute and officially introducing English in Indian education.

In retrospect, the 1835 resolution became pivotal to language policy in British India which resulted in bilingualism with English as one of the languages and one of the vernaculars as the other. The advent of English in Indian education and the co-existence of English and the vernaculars was one of the determining factors of modern language policy.

Till today it is debated and disputed whether the decision to impose the language of the rulers on Indians was justified. Since 1835 there has been disagreement, arguments and counter arguments between the Orientalists and the Anglicists. The controversy survives even in modern times among intellectuals, educationists, administrators and politicians in modern India. Some scholars believe that English education has made a great revolution in our educational system while the others believe that it
was designed by the East India Company to perpetuate its imperial hegemony in the political sphere of life and expand it to educational and cultural areas.

Since 1835, the British rulers established their firm hold in India and along with it there was a greater anglicization of Indian education. Slowly but surely and perceptably the English language grew deeper roots in an alien setting. Although the British encouraged English language in India right from the beginning the period after 1835 is considered an era of English expansion. In 1857 the three famous cities, the nerve centres of Indian education and culture, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras witnessed the establishment of Universities. Before the end of the century Allahabad and Punjab Universities came into existence. Tracing the rapid expansion of English, Kachru observes,

' By 1928 English had accepted as a language elite, of the administration, and of pan-Indian press. Although the English newspapers claimed only a limited circulation, they have acquired an influential reading public. In addition, another phenomenon with a far reaching consequence was slowly developing, that of Indian literature in English '. (4)
The English language transplanted by the British rulers in India has grown in this alien country away from its homeland as an independent variety of English. The colonial rulers introduced it in official circles as the language of administration practically at all levels. The missionaries introduced it in educational institutions as the medium of instruction at various levels. Further it was the language of the courts, the media and the language of communication at the higher echelons of Indian society. The English language soon spread far and wide although the masses at large were not perceptibly touched by it.

Another important feature of the far reaching consequence is the emergence of new class of creative writers who, later, came to be known as Indo-Anglian writers or Indian writers in English. The Indian writers in English were English educated and therefore acquired a respectable degree of proficiency in communicating creatively or otherwise in the language. In spite of their high degree of communication skills in the English language they were not entirely anglicized. They retain their Indian cultural roots, the Indian ways of life,
Indian superstitions, rituals and practices. They started writing about India in the new found medium. These writers gave a new dimension to the English language. Initially a few and far between the Indian writers in English have increased in number in course of time and more so after Independence.

On the political plane, most of the pioneers in the Freedom Movement were educated either in England or in English schools and colleges in India. They acquired excellent communication skills in English language. In multi-lingual leadership meets English was used as the medium of communication among the leaders drawn from various mother tongue backgrounds. Political parties launched their journals of various periodicities in the English language. The emergence of journals, magazines and dailies in English gave a new impetus to the spread of English at various levels. The English used by administrators, judiciary authorities, creative writers, journalists and political leaders later came to be described as Indian English.
The term 'Indian English' is loosely used by the present day scholars who refer to the kind of English spoken and written in the sub-continent at different levels of society and for different communicational functions. Indian English is too nebulous, too full of variations to be defined precisely. Before we describe what it is, it would be better to know it in negative terms.

i) Indian English does not mean that English spoken all over the country is the same or has homogeneity at various levels of its structure.

ii) Indian English does not mean that there is a uniform level of linguistic proficiency in the performance of the language skills among all the users of English in India.

iii) Like any other language or a variety of language there is no uniformity in the use of Indian English. Just as we look for discover and tolerate variations in any language, we have variations in Indian English. These variations can be explained in terms of functional, socio-cultural and educational parameters.
In positive terms Indian English may be described as English although its intelligibility varies from person to person and situation to situation. It is Indian in the sense transplanted from England by colonial rulers for whatever reasons it has grown on Indian soil and developed its roots and like any other language or dialect it has branched off into variations. In a larger geographic context Indian English is a broad variety of South Asian English (English spoken in South Asian Countries). Like American, Canadian or Australian English, it has an independent existence, growth and evolution and changes within the Indian socio-cultural contexts.

The variations in Indian English are generally explained in terms of three parameters namely region, ethnicity and proficiency.

Region: One of the important factors of variation in Indian English is the geographic region in which it is learnt and spoken. In the Indian situation the geographic region by and large coincides with the Indian states and since the states are to a large extent based on the
language spoken or the mother tongue of the people of the state, the regional variation is also the variation based on the regional language. The Indians who learn and speak English have their own mother tongues. Coming under the spell of the mother tongue, the English of the Indians is modified in matter of phonology and grammar according to the norms of the language of the speaker. Thus it is often said that a Gujarathi learner of English learns and speaks Gujarathi English, just as a Marathi speaking learner of English speaks Marathi English. These variations in English influenced by mother tongues are often ridiculed by giving them names formed by portmanteau formations. For example, Tamilian English is jocularly referred to as Tanglish; Hindi speakers English is called Hinglish; Bengali speakers English Benglish and so on. Despite the humour of such names, every speaker of his mother tongue more seriously learns, speaks and propagates a variety of English which is based on the structure of his mother tongue. The speakers of English whose mother tongues are unwritten dialects like Gondi, Parji, Gadaba create greater complexities and variations in Indian English. The regional variations therefore are ultimately attributed to the mother tongues of learners / speakers of English.
ETHNICITY: The term 'ethnicity' is too complex to be explained fully in the present context. It refers to racial variations like Aryans, Dravidians, as much as it implies the religious variations like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and so on. Anglo-Indian community adds to the ethnic complexity of the Indian situation. Except the English spoken by the Anglo-Indians, the other ethnic varieties of Indian English have not been studied with any seriousness. Some scholars question the validity of the concept of the ethnic variation of Indian English because in the Indian context the ethnicity is interconnected with the mother tongue. All the Hindus in India do not speak the same variety of Indian English because they speak different mother tongues and live in different geographical regions. Similarly all the Indian Muslims do not speak an identical variety of Indian English because they live in different geographical regions and speak different regional languages. So is the case with Indian Christians. It is therefore reasonable to argue that ethnic varieties of Indian English is not based entirely on the ethnicity of the speaker but on the primary regional language which he learns almost like a mother tongue.
The ethnic varieties cut across the regional language boundaries in India. They do not have the same relevance in India as English of the Welsh in England or the Blacks in America.

PROFICIENCY: Most people who use Indian English have acquired varied levels of proficiency in language skills. They all learn English as a compulsory second language, and in some states they call it third language. The numerical status of English in the curriculum is not relevant. What is implied is that all of them study English as the other language that means other than the mother tongue, in Hindi speaking states as other than the mother tongue, like Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states. In the urban setting, in the ever growing number of English medium schools English is studied as first language and as the primary medium of education right from the nursery or kindergarten level. The proficiency in English acquired by a speaker depends upon the period of study of English, the nature of the school and the nature of his contact with English in the post school stage. A sizable number of
Indians study in public schools in India and acquire a better language proficiency. Some go out of the Country and come back highly anglicized linguistically.

The variation in Indian English is due to the varied levels of proficiency acquired by the speakers. The levels of proficiency vary according to the factors mentioned above. Kachru analyses the variation of Indian English based on the proficiency in terms of the cline of bilingualism. (5)

In the hierarchy of Indian English, highly anglicized English of the upper class Indians who have had opportunities to study abroad or in public schools in India, occupies the highest position. On the lower rung of the ladder are what are often described as Butler English, Kitchen English or Baboo English. Between the two extremities there are several variations based on the level of proficiency acquired by the speaker. The variations are too many and are too complicated because they are at phonological, morphological and syntactic levels.
Indian English is said to be spoken today by about 8% of the total population of the country. In sheer number it is used by a larger number of people than any single Indian language except Hindi. Over 60 million Indians who use English with various levels of proficiency varied communicational functions form a larger English using community than the entire population of great Britain. In terms of the spread of the language in the subcontinent it has a pan-Indian characteristic.

Indian English serves a wide variety of functions in modern India. It is the associate official language for the entire nation. It is the second language of administration in the Central Government offices and at the higher levels of administration in State Governments. It is still the language predominantly used in High Courts and the Supreme Court. It is the historic language of two states in the Eastern part of India—Meghalaya and Nagaland. It is still the medium of instruction in most institutions of higher learning. It is a medium of research in all branches of knowledge and it is taught as second language at the secondary level and at the University
level practically in all states of the country. In a multilingual country like India it serves as an effective convenient medium of inter state communication and as such it has a pan Indian sweep cutting across all language boundaries. It is also a convenient medium of business communication within and outside the country. Owing to the recent liberalisation in matters of industry, business and trade and with the emergence of European common parliament where English plays the most predominant role, Indian English envisages a much greater role in the future at home and abroad.

As a medium of printed communication English has been playing a very useful role in Indian press. The Indian press in turn is spreading far and wide Indian English as it is used in the country. The English press in India has an upper hand over the regional language press. It is considered the press of upper class, the elite and the opulent. In terms of numbers there are more newspapers and magazines of varied periodicity in English than Hindi or any other Indian language.
In spite of occasional outbursts of parochial leaders Indian English has come to stay and serve the people of India in various ways particularly in the academic field and in the world of learning of science and technology.

Need for description of Indian English:

Although Indian English has been playing and is expected to play an important role in the life of nation there have been only fragmentary and sporadic descriptive studies of the language. Kachru attributes the lack of standard research studies of Indian English to the language attitude which both Indian and non-Indian speakers of English have shown towards this variety of English. Kachru further observes:

"Even the term Indian English was used in a derogatory sense; Indians normally would not identify themselves as members of the Indian English speech community, preferring instead to consider themselves speakers of British English."
As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Indian English does not have uniform pan-Indian characteristics. Even the educated speakers of English do not speak in identical ways. In its spoken and written form it reveals the characteristics of the class and area to which the speaker belongs, the level of education he has received and his mother tongue. A Bengali speaker of English cannot distinguish between S and J, he is therefore apt to pronounce the word 'sane' as 'shane'. Malayali speaker of English cannot distinguish 'z' and 's'. More often than not he might pronounce the word 'zeal' as 'seal'. A Hindi speaker of English cannot pronounce the consonant cluster 'st' without the support of a vowel sound which intrudes before them. The words like 'station', 'student' are pronounced as 'istation', 'istudent' (ɪˈsteɪʃən, ɪˈstjuːdənt). The lack of homogeneity in Indian English at various levels should not be sought as justification for the lack of descriptive studies of the language. While conceding heterogeneity and variety of English it should not be forgotten that there are several characteristics which the users of educated in Indian English share. In this context Kachru's views merit full quotation.
'An Indian English speaker intuitively recognizes another Indian speaker; at the same time he categorizes him as an 'educated' speaker, or as one who does not come up to the standard. In India, then, the concept of standard or educated Indian English is not as elusive as purists or cynics tend to believe. But, at the same time, when we study Indian English we are essentially making a study of a second language in a bilingual or a multilingual context. In such a context, as we have discussed earlier, the effect of transfer, or what linguists term interference, cannot be ignored'.

A systematic description of Indian English is expected to analyse the language at all the three important levels, namely phonological level, grammatical level and lexical level. That is what precisely the present project is designed to do. However, some preliminaries of it are not out of place in the introductory chapter of this nature.
Indian English pronunciation as is expected is a deviation from Received Pronunciation of the British Standard English. Attempts have been made to isolate the common characteristic of the sound system of Indian English shared by all language groups. These common characteristics make or contribute to the Indianness of Indian English pronunciation. The difference in the inventory of sounds between English and Indian English is one of the methodologies of the study of Indian English phonology. The syllabic structure of English is different from that of Indian English because it is influenced by the syllabic structure of the mother tongue of the speaker. For example, the primary syllabic structure of Hindi and English is CVC. But this similarity ends at some point because the total inventory of English consonants is not the same as that of Hindi. Further the consonants like $f$, $h$, $s$ of English are not available in any Indian language and therefore $ph$, $th$, $dh$ are substituted in Indian English in place of these English sounds.

Even if some sounds of Indian languages, consequently of Indian English are identical phonetically with
those English, there may be differences in the distribution of those sounds. For example, in Hindi / Urdu the consonant clusters sk, st, sp, sl are available just as they are available in English. But the distribution of these clusters in these languages is different from that of English. While these clusters are available in the initial position of the sound they are not available in the initial syllable of the word in many Indian languages. Therefore they find it difficult to pronounce them independently and so they add 'i' before these clusters.

Many Indian languages have the consonantal series like Ka, Cha, Ta, Tha, Pa (क, छ, त, ठ, प). Influence by the force of habit in the mother tongue the Indian learner of English may introduce all of them into the English language which indeed does not have all such sounds. For example, the retroflex 't' series is common to all Indian languages. So many Indian learners of English mistake English t, d for retroflex sounds and pronounce them as such in Indian English. English in Indian languages do not share the common prosodic features. English is stress timed language whereas most Indian languages are syllable timed. In syllable timed languages the Indian rhythm
is based on long and short syllables. In stress timed language, like English, the rhythm is based on the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. As Bansal observes this difference seems to be one of the main linguistic factors which impedes intelligibility between an Indian speaker and a native speaker of English.

2. Grammar:

Kachru observes 'a detailed grammatical description of Indian English is not available' (Emphasis ours). Any attempt to describe a grammar of Indian English or any other variety of English should take into consideration the differences between mistakes and deviations. These two terms presuppose a norm which is, Standard British English. Any expression which is different from a norm is not always a mistake. It could be a mere deviation which is not a norm, which is also not a mistake. Kachru makes a valid distinction between the terms the mistake and deviation.
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, and which may not be justified in Indian English on formal and/or contextual grounds. A deviation, on the other hand, may involve differences from a norm, but such deviations may be explained in terms of the cultural and/or linguistic context in which a language functions'.

Deviation is a local or regional norm which can be explained in terms of cultural variations of the speaker. A mistake has no such justification. Any systematic study of Indian English should make an analysis of its deviations from the standard language. When they are accepted as deviations they are called Indianisms. That is the variety of English expressions common to the English users of English particularly in the area of grammar. Once the Indianisms are isolated they are taken as norms of the Indian variety of English. Just as standard English postulated and isolated, just as standard American English or standard Australian English, is made perceptible it is possible to arrive at a form of English which is different from British norms but which is acceptable to the most speakers of English in India.
A description of grammatical characteristics of educated in Indian English is expected to study the sentence and the clause and phrase structure in the language as it is used by journalists, administrators, creative and other brands of writers. For example, the present progressive tense with the phrase structure be + verb + ing is a standard form in case of the most of the verbs in British Standard English. But in Standard English, sentence structures like 'I am seeing ', 'I am having ', 'I am knowing', 'I am believing ', 'I am understanding ' are considered mistakes. But in Indian context the present progressive tense with these verbs is an extension of the pattern to all the verbs and thereby create a uniformity.

The use, non-use or misuse of articles in a sentence is yet another area of variation between Indian English and British English. Dustoor uses descriptive labels to categorise the Indian deviation in the use of articles. He describes them in terms of missing articles, intrusive articles, wrong articles, usurping articles and dispossessed articles.10
Reduplication of an adjective is a pan-Indian characteristic of Indian English. Reduplication is a repetition of a word used for emphasis. Generally this is a translation of a construction in most Indian languages.

For example,

- small small children.
- hot hot coffee.
- give them one one piece.
- It is a long long way.

Another characteristic of Indian English is the formation of interrogative constructions, without changing the position of the subject and the auxiliary verb, like,

- 'They have gone ?', 'You have taken your lunch?', 'He has passed ?'. Similarly the tag questions 'isn't it?' is universal in Indian English whatever may be the subject of the sentence and the tense of the verb.

The most productive phrasal constructions which are the outcome of collocation of English words to suit the cultural needs of Indian speakers form another aspect of the grammar of Indian English. This is a part of Indianization of English. Explaining such collocations linguistically Kachru says
The Indian linguistic and cultural context has either extended the membership of the set of items with which lexical items can co-occur, or new, typically Indian collocations have been formed. The Indian collocation naturally sound 'foreign' to native speakers; after all, these have to be understood in the Indian context. Therefore, a large number of typically Indian collocations mark Indian English as distinct from other varieties of English. A collocation might be marked as Indian either in terms of its constituent members, or in terms of its extended or restricted semantic range.11

As in phonology there is a concept of interference of mother tongue in the areas of grammar and lexis. In lexical items in Indian English the interference of the mother tongue usually assume the shape of translation. The translated items are assimilated into target language according to its needs. The list of such translations is too long. Some of the examples given here may serve as samples.
'twice-born' translation of 'dvija'
'waste-thread' translation of 'katidora'
'dining-leaf' translation of 'pattal'

More of such words are described in the chapter on vocabulary.

3. LEXIS (VOCABULARY):

Indian English vocabulary is enriched by three lexical streams. One of them is the native English vocabulary used in Indian English in native English meaning and grammar. Words of this kind have a universal significance and add to the intelligibility of English within and outside India. The second stream consists of English words collocated into phrases and used in contexts peculiar to Indian culture. Such collocations have the impact of idioms in the language. They may not be intelligible to English speakers outside the Indian socio-cultural contexts. But they lend mini universality or pan-Indian, even pan-Asian touch to Indian English and serve a very useful purpose in communication across Indian languages and culture. In explaining the Indian English lexis, Kachru says that it refers to two characteristic types of Indian English vocabulary. He adds:
A large part of the Indian English vocabulary is used essentially in Indian contexts and is restricted in use to Indian English; it is not shared with the native varieties (say, American or British English). The second part consists of those items which do not have such a variety specific constraint and have thus become part of the borrowed lexicons of other Englishes too. One might term such items assimilated items, that is, assimilated in the lexicon of the English language.\textsuperscript{12}

The third stream of Indian English vocabulary consists of Indian words in English which have been borrowed into English from time to time since the establishment of East India company. Many such words are naturalised and assimilated into English and some are not only easily understood but are found to be an indispensable asset to the power of communication in Indian English. Some of these Indian words are also used in hybrids, such as 'kum mark', 'lathicharge', 'tiffin-carrier', and so on.

The fourth important element of Indian English vocabulary consists of English words which are used in Indian contexts after undergoing some relevant semantic changes. These words are discussed in the chapter on Semantics.
The description of Indian English, at various levels, attempted in the chapters that follow is the first systematic work of its kind in India.
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