CHAPTER 4

LEXICAL CHOICES AND PREFERENCES

4.1. Probable Reasons for Deviant Choices

Apart from lexical transferences and innovations, there are certain other features which characterize a non-native variety of English as a distinct variety of the English language. It may be said that the kind of English that has developed in a foreign environment is more formal and literary than that used by the native speakers of English who acquire the language in the process of living. As Mathai (1979: vii) rightly remarks:

A living language, like a living organism, experiences loss and addition in the elements that compose it: words and expressions become obsolete, or change their meaning; new words and phrases are added. A dynamic language like English grows and changes more rapidly than a language that is in a more torpid situation.

As a matter of fact, even native speakers of English find it difficult to cope with the everchanging norms of the English language. As such, it is no matter of surprise that the non-native speakers use old-fashioned English. In the select corpus of MIE prose, it was found that cliches, archaisms, poeticisms and the latest American Slang are
mixed with culturally significant lexical innovations, making it look like a collage made by a painter where the mouth of an infant is combined with the beard of an adult and the wrinkles of an old man.

At this point, it may be appropriate to look into certain causes that are responsible for the peculiar flavour of MIE or IE in general. First of all, the very fact that English has spread in Kerala from being taught in the classroom has, oddly enough, been a factor in promoting a somewhat bookish English in this area. While the native speakers of English learn the language in the process of living rather than in the process of being educated, the linguistic limitations of the bilinguals in Kerala or in India as a whole, as in other countries where English is used as L2, bind them to an environment of textbook language, and it is hardly surprising that for them this is often the most common type of English. Moreover, the learner of English in Kerala does not get enough opportunity to listen to the monolingual native speakers. Perhaps the only method by which he can be acquainted with Modern British Standard English is by reading the current literary works from Great Britain for which very few people have either the inclination or opportunity. Frequent visits to Great Britain would be a luxury which very few people can afford. Considering all these factors, it is inappropriate to expect the users of English in Kerala to conform to the ever changing norms of MBSE. Hence certain style features or
lexical choices and preferences found in MIE are glaring enough to attract the attention of people who are concerned about the English language as it is used in Kerala. Commenting on the style of Indian English, Dustoor (1969: 107) writes: "But not only do most of us tend to talk and write like books, we also tend to talk and write like old books." This comment seems to be quite appropriate in the case of non-native varieties of English in general. So it will be interesting to look into this aspect of MIE.

4.2. Single Lexical items and Lexical Sets

The functional aspect of the English language and the vernacular in Kerala will clearly show that the spheres of language use are clearly separated on the basis of the purpose for which English and the mother tongue are used by the bilinguals of Kerala. English is essentially a complementary language for the bilinguals and it is used for the most formal and pragmatic purposes, such as higher education, official correspondence and in communicating with people who do not know the Malayalam language. For the colloquial and the lighter aspects of communication, the mother tongue is preferred. In such circumstances, it is only natural that the lexical content of the English language, as used in Kerala, comprises stylistically more formal and uncommon lexical items than can generally be found in native varieties of English. The traces of the earlier linguistic contact of Kerala, with the Portuguese and the Arabs and the all-embracing influence of Sanskrit are
also perceivable in the lexical choices and preferences in
the English written by them. In short, it can be said that
the MIE speaker/writer lives in a linguistic climate which
is not quite favourable to the acquisition of current English
idiom. The colloquial mode is almost altogether absent in
MIE. So the MIE speaker/writer frequently uses words and
constructions no longer in common currency or, at least, no
longer current in the sense in which he employs them.

To cite a few examples, words like 'demise', 'expire'
or 'decease' are preferred to 'death'; 'blithe' and 'blissful'
are preferred to 'jolly' or 'merry', 'melancholy' and
'despondent' are preferred to 'depressed'. He will dream of
a 'dwelling place' (IE, Dec. 10, 1979) instead of a 'house'
or 'home'; he 'traverses' the distance bare-footed (IE,
Nov. 30, 1979) instead of 'walking' it. When he is 'seriously
ill', he becomes 'violently sick' (M.S., p. 117). Sometimes,
he does not even 'converse with' (M.S., p. 117) others. People,
according to him, 'hail from' noble families (L.V., p. 54)
on the analogy of ships hailing from a port. He 'purchases'
a newspaper (SEKV, p. 30) instead of 'buying' it. He does
not 'stay' or 'live' in a house, but invariably, he 'resides'
(ALIE, p. 129) in the house. He 'commences' work in the 'paddy
field' (RL, p. 41) instead of 'starting' work in the 'rice-field'.
He sometimes lives 'imbibing nothing but water' (ICOP, p. 139)

1 In MBSE the expression is used colloquially of persons.
(Ref. OALDCE) In MIE, it is used in serious formal situations
or contexts.
instead of 'drinking' it. He 'importunes with tears' (KA, p. 33) rather than 'begging urgently and repeatedly'. He invariably 'opines' (MV, p. 24) rather than suggesting or giving his opinion on matters. People are directly addressed to as either 'gentlemen' or 'ladies' even in ordinary conversation. 'Men' and 'women' are rarely used while referring to people. He often 'pens a letter' (MSTR, p. 38) and concludes it when there is 'nothing more to pen'. He is partial to the 'females' whom he flatters as the 'fair sex' (T Alg10, 82). 'Better half' is his preference while referring to 'wife'. He prefers the term 'cent per cent' (ALIE, p. 170) to 100%. Likewise the term ':savant' (KA, p. 36) is preferred to a scholar.

Commenting on the lexical preference of Indians, Dustoor (1969: 106-107) cites an anecdote in which an Indian asked a fellow-student at the MIT whether there was anybody there who "descended from Polish Parents". The fellow-student, it seems, stared at him without understanding the meaning of the phrase. Realizing the situation another Indian who had been long enough in the country put the enquiry in a rather informal language, as "Any Poles around?" and immediately got the reply "ya; I am one myself".

Likewise, there is a strong preference for certain words of Portuguese origin which were passed over to Malayalam and have become a part of the lexical stock of MIE. They include
words like 'almirah', 'ayah', 'caste', 'peon' etc. Not only that these words are used frequently in MIE, but they are preferred to their more common equivalents in English. So we often find sentences like the following in MIE:

1. Keeping the bottle in the almirah, I stood ready to face the storm. (MSS, p. 54)

According to Hobson-Jobson, "almirah (Port-almário) means a wardrobe, chest of drawers, or like piece of closed furniture."

2. Peons are a category conspicuous by their absence in America. (ALIE, p. 81)

The Portuguese word peão (Spanish 'peon') in the sentence may be substituted by the word 'office-attendant', 'messenger' or 'orderly' in MBSE.  

3. The School ayahs kept them company. (MSS, p. 10)

'Ayāh', a word of Portuguese origin, according to Hobson-Jobson is "a lady's maid or nurse-maid in India." 

4. A godown and some shop-rooms have been completed (IE, Aug. 29, 1978)

Godown from Hindi, Bengali gudām, Sinhalese gudāma is preferred to the more common English equivalent 'warehouse', in the above sentence.

Indian words like 'crore' (10 million) and 'lakh' (100 thousand) are preferred in MIE to 'ten million' and 100 thousand respectively, as used in MBSE. For example:

2 In Latin America the word 'peon' is used for an unskilled farm worker, especially one who is not wholly free (Ref. OALDCE). In Portuguese 'pe' means 'foot'; peon, therefore means a footman.
5. The very first investment in Disneyland was ten crores of rupees.³ (ALIE, p. 129)

6. When he died, he had in his will set apart five and a half lakhs of dollars for founding the Smithsonian institution in Washington. (ALIE, p. 118)

Certain lexical sets which are not so frequently found in MBSE, seem to have high frequency of use in MIE. A strong preference for the same words or synonymous words as lexical sets sometimes lead to reduplication. The words thus used are either connected with 'and' or occasionally separated by a 'coma'. This seems to be a stylistic technique well exploited in MIE. The following examples may show how prevalent this practice is in MIE:

1. benedictions and blessings (K.A., p. 85)
2. expert and adept (R. p. 10)
3. foolishness /sic/ and quixotic (LV, p. 131)
4. green and verdant (KA, p. 49)
5. lethargy and laziness (ALIE, p. 62)
6. mix and mingle (ALIE, p. 64)
7. oppressed and suppressed (IE, Dec. 5, 1979)
8. soil and spoil (IE, Nov. 19, 1979)
9. vice and viciousness (KA, p. 49)

The repetition of the same lexical items instead of using the necessary intensifiers is a linguistic habit which is so

³ The Indian currency note.
very common in non-native varieties of English.

H. A. Passe (1947: 112) gives the following examples from Ceylonese English to show how this feature is prevalent in the English language used in Ceylon:

(to cut into) small small pieces
(to eat something) hot hot
(to give them) one one piece

In the following sentences we find certain lexical sets which are uncommon in the native varieties of English, as in the context in which they are used. So they seem to be worthy of consideration as lexical preferences of the bilinguals of Kerala.

1. Then the cooked noon day meal \(\text{sic}\) is inspected (HP, p. 15)

2. She served him his noon meal (RL, p. 93)

3. His mother and father were greatly perturbed (RL, p. 115)

'Lunch', and 'parents' respectively are more likely to occur in MBSE in the above sentences.

The lexical sets in the following piece of discourse may show how certain lexical sets of phonetic similarity are put together for the purpose of alliteration.

Yellow bamboo rot comes down constantly on the teachers and students to soil and spoil their clothes. The already cramped room is crammed with all and Sunday articles, decay and dilapidation are writ large on these sheds. (IE, Nov. 19, 1979)
The frequent use of words and constructions no longer in common currency, when used in the most informal occasion gives MIE an exotic touch. The words thus used look strangely incongruous in the contexts in which they are employed. However, it cannot be pointed out as a fault, since the bilinguals of Kerala live in an altogether different linguistic environment, compared with that of speakers and writers of Modern British Standard English.

4.3. Archaisms

Archaisms, the survival of the language of the past in the language of the present, is considered an institutionalized licence of poetry and perhaps may be distinguished from linguistic anachronism. Even in prose writings when novelists and other creative writers place their story or other topics of discourse in some bygone age, they often use archaisms with a view to presenting a living picture of the period about which they write. When that is the case, the creative writers naturally feel obliged to shun anachronism not only in its externals, but in thought as well as the expression of thought. Coleridge's use of archaisms in the Ancient Mariner or Stevenson's use of obsolete lexical items in the Black Arrow can thus be justified as conscious stylistic techniques.

But in MIE, archaisms which include poetisms and Biblical expressions form an integral part of the lexical resources of a language community who use English as an elite
second language. The use of archaisms in MIE in the ordinary prose passages of stylistically neutral contexts, is likely to give the impression that the users of this variety of English have not learnt the changes that have taken place in the language. The use of archaisms belongs to the old time style, and the tendency to use obsolete lexical items gives MIE a peculiar stylistic flavour.

In the use of archaic lexical items MIE is perhaps more akin to American English than to MBSE, as American English seems to retain a good deal of the linguistic practices that the pilgrim fathers took with them when they went to settle in the new colony. This aspect of American English elicited the following comment from Hornwill (1935: vii), the British compiler of A Dictionary of Modern American Usage:

"Linguistically the American people as a whole sometimes seem to be our contemporary ancestors, rather than our cousins."

The same comment is perhaps applicable to the users of MIE or IE as well, if the unmotivated use of archaisms in this variety of English is taken into account.

Before attempting a study of the archaisms in MIE, it would be appropriate to look into certain social and historical aspects of English education in India. As already mentioned in 3.3.1, the survival of archaisms, poeticisms and Biblical expression in MIE or IE in general is closely connected with the system of education in India. First of all, the teaching of English in the schools and colleges in Kerala, as in other
parts of India has been a little too closely linked with the teaching of English literature of a by-gone age. As Dustoor (1968: 112) has pointed out, "the needs of language as language have invariably been subordinated to the needs of the literature of which it is the medium." In such a situation the tendency to model the ordinary day to day language on the literary master-pieces of a by-gone age, result in the use of archaisms and poeticisms. As such, it is not a matter of surprise if one finds a Shakespearean or Miltonic echo in the ordinary prose passages written by MIE writers. They have a marked tendency to use 'behold' instead of 'see', 'damsel' instead of 'girl', 'oft' instead of 'often' or 'ere' instead of 'before'. The following sentences abstracted from recently published MIE prose works will testify this marked tendency:

1. "He toils from morn till evening" (ICOP, p. 51)
2. "The narrative starts significantly with the morn; suggesting a new dawn in the nation's history." (KA, p. 10)
3. "He has the distinction of glorifying womanhood as the perpetual fount and source of pure love." (KA, p. 16)
4. "She was his only offspring—a damsel of extraordinary beauty." (KA, p. 78)
5. "The sight she beholds there is breath-taking." (KA, p. 83)
6. "Nor could the yogi-like self-discipline of yester-years and the profound knowledge of 'vedantic' truths could be fully obliterated." (KA, p. 65)

7. "The immortal saints serve as the sacred flower at their offerings and thus attains weed of perennial bliss." (KA, p. 60)

The influence of The Bible is also perceivable in MIE in the ordinary language of day to day communication. In the early stages of English education in Kerala, the teachers of English were mostly missionaries who came to India for the purpose of proselytization. Though they were devout teachers of English as well, one of their aims was to make The Bible and the hymnal available to the new congregations. The Bible then available to the new literates was the King James' version. Of course the language of King James' Bible is magnificent, but hardly appropriate to the demands of modern everyday use of language. So, an echo of the liturgical language still seems to persist in MIE.

The not so infrequent use of the plural 'brethren' instead of 'brothers' in ordinary contexts is one such biblical influence:

1. "Now those brethren who sit here remember the corn that is cut by the father." (MSCNR, p. 80)

Likewise the word 'tithe' has its origin in the ancient custom of giving tenth part of farm produce to the church of England for the maintenance of the parish priests. The
word in the sense of 'tenth part' is thus at once liturgical and rhetorical. In MIE we find the term occasionally used in contexts where the expression is least expected, as in:

2. "Even a tithe of pleasure we get from seeing in the stage human beings in flesh and blood cannot be achieved from seeing human beings on the silver screen." (ALIE, p. 99)

The use of the word 'unto', as in the following sentence looks unwarranted in the context:

3. "They were a burden unto themselves." (ICOP, p. 79)

The use of the word 'hath', instead of 'has' and the occasional retention of the '-th' suffix with verbs in ordinary contexts often gives MIE, a scriptural echo, as in:

4. "It passeth understanding how, if they are Hindus, the 'Ezahvas' (Thiyas) who happened to be numerically superior group always remained out of the pale of the 'chathurvarnya'." (K.A., p. 26)

5. He did not even dreamth that the lanciers would set fire to his house. (MV, p. 34)

Many lexical items which are labelled as archaisms in the dictionaries of MBSE are often found used in MIE. This feature demonstrates the unawareness on the part of MIE speakers and writers about the contemporary use of the English language and the linguistic change. The result is that MIE becomes out of tune with the synchronic use of English and shows a literary flavour in its use of obsolete lexical items.
Examples include the following, among many others:

1. 'Don', as in: "The question why I who had donned the robes of a visiting professor should co-exist with students and with minimum comforts perplexed me." (ALIE, p. 58)

Other than the word 'don', 'co-exist' in the sense of 'live with' or 'stay with' also looks unusual and pompous.

2. 'Ere', as in: "Not that he was interested in the finer arts ere he joined the industry." (IE, May 18, 1980)

3. 'Ever and anon', as in: "The sacred ashes of my father lie scattered in the soil of Changanacherry and I really cannot forget the spot to which I feel, ever and anon drawn by a thousand ties of affectionate memory." (EPU, p. 3)

4. 'Native place', as in: "People started deserting their native places apprehending a severe earthquake on the eclipse day." (IE, Feb. 13, 1980)

According to Nihalani et al. (1979: 126): "This phrase, frequent in Dickens and other nineteenth century writers would not be likely to be found now a days in BS though its meaning is perfectly clear to any speaker of English."

5. 'Thrice', as in: "She was finicky about cleanliness and bathed thrice a day." (MS, p. 24)

Though 'thrice' is no longer fashionable in MBSE and is rarely used, it is preferred to three times in MIE on the analogy of 'twice'.

6. 'Spouse', as in: "They were greeted warmly by the doctor and his beautiful and accomplished spouse.' (KA, p. 35)

7. 'Wherewithal', as in: "Others were worried about the wherewithal to build the temple." (KA, p. 19)

A comprehensive list of the archaisms used by a language community in the various contexts in which they occur, however, cannot be listed within the scope of a study of this kind. 'Abode' for 'house', 'better half' for 'wife', 'dickey' in the sense of 'boot' or 'trunk', 'morrow' for morning' and 'yesternight' for 'yesterday night' are still contemporaneous enough in MIE. Likewise, 'beg to submit', 'do the needful', 'do as you want', 'leave alone' are fossilized expressions popularly used in the administrative register of MIE.

The growing political and economic importance of America coupled with the influence of American 'movies', TV and the famous American magazines like Life and Time makes their perceptible impact on all varieties of English in the world. Though the influence of American slang and nonce words are often more pronounced, occasionally archaisms too reappear in other varieties of English through the impact of America. Regarding this phenomenon Brian Foster (1976: 31) writes thus: "It must be used with caution, however, since words which have died out in Britain sometimes survive in the USA and are finally hailed in British English as neologisms." Several
archaic words have come into MIE as a result of its contact with American English. The use of the term 'faucet' for 'tap' is one such instance of the reappearance of an old fashioned word in MIE. Though the term 'tap' is used for that device in Kerala, we occasionally come across the term 'faucet' too. This is a clear instance of American influence. To cite an example:

1. Midway there was to the right, an opening which led on to the servant's quarters where night and day a faucet leaked noisily, sadly. (MS, p. 13)

The same author repeats the use of this lexical item three times in the same book. Perhaps this may be an author-specific or text specific instance of the influence of American English.

The word 'presently' in the American sense (at the present time) instead of 'soon' is often found used in MIE, as in:

"He was presently employed in research and teaching in Chicago." (ALIE, p. 2)

Likewise, the word 'sick' instead of 'ill' or 'unwell' is preferred in MIE, as in the sentence given below:

"She was violently sick (MS, p. 48.)

In MBSE the term 'badly ill' may be preferred in the context of the above sentence.

In American English, however, the use of archaic words is more or less compensated by palpable modernisms, especially
by the use of slang. The minimal use of slang words and the excessive use of archaisms and poeticisms give MIE a literary flavour, a kind of literaliness rather than a literary quality.

4.4. Cliches

According to Fowler (1925: 25) "Cliches (from French 'clicher'; to stereotype) are stock phrases, once original and arresting, but now grown so common through over-use.' Cliches are thus hackneyed phrases which no longer arrest the attention of the listener/reader in a spoken or written communicative situation. Cliches, when used in formal written English may indicate the writer's inability or unwillingness to think freshly and clearly. Excessive use of cliches can therefore be considered a "... sign of mental laziness and of secondhand thinking and feeling" (Passe, 1955: 101). Many cliches are perhaps unavoidable in everyday conversation. It is not possible to think out a fresh expression for every trifling occasion. But in written English, where precision matters much, cliches are perhaps, better avoided.

M.A.K. Halliday (1966: 23) has defined the categories of 'idiom' and 'cliche' from the point of view of formal lexical relations as follows:

There are fixed collocations of lexical items which are of high probability and without grammatical restrictions . . . and there are several examples where one of the words thus collocated is never found except in association with the second, giving a unique collocation like 'in the nick of the time'.
... Fixed collocation of this kind, including unique collocations, could be called 'cliches'...
Secondly there may be one or more lexical items which are always tied to a particular grammatical structure; for example... the English *let the cat out of the bag*. You cannot say... the cat is in the bag. The category may be called idioms.

Thus in terms of content, cliches have the connotation of outworn usages due to their unvarying nature through any number of repetitions. Idioms too, in terms of their semantics of fixity can thus become cliches in usage.

Cliches probably have their origin in normal social intercourse as the apt turn of phrase to express a state, feeling, idea or emotion, which truly reflects the condition of the society at that particular point of time. However, as society undergoes change, social relationships expressed and maintained through language must come to terms with what is new.

One of the characteristics that distinguishes MIE from MBSE, is perhaps the use of an excessive number of cliches in the formal variety of English. In MBSE too, 'journalese' seem to contain a good number of cliches. But, as journalists work against the constraint of time, they may not be able to think of arresting new ideas to replace the cliches, especially when the news items are to be reported without delay. But in MIE or IE, one finds cliches in the most formal type of writings, like, say, autobiographies, travelogues and even in novels and
other types of creative works. This may be due to the inability or mental inertia of the writer to cope with the new reality. The change of fashion in English language becomes so alarming that the non-native speaker/writer finds it difficult to absorb the latest trends in language. In such circumstances cliches become important as a means of continuing the linguistic habits of a less complex past. As the social structure and incidents which contributed the metaphor or simile of the cliches do not have equal relevance in the modern age, cliches become hackneyed or old fashioned.

The following sentences abstracted from the corpus will show how cliches have become the lexical resource of the various registers of formal written MIE:

(a) Books on literature

1. Here again the results of pioneering efforts have passed into oblivion (WIML, p. 40)

2. When Caldwell's grammar was published, all previous works on the subject paled into insignificance (WIML, p. 40)

3. In south India Bishop Caldwell's 'A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages' was hailed as a beaconlight (WIML, p. 41)
4. He felt sure that he would unravel the mystery of the strange girl (LV, p. 28)

5. There were also days when she came to office with problems writ large on her face (R.L., p. 41)


7. Could he be made to face the stark reality? (MSS, p. 27)

8. The idea has come to us so suddenly like a bolt from the blue that we are lost for an answer (R.L., p. 167)

(c) From Travelogues

9. When we met so suddenly after a long silence of twenty-five years, our joy knew no bounds (ALIE, p. 107)

10. The species called peons was conspicuous by its absence (ALIE, p. 4)

11. The news will spread like wild fire (ALIE, p. 9)

12. Such roads above and below provide a quick entry into the heart of the city (ALIE, p. 76)

13. In every nook and corner of the city there are cinema houses (ALIE, p. 99)

14. However, it was John who did the lion's share of the work (ALIE, p. 219).

15. It seems that this attitude is a stumbling block to our progress as a nation (ALIE, p. 215)

16. Every movement of his was pregnant with meaning (ALIE, p. 112)
17. Mannom, who was known as the heart and soul of the Nair community, agreed to their suggestion (AEKH, p. 1)

18. The invigorating speech of Mannom was a milestone in the history of Kerala (AEKH, p. 56).

An exhaustive listing of cliches in common use in the various registers of MIE is not attempted in the present investigation. However, some of the cliches which are in popular use in the various registers of MIE are listed below. Since the use of cliches is one of the linguistic prerogatives of the journalists, cliches used by them have not been included in the following list:

1. add fuel to fire (MM, p. 75)
2. ample proof (T, Oct. 1982)
3. a lion's share (KFL, p. 73)
4. beat black and blue (ADCP, p. 52)
5. blessing in disguise (TR, Aug. 1981)
6. blissful ignorance (TR, Sept. 1982)
7. come into lime light (MM, p. 41)
8. every nook and corner (C, p. 70)
9. knew no bounds (C, p. 55)
10. length and breadth (KFL, p. 75)
11. see the light of day (MM, p. 41)
12. to leave no stone unturned (T, Oct. 1978)
It looks easier to describe what is avoidable in writing than to say what is good. Cliches are overworked expressions and they look stale and lack originality. But a non-native speaker/writer finds them readymade expressions to suit his purpose. Some of the cliches are still so expressive that the avoidance of them may create a kind of gap in communication. But the use of cliches in and out of context may create a sort of jarring effect; and they may give the impression of linguistic inertia on the part of a non-native speaker to think afresh.

However, a non-native user of English, as the term implies, does not learn the language in the process of living, but in the process of learning; and the complete avoidance of cliches may be difficult for him in his speech and writing. So it may perhaps be better to express oneself than to remain tongue-tied or 'pen-tied'.

4.5. Idioms and Phrases

An idiom is a sequence of words whose meaning cannot often be predicted from the meanings of individual words in them. As Palmer (1979: 41) writes: "Semantically idioms are single units. But they are not single grammatical units like words." Idioms often involve collocation of a special kind. To cite an example, the English slang idiom 'kick the bucket'
of course, has the collocation of 'kick' and 'the bucket'. But the meaning of the resultant combination is 'opaque', i.e. the meaning of the individual words in the idiom is not of much significance, as the collocation of the words gets a separate meaning almost akin to that of a single word.

Each language has its own private wealth of idioms which springs from the ethos of the people. They have their roots in the socio-cultural set up of the society to which the people belong. So, idioms are the idiosyncrasies of a language. The 'opaque' idioms usually need not have equivalence in other languages and an attempt to literally translate them may lead to the formation of exotic idioms. English idioms like 'kick the bucket' or 'spill the beans' cannot be satisfactorily translated into Malayalam or other Indian languages. But the idioms which are comparatively transparent often yield to paraphrasing. Idioms which are phrasal verbs like, put down, look after etc. are of this kind.

As such, the literal translation of Malayalam idioms into English sometimes makes them unidiomatic sequences of words and they give a strange flavour to the English written by the bilinguals of Kerala, as idioms which are peculiar to the experience of a certain community may not necessarily have much relevance to another cultural group.

A few examples of idioms translated from Malayalam to MIE, as given in the following sentences may show how the
Idomatic expressions function in the context of the sentences in which they occur:

1. This same Mannam, one fine morning, joined the state congress and sounded his horn against C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar (AEKH, p. 55)

The idiom sound one's horn in the above sentence is a literal translation of the Malayalam idiom 'sabdakāhalam mulakkuka', meaning 'protest vehemently'.

2. The contact with the English language gave Indian writers new outlooks; they got new eyes and ears (IEML, p. 28)

The idiom 'get new eyes and years' is a literal translation of the Malayalam idiom 'Puthiya Kannum Kathum labhikkuka', meaning 'to get a new awareness'. However this kind of figurative usage is common enough in English and so there is no problem of intelligibility.

3. This rule should be dumped into the Arabian Sea (IH, May 22, 1980)

The idiom 'to dump into the Arabian Sea' is a literal translation of the Malayalam idiom 'arabikadalil thalluka'. The idiom meaning 'to discard' refers to the practice of throwing unwanted things into the sea. It is a common practice that is so very familiar to the people of Kerala who live near the Arabian sea.
4. Now let them count the stars (C, p. 61)
('Count the stars' is the literal translation of the Malayalam idiom 'nakshatram ennuka', meaning 'try to do something impossible'.)

5. K. T. Raman Nambiar and others blossomed through the columns of the magazine (ICOP, p. 6)
('Blossom through' here is a literal translation of the Malayalam idiomatic phrase 'vitarnu varukā' meaning 'coming out with brightness and becoming popular'.)

However, idioms translated from the mother tongue are comparatively less in number in the select corpus of MIE. The most striking feature of MIE with regard to the use of idioms is the deviant usage of MBSE idioms and the formation of new idioms on the analogy of the ones that already exist in English. Such idiomatic formulas often look 'sub standard' and show that the English idioms can be alien to the experience of the writers in MIE.

As the British English idioms are closely connected with the history, mythology, geography, literature, etymology, music, painting and above all the great cultural tradition of the country, lack of proper acquaintance with the history and culture of the country of their origin makes the proper understanding of the idioms difficult. So idioms like 'a feather in one's cap', 'to laugh at one's sleeve', 'to meet one's waterloo', 'cleanse the Augean stable', 'to carry coal
to New Castle', 'to grin like a Cheshire cat', 'to paint the town red', and a host of other idioms which are closely bound to British tradition, may not mean much to a non-native speaker of English, unless he makes an attempt to study their etymology and historical importance.

The mechanical drilling of English idioms to the learners of English in Kerala as part of the introduction in English language often keeps them acquainted with the idioms without proper understanding of their subtle nuances. In fact, it is the idiomatic part of a language that is the most difficult part for a foreigner to master. It adds to the difficulty especially when a non-native speaker does not understand as to how or why a particular idiomatic phrase has assumed its present form. So one who is not familiar with the English history, English legend, English humour, English festivals and above all the English tradition will find it difficult to use the English idioms. As such it is not surprising that we find idiomatic irregularities of the following type in MIE:

1. The present mode of permitting the rule of a political-party which by hook or crook gets more number of MLAs/MPs is indeed an uncivilized practice (IE, Dec. 4, 1979)

(by hook or by crook' is the fixed MBSE idiom.)
2. During the modern period, Ezhavas happen to run almost neck to neck with them. . . . (KA, p. 25) ('neck and neck' meaning 'side by side' is the fixed MBSE idiom.)

3. He was married to Malayalam literature (IFMN: p. 37) ('wedded to' meaning 'devoted to' is the MBSE idiomatic phrase.)

4. From the heart of her hearts, there rose up tumultuous feelings of warmth (A, p. 43) ('heart of hearts' is the fixed MBSE idiom. The interposing of the personal pronoun 'her' within the idiom is unnatural.)

5. 'How the steel was tempered' is a novel in two parts and it is his opus magnum (OON, p. 12) (In MBSE, the fixed idiomatic phrase is 'magnum opus'.) As a general rule an idiomatic phrase cannot be altered; no other synonymous word can be substituted for any word in the phrase. Even the arrangements of words can rarely be modified. Any change in the wording or collocation will naturally destroy the idiom and perhaps render the expression meaningless. The examples cited above are deviant because the writers have altered the fixed nature of the idioms.

Certain idiom-like formations on the analogy of MBSE idioms are found used in the corpus to bring about comic effect. Examples include the following:
1. Everything was **spit and polish** inside the single room (BB, p. 69)

('spit and polish' is used in the context on the analogy of the MBSE idiom 'spick and span'.)

2. I want to **beef up** the bastard (BB, p. 59)

(The expression 'beef up' is used here in the sense of 'finish off'; kill etc.)

3. The rural-urban conflict is **round the bend** (BB, p. 64)

(The idiomatic phrase 'round the bend' is used in the sentence in the sense of 'very near'. The English slang idiom 'round the bend', means 'mad'.)

Metaphorical monstrosities, probably emanating from an ill-assorted phrasal memory, are often found in the corpus. Such mixed metaphors show that the writers are more interested in inserting idioms into their sentences than in conveying precisely the message they intend to convey. Examples include the following:

1. This will make them **lotus eaters** who will be **square pegs in round holes**.(IE, Dec. 8, 1979)

2. Every minister has **skeletons galore** in his cupboard and even if anybody washes the dirty linen in public, it is all going to end up in a comic falsetto of a one-man enquiry commission. (BB, p. 135)

Verbal idioms of English are indeed an achilles heel to all those who learn and use English as a second language. Ordinary verbs enter into combination with ordinary particles
and the meaning of the resultant verb phrase becomes entirely different from what is usually expected. The slightest deviation in the use of the particle may lead to semantic change of great significance. For instance, 'give in', 'give up', 'give over' and 'give off' have different significations.

Regarding the confusion created by verbal phrases and idioms Dustoor (1968: 116) cites an interesting story:

There is the story of the Frenchman on the boat-train to Victoria. As the train approached the station he saw the notice, "Look out! Danger ahead!", and like the logical Latin he was, he promptly looked out, only to meet the danger more than half way. It is reported that, when he regained consciousness, his first words were: "O these mad Anglais! They say 'look out' when they mean 'look in'.

Many deviations in the use of verbal idioms are found in MIF. A few of them are given below:

1. Her words are little better than Written on water (MV, p. 29)
   ('Written in water' is the MBSE usage.)

2. Karthyayani Amma returned beaming with the pride and satisfaction of a minister who has skilfully used his brain in a trying situation and come out with flying colours (MV, p. 70)
   ('Come off with flying colours' is the fixed verbal phrase in MBSE in the context of the sentence given above. 'Come out' means 'appear', 'become visible' and the like.)
3. The doctor made her swallow down the tablet
   (LV, p. 27)
   ('swallow up' something is the fixed verbal phrase in MBSE.)
Occasionally the particles are deleted from the verb phrase as in:

4. But please refrain raising the claim in future
   (MM, p. 16)
   (In MBSE 'refrain from' is the fixed phrase.)

The descriptive treatment of structural idioms are dealt at length in the chapter on Syntax. The study of idioms and phrases here is intended at pointing out that English idioms and phrases are usually very difficult to the people who use English as a second language. Many idioms are alien to their experience too.

4.6. Neologisms

Neologism or the invention of new words is one of the most common forms of lexical choices in language. Poets, philosophers, journalists, scientists, and ordinary citizens in ordinary conversations quite often stumble into neologisms as the readiest means to express their feelings or opinion or to designate new concepts or things.

In fact, all lexical items remain for sometime with an uncertain status at the time of their birth till they get recognized by their inclusion in a lexicon. Regarding the
contribution of poets to the growth of English vocabulary, Leech (1968: 42) writes: "Quite a number of widely used English words apparently originated in poetry; examples are blatant [Spenser], assassination [Shakespeare], pandemonium [Milton] and causistry [Pope]." Of course, in the case of the words contributed by the poets, the time of their birth is more or less certain. With regard to most of the words, the exact year of their origin is difficult to ascertain and they are recognized only with their inclusion in the lexicon. So the word 'hijack' may have originated as a neologism long before 1941 in the sense of 'armed bandit who preys on bootlegger'. This American slang expression has today been extended to cover what is sometimes called 'air-piracy'. Thus a nonce word gets a 'nonce sense' when it is used to refer to a new practice.

So neologism is a linguistic necessity and to call it a violation of lexical rule may sound illogical. Fowler's (1935: 28) view that "Each word that does appear should be severely scrutinized," looks logical enough. However, neologisms increase in number, day by day; some face a sort of 'verbicide'; others survive and become a part of the lexical content of the English language.

Popular neologisms present problems of intelligibility even among the native speakers of English, especially if one does not keep pace with the latest development in the language. Brian Foster (1968: 1) cites an anecdote to show how new words
are sometimes embarrassing. A girl called Monica Baldwin entered the convent in 1914, remaining secluded there until 1941, when she was released from her vows. Coming to the outer world, she felt embarrassed as she could not understand the meanings of "new words and phrase like 'unknown soldier', 'leaseland', 'Hollywood', 'cocktail', 'striptease' and 'isolationism'" which were very frequently used by people. So she felt bewildered when friends said: "Its your funeral' or 'believe it nor not'. Inspite of such isolated problems, neologisms help to reduce a good deal of linguistic monotony.

The formation of neologisms as a stylistic technique is an area successfully exploited by poets. T. S. Eliot's use of the verb 'fore-suffer' in The Waste Land, as in: "And I Tiresias have fore-suffered all" on the analogy of foresee, foretell, foreknow etc., strikes us as a novelty. Of course, this is an instance of poetic licence and if there were no limitations of lexical items of this kind, there would be no such thing as a finite list of words constituting the lexicon of the English language.

4.6.1. Neologisms in MIE

All the lexical items referred to so far in the chapter on "Lexical Transference and Innovations" in MIE are in a way neologisms or nonce-forms. But they are the products of bilingualism and biculturalism. Other than those items, we find a number of neologisms in MIE, which are either independent
words or analogical formations created to designate certain concepts and things. Neologisms of the type referred to in the present section do not necessarily depend on the language contact situation. No known reason can be found for such rule-bending creativity. However, all non-native varieties of English seem to have a private treasure of neologisms which are unintelligible outside their geographical boundaries. Regarding the use of a popular neologism in West Africa John Spencer (1971: 3) writes: "With regard to the widely used term 'been to' for an England-returned graduate or trained man, it was believed in Ghana, some years ago, that a feminine form 'beentress' also existed in popular usage." such neologisms may look funny for the native speakers of English. But the non-native speakers of English who use such words find them very convenient.

A few neologisms in MIE, abstracted from the corpus, are for convenience of analysis divided into three groups, as under:

1. Analogical formations
2. Lexical sets
3. Compound blends

4.6.1.1. Analogical formations

Analogical formations on the pattern of English word-formation constitute the bulk of the nonce-words in MIE, as in the other native and non-native varieties of English.
The most common process of neological formation is by affixation, i.e., the addition of a prefix or a suffix to an item already used in the language. In the limited corpus analysed, we find the use of the compound 'unlove', as in 'I can unlove you (LV, p. 140). This seems to be a neologism, as it does not find a place in the OALDCE even though it includes 302 simple compounds with the prefix 'un'. The compound 'unlove' does not look a serious violation of word formation, as it has the analogy of 'unman', 'unfrock', 'unfurl' etc. which are normal usages in native varieties of English. What is noteworthy is the fact that the prefix is used in a sort of mathematical way to reverse the meaning of the verb 'love'. Hopkin's use of the compounds, 'unchilding' and 'unfathering' in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and Lady Macbeth's use of the term 'unsex' are acceptable on stylistic grounds, and they remain as nonce-words in the language. 'Un-' is perhaps the most common of English negative prefixes. Anyone who feels the need to create a negative word or the opposite of a word, would, use '-un' rather than any other prefix. Unperson, unpoor, unyoung, unblack etc. are now popular usages in American English. 'Unperson' is one whose memory must be obliterated. Webster 3 Addende (1968) gives the meaning of the word as "an individual who, for political or ideological reasons, is removed completely from recognition . . . memory. . . . " However this does not seem to be a healthy tendency. For instance, if someone uses
the term 'undirty' on the analogy of 'unclean', and this process continues indefinitely, the lexicographers may find it difficult to account for them.

'Prepone' as in "The students' demand to prepone the publication of results," on the analogy of 'pre-fabricate', 'pre-empt' etc. as the antonym of 'postpone' is a popular neologism in MIE. If popularity of usage of a word or compound is any sign of its status, this is a word of high status in MIE.

The prefix 'anti-' is found used in MIE as in: "It is between two group of anti-raggers" (IE, Nov. 22, 1979). From the English verb 'rag' is formed the noun 'ragger' and its antonym becomes 'anti-ragger', a nonce formation. Another examples of the type is anti-Congressism (ICOP, p.214). Suffixations like '-al', '-er', '-ful', '-en' and '-ness', when arbitrarily used with adjectives, nouns and verbs contribute a few neologisms in MIE. The present investigator feels that such formations are the product of a certain amount of linguistic inertia on the part of the writers to ascertain whether such suffixations are permitted with the words to which they are superfluously attached, as the constructions do not seem to serve any stylistic purpose. Examples of such formations include the following:

determinatedness (A, p. 53)
percential (KA, p. 14)
prestiegeful (SRKV, p. 51)
multistarrer (films) (SS, April 27, 1979)
In the examples given above, additional suffixes are added to nouns and adjectives, thereby making the lexical items nonce-formations. Sometimes we may feel a stylistically valuable difference between a coinage in '-ness' and a standard abstract noun. 'Sensitiveness' is perhaps not exactly replaced by 'sensitivity'. But in the case of the lexical items mentioned above, no stylistic purposes is served by their use. Analogical formations other than those formed by affixation include 'black money' (IE, Oct. 12, 1978) on the analogy of 'black market' and 'white money' as its antonym. 'Kingcrow' (LV, p. 22) is a popular neologism for a crow which is big in size. This may perhaps have the analogy of 'king fisher'.

4.6.1.2. Lexical sets

The term lexical set is used here for the items which are of a higher rank than single words. Some nonce-words which are formed out of the pressure of indigenous habits and attitudes belong to this category. About a very interesting neologism prevalent in Bengal--'out books'--Dustoor (1966: 111) writes as follows:

When I first heard it as a student at Calcutta I was puzzled by this neologism bandied about by my class-mates. I soon learnt, however, that it was a literal translation of a Bengali word for books outside one's prescribed course.

Many of the neologisms are born out of an immediate need to designate certain things and ideas for which the writer may not find a precise and suitable expression in the English
language. So, he invents one. 'Rocket roast' in MIE is an eatable item which is a delicacy in the restaurants of Kerala. The motivation for the invention seems to be the shape of that food item to that of a rocket. Writing about the price-rise of eatables in the restaurants of Kerala, The Indian Express (Dec. 6, 1978) reported as under:

For instance, one hotel in the city sold the rocket-roast at a rate of above or upto Re.1.

The expression may look an apocryphal joke to the educated users of the English language. But they will also be constrained to use the term, if they wish to eat it from the restaurant.

In the northern districts of Kerala and in the neighbouring state of Tamilnadu, the term 'military hotel' is very popular. 'Military hotel' means a hotel or restaurant where non-vegetarian food is served. It has developed out of the supposed association of the people in the military service with those who eat all types of non-vegetarian food. One who is not familiar with the expression may be surprised at the waiter's innocuous enquiry, 'military' or 'sadha' when one sits at the dining table of the restaurants.

The cinema, which of late has developed as a very popular industry in Kerala has its own peculiar vocabulary. So in the MIE film reviews, we come across expressions like 'sex-bomb' as in: "The film begins with Madhu bashing up a notorious murderer and then cuddling a sex bomb, his sister" (SS, Nov. 11, 1979). A film that creates a light comic situation

Ordinary food, meaning vegetarian, in a hotel where vegetarian and non-vegetarian food are served.
with a number of important stars or actors is thus a "multi-starrer entertainer" (SS, Dec. 9, 1979), while a "colour venture" (SS, Dec. 9, 1979) is a cinema taken in colour films. The comparatively recent switch over from black and white cinema to colour cinema, is a 'venture', as the production of a colour cinema would involve more financial commitment on the part of the producer, than for the production of a black and white cinema. A 'play back singer' in MIE or IE in general is one who sings songs for the cinemas. According to OALDCE 'playback' means "the device on a tape recorder which plays back recorded material". However, the term 'play back singer' does not find a place in OALDCE or COD. So it can be treated as a pan-Indian neologism.

'Line bus' (ALIE, p. 85) in the sense of a bus that takes passengers enroute, 'petrol bunker' (IE, April 4, 1979) in the sense of the owner of a petrol pumping station, 'sky-rocketing prices' (IE, Aug. 8, 1979) in the sense of prices of goods that go up due to inflation, 'money plant' (AL, p. 35) as the name of a creeper plant that is supposed to bring financial prosperity to one who nurtures it at home and 'sit out' in the sense of 'patio' are some other neologisms found popularly used in MIE. Likewise 'sunglasses' are often referred to as 'cooling glasses' (T. Dec. 1982 in MI). Mangokin (MSS, p. 152) is a recent neologism coined to designate small tender mangoes. Likewise, 'kidlet' (MS, p. 48) is used
to designate a very small 'kid'. 'Eve-teaser' is a very popular neologism used in MIE, as in 'Eve teasers nabbed' (IE, Oct. 7, 1980). 'Eve teaser', as the term implies is one who teases women.

4.6.1.3. Compound Blends

Compound blending is a popular pattern in the formation of new words. Though this pattern of word-formation was in vogue for long, the trend has been very much popularised by journalists and advertisement experts in recent years. However, this type of word formation does not seem to have much linguistic sophistication as they are mere morphological irregularities in their form. Yet they seem to express certain notions more readily and appropriately than other kinds of complex words. In journalism and advertisements, the blends are very popular as they save space due to the presence of lesser number of letters in them than in the use of the blended words separately.

Though the blends or 'portmanteau words' as they are popularly referred to, are mostly twentieth century coinages, there are a few exceptions. Portmanteau words like 'slithy' and 'minsy' as made up of 'lithe' and 'slimy' and 'flimsy' and 'misrable' respectively are popular examples of this type used by Lewis Caroll in the dialogue between Alice and Humpty Dumpty in Alice in Wonderland.⁵ These examples show that in the past

centuries, blends were used for the fun of it. In modern times, especially in science and technology, the blends are used on rather serious occasions too, to express certain important ideas. 'Ballute', for 'Balloon parachute', 'transceiver' for transmitter receiver 'ruddervator' for ruder elevator' etc., are some of the examples.

In MIE, the investigator came across a few portmanteau words or blends. As they are not found in the authentic dictionaries of the English language, the investigator is at a loss to decide whether they are used in the native varieties of English as well. As the blends are not recorded in the dictionaries, the spelling and pronunciation of such words also bring in problems to those who would like to use them.

'Boatel' as in 'Boatel launched' (IE, May 25, 1980) do not pose serious problem of intelligibility as it is comparatively transparent in its blending. 'Boatel' is a hotel n a boat. However, 'bomphlet' (Bomb like pamphlet or pamphlet in a bomb?) is comparatively opaque and puts strain on the readers' comprehension. 'Sexcapades' (SS, Dec. 5, 1980), 'sexplosion' (IE, Aug. 2, 1978), 'sexplosive' (MB, April 24, 1981) and 'sexperience' are a few blends usually found in MIE especially in film advertisements. As these words are yet to find a place in the English dictionaries, it is difficult to ascertain whether they are indigenous creations or adopted from the journalese of native varieties of English.
A comprehensive study of the lexical content of MTE may show an astounding variety of neologisms. For want of a lexicon of IE or MIE the nonce-words in this variety of English may have to exist with uncertain status—a kind of bastardly lexical items, unclaimed by any lexicon.

4.7. Slang

Slang is an area of language use which arouses the most diverse response. It is a very elusive element in human communication. It is not an easy term to define. The COD defines slang: "1. Words and phrases in common colloquial use, but generally considered in some or all of their senses to be outside of standard English. 2. Words and phrases either entirely peculiar to, or used by some class or profession."

Slang words are thus expressions which are regarded as non-standard. But, as Pythian (1976: iv) says:

The normal development is for a slang expression to become accepted into that large body of more 'educated' but still informal English known as colloquialism, and thence into the full status of standard English.

However, an essential characteristic of a slang is its informality. As Brook (1973:123) writes: "The proper use of slang calls for considerable linguistic tact." Non-native speakers of English find the slang expressions difficult to comprehend as their English is learnt in the formal atmosphere of the class room. Yet, established slang expressions which are shortened versions of long words have attained a good deal of popularity in non-native varieties of English, as well. So, words like 'flu' (from influenza), 'bus' (from omnibus), 'cab'
(from cabriolet), 'popmusic' (from popular music) and the ubiquitous 'o.k.' are very frequently used in the non-native varieties of English as well. According to Brook (1973: 136) "This tendency is due to love of conciseness". The two world-wars have done much to increase the use of slang. The words used by the men in the 'forces' (army, navy and air-force) became popular and this seems to be partly responsible for the change of attitude of people towards slang. The word cushy (comfortable) is one such instance of an Indian word, which became a very popular slang in English. So the attitude towards slang cannot be said to be very stable. According to Pythian (1976: 10):

The world 'telly' for television was stigmatized as 'non cultured' by the Standard Dictionary of Slang; in 1973 it was used by the Archbishop of Canterbury during a televised broadcast from West Minster Abbey on the eve of a royal wedding.

So slang words become acceptable by their use by those who do not usually use them, especially when the user happens to be a person of high rank and prestige, as in the case of the archbishop of Canterbury.

The task of distinguishing a slang from a dialectal form has become difficult as speakers and writers of English everywhere develop their own slang. As the expressions thus developed seldom find entry in a dictionary, the non-native user of English finds it difficult to ascertain their status. 'Tear-jerker' (SS, Oct. 4, 1981), a slang or cant of the theatre is popularly used in the English newspapers in India.
in the sense of a sentimental cinema. The non-native speakers of English, who speak and write a more or less 'standard variety of English' or as H.A. Passe (1955: 7) calls 'the educated English' are at a loss to decide whether they should take such terms seriously or not.

Some slang words which are peculiar to MIE, found in the corpus looks worthy of attention, as they are not likely to be easily understood by the speakers of other varieties of English. The expression 'tender coconut' is popularly used in MIE as a slang for teen-aged girls. To cite an example:

"You are indeed a tender coconut, he remarked,
as he advanced towards me."  (LV : 30)

The coconut imagery is characteristic of Kerala which is the largest producer of coconuts in India. 'Elephant' (Mal. "Ana) is a slangword for the buses of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation, as in the sentence; "The elephant has come" (MSS, p. 36). The speaker of the sentence mentions the arrival of a bus of the Corporation. The use of the slang is connected to the emblem of the Corporation which has the picture of two elephants keeping their trunks aloft a conch. 'Sex bomb', in the sense of woman with bewitching 'sex-appeal' has already been discussed under 'neologisms'. The metaphor of the bomb which bursts at the slightest provocation is transferred to women.

As most of the slang expressions are not used in written English, the investigator is at a loss to provide concrete data
to elucidate their use. Yet, two slang expressions which are used popularly in MIE seem to be interesting, even though they are not found in the corpus of written English. They are, 'London' for the 'lavatory', and 'taxi' for a 'prostitute'. The reason for the use of London in the sense of lavatory evades all kinds of reasoning. The only likely reason for the use of the expression is that, the modern lavatories which are called the 'safety tanks' were introduced into India by the English; while 'taxi' for a prostitute looks reasonable enough as the 'taxi cab' and the 'pros' (a popular clipped word for prostitute) can be hired on payment.

4.8. Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronyms are words formed from the initial letters of a phrase or ordered series of words. They are a kind of linguistic shorthand. The tendency to form words in this manner has been on the increase since the beginning of the twentieth century. The word 'acronym' is derived from the Greek acros, meaning 'tip' or 'top', and onoma, meaning 'name'. The lexical content of the English language of the twentieth century consists of a large number of acronyms as well as abbreviations, a comprehensive list of which may run into a few volumes. Some acronyms and abbreviations are universally understood, while others make sense only to limited linguistic groups. Most of the acronyms are 'register-bound', and are known only to a small specialised circile of initiates. Science and technology seem to share the bulk of the acronyms in the English language.
As acronyms and abbreviations form a great part of the linguistic activity of man, each society and culture contributes its own variety of acronyms and abbreviations to designate new concepts, institutions and matters of general interest. They present problems of intelligibility as the same acronym or abbreviation may sometimes have different expansions in different parts of the world. This aspect of the abbreviations makes them linguistically important as they are often 'language bound' or 'culture bound' lexical usages.

Abbreviations in MTE, as in other varieties of English can be divided into two main categories: alphabetisms and literalisms. Alphabetisms are ordinary abbreviations represented through the first letters of the words of a series which are pronounced separately as in the case of the U.S., the B.B.C. etc. Literalisms or acronyms are word-like use of the letters as in the case of NASA, CARE, UNESCO, which are pronounced as independent lexical items. The tendency to use alphabetisms in the form of lexical items is gradually becoming fashionable in the language. So acronyms like J. C. (Junior Chamber) M. C. (Master of Ceremonies) and D. J. (disk jockey) are often written as jaycee, emcee and deejay respectively.

The popularity of abbreviated forms sometimes obscures their expansions and people use them without understanding the concept, person or institution represented by such alphabeticisms. So IQ (Intelligence Quotient) and T.M. (Transcendental Meditation) are more popularly understood by
people than their expanded forms. Most of the abbreviations in MIE represent government agencies, organizations, political parties, proper names and designations of officials. For instance, E.M.S. (Elamkulam Manackal Sankaran) and A.K.G. (Ayillathu Kuttiri Gopalan) are two very popular acronymous proper names that are found in MIE, as in:

1. I felt at this time that Comrade E.M.S. was perhaps too good a man (ICOP, p. 59)

'MILMA' is a popular acronym for the 'Milk Marketing Society' of Kerala, while KELTRON represents the Kerala State Electronic Corporation. So it is not only the first letters of an ordered series of words alone that represent the acronyms in MIE. Acronyms like 'Milma' and 'Keltron' give great importance to the lexical shape and the phonetic aspect, than to the initialisms. They are motivated, word-like acronyms, as they would sound better in catchy advertisement slogans.

Excessive use of acronyms, or initialisms is a note-worthy feature in the registers of administration and journalism in Kerala. An outsider reading an English newspaper published from Kerala or an official circular issued by the government may be surprised on seeing the number of unfamiliar acronyms and abbreviations used in these registers. For example, the sentence, "The CPM-led LDF and the UDF seem to be in a tight
fight" (IE, Jan. 10, 1980) is to be understood or reread as "The Communist Party Marxist-led Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front" seem to be in a tight fight."
The abbreviations LDF and UDF are peculiar to the political situation in Kerala, where political parties of more or less identical views join together to form 'fronts' and so the abbreviations are not even understood in other parts of India, except among the politically well-informed people. Likewise, a casual glance at any official circular or note may show the enormity of alphabeticisms used in the register of administration. An official note like, "The A.O. may make necessary arrangements for the CE's visit to the offices of the AEs and JEs" is to be read as "The Administrative Officer may make necessary arrangements for the Chief Engineer's visit to the offices of the Assistant Engineers and Junior Engineers".

4.8.1. Overlapping of Abbreviations

Abbreviations across registers, cultures and linguistic groups, sometimes overlap, making it difficult to ascertain their use without understanding the context in which they are used. Sometimes the same abbreviations have different expansions in different countries. The following chart shows how the same abbreviations differ in their expanded forms, in MIE or IE and in MBSE and/or A E.
### Abbreviated form | Expanded form in MIE and/or IE | Expanded form in MBSE and/or AE
--- | --- | ---
1. A.I.R. | All India Radio | Association of Interamericana de Radio Diffusion--USA
2. C.D. | Compulsory Deposit | Crops Diplomatique (Diplomatic Services) UK
3. C.I. | Circle Inspector (of Police) | Channel Islands (UK)
4. C.S. | Chief Secretary | Civil Servant, Civil Service (UK)
5. D.A. | Dearness Allowance | District Attorney (USA)
6. D.C. | District Collector | District of Columbia (USA)
7. EMS | Elamkulam Manackal Sankaran | Energy Management System (USA)
8. MES | Muslim Educational Society | Marine Echo System (USA)
9. R.S.M. | Relieving Station Master | Regimental Sergeant Major
10. R.S.S. | Rashtriya Swayam Sevaksangh | Ribbed Smoked Sheet (US)
11. U.F. | United Front | University of Florida (US)

A list of a few popular abbreviations found used in the various registers of MIE, will show how their frequent use creates problems of comprehension to the users of other varieties of English.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Expanded form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. AKGCTA</td>
<td>All Kerala Government College Teachers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. AKPCTA</td>
<td>All Kerala Private College Teachers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A.O.</td>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A.P.P.</td>
<td>Assistant Public Prosecutor</td>
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<td>5. A.R.C.</td>
<td>Administrative Reforms Commission</td>
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<td>6. BDO</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. BJP</td>
<td>Bharathiya Janatha Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. CFD</td>
<td>Congress For Democracy</td>
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<td>9. CDE</td>
<td>Coconut Development Corporation</td>
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<td>10. CITU</td>
<td>Centre of Indian Trade Unions</td>
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<td>11. D.A.</td>
<td>Dearness Allowance</td>
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<td>12. DCR</td>
<td>Daily Collection Report</td>
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<td>13. DDC</td>
<td>District Development Council</td>
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<td>14. DLA</td>
<td>Dravidian Linguistic Association</td>
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<td>15. FP</td>
<td>Family Planning</td>
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<td>16. GCDA</td>
<td>Greater Cochin Development Authority</td>
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<td>17. HC</td>
<td>High Court, Head Constable</td>
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<td>18. HDC</td>
<td>Higher Diploma in Commerce</td>
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<td>Inspection Bungalow</td>
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<td>20. IT</td>
<td>Income Tax</td>
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<td>21. KBCC</td>
<td>Kerala Backward Christian Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. KGPTU</td>
<td>Kerala Government Primary Teachers' Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. KPCC</td>
<td>Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. KSU</td>
<td>Kerala Students Union</td>
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