

Role of English in Enriching Hindi Language and Literature

KUMARI RASHMI PRIYDARSHNI

Abstract. English has always been accused for the deplorable state of Hindi in India. Many of the supporters of Hindi language cherish a very hostile attitude towards English and English speaking people. They consider English as the main culprit behind the disrespectful behaviour of Indians towards Hindi in the country. English being the language of Britishers is despised by the nationalist Indians, specially in the Hindi speaking states. When one speaks in English, Hindi lovers take it as a continuation of the slavery of the Britishers. Despite the truth that English has always enriched Hindi language and literature by introducing new vocabulary, knowledge, thoughts, emotions, experiences and expressions; if anyone makes mistakes while writing in Hindi, English is held responsible for the error. The question is should English be held responsible for the plights and predicaments of Hindi. English provides access to global knowledge and opportunities. Undoubtedly, this practical adaptation of languages creates a challenge for the linguistic purity, yet, English-to-Hindi translation brings global literature and ideas into Hindi which strengthens its literary tradition and enables broader cultural exchange. The interaction between Hindi and English has played a significant role in the enrichment of the Hindi language and its literature, influencing vocabulary, literary forms, critical thought, and global reach. The introduction of English literature through British colonial rule and subsequent global exposure familiarized Hindi writers with new literary forms previously less common in Indian languages. In the present research paper efforts will be made to critically analyse the role of English in enriching Hindi language and literature. Here, endeavours will be made to justify the co-existence of Hindi and English languages in Indian society which makes Hindi capable of addressing a wide range of contemporary issues. The paper aims at providing evidences to the fact that English has not diminished Hindi, rather it has catalysed its modernization and expansion. It has allowed it to flourish in the present era multidimensionally. The emergence of Hinglish will also be discussed in the paper.

Keywords : Multilingualism; linguistic exchange; adaptability; linguistic realism; vocabulary expansion; lexical borrowing.

English has always been accused for the deplorable state of Hindi in India. Many of the supporters of Hindi language cherish a very hostile attitude towards English and English speaking people. They consider English as the main culprit behind the disrespectful behaviour of Indians towards Hindi in the country. They are not ready to accept English as a language assisting people who speak in Hindi or love Hindi. They are not ready to accept the truth that students or teachers of English language and literature can contribute to Hindi language and literature in much better way. They are not ready to accept the fact that the individuals who have the knowledge of English language and literature can enrich Hindi language and literature in much better ways because they have already imbibed literary fragrance from English as well.

Loving English language and literature does not mean hatred for Hindi language and literature. Contributing to any language does not mean degrading other languages. English teachers in India, particularly, who teach Hindi-medium students, play a very significant role in bridging the gap between local language proficiency and global language competence. They enable the access of Indian students, speaking in various regional Indian languages including Hindi as well as their mother tongue, to modern education, technology, and career opportunities. The pivotal contributions of English teachers in a Hindi-speaking states cannot be gainsaid.

In India English teachers use Grammar Translation Method to make the learning process easier and more accessible to Hindi speakers. At the same time in the classrooms of Northern India, teachers frequently use Hindi to explain English concepts, especially when students struggle to express themselves in English. This is an evidence to the fact that Hindi and English play the role of bridging languages mutually. English serves as a “window” to the modern world and technology for the students belonging to Hindi speaking states. English helps in facilitating modern learning in students who primarily speak Hindi but try to get confidence in a new language.

The four literary skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and writing in English train the knowledge, thoughts and emotions of Hindi speaking students in such a way that they start expressing themselves in English creatively or with a purpose of bringing good changes in the society. English helps students from Hindi-medium backgrounds become

competitive in the job market, particularly in industries which require good communication skills. The translanguaging, that is, using both Hindi and English simultaneously fosters better understanding and validates the students' mother tongue while teaching a new language. It ensures the academic success of the learners.

Getting victory over the language barriers and seeking help from English, Indian students belonging to different regions, can make academic achievements in science, technology, and other subjects efficiently. These subjects are often taught in English. English teachers in India act as facilitators equipping students with the proficiency in English needed for academic, personal, and professional growth. At the same time, they respect Hindi language and contribute to it by enriching its language and literature both.

English being the language of Britishers is despised by the nationalist Indians, specially in the Hindi speaking states. When one speaks in English, Hindi lovers take it as a continuation of the slavery of the Britishers. Though many such persons use English words daily in their day-to-day activities. Despite the truth that English has always enriched Hindi language and literature by introducing new vocabulary, knowledge, thoughts, emotions, experiences and expressions; if anyone makes mistakes while writing in Hindi, English is held responsible for the error.

The question is should English be held responsible for the plights and predicaments of Hindi. If Indians make mistakes while writing in Hindi and or other Indian languages, commit spelling errors or grammatical errors, should English or other language be accused for the condition. Why not one should start trying to make efforts for improving the condition of one's own language instead of accusing other languages for the deplorable state of one's mother tongue or the regional languages?

English provides access to global knowledge and opportunities. The practical adaptation of English or other Indian languages may create challenges for the linguistic purity of Hindi or any other Indian languages, yet, English-to-Hindi translation or translation of any one language into other languages brings global literature and ideas into Hindi or other Indian languages, which strengthens the literary traditions of India and Indian languages. At the same time this literary or linguistic exchange enables broader cultural exchange and global exchange as well.

The interaction between Hindi and English has played a significant role in the enrichment of the Hindi language and its literature, influencing vocabulary, literary forms, critical thought, and global reach. The introduction of English literature through British colonial rule and subsequent global exposure has familiarized Hindi writers with new literary forms previously less common in Indian languages.

If one analyses the role of English in enriching Hindi language and literature, one finds numerous words of Hindi have been borrowed or loaned from English. Words like “station”, “rickshaw”, “bus”, “car”, “scooter”, “junction”, “train”, “railway”, “toto”, “computer”, “hospital”, “mike”, “mobile”, “data” and numerous words, have been adopted in Hindi from English or other languages. For many English words, there are no replacement in Hindi or other Indian languages. However, in English language and literature as well one can see the impact of Hindi or other Indian languages.

Here, it will not be wrong to justify the co-existence of Hindi, English or other Indian languages in the Indian society. In the novel *In Custody* (1984), Anita Desai, an Indian American feminist writer, explores the theme of language along with the theme of identity. Deven is a Hindi teacher, but he turns to Urdu poetry, due to which he had to face many hurdles in his life and career. Deven’s first language is Urdu, the language he is enamored with, however, the source of his livelihood is Hindi literature. Deven is asked to interview an elderly Urdu poet of great renown Nur Shahjehanabadi. Deven is very much excited for the interview:

He had never found a way to reconcile the meanness of his physical existence with the purity and immensity of his literary yearnings. The latter were constantly assaulted and wrecked by the former...How out of such base material, was he to wrest a meeting with a great poet, some kind of dialogue with him, some means of ensuring that this rare opportunity would not also turn to dust, spilled blood and lament? (*In Custody* 26)

English is a foreign language, true, but it has been adopted in India in such a way that it has been Indianised and made intertwined with other Indian languages. Now-a-days we talk about Indian writing in English.

Inclusion of English words has made Hindi capable of addressing a wide range of contemporary issues. The emergence of Hinglish is the consequence of the intermingling of the Hindi and English languages. The role of digital linguistics or unique computer language has also been very enriching and strengthening for Hindi or other Indian languages in the multilingual perspective of India.

Several notable Indian poets, novelists, story writers, authors and playwrights have survived their careers as English educators while producing significant works in Hindi or other Indian languages. Many of the authors who basically belonged to English literature but brought new perspectives and techniques to modern Hindi poetry. Several prominent Hindi novelists and writers also worked as English teachers or lecturers, used their understanding of both languages to enrich Hindi literature.

The names of Sachchidananda Hirananda Vatsayayan, popularly known by his pen name Agyeya, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Firaq Gorakhpuri (Raghupati Sahay), Vishnu Khare, Bhisham Sahni, Mohan Rakesh, Nirmal Verma et. al are some of such writers who had been contributing to English and Hindi both. These authors, brought a modern, and often Western-influenced perspective to Hindi literature, while working within the Indian educational system. Indian authors writing in English or British authors writing in English, both have influenced the literary and linguistic domains of Indians.

The phrase “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” comes from Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The Ballad of East and West” (1892), which highlights the cultural differences, primarily the two diametrical cultures or world cannot meet but since the Earth is spherical so the two cultures of different worlds seem to meet. The idea of directions on a sphere shows that travelling east or west indefinitely eventually brings the individuals back to the start, making them meet in a different sense.

If Rudyard Kipling wrote, cynically, that “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,” in Forster’s conception of India, as he has depicted in his famous novel *A Passage to India*, East and West

can and do meet, though they will likely continue to struggle to find true friendship or intimacy under British colonial rule. *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster explores the complexities of British colonialism in India. In it, Forster discusses the possibility of interaction between the East and the West. The novel depicts the theme of the possibility of friendship between an Englishman and an Indian, which will bring the possibility of friendship between the East and the West or one can say Indian languages and English as well. When Aziz and Fielding meet one another in the last section of the novel, there is no happy union between the friends. Despite the clearance of misunderstanding, the conversation ends at a pessimistic note leading to the separation between the two men i.e. an Indian and a Britisher. “Why can’t we be friends now?” said the other, holding him affectionately. “It’s what I want. It’s what you want.” (*A Passage to India* 317) E. M. Forster ends the novel with the observation:

But the horses didn’t want it—they
severed apart; the earth didn’t want it,
sending up rocks through which riders
must pass single file; the temple, the
tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the
carrion, the Guest House, that came into
view as they issued from the gap and saw
Mau beneath: they didn’t want it, they
said in their hundred voices, “No, not
yet,” and they sky said, “No, not there.”
(317)

Literature serves as a tool for the national and international interaction and it should be used to humanise whole world. The celebrated writer T.S. Eliot in his masterpiece work *The Waste Land* uses the Sanskrit slogan of “Datta, Dayadhvam, and Damyata”. The three commands come from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, a foundational Hindu scripture. These words symbolise spiritual redemption, and reveal the philosophy of “Give,” “Sympathize,” and “Control,” respectively, urging fragmented modern humanity towards generosity, compassion, and self-restraint to find peace. By presenting these Sanskrit imperatives, Eliot offers a spiritual solution, derived from Eastern philosophy, to the cultural and spiritual crisis of the post-World War I era that *The Waste Land* explores.

Evidently enough, the fact can be concluded here that English has not diminished Hindi language and literature, rather it has catalysed its modernisation and expansion. It has allowed it to flourish in the present

era multidimensionally. English plays a very crucial role in enriching Hindi language and literature, and it cannot be blamed for the declining state of Hindi or other Indian languages in India. It has always assisted Indian languages in national or international perspectives.

In fact, no language should be accused for the deplorable state of other languages. Students should be taught literature and language in a very interesting and friendly manner. They should be treated softly and delicately so that they must not take language learning as a burden but as a boon. Dr. Satish Kumar tells about the social concerns of the novels written in English in the Indian contexts in his book *A Survey of Indian English Novel*:

Early Indian English novel is derivative and imitative of English models. Early fiction writers copied their language form the works of English Romantics and Victorians. They obviously imitated Defoe, Fielding and Scott. They evinced little creative effort.... What distinguishes Indian English novels from the very beginning is its social concern, realism and its unfailing interest in man.

(Kumar 2)

In R. K. Narayan's novel, *The English Teacher*, Krishna, the protagonist of the novel, an English lecturer at Albert Mission College, Malgudi, narrates one episode in which he and other teachers were summoned to the chamber of the English Principal, who has been depicted as an academician who felt utterly scandalized when one of his students spells the word honour without u. The narrator Krishna says:

He (Mr. Brown) motioned us to our seats and said, "Could you imagine a worse shock for me? I came across a student of the English Honours, who did not know till this day that 'honours' had to be spelt with a 'u'?" He finished his sentence with a sharp, grim laugh. We looked at each other and were at a loss to know what to reply. (*The English Teacher* 5-6)

Krishna further adds sarcastic remarks on the whole matter. He says:

Our Assistant Professor, Gajapathy, scowled at us as if it were us who had induced the boy to drop the 'u'. Brown cleared his throat as a signal for further speech, and we watched his lips. He began a lecture on the importance of the English language, and the need for preserving its purity...The responsibility of the English department was indeed very great. (5-6)

At this Mr. Gajapathy grew very furious and muttered, "Disgraceful! I never knew our boys were so bad...We cannot pretend that we come out of it with flying colours..." (6) The narrator Krishna, who is none but the mouthpiece of R. K. Narayan, gets irritated and opined very humorously, "Mr. Gajapathy, there are blacker sins in this world than dropped vowel." (6) Krishna further narrates:

He stopped on the road and looked up and down. He was aghast. I didn't care. I drove home the point: "Let us be fair. Ask Mr. Brown if he can say in any of the two hundred Indian languages: 'The cat chases the rat'. He has spent thirty years in India. (6)

The novel *The English Teacher* was published in 1945 when India had not got independent. It was a slave country to the Britishers. It seems that R.K. Narayan, the celebrated Indian English novelist had come to understand the problems of Indian teachers specially English teachers. India is a country of many languages and dialects. It is one of the most linguistically diverse countries globally, with over 120 major languages and thousands of dialects. This rich and variegated tapestry shapes the nation's culture, journalistic domains and national and international interactions. These days we talk about multilingualism, which is a defining national characteristic, encompassing hundreds of indigenous languages. Hindi and English serve as the primary official link languages. Hindi has the largest number of native speakers, while English acts as a crucial lingua franca for administration, higher education, and the corporate sector. About the future of Hindi and English in India, the great critic

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes in his celebrated book *Indian Writing in English*:

The position therefore is that people now continue to talk and write in English, the language of the higher administration and the law courts remain English, the medium of teaching and examinations in most colleges and universities in English...As is to be only expected and indeed welcomed, ?? the regional languages are steadily forging forward, and Hindi too is worthily participating in this movement of expansion and modernization. (13)

Iyengar has expressed his thoughts on the future of Hindi very optimistically into the book. He writes, “Hindi will grow in good time, and perhaps one day by virtue of its richness and strength become the *de facto lingua franca* of India”. (14)

Obviously enough, the role of English in Enriching Hindi language and literature cannot be gainsaid. At the same time, it is also to be noted down that the people who cannot speak in English must not be discriminated or undervalued in India or in the world. Language or literature is a medium to exchange our views, to exchange our thoughts and emotions. The purpose of the literature of any language is and should be to humanise the whole world to serve for the cause of humanity. Languages should not have rivalry among themselves but respect and regard towards one another. The introduction of Interdisciplinary approaches in the present-day Higher Education in India and at the same time the introduction of Indian Knowledge System in the syllabus of the Choice Based Credit System of Education may be co-related to the topic of the research paper.

Kumari Rashmi Priydarshni

Assistant Professor (Senior Scale) and Head
Department of English
Gautam Buddha Mahila College, Gayaji
Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya

Works Cited

- Desai, Anita. *In Custody*. Random House India, 2008.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land*. IAB Books, 2004.
- Forster, E. M. *A Passage to India*. A.I.T.B.S. Publishers & Distributors, 2006.
- Iyengar, K R. Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*. Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2006.
- Kipling, Rudyard. "A Ballad of East and West", 1889 Digital Victorian Periodical Poetry Project, Edition 0.98.11beta, University of Victoria https://dvp.p.uvic.ca/macmillan/1889/pom_14845_a_ballad_of_east_and_west.html
- Kumar, Dr. Satish. *A Survey of Indian English Novel*. Prakash Book Depot, 2006.
- Narayan, R.K. *The English Teacher*. All India Press, 2005.