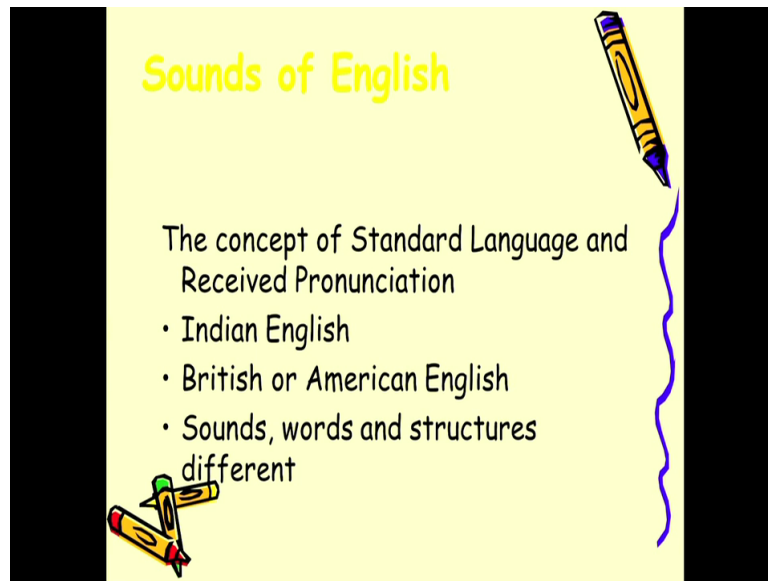


Speaking Effectively
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Lecture 11
Politics of English

Welcome to module 3 of speaking effectively.

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In the first unit of in this module, I will be focusing largely on English pronunciation and before I go into the hands-on aspects of English pronunciation, I would like to introduce you to phonetics. What are phonetics? Phonetics is the science of sounds. Phonetics and phonology they are, I am using very lay definitions, I am not using technical linguistic definitions of phonetics. Phonetics roughly refers to the science of sounds and we need to understand the science of sounds in order to be able to improve our pronunciation.

Now I begin by showing you let us begin from the beginning. You all know how to speak, right? Everyone knows how to speak. We began with this premise at the very beginning when we said everyone knows how to breathe, everyone knows how to speak, so why not should we learn to how to speak? We need to speak effectively, of course we all know how to speak but we need to speak effectively. So when we know how to speak and we know a number of us also know how to speak English.

If we know how to speak English, why do we need to improve our pronunciation, why do we need to speak better? Let us begin with that question. So I am assuming that those of you

have enrolled in this course either speak English or there are some among you or maybe a certain percentage among you who do not speak English fluently, who have come from the vernacular medium schools or who are more comfortable speaking our Indian languages, are not very fluent in speaking English, even though you are able to write English perfectly.

This so if that is so, my first question to you is what according to you is the correct way of speaking English? What in your opinion is the correct English? Now that is a very tricky question because in this question, one is the politics of English and then the other part is the pragmatics of learning English. If I begin with the politics of English than I would abandon teaching this course because in the politics of English, the world has veered around to the view that there is no correct way of speaking English.

There is no one English, there is no single way of speaking English and if there is no single way of speaking English writing English and there are many different ways of speaking and writing English. There is notion of correct English or originary English, the idea of correct English is the English as it is spoken in its originary region , that idea has now been demystified, given the number of ways or number of English is that are circulating across the world today. So we can see as someone said that once upon a time, there was English with a capital E and now we have English is with small e.

So once upon a time, there was English as it was spoken in the mother country, which is England Britain and that was the standard English or that was the only way of speaking English and that was the correct way of speaking English. But today, that idea is no longer true mainly because the hegemony or the monopoly or the domination of British English has been challenged for a long time by English and other English speaking nations beginning with the US, where American English has now become is now rubbing shoulders for the same place as standard usage.

So today we talk about standard British usage and we talk about standard American usage and they seem to be competing one another for the attention of speakers of English across the world. In fact, most speakers in the world today seem attracted to American English because of the power of American soft power, American popular culture and because American popular films, music, fiction is easily available across the world and America is now the dominant nation as the only superpower as with vis-a-vis Britain which dominated the world during the colonial era.

Today, more people seem inclined to learn American English. Now this same this competition between written English and American English today, we have Englishes from other parts of the English-speaking world such as Australian English or Canadian English or New Zealand English or South African English. So now each of these registers of English or these ways of speaking or writing English are emerging as independent languages which are threatening the domination of both British and American English.

Then we come to English in countries which are not English-speaking countries, where English is a second language but due to the history of colonialism, since most of these countries were colonies of England or Britain the speakers of these countries have begun to have been learning English for a long time since the colonial era and English has become part of their collective psyche.

Among these (06:59) use Commonwealth countries or postcolonial nations in Asia and Africa and rest of the world, their English has been practiced for a long time and English serves as an official language because of the practical very pragmatic reason of having a common language which is acceptable to speakers of all native languages. So other than English spoken in English speaking countries, English in as it spoken in postcolonial nations has now emerged as a very confident linker which is aspiring to the status of an independent language, take the case of Indian English.

Now Indian English, the way it is both written and the way it is spoken, is very different from standard British usage. However, with increasing confidence of India in the global economy with India's rising economic power and India's rising cultural power, we have Indian English being accorded a certain respectability which it did not possess in the past. Now how did this happen? How did Indian English become respectable and how has it become almost like a standard language within the Indian context?

Let us go back to that history of the increase in recognition or respectability given to Indian English. Let us begin with the 70s, in the 70s a young model turned journalist who was asked to who was the founding editor of a new tabloid called Stardust.

A woman many of you would be familiar with, the yes the incomparable Shoba De who was known as Shoba Rajyadaksha in those days, invented a new kind of English to distinguish the new tabloid Stardust which she was editing, with the more conventional more traditional film

magazines like Star n Style and Filmfare and so on using a mix of Hindi and English to create a register of English as it is used by Indian speakers.

So it was on the pages where you would have English speech being peppered with Indian phrases, Hindi phrases like samajh gaye na, sharam ki baat hai, so this peppering of Indian English with Indian words or Hindi phrases was something which was pioneered by this young journalist Shoba Rajyadaksha, now known as Shoba De. And it became very popular with a certain group of readers, particularly the readers of Stardust who began to even use the same language to converse among one another, peppering their own speech with phrases from Hindi and other Indian languages.

Let us cut to the 80s, now Shoba De Rajyadaksha has not been given the credit in my opinion for inventing this new variety of English which we know as Hinglish today. I come to the 80s and then come the publication of a path breaking novel, yes I am talking about Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* which created a sensation of sorts, not only because of the novelty of its narrative technique but also because of what it called its chutneyfied language.

The chutneyfied language was the language which transliterated Indians the syntax and vocabulary of Indian languages, particularly Hindi and Urdu and did it so marvelously without violating the structures of standard English or playing with the structures of standard English, that it became a respectable language, courtesy Salman Rushdie winning the Booker prize for his novel and also because of the originality and the vigor and the variety of his non-standard English which was really a transliteration of Indian languages.

So you would have structures like where somebody is literally translating from Urdu and saying, oh come on your fatherji, your daddyji, your fatherji is going to heaven. So instead of saying, aapke pitaji swarg sidhar rahe hai, you have a transliteration of one of the characters in (12:30) family telling the mistresses of the house, your daddyji is leaving for heaven. So such structures, which are not standard English, they were made fashionable, they were first introduced into literary fiction by Salman Rushdie.

Of course there was his predecessors like Raja Rao who invented memorable faces like *Corner House Murti* which is who murti nukkad wala, like we say, Ganga kinare wala, so Raja Rao coined phrases which could translate from Indian languages, which would capture the nuances of Indian languages by inventing phrases like corner house murti. But it was with

Salman Rushdie at the International recognition that Salman Rushdie and his novel *Midnight's Children* received that this non-standard variety of English became part of literary fiction and gained respectability as a literary language.

From non-standard English or Indian English becoming the language of literature, let us come to how this language which is a mix of Hindi and English and which uses in Hindi the intonation, rhythm and stress patterns of Indian languages, how it became the language of media. We jump another decade and come to the 90s. In the 90s, India witnessed a mind-boggling satellite revolution.

Indian skies were flooded with channels all across the world, thanks to unfortunate event of the Gulf War, where Indians who had relatives in that Gulf countries were compelled to install dishes by friendly operators known as cablewalas at their houses so as to get information about their families who were stranded in the Gulf but also got hooked to international channels, mainly American channels, which were part of the package installed by the cablewala.

And following this we have the privatization of the Indian skies in the early 90s and with the private citation of the Indian skies, we had the invention of new language. Not the invention of a new language but the formal recognition of English as spoken by Indian speakers as a language in its own right through its use in broadcasting and in the media. Now how was this change revolutionary, let us go back to the pre-privatization era to see what is the kind of English which was spoken in the Indian media prior to this.

So yes, we return to DD or Doordarshan or All India Radio and in All India Radio and Doordarshan continued to remain in the British Raj and their idea of good English diction was the Queen's English or English as spoken in the mother country.

So you would find that the old readers on newsreaders on all India radio for even the newsreaders on Doordarshan, think of the generation which spoke like Tejeshwar Singh or Mrinalini and Meenu Talwar, each of them spoke, they tried to Renée Simon, she is called Renée Simon Mehta now, they would try to approximate what they considered the Queen's English or the standard British English. And people and individuals who could speak in a clipped British accent were the ones who would find themselves clearing the petition on Doordarshan or All India Radio.

So we continued to be in the British era as far as our speech or our language of broadcasting was concerned until the satellite revolution in the early 90s and with the coming of a transnational channel called Star TV. Now when Star TV came to India, there was a lot of fear that Indian culture or Indian languages or Indian speech patterns would disappear with the so-called Americanization of Indian skies. The fear that Indian skies would be invaded by American modes of speech, American patterns of speech, American body language and so on, were dispelled when Star TV came to India.

Because when Star TV came to India, it revolutionized the language of broadcasting by introducing a generation of newsreaders who did not speak English in clipped British accents but who spoke English the way it is spoken in India. So I am talking about, the generation of newsreaders who we are all familiar with today, newsreaders like Barkha or chat show hosts like Barkha Dutt, Rajdeep Sardesai, Arnab Goswami and so on, Nidhi Rajdhan.

This new generation of Star TV newsreaders, you find that they speak English the way English is spoken by ordinary educated speakers in India and that was a sea change as far as what is considered acceptable as English because once it is endorsed by the media and once it becomes the official language of the media in India, it gained the same kind of respectability that Rushdie gave to written non-standard English usage, Indian English usage through his novels.

And the rest is history because then we have a generation, are very confident generation of Indians who are ready to take on the world and who are not embarrassed to speak Indian English speakers as they proclaim on Channel V, a newly launched channel, we are like that only and proclaiming in non-standard English that we are what we are and we have no intention to change our way of speaking or writing is very well captured in this signature line, the sign of line of Channel V which says, we are like that only.

As you see, it is not standard usage, it is non-standard usage but it is spoken with such confidence, which shows the coming of age of Indian English. And what is happening with Indian English has also happened with Englishes elsewhere. Likes Singlish, Singaporeans when they are speaking among themselves, they do not speak in correct or I will not say sorry about using the word correct, they do not you standard English when they are communicating with one another because they feel it does not it makes them feel distant from one another.

They speak like Indians speak in Indian English they tend to speak in Singlish which is English spoken with a Singaporean accent. But before that we have other regions which let this deconstruction of English, let us come to West Indies and let us come to a language which is called pigeon. What is pigeon? Pigeon is a language which is a language of very basic communication between two groups of speakers who do not know each other's language and pigeon was invented by colonial masters when they wanted to communicate with natives.

When they wanted to communicate with natives, the English men invented a very basic variety of English which was sufficient for carrying on day to day activities like giving instructions, get me water, drive me and the natives whether they were Africans or Asians, they also mastered a very basic vocabulary of English which was incorrect, a very basic usage of English, which was not standard but which was mutually understood both by the colonial masters and the colonized.

Now over a period of time when pigeon is spoken, it invents its own rules and its own grammars and it involves into what is called the creole language. So it is non-standard language, not just English, every languages every language can have its pigeon or non-creole version where over a period of time a functional English invented by Imperial masters or their subjects, over a period of time when it evolves into an independent language with its own systematized rules of grammar and syntax, then it is called creole.

And the best example of creole is the language which is spoken in West Indies which is called Jamaican Patois. Now those of you who listen to rap music or reggae music will be familiar with this language. So in this language which is non-standard, not only the pronunciation but also the speech is different. So you have like the song by Apache Indian which says me want girl from Jalandar city which is I want a girl from Jalandhar city, me want girl from Jaladhar city, so I becomes me. The entire pronunciation is different.

But rap and reggae and hip-hop music has turned this language which is spoken by West Indian people in Trinidad, Tobago and so on as a cool global language. Similarly, we can think of African-American speech registers. Just like Singaporeans do not speak to each other in standard English and Indian do not speak to each other in Queens English when they are talking among themselves, African-Americans also talk that talk when they are talking among themselves, instead of speaking standard American English an order to distinguish themselves from whites and in order to forge unity among members.

So even the most educated erudite African-Americans are among themselves, they slip into the African-American register where which is different from standard American usage, not only in terms of its vocabulary and structures but also in terms of its pronunciation. So with this I will conclude with the idea of concept of standard language which I will take up in the next module. With this I conclude the idea of politics of English and I will move onto the pragmatics of English.

Yes, if we go by the politics of English, every register of language, every English that is spoken in the world today whether it is Indian English or it is Singaporean English or its Jamaican Patois or it is rotten English as the famous as the celebrated writer Ken (25:09) called the English which is spoken by ordinary African people in Nigeria, he called it rotten English, each of these languages has a right to be a language in its own and hold its own so long as it serves the communication needs of its speakers.

So a language in linguistics is any language serves the communication needs of its speakers. As long as the speakers understand one another, no language is inferior or superior to another and each language has the status of a language. So there is no hierarchy between languages, between different varieties of English in linguistics but socially there is hierarchy. And depending upon what kind of English you speak, you are considered entitled to certain privileges or not entitled to certain others.

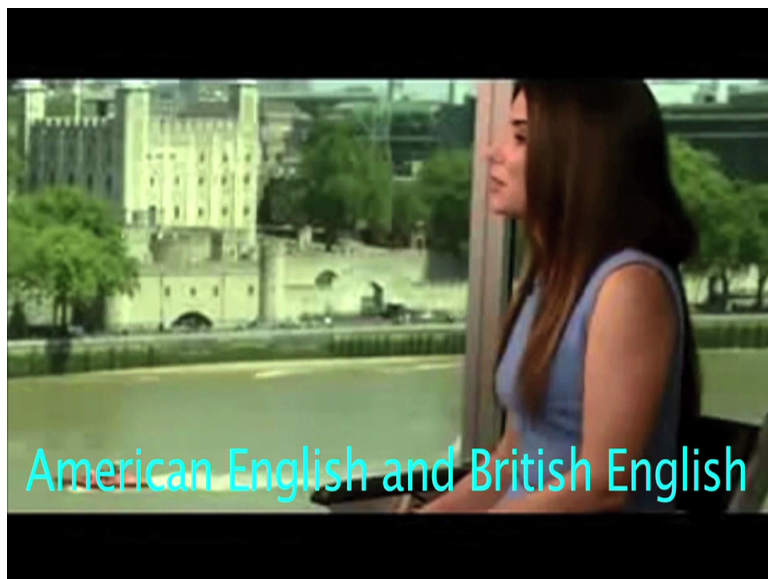
We will come to that aspect of language, the social aspects of language and the pragmatics of having to learn what is the correct way of speaking English. Whereas, when we come to the politics of English, there is no correct way of speaking English. Every link every form of English is equal to other forms of English. Thank you.

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I am the one, I am the one and I do feel like I ruled the world and it revolves around me.

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But when I tell how to clean up the mess, until I want to stand up and clean the mess. I would probably treat everyone like a mother treats a child, get everyone on schedule, make sure everyone goes to potty before bed, nor have it, have it. You have been here. I am super mom, super mom, I mean that is that is the ultimate superhero. I get to play roles which are real human beings.

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A question now, how to play (())(26:59) blah blah. Yes, I have been, it has been it is interesting that that has been what has been picked up on about this film and I think this film is timing along with the sort of arrival into modern language of the word friend zone, it is sort of a cross purposes when one another because this film is about you know friend zoned as I understand it is when you really fancy somebody and I do not fancy you at all.