

Speaking Effectively
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Lecture 12
Concept of Standard Language

Hello, in this unit of module three, I am going to look at the concept of standard language and the pragmatics of English. As I said in the last unit, every language is linguistically equal, there is no hierarchy among languages in linguistics but socially there is a hierarchy. There are some standards some languages are considered more equal than other languages and the mastery of these particular registers or these particular languages can bring some advantages, which others cannot.

Now since your interest in speaking effectively is to be able to get on in the world and to make a success of your career, the pragmatics overrule the politics. And whether in your personal life you feel that, oh I do not need to speak English the way Englishmen speak or Americans speak because it is not my language, it is not my mother tongue, why not should I be speaking English like Englishman, the pragmatics of English compel that if you want to be understood or you want to make an impact globally you should be able to speak and international register of English.

That international register of English as of now it could be either British English, British usage or it could be American usage. Before I come to the standard international languages prevalent today, of course as I said, other languages are competing for the same position like Australian usage or Canadian usage or New Zealand usage South African usage, they are competing for the same position but two usages are still dominant in the world namely, the British and the American. If this is so, what is the kind of usage that I am going to introduce you to?

I am old-fashioned and I believe in going back to the origins and since I myself have been trained in British usage rather than American usage, I would be introducing you to the British standard English. What is standard English? What is standard language? I am going to try to introduce you to standard British English and standard British pronunciation but this does not mean that only English or only British English has a standard version. Every language, irrespective of where it is spoken, has a standard version.

So since we are in India, let me illustrate the use of standard language or the idea of standard language through going through our Indian languages. And I of course try to give the example of the languages I speak fluently namely, Hindi. Now in Hindi which Hindi do you think is the standard language? Take any guess. Mostly I get answers like, oh Hindi that I learnt in my school textbooks, Hindi that I hear on television, Hindi that I hear on radio or Hindi that is used in official work, yes you are right.

Standard language is the language which is used in education, which is used in media, which is used in broadcasting and which is used for official purposes. If that is the definition of standard language, what is standard Hindi? Yes of course, it is the Hindi that which is used in education, it is the Hindi which is used for official purposes and it is the Hindi which is used in broadcasting and media. What is this Hindi? Have you ever thought of what name this Hindi has which we tend to use?

This Hindi that has become standard in the in India after partition, after independence, it is very important to know that it became standard Hindi after independence or after the 1930s, this is a dialect of Hindi called Khadiboli. What is the dialect and what are the other dialects of Hindi? Every language has a number of dialects. Dialects are varieties of language in which the speakers understand one another. So when speakers can understand speakers of another language it is known as a dialect.

But when they cannot understand one another then it becomes a different language. Now in Hindi, let us think of what are the different dialects of Hindi. Guess. Those of you who are from Bihar, you do not speak standard Hindi I understand. I learned it from my friends in Bihar that you are extremely proud to speak Maithili, some of you who come from who are speakers of Maithili, you are extremely proud and there is no reason why you should be proud, you speak Maithili. Others from UP and Bihar probably speak Bhojpuri and again Bhojpuri is a very well-known very popular dialect of Hindi.

Then we go back to then we have other dialects of Hindi, say the Hindi that is spoken in Madhya Pradesh which is different from the Hindi as it is spoken in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the Hindi that is spoken in Chhattisgarh is different from the Hindi in UP and Bihar. But let us think of the earlier dialects which are no longer spoken, say what is early Hindi poetry in? Some of the best known for your tree in Hindi, is it Avadhi or in Braj Bhasha.

Some of the best poetry composed in Hindi with rich any student of Hindi begins their introduction to literature, I myself when I was in school, I was introduced to some of the best for your tree of Surdas and Tulsidas and these poems were not in Khadiboli, they were in they were in Avadhi and Braj Bhasha. So let us think of dialects of Hindi such as Avadhi, Braj Bhasha, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Khadiboli. Why did Khadiboli become standard Hindi? Why not Bhojpuri, why not Maithili, why not Braj Bhasha, why not Avadhi, why not Bundelkhandi? Why not?

Why is it that we choose a particular dialect among several dialects as the standard language? Guess. Is it because it is spoken by more people? Some people had given me this answer. So they say, because Khadiboli spoken by more speakers than those of other dialects, Khadiboli became standard Hindi. It is not true because there are more speakers of Bhojpuri in the world than there are of Hindi, did you know that? And why is it there are more speakers of Bhojpuri across the world?

Because the descendants of people who migrated from what are present day UP and Bihar to countries which are now called Mauritius or West Indies or Fiji during the colonial era, they still speak the languages which their forefathers who were largely rural migrants from these regions spoke, which is Bhojpuri.

So even educated speakers in Fiji, in West Indies, in Trinidad, in Guyana, in Mauritius, continue to speak Bhojpuri and they speak it with great pride unlike educated speakers in India who tend to think of Bhojpuri as a rural rusting dialect and do not speak it in public he men though they might use it in family circles. Second reason could be, as some of my participants say, oh but Khadiboli is spoken because it has more literature and therefore it is better than other dialects. But as I just told you, Tulsidas and Surdas did not write in Khadiboli they wrote in Avadhi and Braj Bhasha.

So the history of Indian Hindi literature really begins in other dialects rather than Khadiboli. Some other speakers are, some other participants give the answer that, Khadiboli became the standard language because it has a better, it is more correct in the sense that it has a more systematic grammar and it has a more systematic it has a better vocabulary than other dialects. Now I would like to ask the speakers of with the, Braj Bhasha and Maithili and Bhojpuri to say, do you think that your language is inferior to Khadiboli in terms of its syntax, grammar and vocabulary?

No, you would protest, you would say, no my language Maithili or my language Bhojpuri is as rich if not superior to Khadiboli in terms of its vocabulary, in terms of its grammar. There is no such thing as correct grammar or incorrect grammar and each of these dialects has its own grammar and its own vocabulary and its own structures which are as correct as any other. So why did we use Khadiboli as standard English?

That is a very long history which I do not have time to go, it has got to do with the history of the need to have a Hindi purified of all foreign influences, a Hindi which was sanskritised. We will not have time to go into that but we will come with a simple answer. Khadiboli was used became standard Hindi because it was spoken by the educated speakers of North India and it is always the dominant group whose language becomes the standard language.

That dominant group may not be dominant economically, it may not be dominant politically but culturally the language the dialect of the culturally dominant group becomes usually is excepted as standard language which is what happened with Hindi. Now having given you an example from closer home which you are familiar with, let me take you to English. Just like in Hindi, there is no one way of speaking English. Even in Britain, everybody does not speak English in the same way. English differs, varies within England, within Britain depending on the region you come from.

And we are not talking about languages like Welsh or Irish which are claimed by their speakers as completely independent languages. We are talking about English itself and how English within England is spoken in different ways depending on which region you come from, which class you come from and your education level. So first of all the English of different regions, so the English that is spoken in say Midlands is very different from English in other parts of England.

English is also distinguished according to class, so the working class people say people who are not highly educated and who are working class, they speak a different variety of English which in earlier days was known as Cockney and the speakers of educated speakers of English tend to look down on these speakers because they are not as educated as them. So class, region and also level of education. Even within London, people speak English in different ways.

So the English which is spoken say in the south of London would be different from the east of London and the west of London because these regions inhabited by people with different

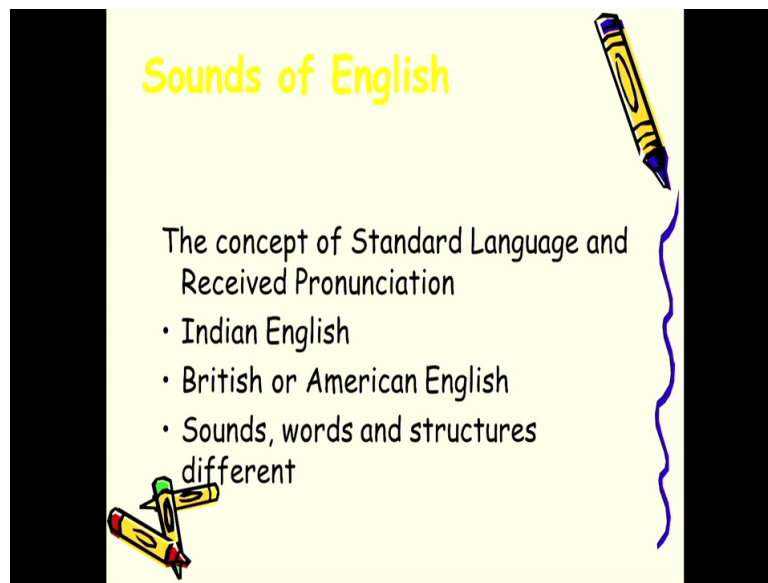
levels of education belonging to different classes and so on. Now what is standard English? What is standard British usage? Standard British usage is the language spoken by the educated speakers of the south of London.

Please remember, the language spoken by the educated speakers of the south of London became the standard British usage for reasons similar to those for the acceptance of Khadiboli as standard Hindi because of their domination cultural domination of England. So people who were highly educated, who went to an elite institutions like Oxford and Cambridge, their speech, their usage was considered was elevated to the status of standard British usage and we call the Queen's English. Now there is another name for Queens English, a technical name for Queens English, which is RP.

What is RP, what does RP stand for? RP stands for received pronunciation. When we are talking about pronunciation, the Queen's English, the pronunciation of Queen's English, the received pronunciation and again it is not unique to English, we have the received pronunciation of any language which is the standard language of that region.

So we will be looking at when we are trying to look at improving your pronunciation, we are looking at RP and we will look at how RP or received pronunciation and standard language standard British usage are different from Indian English. We will not have time to go into American English speakers for the very simple reason that I do not claim expertise in American English, so I will confining myself to standard British usage and RP.

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Sounds of English

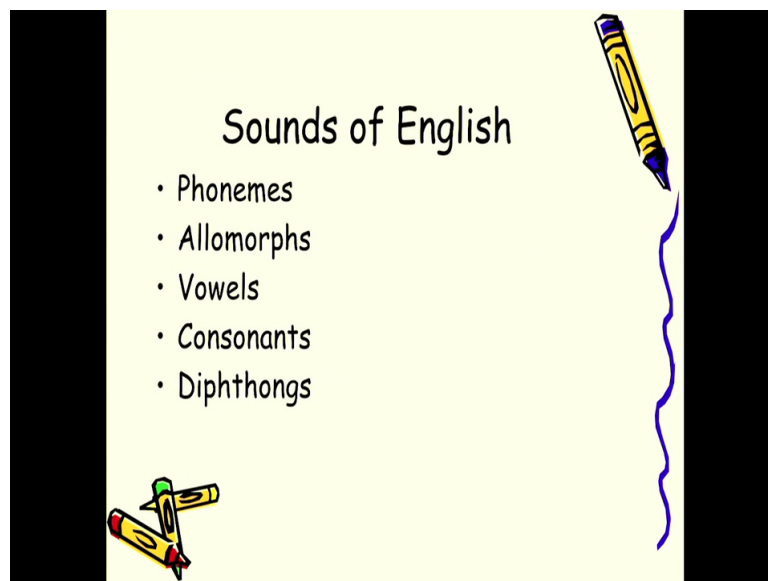
The concept of Standard Language and Received Pronunciation

- Indian English
- British or American English
- Sounds, words and structures different

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So I would try to show you that not only the words and structures but also the sounds of RP (sta) sounds of standard British English are different from the sound structures and words of Indian English.

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Sounds of English

- Phonemes
- Allomorphs
- Vowels
- Consonants
- Diphthongs

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Let me begin by introducing you to the sounds of English and the notion of Phonemes. What is the minimal distinctive unit of writing? We all know from our schooldays, we were told that the smallest unit writing was an alphabet, a letter and we said that alphabet was divided into vowels and consonants. Now let us forget when you start speaking you need to forget writing, you have to start thinking verbally. You have to start thinking orally, you have to stop thinking of translating writing into speech.

So let us begin again like we started you started learning the alphabet in school, let us begin from the beginning by learning the smallest unit of sound as you learned your basic alphabet, your ABC, let us go to the basic unit of speech is called a phoneme. What is a phoneme? Phoneme technically is defined as the minimal distinctive unit of sound. How do we how do you define a phoneme? How do you know what is a phoneme and what is not a phoneme? So let us look at the idea of producing sound and notion of what are called primal sounds of primal syllables.

It is humanly possible to produce certain sounds for human beings, okay. This is what that is what is called primal sounds of primal syllables. Now among the primal sounds and primal syllables, every language chooses particular sounds. It does not choose all the sounds, that is why languages are different, that is why sounds of languages are different because all the languages do not use all the sounds which are humanly possible for people to produce.

Let me illustrate from an example from Africa, for example in Africa, the sound ung ung which we use in Indian languages or in English as in word final or la word medial position, like sing, singer, right. This sound is used in the initial position in African languages.

So one of my favorite authors, one of my favorite novelists is a man whose name begins with this sound and even though he is my favorite author, I find it very difficult to pronounce his name but now his name is on everyone's lips because he was slated to received the Nobel Prize in literature, he was a top contender for the Nobel Prize in literature this year which he unfortunately lost. What is the name of this famous writer?

His name is Ngugi wa Thiongo Gugi wa Thiongo, so some of us say his name by silencing the na sound and we say Gugi. Some of us pronounce the first round and we say Ngugi, it is neither Ngugi nor is it is Gugi, it is Ngugi Ngugi. Because none of our languages use this sound in the word initial position, we find it so difficult to pronounce the name of this very brilliant and talented writer. Let us come to India look at the sounds which are there in some languages are not there in other languages. So let us look at a very sharp distinction between Indo-Aryan languages and Dravidian languages.

The two main language families which we have not in India, of course we have many other la language families, I will not have time to go into that but one of the basic distinctions in Indian bhashas or Indian vernacular languages is that some of them belong to the Indo-Aryan family and languages in the south of India are believed to belong to the Dravidian language

family. Now the most important thing between the Indo-Aryan languages and Dravidian languages is the Dravidian languages have certain sounds which is impossible or almost impossible for speakers of Indo-Aryan languages to produce.

Now I am going to take the sound wa hya which is used in Dravidian languages, I am not familiar with all the Dravidian languages but I have a smattering of Tamil and I would illustrate it from a sound in Tamil. The sound which is used in the word in Tamil for fruit, the sound which is used in that which is the sound param param. Now this sound when you ask a North Indian to produce, you would find North Indians shopping for vegetables or fruits in panagal market and asking padamkud padam.

So they make it like Hindi da whereas the sound is param, you have to roll your tongue and say the sound. So of course the functional English is such that the fruit vendor or the greengrocer understands what you are saying but you are mispronouncing the sound when you are say wayapadamkud, I want a banana. So what you need to say is, waya param. Forgive me or pardon me if I am mispronouncing the sounds, those of you who are speakers of Tamil but I am just trying to illustrate that for a North Indian like me also, however hard I try, it is difficult for me to produce this sound.

So basically what I am trying to say is that phonemes of two languages are not identical because each language chooses certain sounds which is humanly possible to use to create their own sound system. And even with Indian languages we found that there is a world of difference between the sounds of Indo-Aryan languages and Dravidian languages. When the sound is not there in another language at all, it is impossible for you to produce that sound, like in the case of these two examples I gave you.

The other example is when you have sounds in your language which are similar to the sounds of another language but not identical, that is when you mispronounce the sounds. So either you are not able to pronounce the sounds or you mispronounce the sounds because the sounds in the other languages do not show one to one correspondence with the sounds of your language. In linguistic terms we say they are not isomorphic, that is they do not show one-to-one correspondence between the sounds of your language.

What happens is, you try to use the sounds which are familiar to you and you try to pronounce the sounds of a new language in the way you pronounce the sounds of your own language and you mispronounce because they are not identical. So this is what let us return to

phonemes, when the sounds of two languages are not identical, they are two separate sounds in one language but not separate sounds in another language, they are considered phonemes in one language but the phonemes of one language may not be the same as the phonemes of another language.

So let me give you an amusing example with no friends intended but I will take examples from different regions to show just to illustrate with humor that when the phonemes of two languages do not intersect there can be a lot of confusion and it can use a lot of humor. So let me begin with the sounds ka and kha. Ka and kha in Hindi are two different phonemes, so when you say kal which is tomorrow and khal which is fraud or cheating somebody, that is khal. when you substitute the sound ka with kha, it brings about a change in meaning.

So whenever a substitution of one sound with another brings about a change in meaning they are phonemes. But when the substitution of one sound with another does not bring a change in meaning, then they are not phonemes but they are allomorphs. What are allomorphs? Let us take the same sounds to show that these two sounds which are phonemes in Hindi are allomorphs in Hindi in English sorry in English. So ka and kha not kha but ka and kha in English, so whether you say car as Indians say it whether you say car as the native speaker say it, it does not bring about a change in meaning.

You can say I bought a nice car, as we say in India or you say I bought a nice car as they would as a native speaker would say and people will understand what you mean unlike in Hindi where kal and khal are two different phonemes. In English when the substitution of one sound from another does not bring about a change in meaning, then they are considered allomorphs. Now let us come to our humorous example with no offence intended. In Chinese la and ra which are phonemes in English and in Indian languages, so we say lice and rice.

They are two different phonemes because when you substitute the sound la with ra, it brings about a change in meaning and they are different phonemes both an Indian languages and in English. But in Chinese, la and ra are allomorphs, they are not phonemes. So whether you say la or whether you say ra, it means the same thing and that is why when you have takeoffs on Chinese pronunciation and when you have people copping the Chinese accent and saying some get me some flied lice, it is a genuine problem because in Chinese la and ra are not separate phonemes.

So when somebody says do you want flied lice, he or she is actually using the rules of their own language. Similarly, come to Indian languages and again I will illustrate first from a South Indian language and then from a North Indian language to show the sounds which maybe phonemes in one language are not phonemes in another language and when the speakers of that language say that surround, it sounds like a mispronunciation to the native speakers. Look so let us take the sound ba and bha, ba and bha in Hindi are two different sounds.

So whether you say bala or you say bhala, bala is trouble and bhala is welfare or doing good for someone. Now the sounds which are two different phonemes ba and bha in Hindi, in Tamil, they are not too different sounds. So whether you say ba or bha, they are allomorphs they are identical. And that is why when new learners of Hindi from the South, when they speak when they pronounce these sounds, they tend to confuse one sound with the other. So they would say instead of bharat they would say barat, instead of saying bhala they would say bala.

So these confusions are natural because in Tamil these are allomorphs, they are not two separate phonemes, okay. When native speakers find it amusing but when someone says barat hamara desh hai, ham sab barat wasi bai behen hai, they are just following the rules of their native language which sounds odd to the native speakers of Hindi because in Hindi bha and ba are very distinctive phonemes, whereas in Tamil they veer into one another. Similarly in kha and ga, in Hindi kala and gala, kala is art and gala is throat, are very different phonemes, they are separate phonemes.

Whereas in Tamil, I understand my knowledge of Tamil is not so deep but from consulting my friends who are Tamil speakers, I understand that they shared into one another, the sound ka and ga. Should somebody whose name the name Shakuntala which seems to be my favorite example in this unit, Shakuntala my somebody I knew in Chennai, her name was Shakuntala but whenever I would address Shakuntala, she would say my name is Shaguntala and she would correct me Shaguntala.

And in my class I remember people would make fun, there used to be a popular film starring Jaya Bhaduri now Jaya Bachchan called Kora Kagaz and everyone in my schooldays would say have you seen Gora Gagaz because Tamil speakers would pronounce that film name as Gora Gagaz not Kora Gagaz. So but I am trying to say is that I am not intending to make fun of any speaker or speakers of any languages, I am try to show how the phonemes of even

Indian languages are not identical. Even within North Indian languages, the phonemes are not identical.

So say Hindi and Punjabi, very often Punjabi is not given the status was not given the status of an independent language earlier because it was said that Punjabi is similar to Hindi and it has a variety of Hindi. But in Punjabi you have certain sounds which are not there in Hindi and the Hindi sounds pronounced differently in Punjabi. So when Punjabi speakers say bhai, the sound is not bha. In Hindi the sound is bha, whereas Punjabi speakers are unable to make that sound because in Punjabi the sound which is used for this word is the sound which ranges between bha and pa.

Bha and pa in Hindi are two different sounds, prath aur bhaat, bhaat rice and prath prataha is subah morning. Pa and bha are very different sounds in Hindi. In Punjabi also they are different sounds, there is a bha, there is a pa but they are pronounced differently. So when Punjabi speakers say the sound bha, they set as something between bha and pa and they say pa pa, it is said the bha be said with an aspiration it is said like a pa with aspiration so it is pa.

And when Hindi speakers try to speak Punjabi, they will say there is the word for brother in Punjabi is papa or paaji, so pa said with an aspiration paaji or papa. But when Hindi speakers say that sound, they will say bhapa or they will say papa. So Kapil Dev the famous cricketer who is affectionately known as paaji by his fellow cricketers, Hindi speakers tend to pronounce it as paaji which in Hindi has a very bad meaning because they cannot say the sound with the aspiration, they cannot set as pa.

So like the song paape pyaar karke pachtava pachtaya from the film Pyaar Ke Side Effects and rendered brilliantly by the late singer Labh Janjua, most people cannot get that sound and they will say paape pyaar karke pachtaya whereas it is paape, in pure Punjabi it is pa. So with this I conclude by saying whenever we learn a new language, we bring go were this habits, the speech habits of our mother tongues and when we bring over the speech habits of a mother tongue, this phenomena is called mother tongue interference in linguistics.

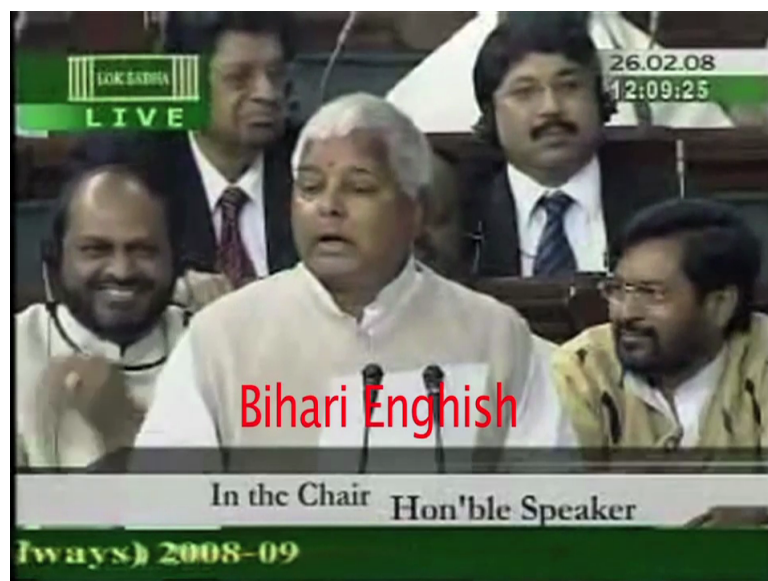
It interferes with our learning of a new language and this is the problem with your speaking English, your correct pronunciation of English. All of us Indian speakers including myself, we are unable to speak like native speakers of English because we carry over the habits of our mother tongue in our learning of English and that interferes with our learning of a new language and as a result we do not sound like native speakers of English.

Now I myself cannot do not claim to be speaking Queens English, I do not claim to be speaking RP but I am trained and I have received formal training to show you the difference between RP and Indian English which is what I will be doing in the unit that follows to show you why we do not sound like native speakers and what we need to do if we want to.

I am assuming that some of you want to, we do not need to as I said in the politics of English, we can speak in Indian English if we want to speak Indian English but those of you who want to who aspire to speak an international register of English and maybe British English, maybe want to know the difference between Queens English or RP and Indian English, both in terms of sound but also in terms of stress and intonation.

In the next unit I will introduce you to the vowels, consonants, diphthongs which constitute the phonemes of English. Remember, unlike in writing where we have only vowels and consonants, in spoken English we have vowels, diphthongs and consonants. In the unit that follows, I will introduce you to the sounds of English, to vowels, diphthongs and consonants of RP and how they differ from vowels, diphthongs and consonants of Indian English.

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But it is appreciating ke I have done a tremendous work. Hmm, each and every year I have earned crores and crores everyday and they are saying Lalu Jadhav has planted ba ba fruit tree and every year, it is duty of my to ba ba fruit tree.

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The Bombay film industry, why don't they object to it that I am Bollywood. It means you are perpetually survive to somebody else.

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In (())(38:14) like all in other films like all his earlier films, he talks about the problems within a small family. The (())(38:21) is the father goes to a bar and in a bar you know they talk he says he casually this a reference to Second World War and the way how they lost the war.