Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
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Lecture 22
Language Hybridity Case of Hindi-English Mixing

Welcome to class. Today we are going to talk about an emerging and evolving trend in English, the mixture of Hindi and English. Though we do not treat it as a separate variety, English or the excessive mixing of Hindi and English specifically in the media sphere, in media platforms is also being carried to real-life situations and the urban youth are deriving identity out of it, it has become in quotes "lingo", emerging lingo for them.

So, today we are going to talk about language hybridity as a concept, and also to substantiate and understand that concept we are going to talk about Hindi-English code-mixing. So, code mixing is a very established area of research and study in social industries. And code-mixing is a phenomenon, as an outcome of a bilingual or multilingual society, and code-mixing is regarded as a very productive and creative outcome of a bilingual mind. So, we are going to talk about language hybridity today.

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Language hybridity can be understood as a socio-linguistic phenomenon of code-mixing that refers to the use of one or more languages for the consistent transfer of linguistic units from one language into another by such a language mixture developing a new restricted or not restricted code for linguistic interaction. Braj B Kachru gave this idea in 1978.

So, it is a continuous transfer of linguistic items from one language to the other. Why do we do so? What is the use of it? For maximum communicability. So, this phenomenon is creative and unmarked linguistic behavior that results from an urgent need to communicate with the desired effect in a bilingual or multilingual situation.

Now, you have to remember this phrase desired effect we will come to this in a short while. So, language hybridity refers to the mixing of two languages, two linguistic items from one language into the other language to create the desired effect in communication for maximum communicability.

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Several linguists have contributed in developing an elaborate understanding of the phenomenon and some of them are like Muysken, Myers-Scotton, Poplock, Sancoff, Rajendra Singh, Woolford, Bhatia and Ritchie, Kachru, and others. So, these studies establish this phenomenon as a very stable, productive, and regular phenomenon. So, it is not something unique, it is a very common phenomenon among bilinguals and multilingual.

Today the case in point here is the mixing of Hindi and English. You can think of and you can work on mixing of your mother tongue with another dominant language, sometimes why I say dominant? Because one language maybe the language of social upward mobility may have a high prestige value. In India English enjoys that super messy, it is a language of social upward mobility, at least considered as a language of social upward mobility, and it has high prestige value.

It brackets you into an elite class if you speak good English. So, English derives a lot of pride and prestige associated with it in Indian linguistic ecology. And you can find a mixing of English with all Indian languages, English has been the language of colonial masters. So, even in post-independent India, English is the official, associate official language, so it enjoys that power, that status, that prestige.

And that is the reason why English easily mixes with most of Indian languages, be it Punjabi and English, be it Marathi in English, be it Tamil and English, be it Telugu and English, be it Kannada and English, be it Assamese and English. So, take the example of Bangla English, English everywhere. And today we are going to talk about English-Hindi mixing with special reference to the new media platforms.

I will tell you why we have chosen new media platforms today in the talk because the IT revolution and the digitization process that started as a technological revolution has turned into a social revolution and if you want to understand this digitization process and reconfiguration of social structure you should read manual castle, a series of writings and three volumes he has written on the emergence of the network society.

I will not get into that but today here we will talk about how these digital platforms and the digitized public sphere are trending and fueling this mixing to a great extent, number one. And number two, how educated urban youth are identifying with this new hybrid variety and it is not restricted to Hindi and English alone, it is to all speech communities.

David Crystal imagines a world where because of this technological revolution world will move towards a bilingual society, where English will be a global language and the local language will

be of that particular geographical location. And in order to become a world citizen and relate to mainstream you need to be bilingual.

So, this is a prediction and imagination but it is not verified and we do not take it that way. But one thing is for sure technological advancement and technological revolution, availability of digital platforms, and social media have created a very fertile space for language hybridity that is a fact that we cannot deny. And that is why for this talk I chose Hindi and English mixing, and a hybrid variety which is in quotes referred to as "Hinglish", Hindi and English, "Punglish" for that matter Punjabi and English, "Tamilish" for that matter Tamil and English.

So, this is a trend coming up and the urban youth are associating with it, they are deriving identity out of it, that is why the case in point here is Hindi-English code mixing which is emerging as an unmarked code for socialization and relating to a wider spectrum of audiences in traditional as well as new media. And what do mean by new media? New media is all digital platforms which have created a very fertile democratic flexible space for you to interact, share and socialize.

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So, if you go by Bhatia's explanation, Hindi and English do stand in a conflicting togetherness, however, their mixing results in Hinglish, a reconciliation of the two codes that captures the imagination of social media users. So, English though not acquired as the first language, is

emphatically present and negotiating with other Indian languages as a dominant partner. The contact of Indian languages with English is an unmarked phenomenon yielding a wide range of hybrid expressions and varieties and that is why we chose this topic.

Taglines	Products
Bole mere lips, I love Uncle Chips!	Uncle Chips
Yeh Dil Maange More	Pepsi
Yehi hai right choice baby!	Pepsi
Shock Laga Kya	Havells Cables
Taste Bhi, Health Bhi	Maggi noodles
yeh hai youngistaan meri jaan	Pepsi
Hungry Kya	Domino's Pizza
What your bahana is?	McDonalds

Let us look at the taglines of a very popular product, you might have seen commercials on television, and we all are familiar with these hybrid taglines, look at them. *'Bole meri lips I love Uncle Chips'*, is a very popular uncle chips brand. Pepsi, you know the series of Pepsi commercials *'yeh dil maange more'*, you remember, *'yehi hain right choice baby'*, or have Havells cables, look at that *'shock laga kya'*, or *'taste bhi health bhi'*.

Look at the tagline of Maggi noodles, Pepsi 'yeh hain youngistaan meri jaan', now youngistaan, what is youngistaan? A hybrid expression, young plus Hindustan. *'Hungry kya'* Domino's Pizza's tag line, very popular tagline. *'What your bahana is'* for McDonald's. Now, these are taglines associated with the brand elements for branding purposes but these taglines resonate with the aspirations of the youth.

So, as a linguist or as a so-called purist you may not approve of these taglines, these hybrid expressions, but look at their presence and their prolific use of it. Look at the television programs and you will find such hybrid expressions prolifically being used and we all adopt and accept it, we all understand it.

So, it is a new lingo or variety or hybrid expression, a set of expressions that are emerging not restricted to Hindi alone, same products and you see these taglines in Tamil commercials, in

Punjabi commercials, in Marathi commercials, in Bangla commercials, everywhere. So, this is an established phenomenon.

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Most of you may not be born by the time but if you recall Alisha Chinai, a very famous Alisha Chinai's song 1995, *'ek dil chahiye bas made in India'*. That was a cult, that was something which was noticed by most of us and perhaps with the opening of local frontiers for global order and opening of economy, the Indian economy to the world and the process of liberalization began post 1991.

And in fact, metaphorically this song announces the arrival of India *'ek dil chahiye bas made in India'*. A kind of very strong announcement that is symbolic of that period. Apart from traditional media domains, the emergence of digital media has created different digital platforms for constructing meaning in Hindi and English hybridity by users. And post digital revolution, traditional media, and new media together are diffusing the linguistic boundaries.

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So, if you look at the very important article I came across published in 2005 on 11 January in New York Times and Sadhna Shankar in her article more than 350 million speakers of "*Hinglish*" in India she writes, a quote from Sadhna Shankar's article 11th January 2005, I quote. *"Then in the mid-90s, cable TV started rapidly spreading across India and indigenous music channels started using a mixture of Hindi and English in their programs. What began as a spoof on the English used by Indians was soon transformed into a fuzzy mix of the two languages. Suddenly, Hindi with a smattering of English acquired status"*, I end the quote. So, if you look at channel V, MTV, you find a very different variety of Hindi there. So, they all speak Hindi but a lot of English words and English expressions are mixed into that and that mixing has got a pattern now, it is getting established now.

A young generation who are on Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, and other digital platforms, you find this variety being very productive and being used exclusively by urban youth who are educated and have good command of English, and this trend continues. So, these media platforms are giving a lot of space for this mixture or this hybrid variety to be used in there.

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So, if you look at the growth of digital technology, it has fueled hybridity, it is an, see hybridization is a natural process that always one language to renew itself in order to suit contemporary needs and David Crystal predicts that at about 350 million the world's "*Hinglish*" speakers, he calls it "*Hinglish*", Hindi and English, may soon outnumber native English speakers.

And Baldauf adds while most of the Indians who came to the west to work in the information technology sector speak English, the sheer number of Hinglish men in IT makes it almost inevitable that some Hinglish words will get globalized and that is true, we have witnessed it, words globalizing.

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So, the popularity of Hinglish among Indian urban youth can be attributed to the perceived characteristics of the variety that is viewed as 'youthful', it is 'new', it is 'fresh', it is 'cool', in quotes 'carefree', and 'in' with a potential to change the game of *youngistaan*, all these words I have used in quotes just to have a referential meaning of these expressions.

So, the hybrid, hybridized variety immediately connects with the vibrant youth population for whom Hinglish a *'cool'* new code just chills and *'hangs out'* well with the virtual space and this virtual tribe and does not seem to carry heavy linguistic purity baggage. And they are happy with that.

So, this experiment and hybridity is continuing, and does not matter how others look at it, the fact is that this Hinglish mix of Hindi and English is growing and becoming a productive variety being used by urban youths. Though in its initial stage in the digital platforms but you never know, languages are always in flux they change, they are fluid, they do not stay the same.

So, this reinforces their idea of freedom and helps them break away from the localized social roles and functions which together forge an individual as well as collective identity. So, people are, young people are associating with it, they are deriving identity out of it, this variety has become a very vigorous marker of their identity both individual and collective.

In real life situations, we may laugh at it but the fact is that in digital space this variety has become, this mixing has become so prolific and so productive that these phenomena continued with other languages like English and Punjabi, English and Tamil, English and Bangla, Marathi, so this is not restricted to Hindi only.

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And this variety offers a common ground to otherwise two exclusively separate linguistic identities for reconciliation in their conflicting togetherness. So, they are in, they stand opposite to each other but there is a reconciliation in the digital space and it remains an outcome of a negotiation and afterward settlement between the two distinct codes with two distinct identities and associations.

Why does it happen? Given the social prestige attached to English in India, the ratio of mixing linguistic items is not random and arbitrary, and the dominant presence of English just reflects that. I mean look at the impact of technology and how it has impacted almost all languages. English is considered the instrumental, very instrumental in carrying technology across the world.

So, look at your own versions where you have *'display lagadena'*, *'upload karna'*, a *'download karna'*, look at these compound verbs, *'upload karna'*, *'download karna'*, *'save karna'*, *'copy*

karna', *'paste karna'*, *'save, copy, paste, upload, download, display pic'*, all these words associated with technology are forming compound verbs in different languages.

And a new set of compound verbs are being added to all languages, be it Marathi, be it Tamil, be it Punjabi, be it Hindi, everywhere. I am giving Hindi examples but you can think of examples in your mother tongue, and that is a very productive process. So, these words associated with technology are creating a new set of categories in a given language and a new set of vocabulary in a given language.

How they are being borrowed, cultured, assimilated, and grammatically used. *'Download karna'*, so you do not find the equivalent of the Hindi equivalent of *'download karna'*, *karna* is Hindi verb but download has a content word and both together make a compound verb. *'Display laga dena'*, 'save karna', 'copy karna'.

Now, *'save karna'* we cannot say *'surakshit karna'* that is a different connotation, a different meaning. So, the digitization process that started as a technological process has emerged into a linguistic and sociological process, it has become a linguistic revolution, it has become a social revolution.

And a beautiful book by David Crystal, I recommend you should read, 'English and Internet', English as a global language, and so many other studies have emerged about computer mediated communication and language change and it is happening all around. So, in addition, this hybridity allows Indian urban youth to explore freedom by breaking away from linguistic boundaries, focusing more on communication rather than on the purity of the language.

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English-Hindi code-mixing has become an unmarked use of various sites in general and in social media but platforms in particular. And however, as Trivedi, Harish Trivedi notes the ratio of mixing is contextually English centric with Hindi structures and vice versa. The Hindi we may find in English, its peanuts compared to the English we find in Hindi.

And in the battle of hybridity Hindi wins hands down, Trivedi 2014. And this is the true story of all other Indian languages where English and Punjabi, English has the upper hand, English and Tamil, in this hybridity English has the upper hand, in English and Bangla, hybridity English has the upper hand.

You find very less Bangla expressions in English, less Hindi expressions in English, less Punjabi expressions in English, but not vice versa. So, what Trivedi says, that the Hindi we may find in English is peanuts compared with the English we find in Hindi, and in this battle of hybridity Hindi wins hands down.

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So, that is the story of this hybrid variety which is emerging more into digitized space, in the digital sphere, and public sphere. But it is bringing a lot of change in our physical world as well where Hindi is being used in society and lots of mixing that you can see. You can see that obviously on youth-centric programs on TV and you can see this variety more in a social media interaction. So, this Hinglish offers a common ground to otherwise two exclusively separate linguistic identities for reconciliation in their conflicting togetherness.

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The exponential growth and digital connectivity have made Indian urban youth more aware, informed, and educated. They are successfully mobilizing on issues of their concern and they interpret and express through the platform of social media. And this variety becomes a vehicle; this variety becomes very instrumental to connect with each other in the digitized space.

Social media has enabled us to socialize and coordinate public life, form opinions and create movement and build consensus. So, if you look at the functions extended social functions of this variety, it is emerging and growing like anything.

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So, social media has allowed youth to explore and create their own language and assert their identities. India has the largest population of youth in the world and the power of this dynamic population cannot be undermined. And this variety has become or this hybridity has become a norm and a very strong vigorous marker of their identity.

This population largely uses social media for gratifying their needs to explore, consume, and producing information through the medium. And today urban youth publish, share, discuss and network via social media. And this language is coming up as a very productive and useful tool.

So, the instrumentality of this hybridized Hinglish cannot be undermined. So, this is the story of this mixed variety which is emerging as a distinct variety among the urban youth in digital space

as well as social media and this is bearing upon changes in the real life situation as well, where you find a lot of mixing not necessarily people, people are competent in both the languages, you do not have to be very competent in English as well to use this variety.

But such expressions are being used so commonly that they are being adopted and neutralized in expressions, they become spontaneous expressions and sometimes it becomes very, it becomes very difficult for this population, the young population to find the equivalent in the real life. So, it is not now restricted only to social media, it is coming in, creeping into the physical society.

So, from the digital sphere to the physical sphere, what the manual castle calls it, we are in real virtuality, so we are in virtual society and we are in real virtuality. And languages cannot remain unchanged with the change of this digital configuration corresponding to changes in social configuration and corresponding changes in the language forms and their use. So, this is for now. Thank you very much.