
EXPERIMENTATION WITH LANGUAGE IN INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

G.D.INGALE

Asso.Professor, Dept.of English,Devchand College,Arjunnagar

Abstract:

Today Indian English has undoubtedly been accepted as 'a variety of English' as viable as American English or British English. Indian English is a cover term used to refer to the forms of English used in India for creative writing. It has a special Indian tone, sensibility, vocabulary and to some extent syntax. English is an acquired language to all the Indian writers writing in English. They are naturally faced with many problems.They find difficulty in presenting Indian consciousness, thoughts, scenes, reality, culture, beliefs, etc. And it is quite clear from their writing that they are successful in bending the English language for their purposes of creative writing.

It is difficult to define Indianness of Indian English. It lies in the choice of subject, in the texture of thought, in the organization of material and in the creative use of language.The phonological, syntactic and lexical features of Indian English writing are known as Indianness of Indian English.There lies the unity of the Indianness among all the Indian writers writing in English.

The Indian English writer faces a special problem because of his situation. He writes in English which is not his own language, and it is, perhaps not the language of his readers. The writer's mother tongue will come into play. And also the characters in his fiction do not know English. For this he translates or transcreates their words, emotions or gestures which are peculiarly Indian.Therefore, the style of each and every Indian English writer is distinctive. They constantly try to wrestle or experiment with English language.

Experimenting with language means finding new, natural and startling means of expression. The experimentations of Indian English writing have two main aspects- interpolations and literal translations. There is nothing arbitrary, chaotic or unmethodical about the experiments by writers.

Key Words :

Experimentation , Indianism, translation and transcreation.

1. What is Indian English (IE)?

Today Indian English undoubtedly been accepted as ‘ a Variety of English’ as viable as American English or British English. It is a distinct, non-native variety of English. It means the use of English language by Indian writers of English for creative writing. It has

features of second language variety contributed by the mother tongue of the speakers and by their cultures. It is a cover term used to refer to the forms of English used in India for creative writing. It is like any other national variety of language. It has a special Indian tone, sensibility, vocabulary, and to some extent, syntax.

English is an acquired language to all the Indian writer's writing in English. They are naturally faced with many problems. They find difficulty in presenting Indian consciousness, thoughts, scenes, reality, culture, beliefs, etc. through the medium of English. They constantly try to overcome this problem. And it is quite clear from their writing that they are successful in bending the English language for their own purpose of creative writing. According to Meenakshi Mukharjee, "the most significant challenge before Indian English writers is the task of using the English language in a way that will be distinctively Indian and still remain English."

2. **Labels used to describe Indian English:**

Cynics have used different derogatory labels to describe it. Some of these are- 'Sub-standard English', 'Baboo-English', 'Butler English', 'Chhee-Chhee English', 'Kitchen English', 'Eccentric English', 'fractured English', 'artificial English'. But this is not the real case. It is neither inferior nor superior to British or American English. It is a distinct and different variety of English. Mulk Raj Anand calls it 'pigeon' English, and not a 'pidgin' variety. Today Indian English has acquired an identity of its own. There is a common core running through all its varieties in India. Its soul is Indian in colour, thought and imagery. In short, Indian English is a different variety of English like Australian or American or African or Canadian English.

3. **Indianness of Indian English:**

'Indianness' is an abstract concept. It is all inclusive of Indian life and culture. Indian writers writing in English come from different cultural backgrounds. Hence they reflect different cultures out of one common Indian culture. According to Mehrotra, 'there are kinds and degree of Indian English involving the specific linguistic, contextual and interpersonal dimensions.' He argues that 'different kinds Indian English are used in different kinds of registers and domains in India and for different kinds of purposes.' Indianness of Indian English lies in the choice of subject, in the texture of thought, in the organization of material and in the creative use of language. The phonological, syntactic and lexical features of Indian English writing are known as Indianness of Indian English. There lies the unity of the Indianness among all the Indian writers' writing in English. Its core is Indian in the deepest sense. It depicts the spirit of Indian society. Their styles are individualistic, yet genuine. Raja Rao remarks, "The tempo of Indian life must be infused in our English expression.... There must be something in the sun of Indian sky that makes us rush and tumble and run on...." According to Mulk Raj Anand, Indian writers' writing in English has full freedom of using the English language according to the needs, feelings, thoughts and bends of mind.

4. **Why write in English?**

The question then is ‘why do these Indian writers write in English? There are, of course, obvious reasons for it. The mother tongue of the Indian writers is not English. Still they write in English because,

- I. It is the language of wider range, vocabulary and thoughts. It is a dominant language for them. They feel they can express their thoughts, feelings, experiences, etc. in English more effectively,
- II. They want to reach the reader beyond their vernacular. They want to be recognized by the people whose mother tongue is different. This love of recognition is either personal or of his culture.
- III. English is more flexible than his own mother tongue. It is the language of his emotional and intellectual make-up. It has the qualities of adaptation and development.

5. The Problem of Intelligibility:

The problem of every Indian English writer is ‘how to be intelligible’ to his reader, especially the foreign reader. He tries his best to be intelligible to his reader by using either literal translations or interpretations such as the idioms, phrases, slogans, expressions, etc. from his mother tongue. Some of these literal translations and interpretations have a great marked local colour. These are easily understood by the people who speak the writer’s mother tongue. But these are not easily understood by the foreign reader. Therefore, the Indian English writer explains to them by putting the explanation either after the comma or in the brackets immediately after them. Otherwise the reader has to understand it in the context itself.

6. Experimentation with Language:

The Indian English writer faces a special problem because of his situation. He writes in English which is not his own language, and it is, perhaps, not the language of his readers. Raja Rao rightly points out, “The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own, the spirit that is one’s own.” Therefore, the echo of the writer’s mother tongue is bound to come through and affect his writing. He has another difficulty while he tries to give expression to his experience through a ‘foreign’ medium. It is that he himself knows English, but the characters in his fiction do not know English. He tries to give his characters shape, movement, gestures and local habitation; for this, he translates or transcreates their words, emotions or gestures which have peculiarly new references and situations. Therefore, the style of each and every Indian writer is distinctive. They ‘create’ their own style, diction, syntax and mode of expression. Thus English written by Indian English writers is creative in its fullest sense. They constantly try to ‘wrestle’ or experiment with the English language. They focus their attention on the pattern of life and culture in India. They try to convey an Indian essence through English. There can be no general rules about how to do it. Each writer has to do it according to his own skill. They are all experimentalists. They have done nothing strange or different from what the native English writers have done. James Joyce and Virginia Wolf also experimented with language in order to express ‘peculiar’ bends of their minds.

Experimenting with language means finding new, natural and startling means of expression. Dr .S.K.Desai mentions the following four strategies of the experimentations of Indian English writers :

- i. Using a number of native words for which there are no exact words in English
- ii. Using translations of certain characteristic expressions, idioms and sayings
- iii. Imposing the syntax of the native language without, however, doing great violence to English grammar , and
- iv. Imposing the native speech rhythms on the English language spoken by the Indian characters

The experimentations of Indian English writing have two main aspects: interpolations and literal translations. The use of interpolations have the following aspects :

- i. Interjections, invocations, etc. from Indian languages, which can not be translated, are interpolated.
ii. e.g- ohe hacha, ohe acha
Hei sri wahe Guru !
- iii. Greetings, blessings, modes of address, etc. are interpolated to give flavor of Indianness
e.g.- Ram Ram, Radhe Sham!
Wadahi, Wadgai
- iv. Words, phrases etc. from Indian languages are interpolated because they have no equivalents in English dictionaries.
e.g. hukkas, Rajas and Maharajas
maya.
- v. Pidgin Hindi expressions are deliberately used to show how the character speaks in Indian situations.
e.g.- vay ja ja, go away
- vi. Swear words ,abuses are interpolated to reach the climax in the dialogue and to give catharsis for emotions.
e.g.ohe chup,ohe chup.
- vii. Hybrid expressions are interpolated sometimes humorously, and sometimes as a bold experiment.
e.g. Don't buck.
- viii. Pronunciation spelling is used to show rough, substandard , and uneducated speech of characters.
e.g. Holdar
Soshialists

Literal translations, on the other hand, may be used for the following reasons :

- i. To convey Indianness .
e.g- oh, may I die for you!
As they look on me as their father mother.
- ii. To convey through English vast range of expressions, beliefs, observations, etc. from Indian life and culture.
e.g. caste brothren,
eat one's head
fall at one's feet
- iii. To show how an Indian will sound it in his speech if it is translated in to English .
e.g. vay! May you die ! May you die!
Aao ji ao, come on my head, come on my eyes
- iv. To describe peculiarly Indian phenomena in a forceful manner.
e.g. What will repentance do when the birds have wasted the field.
- v. In order to be intelligible to the foreign readers.
e.g. cat- killer's lane (Billimaran)
Ocean of Nectar (Amritsar)

7. CONCLUSION :

Thus, there is nothing arbitrary, chaotic or unmethodical about the experiments by Indian English writers. On the other hand, they are the part and parcel of their creative writing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Patil, A.N. : M.Phil. Dissertation, S.U.Kolhapur,1988.
2. Daswani, C.J. : 'Indian English' JSL,1974-75.
3. Desai, S.K. : Experimentations with Language in Indian Writing in English (fiction), S.U.Kolhapur, 1974.
4. Kachru, Braj B.: The Indianness, 1983
The Indianization of English, 1983.