

## 9. The English Component

The history of English in South Asia since the mid-eighteenth century is in many ways remarkably similar to the preceding role of Persian from the thirteenth century until after 1800. Both languages are of Indo-European origin, both grammatically rather simple, both initially implanted as colonial media in the Indo-Aryan territory of Hindi-Urdu, both then eagerly cultivated locally. The double process of adoption and adaptation which once led Indo-Persian to emerge as a fossilized variant of High Urdu (and the tacit formulation of its Sanskritized rival) was largely repeated. 'Indian English' is as immediately a target for simple fun from a British perspective as the Persian of Delhi once was to the nice critics of Shiraz: and the contemporary Hindi of India or the official Urdu of Pakistan are hardly to be savoured without an awareness of the process which has fostered their emergence as twin look-alikes of the English of the Raj, to whose deliberate replacement so much of the energies of the architects of Independence was once dedicated.

### 9.1. Phonology

E contrasts quite sharply with HU, both in the phonemic distribution of vowels and consonants, and in syllabic structures. Although equally Indo-European, E is thus much further removed from HU than P.

It is assumed that users of this book will be familiar with the complex system of E vowel-phonemes (often involving diphthongal realizations), and the many consequent simplifications involved in the pronunciation and spelling of E loans in HU. Attention need only be drawn to the amalgamation of three E phonemes, i.e. /ɔ/ as in 'lorry', /ɔ:/ as in 'law', with /a:/ as in 'laugh', yielding HU *ā* in *lārī*, *lā* and *lāf* and a similar realization of all the vowels except the last in the phrase *pāl skāṭs lāṣṭ nāval* 'Paul Scott's last novel'.

Although E consonant-phonemes are more simply organized, HU adaptations sometimes involve slightly confusing transfers. These are best understood by reference to the following table of E phonemes:

	k	ch	t		p
	g	j	d		b
	ng (/ŋ/)	n	m		
			th (/θ/)		f
		y	th (/ð/)	w	v
h		sh	s		
		zh (/ʒ/)	z		
			r		
			l		

The E contrast between /v/ and /w/ is notoriously difficult for HU speakers, for most of whom E 'very wide vowel' is an impossible tongue-twister; the problem is exacerbated for those speakers prone to substituting

*b* for *v* in stressed positions. Other problems concern the sibilant fricatives. 'Bridges' is quite difficult for many H-speakers who lack the contrast between *j* and *z*, while 'pleasures' is unattainable for all but the most sophisticated U-speakers who carefully distinguish *ʒ* and *z*. The varying realisation of E 's' as /s/ or /z/ depending on position causes much confusion, as in the spelling *mises* for 'Mrs'.

The de-aspiration of the E consonant sounds /k/, /ch/, /t/ and /p/ is quite marked in HU pronunciations of loans such as *kār* 'car', *carc* 'church', *ṭāip* 'type' and *pin* 'pin'. The first of these examples also demonstrates the universal HU tendency to realize the full phonetic value of final '-r' in loans where it is silent in British E.

The main area to be noted is, however, that of the very marked contrast between the dental consonants, where HU *ṭ th ḍ dh t th d dh* correspond rather erratically with E /t d/ and the grapheme 'th' which represents either the unvoiced /θ/ as in 'three' or the voiced /ð/ as in 'the'. Outrageously transmitted loan-spellings tend to reflect the following pattern (as borne out by HU realizations of e.g. 'the third director' as *ḍī tharḍ ḍāirekṭar*):

E	/t/	>	HU	/ṭ/	e.g.	<i>ṭāim</i>	time
	/d/			/ḍ/		<i>ḍīar</i>	Dear
	/θ/			/th/		<i>thiaṭar</i>	theatre
	/ð/			/d/		<i>brādarz</i>	Bros

Many of the most well-established HU loans from E, however, diverge from this strict pattern. In some cases it is reasonable to postulate the influence of prior assault on Indian ears of European languages with less retroflexing pronunciations of /t/ and /d/, e.g. both HU *botal* and *pādrī*, which presumably reflect Portuguese 'bouteilha' and 'padre' rather than the E /bʊtəl/ and /pa:dri/. In others, which include many of the most fully assimilated loans from E employed in HU, it must be assumed that a possible retroflex has been replaced by a more congenial dental, e.g. HU *sitambar* 'September'.

Such 'Indianized' forms not infrequently form doublets with freshly-borrowed HU representations of the same E word, the well-established *aktūbar* and *amrīkā* for example having to compete with *akṭobar* and *amerikā*. A similar but rather more bizarre process is at work in the re-importation of Indian words in Anglicized forms, e.g. the use in HU of *iṅḍiyā* (whose retroflex *ḍ* betrays its passage through England despite its P origin), or of the name *ṭaigor* (E 'Tagore') alongside original *ṭhākur*.

Initial E consonant-clusters beginning with 's' are problematic for HU speakers, as is frequently demonstrated by the pronounced values of such essential E loans as 'station', 'school', 'street' 'state'. While NIA often explodes such consonant clusters, yielding pronunciations such as *sīṭeśan*, clusters in initial position are more commonly resolved by the special device of a prothetic *i-*, giving *iṣṭeśan*, *iṣkūl*, *iṣṭrīṭ* and (confusingly) *iṣṭet*. In some instances this phonetic convenience is recognised orthographically in U, which has *iṣṭeśan* as a standard spelling. H however prefers the spelling *sṭeśan*, regardless of its pronounced value; and the tendency for *s* before a retroflex consonant to pick up a retroflex quality also goes unrecognised in the written form.

911. *Script*

Both H and U are adept at utilizing their respective scripts to represent E loans. Nagari makes somewhat sporadic use of the superscript sign ~ to represent E 'o' vowels alien to Indian phonology; but still without distinguishing /ɔ:/ from /a:/ (91).

The spellings of 'typewriter' in either H or U nicely illustrate the recourse which must be made to the use of independent Nagari vowels for H, or of *hamzâ* for U:

H टाइपराइटर                      U طائپ رائٹر

92. *Lexicon*

E clearly dominates a great range of semantic fields not represented in this book, whose passages are mostly selected from the works of writers whose chosen means of expression is H or U. A very different picture would have been presented if we had included examples of more journalistic usage such as a passage of either H or U film-criticism or cricket coverage, when *sāiḍ-hīro* and *kāvar-ḍrāiv* would doubtless have emerged as shared loan-compounds. The passages in this book, directed as they deliberately are towards high usage on both sides (no matter how well their writers knew E), tend to obscure this somewhat.

921. *Word-building*

Like P and S, E is a conveniently word-building language, with the further benefit of the orthographic device of the hyphen (complementing in U the inherited P convention of showing word-breaks between the elements of a compound (811)). Transfers to HU should need little spelling-out to E-speakers, who should readily be able to decipher such phrases as *incārj maiṭarniṭi sekṣan*.

922. *Use of English Loans*

The most obvious category of E loans comprises nouns imported along with the object they designate: many of these belong to the areas of technology and administration, with well-established words such as *ṭelīfon/ṭelīfūn* and *jaj* resisting the competition of PA- or S-based neologisms. Such loans are extremely common and call for little comment; but the extent to which they are absorbed sometimes varies between H and U. Thus while U prefers the E loans *graimar* and *nāval* ('grammar' and 'novel'), H uses S *vyākaraṇ* for the former and S *upanyās* (lit. 'statement, setting down') for the latter. But certain words have become so well accepted that they are allowed to rub shoulders with formal S (or PA) loans, as in the title of India's prestigious *saṅgīt nāṭak akāḍemī* 'Academy of Music and Drama'.

More far-reaching in their cultural implications are those E loans which in particular contexts are felt to be more apposite than their HU synonyms. The word *freṇḍ* neatly circumvents the gender-specific connotations of HU *dost* and *sahelī*, and in so doing, defuses the potentially explosive connotations of relationships outside the family (often *faimilī* rather than H *parivār* or U *xāndān*, especially if the domestic group is a nuclear rather than an extended one). Though such usages are especially prevalent in the

HU-speaking diaspora, they are also common enough back home in India (so frequently referred to as *inḍiyā*, a name which avoids the implications both of *bhārat* (implying the Hindu-majority post-Independence republic) and of *hindustān* (often taken as referring principally to the northern part of the sub-continent with its associated legacy of Muslim culture).

The fondness for things Western which continues to thrive unabated in the subcontinent inevitably lends a certain attraction to such assumedly fashionable E colloquialisms as slang, nick-names and the softer swear-words; thus many a Hindu boy blessed with a polysyllabic S name such as Abhimanyu or Venkateshwar will be known universally as 'Bobby' or 'Sonny', and will revel in the sophistication of expressions such as *dām* (or *ḍaim*) and *blaḍī* — the latter not restricted to adj./adv. usage but also soldiering on alone as an expletive. A few E words have filtered through almost all levels of education and social class, and if the circumstances demanded it there would be few whose affirmative answer to a question could not be given as a resounding *yas!*

There is a large class of E loans which either no longer form a part of current standard E or have never done so. Bobby, who wears *hāf-paiṅṭ* ('half-pant', i.e. shorts) made from a *kaṭ-pīs* ('cut-piece', i.e. remnant of cloth from the end of a roll), breakfasts on *ḍabal roṭī* ('double bread', i.e. a loaf of the Western type, presumably so-called because it is made from twice-risen dough), and then perhaps does his homework in his *kāpī* ('copy', i.e. exercise book).

### 923. *Calques from English*

The policy of substituting E terminology with HU coinings continues apace, albeit with varying degrees of success; but the widely-used calques from E are not subject to the same process, their veneer of PA or S usually being sufficient to pass them off as genuine autochthonous forms. Most passages of modern prose will yield examples such as the U *yak-tarfâ* for 'one-sided', the H *ek śabd dhanyavād kā* for 'a word of thanks', and the HU *savāl uḥtā hai* for 'the question arises'. The very term used by H grammarians for such loan-translations, *udhār anuvād*, is itself an example of its own class.

The ultimate relationship of HU with its distant cousin E occasionally throws up formal parallels such as that between Latin-derived E 'circumstance' and its S-derived H calque *paristhiti*; and the use of P or S prefixes facilitates the production of calques such as U *ḡair-fitrī* 'unnatural' and *a-hindī-bhāṣī* 'non-H-speaking'.

A rather different category is that of expressions which have their own S or PA pedigree and yet whose usage is determined by E conventions. For example, the convenient formulae S *priy* and HU *tumhārā/āpkā* for 'Dear' and 'Your(s)' have a permanent place in the conventions of informal H letter-writing, with E *dīar* and U *piyāre* competing with A *mukarram* in U usage. And ironically — given the elaborate and extensive nature of honorific expressions in HU — it is E 'Mr' and 'Mrs' which provide the model for the modern uses of *śrī* and *śrīmatī* in H and of *janāb* and *begam* in U.

The excessively literal rendering of E terms into a HU guise often gives the more banal calques a somewhat comic quality, such as in H *bas-sevā* for 'bus service' (inappropriate because *sevā* implies the offering of deferential servitude rather than the provision of a public facility), H *sajjan kī sāikil*, sounding like 'the bicycle of a gentleman' rather than the intended 'gent's bicycle', and H *stambh-lekhak* for 'columnist', based on the S word for 'column' in the architectural context.

### 93. Morphology

Like the majority of loans from S or A and P, most E loans fall into the same HU word-classes of nouns and adjectives. By far the greatest number of E loans in effective use are s. nouns, many of which generate phrase-verbs through productive combination with *karnā*; e.g. *pās karnā* 'to pass', *cailinj karnā* 'to challenge', *ḍīpend karnā* 'to depend' and even, in the video age, *fāst-fārvāḍ karnā* 'to fast forward'. The use of E nouns in the formation of ppn. is restricted, and the relatively formal contexts of most of the HU passages included in this book do not provide examples of such unexpected colloquialisms as the ppn. *ke thrū* 'through' (in the sense 'through the offices of, by means of'). A similar restriction applies to the use of E morphemic suffixes such as '-s', '-ed', '-ing', '-er' etc., seldom encountered in HU except in such usages as *brādarz* 'Bros' (91) and *sanz* 'Sons', both common in HU company-names, and in rarer delights such as U *īvningar* 'evening paper'.

As in the case of loans from S (631) and from P and A (731) assignment of gender is generally determined by existing synonyms, e.g. *bas* and *kār* are both f. by analogy with *gārī*, while the f. gender of *pulis* 'police' is probably by analogy with S *senā* and/or the f. assigned in HU to A *fauj* 'army'.

The growing tendency in E to apply p. agreements to s. collective nouns ('the government are' etc.) is not carried through into HU loan usage, where s. concord is strictly followed not only with *sarkār/hukūmat/gavarnmeñt* (or *gauñrmeñt*) but even with *pulis*. Conversely, some E pl. forms are borrowed into HU as though they were s., e.g. *mācis* f. 'match' and *darāz* f. 'drawer'.

Finally the extensive use made in modern HU of the numeral *ek* as equivalent to the E indefinite article may be noticed. Sentences such as *maiñ ek ḥīcar hūñ*, in which it is quite redundant, depend entirely on the E model, and elsewhere *ek* is often used as a substitute for *koī*.

### 94. Syntax

The intimately continuing symbiosis in South Asian linguistic reality hardly makes it sensible to distinguish individual syntactic elements, since so much conscious effort from both the H and U sides has gone into the demonstration that neither are the directly calqued reworkings of E that they can both so frequently be demonstrated to be. Many examples will be found ad loc. in the annotations to the later H and U passages.

While the extent to which E loans have infiltrated HU is demonstrably remarkable, there are of course numerous examples of parallel expressions being thrown up spontaneously by HU on the one hand and E on the

other: thus *hamešâ hamešâ ke liye* is not dependent upon the E equivalent 'for ever and ever', and in many instances where a connexion may be suspected it is unprovable.

'Indian English' is nevertheless still a dominant model for both H and U modern styles. Given the degree of bilingual command which exists between E and HU speakers at the higher end of the educational range, it is hardly surprising that calqued patternings on either side should resemble each other so closely.