

Indian English Literature became a Universal Unique**G.Mohana Rao**Ph.D Research scholar
Dep. Of English, Andhra University.

English is a living language. Its literature insures the permanence of the language as well. Premananda Kumar says, Man's civilization owes not a little to the power of language to communicate meaning, to advance knowledge and to preserve the treasures of the mind and soul. Standard English could be taken to be the language of English literature from the sixteenth century to the present. But literature is itself reared upon standard speech. Prof. Wyle says that "Standard speech is the language spoken all over the country within certain social boundaries". Otto Jespersen describes it as the normal speech of the educated class. W.J Long defines literature thus: Literature is the expression of life in words of truth and beauty". It is the written record of man's spirit of his thoughts, emotions, and aspirations. It is the history and the only history of human soul.

So It is one of the most important and delightful subjects that can occupy the human-mind. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says" Man is a thinking animal. He is a talking animal". He broods; he dreams, he looks before and after. By these means sensory experience is qualified and heightened.

R.J Rees says" Literature is writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings attitudes towards life". Serious literature must have the quality of permanence. One of his sonnet Shakespeare writes of his poetry and patron thus; "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives this and this gives life to thee,"

Literature can only come alive through the creative imagination without this all the technical skill in the world is useless. Literature is a permanent expression in words of some thought, feeling or idea about life

and the world. Literature in fact is something from which we get moral education. The use of literature has a long story from Plato down to the present. Indian literature in English and its historical emolument had happened alongside the consolidation of British imperialism in India.

The British Government's educational reforms, the Endeavour of missionaries and the response and acceptance of English language and literature by upper-class Indians. The educational reforms called forth by the Charter Act 1813 and the 1835 English Education Act of William Bentinck.

Indian English literature has matured from a sapling to a firmly rooted tree that blooms. History of Indian English literature enlightens readers that the first book written by any Indian in English was by sake Dean Mahomet. In the contemporary Indian scenario, the country possesses a sizeable number of populace that has English as either primary or secondary language of means of communication.

Most of the early exponents of English literature in India were perhaps not in a state under British domination to reproduce native English brilliancy. The history of English language and literature in India all starts with the advent of the East India Company in India. The East India Company was formed in 1599 at a meeting participated by leading London merchants and after more than 150 years.

By the commencement of the 19th century Britain or East India Company was more or less the master of the situation in India. The beginning of the 18th century with grammar, dictionaries and translations, the printing press also brought out.

Began by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his friends; David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East. The Hindu college had become the Presidency College in 1855. History of English literature in India was thus gaining its higher

grounds by being uplifted and rejuvenated under the still good-hearted Bruisers from 1835 was thus ushered in the” Anglicizing period” in the historical development of English literature for India.

During the 20 years between 1835 to 1855, numbers of those enlightened in English were witnessed to increase rather rapidly and vociferously. 32,000 English books were sold in India as against 13,000 in native Indian languages. Indian English literature and its history and evolutionary maturation was verily perceived when the craze for English heightened. The demand came more from the English Educated Indian bunch as opposed to from the English men in India.

Indians began with reading, speaking and apprehend in English and they soon started writing also in such a foreign medium. Once this was ushered in the history of Indian writing in English began to range from the most useful and functionary prose to the most motivated and determined verse-epics for instance. Indian writing in English was only one of the materializations and expressions of the new creative impulse in India.

Asian English

English in the Indian Subcontinent

Just as in the Caribbean, the English Language arrived in South Asia as a result of colonization. Unlike its history in the Caribbean, however, English has always co-existed in the Indian subcontinent alongside thousands of local languages. So for most of the population, it has only ever been a second language.

The origins of English in India

The British first arrived in India in the early 1600s and soon established trading posts in a number of cities under the control of The East India Company. By 1765 the Company’s influence had grown to such an

extent that the British were effectively controlling most parts of the country. This date is often taken as the start of what is referred to as *The Raj* — a period of British rule in India that lasted until Independence in 1947.

Initially English was only taught to the local population through the work of Christian missionaries — there were no official attempts to force the language on the masses. But by the 1700s, English had firmly established itself as the language of administration and many educated Indians were demanding instruction in English as a means of social advancement. By 1857 universities had opened in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. English was increasingly accepted as the language of government, of the social elite, and of the national press.

After Independence

After Independence, India became a nation state, and it was intended that English would gradually be phased out as the language of administration. But there was no simple solution as to which language should replace it. At first Hindi, the most widely spoken language, seemed the obvious choice, but following violent protests in 1963 in the state of Tamil Nadu against the imposition of Hindi as a national language, opinion has remained divided. In a country with over 900 million people and more than a thousand languages, it is difficult to choose a single national language, as mother tongue speakers of that language would automatically enjoy greater social status and have easier access to positions of power and influence. Even Gandhi, a proponent of a native variety as a national language, accepted that his message was most widely understood if expressed in English. So, although English is not an indigenous language, it remains as an 'Associate Language' in India, alongside Hindi, the 'Official Language of the Union of India' and eighteen 'National Languages', such as Bengali, Gujurati and Urdu, which have a special status in certain individual states.

English in India today

Despite continued pressure from nationalists, English remains at the heart of Indian society. It is widely used in the media, in Higher Education and government and therefore remains a common means of communication, both among the ruling classes, and between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages. According to recent surveys, approximately 4% of the Indian population use English. That figure might seem insignificant, but out of the total population this represents 35 million speakers — the largest English-speaking community outside the USA and the UK. In addition there are speakers of English in other parts of South Asia, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where English plays a similar role. English is virtually a mother tongue for many educated South Asians, but for the vast majority it remains a second language. This means there are speakers whose spoken English is heavily influenced by speech patterns of their ethnic language, alongside those whose speech reveals nothing of their racial background and some who are ranged somewhere in between.

Asian influence

There are a number of elements that characterize the more ‘extreme’ forms of South Asian English. In terms of pronunciation, many speakers do not differentiate between the sounds <v> and <w>. They might also replace <th> in words like *think* and *this* with a <t> and <d> sound, as no Indian languages contain these consonants. Under the influence of traditional Hindi grammar, speakers often use progressive tenses in statements, such as *I am believing you* or *she is liking music*. Anyone who has experience of speech in the UK’s Asian communities will also have encountered the phenomenon of **code-switching** — mixing words, phrases or even whole sentences from two different languages within the same conversation. The occasional or even frequent use of a Hindi (or Urdu, Punjabi, Gujurati etc.) word or expression within an English sentence can communicate a great

sense of shared identity or solidarity with other speakers. This characteristic feature of Asian speech has led commentators to coin popular terms, such as *Hinglish* (i.e. Hindi English) or *Pinglish* (i.e. Pakistani English).

The table below gives several examples of speakers using a number of pronunciations and grammatical constructions that are typical of speech on the Indian subcontinent. All the audio clips are taken from recent BBC interviews and come from spontaneous conversation and therefore reflect the natural reflexes of South Asian English. The left hand column lists each feature, while the second column gives an explanation. The list is by no means comprehensive, but by clicking on the sound file you can hear an extract from a recording of a speaker using the target feature.

Why is English a universal language?

Answer historically, the British, who conquered most widely, spoke English. They colonized North America – most North Americans are descended from the colonists and speak English. They conquered parts of South America, and those pockets speak English. They conquered Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India. Currently, Modern English, sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, is the dominant international language in communications, science, business, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy. Because unlike other languages, English is taught in every country in the world and many people can understand English than other languages.

Indian English literature during British India and postcolonial Indian English literature came to the surface. So English is a living language and its literature insures the permanence of the language as well. So Indian English literature became the great universal unique.
