

BRITAIN'S HEGEMONY INDIA'S MAY BE

Indra Sinha: Identity through language in Animal's people.

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Now, without doubt, India can boast her competence as a user of English language as a native writer. Gone are days when any innovation in language in post colonial Indian writing in English was marginalized as impurity. "... India's literature has taken centre stage, nationally and internationally"¹. Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* is an outright reply to WB Yeats statement, "Tagore does not know English. No Indian knows English. Nobody can write with music and style in a language not learnt in childhood and ever since the language of the thought"². Sinha has successfully washed off old identities given to the Indian writers of English by the people from the first world. By marginalizing Indian culture and linguistic innovations he has created a wonder. His English respects the British formalism, and with an unmistakable indigenous stamp about it at that. He handles the language, especially the written variety, with the same deftness as any reputed native writer would do. With his language, Sinha has shown that an Indian can share the world with the English on equal terms, as even while presenting Indian culture to the western reader he strikes a golden medium by presenting a correct picture in a correct manner and in a correct language. Like any native writer he fearlessly and intelligently goes beyond the established rules to create something new and honest, with the idea of enriching English language and literature, not merely creating Indian English or Indian English literature. In his writing, there is not only Indianness but also Englishness about his English. He has presented Indian culture in the English language with minimum awkwardness and maximum acceptance.

Though much ink has been lavished upon the same concern yet what Sinha has done newly is beating the blamers at his/her own game using the update version of his/her own language, and with better competence at that. He has written with such an innovative skill that there is no rival to surpass in India. On 5th March 2007, with the publication of *Animal's people* he made a long flying in the field of linguistic innovation, and the poor natives could not help bewildering themselves. In it he has innovated linguistically at almost all levels: graphology, phonology, lexis, syntax and semantics, and thus he has earned a sole model which the others want to identify with.

Language, above all, shapes our distinctive

ways of living in the world. Language, thus, "is the carrier of a person's identity"³, a means of seeing, experiencing and feeling things. In this view, indigenous languages are of more significance than European languages to those that take the initiative in the idioms and customs of the people. Also, in an 18th century Australian novel, *Policy and Passion*, it is exhorted "to be colonial is to talk Australian slang"⁴ and Salman Rushdie exhorts the contemporary writers that "one of the changes has to do with attitudes towards the use of English... . And I hope all of us share the view that we can't simply use the language in the way the British did; that it needs remaking for our own purposes."⁵ Probably, like Tagore's, and Rushdie's, it is due to Sinha's bilingualism that the literature of Magic realism is created in the interanimation of different languages. It is polyglot potpourri that helps him a lot for earning his fame. "The socioeconomic stability of these varieties threatens the hegemony and monopoly of Standard English."⁶ And one would easily include such writers as Joyce and Yeats in the same polyglot potpourri for which the poor imperial writers could only wish they were postcolonials.

1. LEXIS—The lexical study is "used in Linguistics to refer to the vocabulary of a language."⁷ It encompasses the words and their formation, the type of words used, and the deviation from the norms of standard variety. Sinha uses a number of linguistic deviation for various purposes: to maintain reader's attention in con (text), to express cultural emotions, to capture socio-linguistic reality, to present the things on the pages, and to create something new, honest and attractive. It is seen that he has used lexical items that fall into different categories like standard English—British or American, substandard English and Indian English. The linguistic deviations are made according both for "idiosyncratic linguistic choices" and some rules have been extended beyond their limits. The later is especially with word formations, neologism, spelling of words and words coming together. But it is clear that these linguistic moves have made his description and narration lively, forceful, easy, economical and interesting.

1.1 Five-language terms—Unlike other Indian English writers and most native writers, Sinha uses many features that form the traditional tools of vocabulary.

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He makes use of both code mixing: "in bilingual speech, the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another"⁸ and code switching: "the use by a speaker of more than one language dialect or variety during a conversation."⁹ To prove the facts a few examples are as follows:

1.1.1 Native item that is Local – Marathi

Galla mandi - Vegetable market, *Garooli* - Cigarette, *Kyo Kha ?* - So, friend ?, *Mehboobi* - Beloved, *Sadda Miya Ki Tond* - A self-important person, *Bidonville* - Slum.

1.1.2 Native item that is national - Hindi

Beedi - Leaf-rolled cigarette, *Bhang* - An intoxicating drink, *Chaar Sau bees* - An Indian Penal Code, *Chuna lagaana* - to deceive someone, *Daal* - Lentils, *Ghurr-ghurr* - To stare, *Haathi* - Elephant, *Jaana* - Life, *Jhadoo* - A household broom, *Kheer* - A milky pudding, *Mela* - Fair, *Naala* - An open drainage canal, *Nasha* - Intoxication, *Oot pataang* - Nonsense, *Ous raat* - That night, *Raakhee* - A token tied by a girl on the wrist of a boy she regards as a brother, *Saala* - Brother-in-law, *Sadak Chhaap* - Street-stamped, *Taal* - Lake, *Talaiyya* - Pond, *Yaar* - Friend

1.1.3 Native item in combination with an English item-Hybrid (Hinglish)

Hey master-Ji, *Oh baba*, *Ma-in-law*, *Government-waali*, *Auto-wallahs*, *Car-Shaar*, *Kebab-genius*, *Mela-of death*, *Beedi packet*, *Poison-Khana*, *Fucking bhonsdi-ka victim*

1.1.4 French items

Dézlioné - Meal, *Twalet* - Toilet, *Komoni sava* - How's it going, *O* - Water, *Cette nuit* - That night

1.1.5 Urdu items

Guftagoo, *Lajawaab*

He not only uses the Hindi items but also make uses of local ones extensively to capture the socio-linguistic reality of the city of Khaufpur. And what sets Sinha apart from the lot is that he never uses these terms in a limited or defensive manner. Armed with exceptional intelligence and linguistic competence, he can afford to assert whatever he wants to. The depth of the emotions is directly proportional to the linguistic depth. Whichever language he chooses, whether it is English or the mother tongue, it is the most appropriate to express the emotions of that level. In translating every thing, not only does the originality escape, but also an unintended artificiality creeps in. For example, if one translates such cultural bound words as "Raakhee", "Sadak Chhaap", "Yaar", "Kheer", "Dabas", "gitpit", "Taal", "Talaiyya" etc how can s/he maintain the true emotional effect.

In translating the abuse like "Saala" as brother - in - law, the sting of the abuse is lost. Moreover for

such words as "Daal", "Haathi", "Jaana" "Mela", "Naala", "Nasha" one can find English equivalents, but Sinha has used them in mother-tongue for only cultural and emotional effect. "These words [the switch to Hindi] serve as vehicles of cultural memory, in so far as their significations are concerned."¹⁰

1.2 Vocabulary

Sinha uses formal and informal, written and spoken, and slang and taboo words as the context demands, unlike many other Indian writers whose vocabulary leans heavily towards formality and bookishness.

1.2.1 Informal Words

(i) English informal: splotch, con, gent, bike, auntie, chap, gibing, crazy, kids, missus, bigwig, back-side.

(ii) Hindi informal: badmash, bakwaas

1.2.2 Slang words

(i) English slang: scams, bastard

1.2.3 (ii) Hindi slang: pandu, dada, battameez kutte,

1.2.3 Taboo Words

(i) English Taboo: fuck, fucker, bugger

(ii) Hindi Taboo: bhonsdi - ka

(iii) Hindi Taboo translated into English: sister fuck, mother fuck.

1.2.4 Spoken words: damn, hop it, sod off, Don't mess with, bugger off, Okay, Not exactly, arsehole.

1.3 Neologisms

These are words coined to serve the need "for a single occasion only."¹¹ They are also called nonce words or nonce formation. For instance, Sinha uses the term "thighs-of-fate" for a special medicine in the sentence: "This thighs-of-fate was a medicine which was helping people get relief". He uses the term "Zapaat" for the type of Nisa's father's Somraj's nose in the sentence :

... he has the same Zapaat nose as hers, long, and pointy.

Animal's vocabulary occasionally includes lexical items like "Namispond", "Jamispond", "Shaggerfucker", "Funtootallamish", "putain", etc. This process of his is not idiosyncratic for the concepts he expresses are well-known. Moreover, many have observed these things like his, but are not able to express like Sinha. Among the fully understandable coinages of his are "baby son", "patient teacher", "time-passman", "poor sex", "rich sex", "breath control", "kampani", "amrika", "mashin" etc.

Sinha skillfully uses compound adjectives: "twisted little bastard" "Solid muscled chest", "grim terrifying bastard", "big-arsed government-walli doctress", post posed adjectives: "ground smooth", lights looped", Noun as adjectives: "right hand man", "silver zari embroidery", "B-movie dialogues" "well water". His skill in using schemes and Tropes is also matchless, as he chooses very homely objects for his

comparisons and images. He makes use of similes: "some voices are slow like honey melting in the sun," metaphors: "... bodies are bottles into which fresh pain is poured every day," and images: "... her checks up into two mango shapes". His symbolic use of words and expressions is also matchless: "look-London-Talk-Tokyo", "Kuala Lumpur Police Department", "things", "Monster" "Unruly beast" etc.

This is that sort of task for which Pre Rushdiean Writers laboured a lot but could not present themselves with flying colours as the Post Rushdiean Writers like Indra Sinha have done. Now the use of English language with its native like innovation has become child's play for especially such writers as Sinha. As Bhatt also states, "the new Englishes now compete with standard Englishes (British and American)...".¹² By tearing the method of translation into pieces Sinha has reached a higher level of linguistic innovations, like any native writer. Mulk Raj Anand's sentence : "O, you son of a bitch, O, you, the love of your mother" Clearly focuses out what a temptation for translation he had! Besides it also shows his linguistic awkwardness. He himself accepts, "I believe that Indian English writing has come to stay as literature of India [not English Literature] because it is based on the Indian English language [not native language] of the most vital character, like Irish English, American English, Welsh English, Australian English or Canadian English."¹³ Thus it is clear that what Sinha has done was oft "thought but never so well expressed"¹⁴ before.

2. Syntax

Syntax is a "term for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language."¹⁵ It is the study of the inter-relationship between elements of sentence structure, and of the rules governing the arrangement of sentences in sequences. It is concerned with the way sentences have been used by the writer. It classifies whether the sentence are simple, compound or complex, whether the structures are basic or derived, Sinha has used both marked and unmarked sentences, but what is worth commenting are the ways in which he achieves markedness. His is the language that has an inclination towards the spoken form, unlike that of most other Indian writers.

2.1 Spoken Form

Before examining the spoke features of his language, to see what are the features that represent the spoken variety of English is desideratum. David Crystal says that the spoken form "... has less grammar 'because it does not follow the rules,' which are founded in writing."¹⁶ He further says that speech is in sentences, but the kind of sentence organization found in speech is different from that found in writing.

शोध, समीक्षा और मूल्यांकन (अन्तरराष्ट्रीय शोध पत्रिका)

Unlike speech writing is "polished". In writing the reader sees only the finished form, but in Sinha's case, the unfinished or unusually finished can also be seen. There is grammatical reduction: ellipses and contractions, for "non-clausal or grammatically fragmentary components"¹⁷ are the hall-marks of the spoken variety, as:

Yes please, want a taxi ? Need a hotel ? Best in Khaufpur. See the city ? Want a guide ? Need translate ? Jarnalis ?

He inserts "stand-alone words" and "syntactic non-clausal units" like "wah", "okey", "oy", "trrrr", "aaa aa iiiiee", "iiiiieaaaa", "Zip-Zip-Zippo", "Taka dum takataka dum dhoning dhoom" etc. Situational reference is also shown through the deictic items: "this", "that", "these", "those", "there", "now". There are more "premodification" than "postmodification" as if the events are happening right in front of the narrator, who frequently compares the happening events to the other things to make the communication more interesting and familiar.

Moreover, Sinha frequently makes use of tags that is a marked feature of spoken variety, and even going beyond the set of rules at that.

"...is jarnalis bribes agent, agent bribes type. Business, na?

She thinks you has a fit, but you don't have fits, do you darling?

"Animal's a nickname, na ?

Here, is a good example of the conversation between Animal and Nisha, to prove the fact:

'No !'

'No ? you ungrateful little wretch, what is this no ?'

'It's my no, the meaning of which is no'.

'Change it to a Yes'.

Eyes, I don't know how many times I told Nisha I would not go back. Ma was old. Very Old. Eighty Years, maybe. Perhaps a hundred.

Infact, in this example, there are uses of ellipses, contractions, monosyllabic words, spoken word, informal words, simple sentence, without verb sentences etc. that connect it to spoken variety.

2.2 Sentence

Apart from simple, compound and complex sentences, Sinha frequently uses such sentences as one word sentence, without verb sentence, cleft sentence and existential sentence.

2.2.1 One word sentence:

Me. See. Flies. but.

2.2.2 Without verb sentence:

Even the kampani. No and no. Me in. But no bodies. Very old. Perhaps a hundred. Mine too.

2.2.3 Cleft sentence:

- (i) It was you talked of movies.
- (ii) It's you they are waiting for.

2.2.4 Existential sentence:

There comes music drifting across the road.

2.3 Order or words:

Another feature of Sinha's syntactical device is the order of words. He frequently changes the normal SVO pattern for focus, weight, suspense and interests.

2.3.1 Reinforcement:

do it do it, what ? what ? that that, no no, yes yes, really ? really ? Yes Yes, how ? how ? so so, o o,... (repetition of same word)

"Hey master-Ji, hey worship, sahib, you are my father, my life, you are my God (use of proxi-word)

2.3.2 Fronting :

...up a hen's bum ? (Fronting of Preposition)

Blinking he's" (Fronting of verb)

...on that night it was a river of people

(Fronting of adjunct)

Grim, terrifying bastard he was (Fronting of Compliment)

Huge eyes you had (Fronting of object)

2.4 Deviations at the surface level:

Sinha deviates from the norms at the deep structure level for several reasons of course.

2.4.1 Non-progressive verbs:

No one's understanding a word.

He is wishing.

2.4.2 Ellipses:

Tears were falling down her fare, mine too.

Do you like anaar ? want some?

2.4.3 Whole sentence as pre-modifier of Noun:

Zafar danced his eye brows in a wouldn't-

you-like-to know style.

She pauses, give me a this-you-won't-believe look.

There are three pillars on which the whole structure of Indian writing in English rests, and they are (i) the carving for an identity, (ii) the need for defining the term "Indianness", and (iii) the campaign for Indian variety of English. Most of the writers strictly follow this norm. But there are some others who go beyond this and put a stamp of India and Indianness on the minds all over the globe. Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Indra Sinha are three such writers. What is special about them is that they have enriched the English Vocabulary: their linguistic innovations are acceptable even to the well educated native users of English. They do Indianize English, but make it presentable and acceptable globally. Last but not least, there is the problem of linguistic innovations. And looking at the linguistic innovations and style, it is difficult to distinguish between an Indian writer and a native writer. Writers like Indra Sinha are classic examples. Beyond the accepted linguistic innovation, even he pays respects to informal and spoken variety, where a situation demands. It will not be an exaggeration to say that his linguistic deviations and innovations in one chapter are more than those in an entire novel by any Indian writer. Every page appears deviating from the normal trend of Indian Writing, one does not have to even read to find it out. Readers can see thing on the pages.

My present article clearly points out that his is the language that not only enlightens Indianness but also illumines Englishness, and so Britain's hegemony may be that of India. One can not help saying that Sinha has gained popularity through language.

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