RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF ENGLISH ON PUNJABI LEXICON: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Being a socio-cultural construct, language undergoes changes with change in society. This change works at two levels: at the level of words and at the level of syntax. Centuries of British rule over India resulted in changes in Punjabi language, adding new words into it which were borrowed from English. Words coming from diverse areas –such as military profession, products of industrialisation, register of law and administration and things of common usage- got included in Punjabi. Quite often these inclusions accompanied changes in word structure and stress shift. Words introduced into Punjabi from English lost their English characteristics and adopted rules of Punjabi morphology, as it happened in case of pluralisation of English words in Punjabi. Besides, other social and technological developments like the migration of Punjabi people to western countries in the latter half of 20th century and the development of internet and social media sites in early 21st century also played their roles in enriching the Punjabi lexicon by borrowing words from English.

Keywords: English, Punjabi, lexicon, hybridisation, language

INTRODUCTION

Language is a socio-cultural product which develops and changes with the developments and changes in the society. Language hybridization is a characteristic feature of language resulting in an altered or an altogether new language. One language influences the other in different ways: by providing a new vocabulary to the other language, by affecting word formation process of the other language and / or by affecting its syntax significantly. An example that can be quoted in this regard is the influence of Arabic on Hindi resulting in Urdu and the influence of Latin and French over English. As the British ruled over India for roughly around two centuries, there took place a considerable influence of English over Indian languages. Punjabi is such an Indian language which has been influenced in its lexicon by English because of the 100 year rule of the British over Punjab, and also because of the migration of Punjabis to the West.

Punjabi is spoken in the northwestern part of India and northeastern part of Pakistan and it is- according to the Ethnologue 2005 estimate -the 12th most widely spoken language in the world having 88 million speakers. In India, it is one of the 22 official languages, and also the official language of state of Punjab. As recorded by the 2001 census, it has 29,102,477 speakers forming 2.83% of the total Indian population. In

Pakistan, it is the most spoken language with 76,335,300 speakers forming 44.15% of the total national population, as per 1998 census of the country.

The 1991 British census estimated that the British population included 840,000 people from India, of whom around 51% were Sikhs (Punjabi speaking), and 477,000 people from Pakistan, of whom 48,000 had Punjabi as their main language. In fact, Punjabi is the almost the second commonly used language in the United Kingdom, used by an estimated 1.3 million people (Publications.parliament.uk, 2000). It is and fourth most spoken language in Canada (The Times Of India).

Discussion

English has influenced Punjabi lexicon by adding new words from diverse areas. This introduction of European and English words into the Punjabi language began in the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) who appointed English and French officials in his army. These words belonged particularly to Military profession and reached Punjabi masses through Punjabi soldiers but got modified in the process, according to Punjabi speech rhythms. Some of such words were:

When the British began to rule India, they introduced their own administrative and judicial system. With this, the register of administration and law in English came into vogue. English now was used as the language of administration, courts and of education. The same happened in Punjab when it was annexed in 1849, ten years after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The use of English in administration and in law resulted in inclusion of lexical items borrowed from English into common Punjabi use. With changes these words were accepted into Punjabi language(TableA)

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(Table A)

English Word	Punjabi Word	Punjabi Pronunciation
Company	Kompani	kompni:
Colonel	Karnail	kʌrnæl
Lieutenant	Laftain	lʌftæn
Captain	Kaptaan	kʌptɑ:n
Command	Kamaan	kʌmɑ:n
General	Jarnail	dʒʌrnæl
Platoon	Paltan	pʌltʌn

(Table B)

English Word	Punjabi Word	Punjabi Pronunciation
Lord	Laat	lɑ:t
Order	Aader	ɑ:dʌr
Deputy	Dipti	dɪptɪ:
Magistrate	mujustarate	mʌdʒstərǽt
Barrack	Baaruk	Bɑ:rʌk
Committee	Kametti	kʌméťɪ:
Stamp	Ashtaam	ətʃtɑ:m
Pension	Pinshun	pɪnʧʌn

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These words were used as such because they came from the rulers' language and also because sometimes their Punjabi translations were not available and sometimes their English words were more handy.

After this, more words entered into the Punjabi lexicon from English language. With changing times, the awareness of the people with industrialization and with science was increasing. That is why words relating to new inventions entered Punjabi. Some words got accepted as such without much change, such as, *rail, bus, photo, line, press, fees, school* etc. whereas some- as following- underwent change in pronunciation or spellings or both, and thus got corrupted (Table B)

With the spread of English literacy in the mid 20th century, more of English words entered and got assimilated into the Punjabi Language. Words of highly common usage like *hotel, car, shave, motor, meeting, vote, member, rally, calendar* (pronounced as kalandar), *pen, tax, bill, copy* began to be so extensively used in Punjabi language both by the urban and rural, literate and illiterate and new and old generation, that rarely their original Punjabi counterparts were used now (Talib, 1970). English words like *time, train, cousin*, *OK* began to be commonly used by the urban Punjabi class, so much so that they substituted their Punjabi counterparts.

(Table C)

English Word	Punjabi Word	Punjabi Pronunciation
Station	Teshan	teʧʌn
College	Kaalj / Kaalaj	kɑ:lʌʤ
Cycle	Saekal	sækʌl
Telephone	Tellifoon / foon	tælɪfu:n/ fu:n
Pencil	Pinsal	pɪnsʌl
Lorry	Larri	lɑ:rɪ
Ma'm	Mem	meɪm
Box	Buxa	bʌksɑ
Separator	Sapretta	sʌpreɪtɑ:
Pantaloon	Patloon	pʌtlu:n
Lantern	Lalten	la:lten
Hospital	Husptal	hʌspʌtɑ:l
Report	Rupat	rʌpʌʈ

Under the British rule, the new system of weights and measurements was introduced. The terminology of the new system soon formed a part of Punjabi language. Terms like *Kilo* (pronounced as *Killo*), *gram, foot* (pronounced as *futt*), *inch, meter, minute* (pronounced as *mint*) and second (pronounced as *skint*) became more or less Punjabi words. The traditional words of weights and measurements – like *seer, chatanak, gaj, hath, koh, ghadi, pal* etc.- are not used anymore except in special situations or altered meanings.

Punjabi lexicon was expanded with English words with popularity of English, and with the establishment of English medium schools. Euphemisms were borrowed from English language to replace commonplace or now offensive considered Punjabi words. Words like *Peon, servant, Bathroom* (in the sense of a lavatory), *labour* (in the sense of labourer) became popular and 'respectable' expressions. English kinship terms like *uncle- auntie, mummy- daddy / mummy- papa , husband-wife, brother-sister* etc and other English words like *kitchen, lobby, gate, marble, bed, shower* were used not just by the literate urban class, which considered them better and sophisticated expressions, but also by the rural people as well.

With migration of Punjabis to European and American countries in the latter half of 20th century, Punjabi language accepted more words from English. Here it must be noticed that the words introduced into Punjabi from English lost their English characteristics and adopted rules of Punjabi morphology (Sethi, 1976). For example pluarlisation was now done in a way characteristic of Punjabi language. These imported words were pluralized in the same way as were the native words:

(Table D)

Word	English Plural	Punjabi Plural	Punjabi Pronunciation
Pound	Pounds	Poundan	paʊndã:
Dollar	Dollars	Dollaran	dalrã:
Class	Classes	Classan	klasã:
School	Schools	Schoolan	sku:lã:
Paper	Papers	Paperan	peɪprã:
Truck	Trucks	Truckan	trʌkã:

With the advent of information technology and consequent development of internet, language change has become a speedy process. A new telegraphic kind of language has evolved out of emails, chat room discussions, instant messaging and SMSs. Mainly the jargon of social media sites, this vocabulary, has entered the Punjabi language. Words like *pic* (for *picture*) bro (for *brother*) sis (for *sister*) *mil* and *fil* (for *mother in law* and *father in law* respectively) have become a part of common usage.

Conclusion

Changes in language are natural because language is society controlled and it has flexibility. This is also the reason why these changes are inevitable. The acceptance of elements from another language actually enriches a language. This process is reciprocal as it influences both the languages. The concept of pure language results in a dead language.

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