

Foreword by Dr Christopher Rollason

to

Sumana Bandyopadhyay, *INDIANISATION OF ENGLISH: ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN SELECTED POST-1980 INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION*

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The present study, by Sumana Bandyopadhyay of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, is entitled *Indianisation of English: Analysis of Linguistic Features in Selected Post-1980 Indian English Fiction*, and is offered as an overview of a number of key linguistic aspects of the English language as used in a particular register - the literary one - in the second-language setting and multilingual context of contemporary India.

India is a land where multilingualism is a way of life,¹ as its inhabitants are reminded every time they handle a national banknote featuring 17 languages.² The total number of mother tongues spoken in India is, according to the census for which the most recent data exist, that of 1991, 1576.³ 23 languages currently have constitutional status, and 22 of those are listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. In the wake of Independence, these initially numbered 14; this list has been extended over the years by a number of constitutional amendments, of which the most recent, the Ninety-Second of 2004, added another four languages.⁴ The 22 are, in alphabetical order: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.⁵ Of these, four belong to the Dravidian group (Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu), two are Tibeto-Burmese (Bodo and Manipuri), one is Austro-Asiatic (Santhali), and the remaining 15 are Indo-Aryan (a subset of Indo-European). To these 22 should be added a 23rd, namely English (also Indo-European), which has the special constitutional status of *associate official language* alongside Hindi. The multilingual situation is further complicated by the fact that no single language - and that includes Hindi - is spoken as a first language by a majority of India's population. Multilingualism is an all but banal component of daily life throughout India, be it in homes, shops, markets, transport, banks, businesses, etc. Many individuals are tri- or quadrilingual, and code-switching and code-mixing are everyday occurrences.

Article 343 of the Indian Constitution as originally framed states in its first paragraph: "The official language of the Union shall be Hindi," but goes on to add in the second paragraph: "For a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before

¹ A wealth of information on Indian language issues is available at the website of the electronic journal [Language in India](http://www.languageinindia.com/): www.languageinindia.com/ (see, for instance, the Hohenthal and Mallikarjun articles cited below). This site also has links to the census and constitutional material cited in this foreword, and to Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education" (cf. below).

² The languages featured on the banknotes are English and Hindi on the front, plus, on the back, 15 of the scheduled languages (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu).

³ See Office of the Registrar General, India, *Census of India 1991* (Internet reference). The data regarding languages from the 2001 census did not appear to have been released at the time of writing.

⁴ The 1991 census lists what then numbered 18 scheduled languages. The Ninety-Second Amendment was proposed in 2003 and passed in 2004 under *The Constitution (Ninety-Second Amendment) Act*. See: B. Mallikarjun, "An Exploration into Linguistic Majority-Minority Relations in India" (Internet reference); and Ninety-Second Amendment text at: <http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend92.htm>.

⁵ For detailed information on the main Indian languages (number of speakers, where spoken, script), see the website Major Indian Languages [no author cited; reference in Works Cited], <http://theory.tifr.res.in/bombay/history/people/language/>; also Andrew Dalby, *Dictionary of Languages*.

such commencement,” and, in the third paragraph: “Parliament may by law provide for the use, after the said period of fifteen years, of .. the English language ... for such purposes as are specified in the law”⁶. In other words, the constitutional text opened the possibility of dropping English after fifteen years, while simultaneously maintaining the alternative option of continuing to use it indefinitely. In fact, it was decided in the Official Languages Act of 1963 to retain English with its existing status, and today, more than forty years on, that remains the option which has prevailed⁷.

The real number of English users in today’s India is something of a vexed question. Those who use English are a quantitatively large, proportionately small and disproportionately influential minority of Indians. Estimates of the percentage of the population who use English (depending obviously on what that means, in terms of sociolinguistic context, first, second or third language, active versus passive, spoken versus written, degree of competence, etc) vary enormously, ranging from 2-4% to 10-20%. Traditionally estimates have been on the lower side, but there is now a tendency to up the figures. The influential British linguist David Graddol states that “India contains a significant proportion of the world’s speakers of English as a second language, but estimating the number of L2 speakers of English there is difficult,” and, while noting a consensus among linguists in the past “that around 4% of the Indian population speaks English as a second language,” contends that “there is evidence ... that the number ... is higher than this,” even positing a figure approaching 20% for those “confident of speaking” the language.⁸ Another expert, Tom McArthur, suggests that “there may well be c. 100-200 million people using the language regularly” and that “an expanding middle class increasingly uses it, and seeks it for their children, and for that group 10% of the population is not an unlikely base figure.”⁹ The 1991 census gives a mere 178 598 (or 0.021% of the population) declaring English as their *first* language, but for the proportion of the total population with English as their *second or third* language, offers 8% plus 3.1% respectively.¹⁰ This would amount to some 90 million English speakers, i.e. considerably more than the total in the UK.

The accumulated presence of English in the education system is such that some educated Indians not only write by preference in English but admit that they speak and even think in English first, keeping other languages mostly for communication with those like servants or taxi-drivers. Annika Hohenthal, a Finnish linguist, comments: “English is virtually the first language for many educated Indians, and for many who speak more than one language, English is the second one.” Nonetheless, Hohenthal further observes that, unlike in some parts of the world, “English has not driven out any of the indigenous languages, existing, rather, alongside them.”¹¹ It is interesting to note that another language scholar, B. Mallikarjun - writing in the same journal as Hohenthal - makes similar claims for Hindi: “The Indian social and political set-up has allowed Hindi to create space for its growth without forcing other languages from their own space ... It has become an additional language and not a substitute language.”¹² At all events, when it comes to international relations, it is English that prevails. English is employed for communication with the rest of the subcontinent (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka all continue to use English) and with the wider world - notably, of course, today in India’s burgeoning “new sectors” such as software development, BPO (business process outsourcing), biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, etc.

⁶ See Constitution of India (Internet reference).

⁷ See Official Languages Act 1963 (Internet reference).

⁸ David Graddol, “The Decline of the Native Speaker,” 159-160.

⁹ Tom McArthur, *Oxford Guide to World English*, 312.

¹⁰ See Census of India 1991, www.censusindia.net/cendat/language/lang1.html, and: Asunción Moreno et al., “Collection of SLR in the Asian-Pacific area,” 2004, <http://lands.let.kun.nl/literature/heuvel.2004.2.pdf> (SLR = Spoken Language Resources).

¹¹ Annika Hohenthal, “English in India” (Internet reference).

¹² B. Mallikarjun, “Fifty Years of Language Planning” (Internet reference).

India is, besides, one of the world's most prolific countries in book production, with vast numbers of titles appearing every year, in every major Indian language and in English. More titles are published in English than in any other language: official figures for 1995-1996 gave a total of 14883 books published in India, of which 5907 (39.68%) were in English.¹³ India is generally said to be the world's third largest producer of books in English, after the US and the UK. The capital's Darya Ganj quarter boasts a whole collection of streets playing host to the offices and warehouses of, in many cases, English-language publishers. A typical English-language bookshop will, while not neglecting the Dan Browns and J.K. Rowlings and offering a range of British and American books on import, stock mostly fiction and non-fiction published in India, written directly in English, by Indians and for Indians. Most of this material has traditionally not been exported outside the subcontinent, though of course today Indian titles may be purchased on-line from anywhere in the world. Apart from literature proper, more than worthy of attention is the very large number of endogenous non-fiction titles, academic or otherwise, in English. Indeed, such is the critical mass of academic titles alone in English that the serried ranks of those books constitute in themselves a clear argument for India needing to retain English: the labour of translating them all into Indian languages would be more than herculean. The press, for its part, flourishes in the whole range of languages: 1997 figures affirmed the existence of 5200 newspapers in India, with a total circulation, all languages combined, of 105 m.¹⁴ The leading English-language title, *The Times of India*, which dates from 1838 and has editions published from ten Indian cities, at that time proclaimed a circulation of 1.4 m,¹⁵ and has since rebranded itself as the world's biggest-circulation English-language substantive newspaper.¹⁶ The big English-language national dailies, with their regional editions, have the advantage of being read all over the country, albeit figures released in 1999 nonetheless revealed that in India as a whole "all the top ten dailies ... were Indian-language newspapers," with the largest circulation (9.45 million) accruing to the Tamil daily *Dina Thanthi*. However, the English-language press, which also includes glossy political weeklies such as *India Today* and less cerebral publications like *Stardust*, is still considered "the most resource-endowed sector within the Indian press,"¹⁷ and foreign visitors may be struck by the way good hotels may offer up to a dozen newspapers for perusal, all in English but all Indian.

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Since English is, willy-nilly, India's main linguistic conduit to a wider world that increasingly needs India, it will now be of interest, in the context of the present volume, to take a closer look at some aspects of the nature and functions of Indian English, and, subsequently, at the literary phenomenon known as Indian Writing in English (or IWE).

English has been spoken in the subcontinent since the first wave of British traders and adventurers arrived around 1600, but today's boom in English-language services for the world market may be seen as an unintended effect of Thomas Babington Macaulay's celebrated project of teaching English to Indians, which laid the bases for India's British-style education system, along lines still extant today. In a more than famous passage of his "Minute on Indian Education" of 1835 - by now all but quoted to death - Macaulay, in his capacity as member of the Supreme Council of India and President of the Committee of Public Instruction, set out a blueprint for the organised teaching of

¹³ Statistics from Government of India, Department of Education site (Internet reference). The figures correspond to the books received over the period by the National Library of Calcutta (Kolkata), a copyright library under the Delivery of Books Act.

¹⁴ N. Ram, "The Great Indian Media Bazaar," 253.

¹⁵ Ram, "The Great Indian Media Bazaar," 253.

¹⁶ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Times_of_India: "*The Times of India* ... has the highest circulation amongst English language daily broadsheets in the world."

¹⁷ Ram, "The Great Indian Media Bazaar," 255.

English to India's native elite, stating the goal of creating "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." That passage is traditionally quoted as epitomising an oppressive linguistic colonialism. It is, however, less often observed that Macaulay and his fellow "Anglicists" were promoting English not so much against Indian vernacular languages as, rather, against the rival "Orientalist" claims of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. Today, Chandra Bhan Prasad, an iconoclastic newspaper columnist of Dalit origin and tireless advocate for the rights of his community,¹⁸ has suggested an alternative, and more contextual reading:

Was Macaulay writing a secret book to "enslave" Indians mentally, and perpetuate ignorance among natives? ... While Orientalists sang the praises of India's past, Anglicists were confronting the backwardness and obscurantism of Hindu and Muslim cultures, their ethos, their rituals. They thought that the true god of Indians could only be modernity - the sciences, mechanics, European philosophy ... The full text of Macaulay's Minute shows him passionately arguing for modern scientific education for native Indians, and thus exposing the backwardness of indigenous systems.¹⁹

Prasad also reminds the modern reader that Macaulay goes on to suggest that the use of English will have a trickle-down, modernising effect on the vernacular languages (which the nineteenth-century writer misleadingly terms "dialects"): "To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population." Macaulay, further and interestingly, states that many educated Indians already have a highly sophisticated grasp of English, extending to the technical and literary registers and permitting the understanding of "even the more delicate graces of our most idiomatic writers": "There are (...) natives who are quite competent to discuss political or scientific questions with fluency and precision in the English language (...) Indeed it is unusual to find, even in the literary circles of the [European] continent, any foreigner who can express himself in English with so much facility and correctness as we find in many Hindoos."²⁰

Today, over half a century after the departure of the British, India uses English not less but more than it did under the Raj – but *voluntarily*, and *no longer precisely the same English*. The former colonial language has over time been appropriated and adapted to specifically Indian ends of nationwide diffusion and communication, with a free admixture of terms from autochthonous tongues: the interaction between English and Indian languages ran (and runs) parallel with other and multiple forms of interaction among the Indian languages themselves.

If we move on from Macaulay, we find that in an essay of 1854, "The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindu," the Bengali writer Michael Madhusudan Dutt made the remarkably anglophile statement: "I love the language of the Anglo-Saxon ... My imagination visions forth before me the language of the Anglo-Saxon in all its radiant beauty; and I feel silenced and abashed."²¹ By contrast, Dutt's fellow Bengali, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, in "A Popular Literature for Bengal," a paper read - albeit in English - to the Bengal Social Science Association in 1870, declared:

¹⁸ Since 1999 Chandra Bhan Prasad has been the author of a weekly column on dalit issues in Delhi's long-established newspaper *The Pioneer*. His columns are collected in *Dalit Diary: 1999-2003: Reflections on Apartheid in India* (see Works Cited).

¹⁹ Chandra Bhan Prasad, "The 'impure' milk of Lord Macaulay," *The Pioneer*, 3 December 2000; in *Dalit Diary*, 92-94 (93, 94).

²⁰ Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute on Indian Education" (Internet reference).

²¹ Michael Madhusudan Dutt, "The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindu," 6.

... a single great idea, communicated to the people of Bengal in their own language, circulated among them in the language that alone touches their hearts, vivifying and permeating the conceptions of all ranks, will work out grander results than all that our English speeches and preachings will ever be able to achieve.²²

The debate continues to rage, notably in literary circles and fuelled by both creative writers and critics, as to whether English is by now an “Indian language” or not. Raja Rao famously argued in 1938, in the preface to his celebrated novel *Kanthapura*, for using *English, but an English adapted to Indian conditions*:

English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up - like Sanskrit or Persian was before - but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can only write as Indians (...) Our method of expression ... will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American.²³

A.K. Ramanujan, in an essay of 1989 entitled “Is There An Indian Way of Thinking?”, argued, somewhat provocatively, that an analogy exists between English and Sanskrit:

When English is borrowed into (or imposed on) Indian contexts, it fits into the Sanskrit slot; it acquires many of the characteristics of Sanskrit, the older native father tongue, its pan-Indian elite character - as a medium of laws, science and administration, and its formulaic patterns; it becomes part of Indian multiple diglossia.²⁴

Strong doubts are, though, still expressed today over the validity of Indians writing in English, even by writers who have made their name through the medium of that language. We may note the terse remark of a character in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, a novel of 1980 by Shashi Deshpande: “After all, it isn’t our language.”²⁵ The dilemma is articulated by Vikram Chandra, in a passage (paradoxically written in eloquent English) in his novel of 1995, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*:

How in English can one say roses, doomed love, chaste passion, my father my mother, their love which never spoke, pride, honour, what a man can live for and what a woman should die for, how in English can one say the cows’ slow distant tinkle at sunset, the green weight of the trees after monsoon, dust of winnowing and women’s songs, elegant shadow of a minar creeping across white marble, the patient goodness of people met at wayside, the enfolding trust of aunts and uncles and cousins, winter bonfires and fresh chapattis, in English all this, the true shape and contour of a nation’s heart, all this is left unsaid and unspeakable and invisible.²⁶

Conversely, however, Salman Rushdie, in an essay of 1983, stressed the role of English in India as a bridging language between communities and regions, arguing:

²² Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, “A Popular Literature for Bengal,” 14.

²³ Raja Rao, *Kanthapura*, 5.

²⁴ A.K. Ramanujan, “Is There An Indian Way of Thinking?”, 437.

²⁵ Shashi Deshpande, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, 150.

²⁶ Vikram Chandra, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, 344. NB: the editions of novels cited in this foreword and in Sumana Bandyopadhyay’s book are not necessarily the same.

... the children of independent India seem not to think of English as being irredeemably tainted by its colonial provenance. They use it as an Indian language, as one of the tools they have to hand ... In South India ... the resentment of Hindi is far greater than of English ... English is an essential language in India, not only because of its technical vocabularies and the international communication which it makes possible, but also simply to permit two Indians to talk together in a tongue which neither party hates.²⁷

Later, in his preface to *The Vintage Book of Modern Indian Writing 1947-1997*,²⁸ Rushdie reaffirmed his position in the following terms:

English has become an Indian language. Its colonial origins mean that, like Urdu and unlike all other Indian languages, it has no regional base ... English has acquired, in the South, an air of *lingua franca* cultural neutrality. The new Silicon Valley-style boom in computer technology that is transforming the economies of Bangalore and Madras has made English, in those cities, an even more important language than before.²⁹

Rushdie thus implies an objectivist, non-communalist model of language use which refuses to make an automatic or emotional distinction between English on the one hand and India's longer-established languages on the other.

In a more descriptive vein, the scholar Jaydeep Sarangi, writing in 2005, identifies, using a sociolinguistic discourse, certain characteristics of Indian English thus:

In the linguistically and culturally pluralistic Indian subcontinent English is used as the Second Language (L2), which is acquired after one has learnt the First Language (L1). This co-existence ... results in interference from one's First Language in the Second Language. Through a large-scale socio-cultural interaction with regional contexts English becomes Indianised. A variety of English albeit non-native, lexically, morphologically, syntactically, stylistically and sociolinguistically different from the Standard British form has come to be known as *Indian Variety of English* ...³⁰ English, as a link language in India, carries the weight of different experiences in different contexts / surroundings. English is essentially malleable in nature, adapting its form to suit cultural contexts ...³¹ In the case of literary *Indian English*, *loan translations* or *word borrowings* from the regional languages of the subcontinent are embedded in the English text, as markers pointing out a cultural distinctiveness. The writers of Indian writings in English often refuse to gloss untranslated words / expressions to be true to their respective roots. *Lexical openness* is a trademark of Indian English canon.³²

One of the most important aspects of any claim for Indian English as a major variety of International Standard of English is, clearly, the literary dimension, and in our times, the Indian capacity, as identified early by Macaulay, for "facility and correctness" of expression in English manifests itself in the multiform literary phenomenon known as Indian Writing in English / IWE. It is certainly of major significance that Indians - like other postcolonial users of English - should see that language as a valid channel not merely for business or administrative transactions but also, and

²⁷ Salman Rushdie, "'Commonwealth literature' does not exist", 65-66.

²⁸ The anthology is co-edited by Rushdie and Elizabeth West; the preface is by Rushdie.

²⁹ Rushdie, "Preface" to Rushdie and West (eds.), *The Vintage Book of Modern Indian Writing 1947-1997*, xiii.

³⁰ Jaydeep Sarangi, *Indian Novels in English: A Sociolinguistic Study*, 17.

³¹ Sarangi, *Indian Novels in English*, 18.

³² Sarangi, *Indian Novels in English*, 19.

abundantly, for their own creative writing: indeed, one might even put forward the creative writing factor as a litmus test for distinguishing between second-language (e.g. Indian) and foreign-language (e.g. mainland European) users of English.

India's remains a divided literary community, with permanent tensions existing along two fault-lines - writers in English versus writers in Indian languages, and expatriate versus India-based writers. Those living writers with international reputations, whether living in India or not, tend overwhelmingly to be English-medium novelists: Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Amitav Ghosh or Rohinton Mistry; Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan or Manju Kapur.

IWE actually dates back to the 1830s, but even today it is no problem-free genre. Some of its inherent cruxes were perspicaciously outlined well before the current wave, in 1968 by the Calcutta-based British critic David McCutcheon, who, in his pioneering volume *Indian Writing in English*, asked a set of questions which are still pertinent today: "To what extent are Indian writers in English truly bilingual? ... In so far as the Indian writer in English does write for his fellow Indians and not the overseas market, what audience does he have in mind?"³³ He adds: "The fascination of Indian writing in English lies ... in the phenomenon ... of literary creativity in a language other than the surrounding mother tongue,"³⁴ and highlights the particular technical difficulties raised by dialogue in IWE works: "It would require very exceptional gifts and total bilingualism to express directly in English the lives of people who do not themselves speak English,"³⁵ while noting the very specific positioning of the Indian intellectual writing in English: "What the Indian poet or novelist may present ... is his own experience as a man educated to think and feel in Western categories confronting the radically different culture all around him."³⁶ McCutcheon supposes a surface-and-depth model: under the English-language surface lies a "radically different" Indian *mind*.

Bearing in mind McCutcheon's still-valid comments, we may define Indian Writing in English as original creative writing produced in English by Indian writers or writers of Indian origin, resident or expatriate, for whom English will normally be a second language but who have in all probability been educated, even within India, in English-medium schools and universities, and are likely to "think and feel" in English and to write it more fluently than any Indian language. This set of conditions in no way makes these writers any less Indian: in most cases they are representing the lives, conversations and thoughts of Indian characters who more often than not are presumed to be speaking and thinking not in English at all, but in a plurality of Indian languages.

IWE remains controversial in Indian critical circles, being regarded by some as "insufficiently Indian" or "inauthentic," notably when practised by expatriates. The position continues to exist that writers in Indian languages are somehow more "Indian" than those who write in English. Rushdie, Seth and the rest are accused by some of being out of touch, cutting themselves off from their roots, and failing to reflect the "authentic India." Thus, in a lecture of 1999, the critic Meenakshi Mukherjee said of the expatriate novelists: "these writers have to (...) exoticize the Indian landscape to signal their Indianness to the West, in the context of the Western market."³⁷ The expatriates, for their part, tend to defend their own practice by invoking an immanent Indian

³³ David McCutcheon, "Introduction" [1968] to *Indian Writing in English: A Collection of Critical Essays*, 22.

³⁴ McCutcheon, *Indian Writing in English*, 10.

³⁵ McCutcheon, *Indian Writing in English*, 15.

³⁶ McCutcheon, *Indian Writing in English*, 16.

³⁷ Meenakshi Mukherjee (1999), quoted in Vikram Chandra, "The Cult of Authenticity: India's cultural commissars worship 'Indianness' instead of art," (Internet reference).

tradition of hybridity. Thus, Vikram Chandra, who happened to be the main target of Mukherjee's strictures, counter-attacked in the *Boston Review*, rejecting such "ensorious rhetoric about correct Indianness" and recalling that "Indians have lived in many languages simultaneously for thousands of years."³⁸ The dividing-lines of language and residence are, in any case, not absolute: a poet like Jayanta Mahapatra writes in both English and Oriya, while the Bombay-based novelist Kiran Nagarkar has published novels written directly in both Marathi and English. Expatriate writers like Seth, Chandra or Ghosh all regularly spend time in India and research their novels there. Meanwhile, and if the advantages of writing in English for the international market are obvious, it is also the case that English is the only language in which an Indian novelist can be read over the entire country without having to be translated: the English-language reading public may be relatively small, but it is pan-Indian.

The language of IWE texts is recognisably the Indian variant of International Standard English, as will be shown in detail in the study that follows. IWE writers tend not to provide glossaries for the Indian lexical items that appear in their books, presuming that Indians will understand them and that other readers, Anglophone or not, will guess their general sense from context.³⁹ One may also note in IWE texts the interesting phenomenon of a certain linguistic indeterminacy as regards dialogue: it is often difficult for the reader to decide, or know, whether the characters are talking to each other in English or in Hindi or another Indian language, and in many cases one might conclude that only the author knows. Further, in the themes treated in their fiction IWE writers often display a keen awareness of the complexities of language issues. Anita Desai's *In Custody* (1984) is an elegy for the post-Independence decline of Urdu language and culture; Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) has as its protagonist and prime mover a professional translator-interpreter, conversant in six languages; Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2006) offers an English strewn with Indian words and expressions in a dozen or more Indian languages, plus Arabic and a hybrid "Bombay slang." Seth's epic *A Suitable Boy* (1993), a text which will be looked at in detail by Sumana Bandyopadhyay, interweaves characters who would in reality have spoken variously in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and English, and in numerous episodes highlights the tensions between those languages. Thus, in Seth's novel, a Bengali poet reads from his work to the local literary society; a woman in the audience asks him: "Why is it that you do not write in Bengali, your mother tongue?"; the poet's answer is that "his Bengali was not good enough for him to be able to express himself in the manner he could in English," and he adds that "even Sanskrit came to India from outside."⁴⁰ All in all, we may conclude that IWE as a genre is a fully engaged element in the rich and dynamic multilingual reality of today's India.

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The present study by Sumana Bandyopadhyay is a significant new contribution to the understanding of both Indian English and IWE in the complex and evolving context we have outlined above. The author brings together diverse strands of both linguistic and literary scholarship, laying particular stress on how Indian English has adapted to homegrown realities while remaining a major variant of a world language. The basic position that both underlies and emerges from this study is - in consonance with the general arguments we have advanced above - that there is an Indian standard English which is a variety of International Standard English.

This is a corpus-based analysis, and the various aspects of Indian English discussed are illustrated with examples drawn from some of the best-known living practitioners of IWE. The time-span chosen is essentially the period opened up in 1981 by Salman Rushdie's epoch-making novel

³⁸ Chandra, "The Cult of Authenticity."

³⁹ Translators of IWE into other Western languages do, however, often provide glossaries.

⁴⁰ Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, 1369.

Midnight's Children. Thus, the works of the preceding IWE generation, as famously represented by the triad of “old masters” Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, are not included in the corpus as such, although some reference is made to them across the study. The writers chosen, eight in number, for the corpus proper are (male): Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee and (female): Manju Kapur and Arundhati Roy. Of these, the two women writers and Chatterjee are India-resident and the rest are expatriate (although expatriation is best seen as a relative concept, if we remember that Seth and Chandra, for instance, are both authors of major novels - *A Suitable Boy* and *Sacred Games* - researched by them in great detail in India).

The author precedes her corpus analysis with an overview of the positions on Indian English of twelve leading linguistic authorities, of whom nine are Indian and the rest - reflecting the global interest in this variant of English - from outside India. A number of themes are recurrent: Indian English as a nativised, acculturated or transplanted phenomenon; the circumstance that Indians almost always learn their English from other Indians and may have little or no contact with native speakers; the influence of Indian languages, as manifested in syntactic choices, lexical calques, or code-mixing; and the relatively formal nature of Indian English arising from the tendency not to use English in more informal situations. Considerable stress is laid on the differences at all levels between Indian and native-speaker English (e.g. dropping or addition of articles; “would” for “will”; the all-purpose “isn’t it?”, etc) - to the point indeed where one author, S.K. Verma, is cited as seeing Indian English forms as examples not of “deviance” but of “creation.”

The corpus analysis offered in the light of the above theoretical survey takes in aspects of Indian English on the phonological, lexical, functional and structural levels. The phonological aspect is examined with the help of Rohinton Mistry’s novel *Such a Long Journey*: it is shown how Mistry’s text phonetically represents Indian phonological variants (e.g. “risvard seat” for “reserved seat”; “snack” pronounced as if “snake”). Fictional conversations excerpted from the same novel are also employed to exemplify Indian English intonation patterns. On the lexical level, the stress is on Indianisation of vocabulary (direct imports of words from Indian languages, hybrid compounds, loan-translations, etc). Of particular interest here are the author’s intelligent use of the still eminently valuable nineteenth-century work *Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo-Indian Dictionary*,⁴¹ and her comprehensive and carefully-worked glossary of Indian lexical items in Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* - a labour of love in itself from which many readers and scholars should benefit. The discussion of functional aspects prioritises such factors as the frequency of repetition in Indian English and creative coinage of expressions (with a useful glance at Arundhati Roy’s facility in this respect), in an analysis drawing on sociolinguistics and pragmatics. In addition, the incidence of the cognitive group” of verbs - such as “know,” “discover,” “recognise” - is examined on the basis of a number of novels from the corpus, with Ghosh to the fore (with additional examples, for the sake of comparison, from two recent British novels): the author argues from this evidence in favour of the status of Indian English as a variant of International Standard English.

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Sumana Bandyopadhyay concludes her study by stressing, with the above multifarious examples behind her, the vital and dynamic Indianness of today’s Indian English as handled by IWE writers. Moving the debate on to a broader theoretical plane, she evokes Rushdie’s notion of “chutneyfication,” as well as Franz Fanon’s concept of the “fighting phase” of the native intellectual. The question readers of this book may wish to ask themselves might well be: where are

⁴¹ Compiled by Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell in 1886 (see Works Cited).

Indian English and IWE now heading? - this of course in the new and changed context of India's rise to global influence in the economic, technological and cultural spheres. If there is a new "fighting phase" for Indian English and its literary practitioners, how is the combat going to manifest itself?

IWE in some of its more recent productions - as in Anita Desai's *The Zigzag Way* (2004) with its Mexican location, Seth's non-fiction work *Two Lives* (2005) spanning India, Germany and the UK, or Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), which articulates globalisation's reach by encompassing Kashmir, France and the USA - now seems to be operating at an increasingly cosmopolitan level, with "Indianness" as but one of its multiple signifieds (or even absent altogether), and yet at the same time and given its writers' never-denied origins, embodying a distinctive Indian perspective on today's global realities. Meanwhile, a work like Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004), from a rather different perspective, has explored the competing claims of the global and the local and attempted some kind of resolution. Precisely how Indian English (as well as IWE) will position itself in a new "fighting phase" around the multiple centres of the evolving world economy remains a future wide open for active shaping by those who speak and write it. Here, Sumana Bandyopadhyay's study, wide-ranging, exploratory and suitably detailed, deserves to be hailed by its readers as part of the very necessary process of opening up new paths for research in a linguistic and cultural area which will increasingly be of concern to scholars in the humanities, both in India and in the new globalised universe as a whole.

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