



# A Glance at the Status of English Language in India and the Impressions of Indian languages on English

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## Abstract

English language is spoken all over the world, it is the third largest spoken language in the world and English language plays a key role in the life of everyone directly or indirectly. Every individual needs a language to communicate with others in society. Without it it is highly impossible to communicate with each other among the people in the society. It is helpful for social interaction, all social purposes, business, industry, administration, and education etc. India is a very large country with rich heritage, multicultural, multilingual, and pluralistic contexts. English is most important medium of communication for the people of India and around the world.

English is one of the most popular and important link languages in the world. It is widely spoken global language and it has been enriched by languages from all over the world since the age of colonialism of British rule. English has a long history of usage in India, predating the British colonial power and now firmly established as a link language across the length and breadth of the country. English is also a global or international language; it is essential for professional development and to get very good employment opportunities in the present competitive world.

Being an Indian every one of us can feel proud for the influence of other Indian languages on English language. However, English language has great quality of imbibing the words from different languages makes it a very great and unique language. English language has been absorbing words from many languages like Greek, Latin, French, German, Arabic, Sanskrit etc. From Indian languages also, there are many words are being adopted into English language directly. Indian Constitution recognizes the English Language as a co-official language along with Hindi, the national language. But even after 75 years, English is still retained with a status of the 'subsidiary' official language. English has an interesting history of incorporating words from other languages. English language has derived many words from Greek, Latin, French, and also from Indian languages. **KEY Words:** English Language, communication, Indian languages, skills and Indian words in English.

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**Live as if you were to die tomorrow.  
Learn as if you were to live forever.  
-Mahatma Gandhi**

Every individual wants to be happy in his / her life, it is very great idea but remember that it's possible only for the people those who learn a new language or a new skill will be always happier and more comfortable than the people those who neglect/ avoid to learn something new will suffer a lot. Here, we have to know that enjoying every movement of life depends upon the quality learning of people and updating their skills will decide the future happiness of people. So always try to enhance your language skills as well as any other new skills it makes every person happy and comfortable.

**You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream-C.S.Lewis**

Many people say it is easier to learn a language when you are young but there are advantages to learning a language when you are older. In the present world of science and technology people are trying to improve their English language skills because it is international language and it opens a window to the new skills or opportunities. English language is spoken all over the world, it is the third largest spoken language in the world. and English language plays a key role in the life of everyone directly or indirectly. Every individual needs a language to communicate with others in society. Language is a basic need for people like clothes, food and shelter. Language is useful to all the people for purpose of communication. Without it it's highly impossible to communicate with each other among people in the society. It is helpful for social interaction, for all social purposes, for business and industry, for administration, for education etc. India is a very large country with rich heritage, multicultural, multilingual, and pluralistic contexts.

## **Need and importance of English in Past & Present:**

Social needs can be best fulfilled when they are allowed to work through their mother tongue. But in the present world of competition English language is necessary for the development people in any field. Most of the international transactions of recent times were concluded in English. English language has contributed significantly in bringing people and their culture closer. The benefits of learning English can be seen in the economic, social and political life of the people of the country. Once our father of nation Gandhiji also appreciated the importance of a foreign language especially English:

He says: "I don't want my house to be walled in all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. I would have our young men and women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world languages as they like and expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world" -**Mahatma Gandhi**

The above quote tells that though Mahatma Gandhiji was totally against English education pattern in India, but he appreciated all the foreign languages, especially English.

English is one of the most popular and important link languages in the world. It is widely spoken global language and it has been enriched by languages from all over the world since the age of colonialism of British rule. English has a long history of usage in India, predating the British colonial power and now firmly established as a link language across the length and breadth of the country also. The influence of other Indian languages on English is not always widely known and yet, there are many words are adopted from different Indian languages into English language directly. However, many languages and dialects are spoken across the Indian sub-continent. India is an extremely diverse subcontinent with a rich emblaze of languages that run into the hundreds. Thus, the states were formed on linguistic lines, each of the 28 states has its native language(s) as the official language(s). India has 22 official languages, 150 major languages and about 1652 recorded languages and dialects. When two cultures are exposed to each other over an extended time, their languages begin to influence each other and words from one language are assimilated into the other. the assimilation could take place with the same pronunciation as the donor language or a distortion depending on the pronunciation limits of the recipient language.

English has a status of an associate official language in India, but it is the most important language in India. Today, the compulsions of learning English is no longer merely political point but it helps us to develop scientific and technological knowledge. Giving the details of the wider uses of English all over the world, according to C. Paul, Vergheses:

"of all languages in the world today English deserves to be regarded as a world language. It is the world's most widely spoken language. It is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations. One person out of every four on earth can be reached through 66 English...In India, English continues to be the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities, and is also the language of administration"- **C. Paul, Vergheses**

Thus, it becomes clear that English, the language imposed during British Raj has deeply rooted in India, and by now has almost become part and parcel of our day-to-day life. The importance of English has been fully realized by various education commissions appointed by the government of India. The University Education Commission headed by S. Radhakrishnan in 1950-51 reported:

“...the English language has been one of the potent factors in the development of unity in the country. In fact, the concept of nationality and the sentiment of nationalism are largely the gift of English language and literature to India”.

The demand for English emerges from many factors, as recognized by the Position Paper on the Teaching of English produced by NCERT in connection with the National Curriculum Framework- 2005 as:

“English in India today is a symbol of peoples aspirations for quality in education and fuller participation in national and international life... The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of political response to peoples’ aspirations, rendering almost irrelevant academic debate on the merits of a very early introduction.” (NCERT (2006), National Focus Group Position Paper on Teaching of English, New Delhi :NCERT, P.1)

From the statement cited above it becomes evident that today peoples’ aspiration about the knowledge of English language is increasing day-by-day in India. A working knowledge of English, as it is believed, will be a valuable asset for all students and reasonable proficiency in the language will be necessary for those who proceed to the university. That’s why most of the states are interested to introduce English language instruction at the early levels of the school education. the English language is a powerful force not just for economics, business, travel and trade, but mutual respect and development of nations. English is a common language for communication among people in the world. English language provides very good opportunities for learners to develop them in different fields in many aspects. English language is the language instruction in all the domines across the world. The scenario is such that one must enhance his/her skills in English to get a best/ better placement. Basic knowledge in subjects no more criteria for getting a job in present competitive job market. Due to globalization, one must surely develop proficiency in English language for effective communication at work place/ in day-to-day life.

### **The influence of Indian languages on English:**

Being an Indian every one of us can feel proud for the influence of other Indian languages on the English language. Every person knows that English is widely spoken and the most used language in multiple fields in the world. However, English language has great quality of imbibing the words from different languages makes it very great and unique. English language has been absorbing words from many languages like Greek, Latin, French, German, Arabic, Sanskrit etc. From Indian languages also there are many words are adopted into English language directly. Indian Constitution recognizes the English Language as a co-official language along with Hindi, the national language. But even after 75 years, English is still retained with a status of the ‘subsidiary’ official language. English has an interesting history of incorporating words from other languages. English language has derived many words from Greek, Latin, French, and also from Indian languages. So far, 900 words from Indian origins have been added to the Oxford English Dictionary. For example:

- airdash, cinema hall, do the needful, English-knowing, matrimonial, press person, redressal, upgradation, slumdog
- avatar, tiffin, bungalow, cheetah, curry, chutney, guru, karma, jungle, juggernaut, khaki, bazaar, chilly, shampoo, bangle, cot, loot, verandah, yoga
- Recent O.E.D. additions: abba, anna, accha, puri, gulab jamun, vada, natak, chup, nivas, sevak, Surya Namaskar, masala, maha, devi, dadagiri, dum, ghee etc.

### **Some Facts about languages in India:**

Number of 'scheduled' languages in India (according to the eighth schedule of the Constitution). This gives them a special status and means that the government is obliged to support their development. These 22 languages are Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. English is a 'co-official' language. All 22 scheduled languages appear on Indian bank notes.

### **How words enter into a language:**

Background information Etymology is the study of where words come from, and how their meanings have changed throughout history. One of the most common ways in which words enter a language is through a process known as borrowing, where one language simply absorbs words from other languages. Unlike in some languages, such as French, English has very low barriers to entry, meaning that there is no formal process for words to be adopted into a language. India's fascinating cultural history marked by Mughal empires, Portuguese and English colonialists, and more have shaped a large part of what this country is today, but what few people realize is that India has influenced these rulers right back. Focusing solely on the British Raj, our colonial history is part of our reflection today, and the relationship between Britain and India is visible today in the English language spoken across the world. From words with an apparent Indian origin, such as yoga, to ones with a more inconspicuous Hindustani source, such as candy, several common terms of this language have evolved from Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit, standing as yet another example in time of the cultural and linguistic intermingling of this melting pot of a world. As the poet Daljit Nagra observed, "It's a madly unruly and idiosyncratic work. Not so much an orderly dictionary as a passionate memoir of colonial India. Rather like an eccentric Englishman in glossary form." Referring to cultural appropriation and linguistic overlaps, this dictionary is one of high acclaim, as well as a historical record to be cherished. Keeping up the tradition, we decided to follow the trend of English words influenced by Hindustani languages and crafted a short list of our own. Although at first words often enter a language in their original form, generally speaking they change, and conform to the norms of the language which is absorbing them. Take the word pyjamas, for example. The original Persian/Urdu word was pay-jama, which went through a whole range of variations (including pai jamahs, piejamahs, peijammahs and many others) before the current English spelling of pyjamas was settled upon (but note that the standard American English spelling is pajamas).



## Popular Indian Words in English:

1. **Loot** is recorded as being an English word in 1788. 'Loot' or 'looting' refers to goods (especially valuable goods) which are taken from an enemy or city in times of war. The word derives from the **Hindi lūt**, which itself appears to come from either the Sanskrit *lōtra* or *lōpra*, meaning 'booty', or *lunt*, meaning 'to rob'. In wider usage, it is used in slang form as a synonym for money.

2. The English word **curry** derives from the Tamil *kari*, a sauce commonly eaten with rice. Its modern usage refers more widely to the preparation of meat, fish, fruit or vegetables cooked with spices which is eaten as a meal. The word also seems to have a relationship with the Kannadan *karil*.

3. **Pukka**, a borrowing from Punjabi, has passed through many spelling variations over time, including *pucka*, *puckah*, *pucker*, *pucca* and *pukkah*. Its original meaning to describe something which was cooked, mature, substantial or permanent, saw it commonly used in the field of weights, measures and money. Over time, this meaning expanded to refer to things which were certain, reliable, genuine, correct or bona fide.

### 4. Shampoo from *Champo* [Hindi]

*Champo*, which means to squeeze, knead or massage, acts as the basis of the hair product shampoo's name, which first emerged in the English language in the 18th century.

5. **Bandana** has a strong linguistic relationship with the word **bandhnū**, meaning 'a mode of dyeing in which the cloth is tied in different places, to prevent the parts from receiving the dye.' Its Sanskrit roots lie in **badhnati**, meaning 'binds'. Its modern English meaning does not refer to the process but rather the object created, namely a richly coloured silk or cotton handkerchief.

6. **Doolally** is a negative word used to describe an unbalanced state of mind. Its origins are in reference to Deolali, a large military camp close to Mumbai. British soldiers who had finished their terms of service would wait in the large barracks for their transport home. This often took much longer than anticipated, leading to intense boredom. As a result, some of the camp inhabitants went 'Doolally'.

### 7. Candy ( *Sucre Candi* [French] < *Qandi* [Persian] < *Khanda* [Sanskrit])

Sweet-enthusiasts munching down on crystallised sugar might never know that that candy has travelled a long way, in terms of the roots of its origin. Starting from the Sanskrit *khanda*, another word for sugar, it journeyed to Persia where it became *qandi*, meaning cane sugar. Making its way to France, old French refers to sugar candy as *sucre candi*, which then became candy in English.

### 8. **Guru** [English from Guru Sanskrit]

Used to refer to intellectual guides or mentors, the word *guru* embarked upon the English language in the 17th century. While the original Sanskrit term means venerable, it was traditionally used specifically for Hindu or Sikh spiritual guides, even though its colloquial use now is more all-encompassing.

## 9. Veranda from Varanda [Hindi, Portuguese]

Featuring in both Portuguese and Hindi as a sheltered gallery or terrace attached to a house, the word *varanda* stands as the source of the term veranda, first seen in the English language in the 18th century.

## 10 Avatar from Avatarana [Sanskrit]

Tracing the roots of the word Avatar, which first appeared in English way back in the 18th century, brought us to the Sanskrit word *avatarana* meaning descent. While most urban screen-obsessed youngsters might associate the blockbuster film, or one's computer character in a visual game, with this word, in Hinduism it's traditionally used to describe a manifestation or alternate form of a God.

## 11. Cot from Khat [Hindi] from Khatva [Sanskrit]

Emerging in the English language in the 17th century, the word cot refers to a tiny bed meant for a child, and draws inspiration from the Hindi word khat meaning bedstead or hammock, initially derived from Sanskrit's *khatva*.

## 12. Khaki [English from Khaki Urdu] from Khak [Persian]

First introduced in uniforms of British cavalry in India, as well as adopted as camouflage fabric in the Boer Wars, khaki is a well-known cloth around the world. Deriving its name from the Urdu word khaki meaning dust-coloured cloth, it originally comes from *khak*, meaning dust in Persian.

## 13. Mongoose from Mangus [Marathi]

The term used to describe the carnivorous animal known for its ability to kill venomous snakes can be traced back to *mangus*, the Marathi word for the same creature.

## 14. Nirvana [English] from Nirvana [Sanskrit]

From one of the world's most sensational bands to the attainment of inner peace and realisation or perfect bliss, the word nirvana is engrained in the English language since the 1890s, with its roots in the Sanskrit word nirvana meaning disappearance (of the individual soul into the universal).

## 15. Yoga [English from Yoga Sanskrit]

All yoga-enthusiasts looking for zen calmness and flexibility should note, the name of your passion originally means yoking or union in Sanskrit, highlighting the Hindu philosophy of reunion with the divine.

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