语言学7990642

INDIAN WORDS IN ENGLISH

A Study in Indo-British
Cultural and Linguistic Relations

G. SUBBA RAO

1313.5
E701 00.5.40

INDIAN WORDS IN ENGLISH

A STUDY IN
INDO-BRITISH CULTURAL AND
LINGUISTIC RELATIONS

BY

G. SUBBA RAO

南大学 资料室

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

Oxford University Press, Ely House, London W.1

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
CAPE TOWN SALISBURY IBADAN NAIROBI LUSAKA ADDIS ABABA
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI LAHORE DACCA
KUALA LUMPUR SINGAPORE HONG KONG TOKYO

FIRST PUBLISHED 1954
REPRINTED LITHOGRAPHICALLY IN GREAT BRITAIN
FROM CORRECTED SHEETS OF THE FIRST EDITION
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD
BY VIVIAN RIDLER
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY
1969

INDIAN WORDS IN ENGLISH

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS comprehensive though concise study of the words from India which have from time to time been made familiar or adopted in English is of interest and value in three respects. It is the work of one who was well fitted for the task by natural acquaintance with some of the numerous languages of India, and by having learned others by contact with speakers of them or by study. It brings together the history of the British in India and the result of this in enriching their own language during a period of three centuries and a half. It gives in detail the extent to which the words thus made familiar have played their part in English literature from the seventeenth century down to the present time.

The following particulars relating to G. Subba Rao, the author of this work, have been kindly supplied by his brother, who is a Lecturer in Physics in the Hindu College in Masulipatam. He was born in July 1919 at Berhampur in the Ganjam District (then part of the Madras Presidency). The spoken language there is Oriya, but later on he prosecuted his studies at Masulipatam, where the language in common use is Telugu, which was also the tongue of his mother. He passed the Intermediate Examination of the Andhra University in the First Class in 1936, and took his B.A. there with distinction in 1938. An M.A. in English Language and Literature followed at the University of Madras in 1941, and he served as Lecturer in English in the Maharaja's college, Vizianagram, during 1943–5. This combination of historical and linguistic studies was also carried on by him as a research scholar at the University of Madras, and there in 1948 earned for him the degree of M.Litt. Early in 1949, having by that time become Reader in English at Andhra

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.erton

University in Waltair, he sent his dissertation, considerably enlarged, to Oxford, where it was submitted to the Clarendon Press and favourably received. Several suggestions for improving it by rearrangements and omissions were readily accepted, but the revision which this entailed was unavoidably delayed for some time, and it was not until 1953 that it was finally ready for the press. Unfortunately, before the printing had begun, his sudden death in the end of June prevented him from seeing in print the work he had successfully completed. As now printed, only a few minor alterations have been made in it, such as he would himself have been likely to make or approve of.

The chapters which will most naturally be interesting to many readers are the first, second, third, and seventh, the titles of which clearly indicate the various aspects under which the subject calls for special treatment. The last of them also displays a knowledge of English and its literature from the seventeenth century onwards which would do credit to many who have not had to learn English as a foreign tongue, while it is also a good example of how much English writers have profited by the study of other languages.

Some of the salient features in the adoption of Indian words which are here brought out are the variations in the numbers at different periods, such as the decline in the eighteenth century compared with the seventeenth and nineteenth and the introduction of a new element and incentive by the study of Sanskrit. Another feature, not made prominent in any of the chapters, is the predominance of words from Hindi and Urdu over those from the southern languages, although some of them were early adoptions through Portuguese and are specially mentioned in pages 11 and 12.

Considering the great variety of the languages and dialects spoken in India and the difficult nature of most of them in respect of phonology and grammar, it is remarkable that

English speakers were able to transfer so many words from them into their own language in varying degrees of correctness, usually improving in the course of time. That this was something that could be acquired without unusual effort is shown by the number of words which the Icelander Jón Ólafsson picked up by ear during a few years spent in southern India in the third decade of the seventeenth century, and remembered so well that he was able to write them down in 1660. That the knowledge was limited to the simplest form of the word, and did not include the grammar, was natural and is well exemplified by the Urdu imperative being taken over to serve as the infinitive.

It is obvious that the recent changes in the administration of India, and the separation of Pakistan, may have some effect in lessening the number of Indian words that may be retained, or hereafter adopted, in English. It is also possible that the penetration of English into the Indian languages may be lessened by the ultimate adoption of Hindi as the recognized language of India. At present however, the estimate that Spoken Telugu contains at least 3,000 English words, and the adoption of English for the definitions and other matter in the large dictionary of Sinhalese now in preparation does not suggest any immediate change over to another language in either India or Ceylon.

However this may be, it is well that this survey of the influence of India upon English has been made just at this time of transition, so that thereby a good basis has been provided for later comparisons between the past and the future.

W. A. CRAIGIE

PREFACE

THE aim of this study is to inquire into the Indian element found in the English language as a result of the contacts between Great Britain and India from 1600 to the present time. It attempts to explain more fully and clearly than has been done heretofore how and why Indian words were taken into English and what happened to them in the new milieu. The scope of this survey is thus limited to the adoption of actual words, the new uses to which English material has been put under Indian influence being, as a rule, left out. Unlike the other foreign elements in English, the Indian element has not so far been treated chronologically and systematically. Writers on English vocabulary make, if at all, but a passing mention of it and the short introductions to such nineteenth-century glossaries as Yule and Burnell's *Hobson-Jobson* and Wilson's *Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms of British India* do not pretend to be comprehensive. My indebtedness to these, to the great *Oxford English Dictionary*, and to a number of philological, literary, and other works will be evident from the following pages. The *OED* deserves special mention, as it is the authority for most of the etymological and semantic material on which my study is based.

G. S. R.

ABBREVIATIONS

abbr.	abbreviation, abbreviated.
ad.	adaptation of.
adj.	adjective.
Ar.	Arabic.
attrib.	attributive, attributively.
Beng.	Bengali.
Can.	Canarese.
COD	*Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
comb.	combination, combined, combining.
corr.	corruption, corrupted.
DAE	*Dictionary of American English*.
ed.	edited by, edition.
EF	*The English Factories in India 1618–1669*, ed. William Foster; *1670–1677*, ed. Charles Fawcett.
esp.	especially.
fig.	figurative, figuratively.
Fr.	French.
fr.	from.
Guj.	Gujarati.
H.	Hindi, Hindustani.
HJ	*Hobson-Jobson* by Col. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, second edition by William Crooke.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*.
Mal.	Malayalam.
Mar.	Marathi.
MEU	*Modern English Usage*.
naut.	nautical.
obs.	obsolete.
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*.
OED Sup.	*Oxford English Dictionary* (*Supplement*).
orig.	original, originally.
Pers.	Persian.
Pg.	Portuguese.
P.M.L.A.	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.
pl.	plural.
sg.	singular.
Skr.	Sanskrit.
SM	*The Diaries of Streynsham Master* (The Indian Record Series).
SOED	*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

S.P.E.	Society for Pure English.
spec.	specially.
St. Dict.	*Stanford Dictionary of Anglicised Words and Phrases*, ed. by C. A. M. Fennell.
Tam.	Tamil.
Tel.	Telugu.
Terry	Edward Terry (*Early Travels*, &c.).
tr.	translated.
transf.	in transferred sense.
ult.	ultimately (derived from).
Whittington	Nicholas Whittington (*Early Travels*, &c.).

> sign used for 'derived from'.

CONTENTS

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.erton

I

THE EXTENT OF INDIAN INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY

> During the centuries that the British and Indians have known one another, the British mode of life, customs, speech and thought have been profoundly influenced by those of India—more profoundly than has often been realized.
>
> LORD MOUNTBATTEN, 14 *August* 1947[1]

1. SINCE the beginning of direct and uninterrupted intercourse between England and India[2] in 1600, with the chartering of the East India Company, there has been a continuous and considerable influx of Indian words into English. 'I once took the trouble', said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 'to collect the Hindustani words in the English language. I could not complete the task, but I was myself surprised to find such a number of Hindustani words current in the English language.'[3] Besides Hindustani, many other languages of India are well represented in the English dictionary.

2. Most writers on English vocabulary realize the amplitude of the Indian element in it; but none, with the solitary exception of Dr. Mary S. Serjeantson, has attempted to evaluate its extent. Dr. Serjeantson's *History of Foreign Words*

[1] *Speeches by the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, 1947–48* (New Delhi, 1949), p. 29.

[2] 'India' throughout this study stands for 'the whole sub-continent of India and Pakistan'.

[3] 'Address to the Local Self-Government Ministers' Conference', *The Hindu* (Madras), 7 Aug. 1948.

in English[1] is admittedly a general and incomplete survey. Yet in her short chronological treatment (chapter x) she tries to establish the number of Indian words in English with a finality that is misleading. Her computation shows in the aggregate 188 words—a number which would make one wonder whether writers like Professor Weekley are, after all, right in holding that the Indian contribution to English is 'really considerable'.[2] She does not include even all the words admitted into the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Thus, areca, jaggery, lacquer, brahman, and mogul, for instance, are missing from her list. The word-counts of Dr. Serjeantson are, therefore, clearly undependable, although, otherwise, her short account of the Indian element in English is a good chronological introduction to the subject.

3. That the Indian element in English is really considerable is amply borne out by the great *Oxford English Dictionary*. It accords recognition to no less than 900 main words of Indian origin (listed in the Appendix to this book) and many thousands of derivatives from these words.

4. These, however, constitute only a small fraction of the foreign contribution to the English language. Compared also with the vast army of English words admitted into Indian languages, their number is small. Spoken Telugu, for instance, is estimated to contain at least 3,000 English words.

5. There are many reasons for the comparative meagreness of the Indian contribution to English. The English, for one thing, were always a very small minority in India, as 'England had never seriously considered India as a *colonie de peuplement*'.[3] The climate of the country prevented its ever being a 'white man's country'. Englishmen who spent some time in India and then returned home carrying accounts of

[1] London, 1935.
[2] Ernest Weekley, *Something about Words* (London, 1935).
[3] G. T. Garratt, *The Legacy of India* (Oxford, 1937), p. 395.

strange customs, institutions, or articles of trade, could not exert any profound influence on the language of their own country.

6. The reasons for the adoption of Indian words into English have been varied. Many of them denote objects and actions for which English names cannot easily be found and thus meet a real need. Besides these, however, there are a great many that have been chosen merely for their picturesqueness and local colour. Thus, a large number of words like calico and tussore, banian and pyjamas, suttee and juggernaut, bandicoot and mongoose, jack and mango had of necessity to be borrowed. Further, as H. H. Wilson rightly says: '*Ryot* and *Ryotwar*, for instance, suggest more precise and positive notions in connexion with the subject of the land revenue in the south of India, than would be conveyed by cultivator, or peasant, or agriculturist, or by an agreement for rent or revenue with the individual members of the agricultural classes.'[1] But in addition to these a large number of words for which good English equivalents could have been found were sometimes employed. Thus *midde* (from Telugu) which means only 'an upper-storied house' and *avira* (widow) in the 'barbarously transmuted form' *obeera* were used in English. The *OED* does not record these words, and they must be reckoned among the numerous casualties in the vast army of 26,000 words found in Wilson's *Glossary*.

7. Pedantic affectation of familiarity with the native languages, as well as the habit already acquired of borrowing foreign words freely, contributed to a certain extent in the beginning to the introduction of a large number of Indian words of the above type into English. This process would have continued and many more words might have gradually gained entrance into English, but for a certain check that

[1] H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms of British India* (Calcutta, 1940), p. i.

took place. The words naturally caused much difficulty to the people in England, and the authorities of the East India Company passed orders directing their servants to use English words wherever possible, and to have recourse to the native word only when it could not be avoided. 'Wee have forbidden the severall Factoryes from wrighting words in this languadge and refrayned it ourselves, though in bookes of coppies we feare there are many which by wante of tyme for perusall we cannot rectifie or expresse.'[1] But the natural tendency to borrow could not be completely checked by official command. Here is a good specimen of the jargon that continued to be employed by the factors, despite the 'forbidding':

Robert Young and John Willoughby at Lahore to the President and Council at Surat, October 26, 1624:

Their last was of the 15th present, with a copy of the King's 'furmand' [*farmān*: command]. Since then they have procured the dispatch of two 'haddies' [*ahadī*: a royal messenger], who are ordered to carry to them the royal farmān, in company of John Willoughby, 'Cojah [Khwāja Abūl Hasan] havinge givne them his parwanna [*parwāna*: a written order] to see all thinges restoored unto you and re-established againe in youre formar trad and priviolidges'. The messengers should therefore be acquainted with all moneys unjustly taken from them, either by Safī Khān, 'Chuckedares [*chaukīdār*: here, a customs-guard] or radarries' [*rāhdār*: a road-guard]. . . .

If any money be forced from them before the arrival of the *ahadīs*, the latter should be sent with the *farmān* to redemand it. Should this be denied, Young should be furnished with the particulars 'under the duscoote [*daskat*: handwriting] and choope [*chhap*: a seal-impression] of the haddies', when he will 'make eares [*arz*: a petition] to Cojah' for redress. . . .

Further on in this letter (over a page in length) occur 'setonbarratt' [*sitān-barāt*: an order to take], 'dusturies' [*dastūrī*:

[1] *Hobson-Jobson*, p. ii.

an agent's commission], *shash* [a turban cloth], 'freaded' [a verb made out of the noun *faryād*: a cry for help or redress], 'dwa' [*duā*: a prayer or good wishes], and 'delassa' [*dilāsā*: encouragement].[1]

Some 150 years later the language of the Company's records was still so excessively charged with Indian words that it provoked the following comment by Burke:

This language is indeed of necessary use in the executive department of the company's affairs; but it is not necessary to Parliament. A language so foreign from all the ideas and habits of the far greater part of the members of the House, has a tendency to disgust them with all sorts of inquiry concerning this subject. They are fatigued into such a despair of ever obtaining a competent knowledge of the transactions in India, that they are easily persuaded to remand them . . . to obscurity.[2]

An obscure versifier of the same period voiced a more general complaint:

In common usage here a *chit*
Serves for our business or our wit.
Bankshal's a place to lodge our ropes,
And Mango orchards all are *Topes*.
Godown usurps the ware-house place,
Compound denotes each walled space.
To *Dufterkhanna*, *Ottor*, *Tanks*,
The English language owes no thanks;
Since Office, Essence, Fish-pond shew
We need not words so harsh and new.
Much more I could such words expose
But *Ghauts* and *Dawks* the list shall close;
Which in plain English is no more
Than Wharf and Post expressed before.[3]

[1] William Foster, *The English Factories in India, 1624–1629*, p. 32.

[2] Edmund Burke, 'Ninth report from the select committee of the House of Commons appointed to take into consideration the state of the administration of justice in the Provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, 25th June, 1783', *Works*, vol. iv.

[3] *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 243.

8. There is another factor which inhibited the flow of Indian words into literary English. By the seventeenth century the English language had become 'self-conscious', possessing a rich vocabulary. The English of this period, it must be remembered, was the language of Shakespeare. No foreign language could have any chance thereafter of exercising an influence comparable with that of Latin, or French. Englishmen began to take a just pride in their language. The poet Daniel asks:

> And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
> The treasures of our tongue? To what strange shores
> This gain of our best glory shall be sent
> T'enrich unknowing nations with our stores?[1]

9. The prophecy of the poet has come true. The languages of 'unknowing nations' are enriched with English words. But, on the other side, English too has not failed to receive an impress from them. More than three centuries of unbroken and growing Indo-British contacts could not but leave a pronounced mark on the English vocabulary and it is left in possession of a considerable number of Indian words, which have a singular cultural, philological, and literary interest.

[1] Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus, or a General Defence of Learning* (1599).

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.erton