

RETURN OF THE NATIVE: HINDI IN BRITISH ENGLISH

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KISS MY CHUDDIES! (WELCOME TO THE QUEEN'S HINGLISH)

The Observer, April 2004

Asian 'yoof-speak' is spicing up English, with Hindi words such as 'gora' and slang such as 'innit' soon to enter the dictionary and experts predicting an explosive impact of the language used by second-generation immigrants . . .

HINGLISH MAKES ITS DEBUT IN ENGLISH DICTIONARY

The Independent, June 2005

For centuries French and Latin have been dominant influences on the English language. Now, though, the popularity of mainstream BBC TV programmes such as *The Kumars at Number 42* and *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee* has brought with it a new phenomenon—the introduction of Hinglish . . .

IT'S HINGLISH, INNIT?

BBC News Magazine, November 2006

Hinglish—a hybrid of English and South Asian languages, used both in Asia and the UK—now has its own dictionary. Is it really a pucca way to speak? . . .

The substantial South Asian presence in Britain since the mid-twentieth century has led to a remarkable rise in the visibility of Hindi mixing in British English. In November 2007, Prince Charles noted in a speech that among the 'splendidly unstoppable' South Asian contributions in Britain, '*chuddies*

seem to have crept into the English language, if that is the correct way to put it'.¹ While delicately distancing the Queen's English from such usage through strategic ineptitude, his remark acknowledges a rich and tangled history of Hindi-English mixing in British English.

But contemporary British Asian Hinglish is only the latest phase of Hindi infiltration into British English. Since at least the seventeenth century, Indian words have populated British English, either travelling back to England in the mouths of returning Englishmen or staying within India, in the form of an inexpert—often derisive—variety employed by British colonists in superficial exchanges with local Indians. The small selection of British English uses of Hindi explored here—from early colonial encounters to sophisticated contemporary hybridizations—illustrates why speakers mix codes at all, and how linguistic form and social status are fundamentally co-constitutive.

Uniting these diverse language practices under such intractably broad terms as 'mixed code' or 'hybrid identity' runs the risk of obscuring important differences in the forms and functions of language mixing. Instead, I explore the particular (often very distinct) interactional stances that speakers achieve by mixing languages in a given situation. These fleeting acts can, in turn, serve to index broader social affiliations or contestations. Such acts afford their users strategic advantages only because the use of a word or a language *in a specific discourse context* can accrue specific and recognizable rights, ownership, or authenticity to the speaker, whether ratified in the interaction or not. Particularly in colonial and postcolonial language-mixing, this can equip a speaker with powerful tools to impose or subvert structures of nativeness and authority.

The term 'native' itself offers a useful starting point to understand the conflicting power dynamics of British Hinglish, depending on the user. The deictic ambiguity, particularly in colonial usage, of the word 'native'—signalling either entitlement or bondage—is evident in this selection of Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definitions (many now obsolete):

NATIVE, *n.*

- i. A person born in bondage; a person born to servants, tenants, etc., and inheriting their status . . .
- ii. Austr., N.Z.: A white person born in Australia or New Zealand, as distinguished from first-generation immigrants and aborigines . . .
- iii. A member of the indigenous ethnic group of a country or region, as distinguished from foreigners, esp. European colonists. Freq. with a suggestion of inferior status, culture, etc., and hence (esp. in modern usage) considered offensive . . .
- iv. In Britain and the US during the period of colonialism and slavery: a black person of African origin or descent . . .
- v. (*adj.*) Of a person: entitled or qualified by right of birth to some status, title, etc.

Of interest to the interpretation of Hinglish here, in terms of transport and exchange of linguistic material, is the duality of nativeness: Hindi in British use can involve either a return to Britain of the 'native' Englishman with new linguistic baggage (having 'gone native'), or a postcolonial return to British soil of the colonial 'native', the Hindi-bearing Asian migrant.

In the discussion that follows, I explore two historical types of Hindi use in British English. First, the use of Hindi by white British English speakers in the seventeenth–twentieth centuries (importing linguistic material of the 'other' into their 'own' English) and, second, the use of Hindi in the English of British-born Asians in contemporary Britain (involving the importing by Asian subjects of their 'own' material into the 'other's' English). The language mixing I examine ranges from isolated loanwords (borrowing of occasional words from another language) to profound code-mixing (admixture of segments of varying lengths from two or more languages). In all time periods, a tension arises between competing claims of authority over the languages (and, by extension, the identities) in question, a tension I argue is exploited strategically by speakers who mix.

Cannadine (2001) has argued that the aristocratic British in

India identified more with Indian royalty than with their own 'blackened' nineteenth-century industrial classes, whom they disdained alongside lower-class Indians, and that class and social status were, in fact, as important as racial concerns in the colonial relationship.² In the cases that follow, historical as well as contemporary, I suggest that the choice of a given phonetic, morpho-syntactic, or lexico-semantic alternative in a particular moment constitutes symbolic capital that speakers use to signal specific class or status (as well as ethnic) affiliations (Bourdieu 1977), and to manipulate the relative status of their interlocutor.

Colonial British Hinglish

Loanwords

Loanwords in colonial British Indian³ usage offer plenty of evidence of British elaboration of class hierarchy in colonial India. In Cannadine's (2001: 41) terms, 'the British colonies of settlement were about the export of hierarchy; India, by contrast, was much more about the analogues of hierarchy'. Indigenous and hybrid terms, such as those in (1a), helped to reinforce and refine extant boundaries of social status in both cultures.⁴ For instance, the hybrid term *competition wallah* did not draw a line in the sand between ethnic groups; it applied equally to Indian and British members of the Indian Civil Service who entered via an open competition rather than elite channels such as Haileybury and Imperial Service College. Similarly, definitions of *sahib*, *memsahib*, and *nabob* eventually cross ethnic boundaries in order to preserve class denotation; in the case of *memsahib* we see a literal reinforcement of two class systems: the English/French *ma'am* and the Urdu/Arabic *sahib*.

- (1a) ***competition wallah***: 'An English-Hindustani hybrid, applied in modern Anglo-Indian colloquial to members of the Civil Service who have entered it by the competitive system first introduced in 1856. The phrase was probably the invention of one of the older or Haileybury members of the same service.' (Yule & Burnell 1886)

- sahib:** 'The title by which, all over India, European gentlemen, and it may be said Europeans generally, are addressed . . . In other Hind. use the word is equivalent to 'Master'; and it is occasionally used as a specific title both among Hindus and Musulmans.' (Yule & Burnell 1886)
- memsahib:** 'A married European or upper-class woman.' (OED)
- nabob:** 'The word is used in two ways: (a) simply as a corruption and representative of *nawab* (a delegate of the supreme chief) . . . (b) It began to be applied in the 18th century, when the transactions of Clive made the epithet familiar in England, to Anglo-Indians who returned with fortunes from the East.' (Yule & Burnell 1886)

The trajectories of other Hindi loans from this period similarly trace a history of deep class divisions. British intellectuals' esoteric loans as in (1b) remain in higher registers of British English today; By contrast, barrack loans can still be found in working-class British English. Today, it is specifically Cockney dictionaries that list the words in (1c).⁵

- (1b) **avatar, sandhi, Buddha, pundit, guru, karma**
- (1c) **blighty:** England (Ar. > U. > H. *bilayati, wilayati* 'foreign')
- mufti:** Civilian clothes (U. *mufti* 'Muslim cleric' or 'freedom')
- dekko:** To have a look around (H. *dekho* 'see', imperative verb)
- cushy:** Comfortable (H. *khushi* 'comfort, pleasantness')
- doolally:** Crazy (Deolali, site of a British sanatorium or transit camp)

Even within the British intellectual and upper classes, differences in loans reflect differences within British culture and in the nature of colonial relationships. For instance, scholarly loans as

in (1b) stand in contrast to exotic loans that fed British Romanticism, as in the following extract by Sir Walter Scott, writing in Scotland in 1827:

(1d) Happy Dog! To India! Oh, Delhi! Oh, Golconda . . . where men are making *lacs* of *rupees* . . . in the land of *cowries* . . . I shall be relieving some *nabob* or *rajahpoot* of his plethora of wealth! . . . The luxuries of a *nautch* . . . and of changing sheep-head broth and haggis for *mulagatawny* and *curry*! (Lewis 1991: 24)

Scott, a nineteenth-century Scottish writer associated with Victorian Romanticism, never visited India; his reliance on superficial lexical loans betrays a lack of participation in any real Indian speech community. Far from constructing a fused identity, as in the contemporary examples discussed later, Scott's hyperbolic use of exotic cultural loans magnifies the distance between the two cultures, reinforced by the explicit contrast between *sheep-head broth and haggis* and *mulagatawny and curry*.⁶

The selective adoption of lexical loans—among scholars, military men, Romantics—gives us a first impression of the underlying power dynamics among different classes of British colonists. Instances of more elaborate British Hinglish style from this period allow a more detailed understanding of the construction of status in interaction.

Code-mixing

Hindi mixing in the English of middle- and working-class British residents in nineteenth-century India became a recognized discourse style, much to the amusement of the domestic British public. Lewis (1991: 13) describes this variety as a 'frontier language', constructed on the fly in superficial interactions and never even approaching expert ability in the foreign code. Its users were the *qui-his*, 'the popular distinctive nickname of the Bengal Anglo-Indian, from the usual manner of calling servants in that Presidency, viz. "*Koi hai?*" "Is anyone there?"' (Yule & Burnell 1886).

A turn-of-the-century novel (Steele 1900, discussed in Lewis 1991) parodies this colonist style, mixing working-class British dialect markers with inexpert, fragmented use of Hindi. Although a fictional monologue, the early date suggests that the extract in (2a) draws on personal familiarity with this style.

- (2a) *Decko*, you want this *admi abhi*, but you ain't goin' to get 'im. *Tumhara nahin*. He's mine, *mehra admi, sumja?* If you want to *lurro*, come on. You'll have a bellyful, and there'll be plenty of you to *phansi*. But wot I say is don't be a *pargul soors*. I don't do your temples 'arm. It's *durm shester ram-ram* an' *hurry ganga*, so far's I care. But this man's my guv'nor. You don't touch 'im *kubbi nahin*. I'm a *nek admi, burra ussel*, when I'm took the right way, contrariwise I'm *zulm* an' *ficker* an' *burra burra affut?* (Steele 1900, cited in Lewis 1991: 12)

(Word translations: look, man now, yours not, my man, understood, fight, hang, crazy pig, faith scripture Ram-Ram, praise Ganga, ever not, virtuous man, very gentle, tyrant, trouble, big big misfortune)

The second example is also one step removed from a natural instance of spoken language. Charles Allen interviewed 'survivors' of the British Raj for a popular BBC radio series and book in the 1970s, in which he includes the 'well-known admonition' in (2b). Again, this example represents an artificial but informed parody of the style.

- (2b) You *dekkoed* me *giro* in the *peenika pani* and you *cooch-biwanied*. You *soonoed* me *bolo*. *Iswasti* I'll *gurrum* your *peechi*. (Allen 1975: 273)

(Word translations: see, fall, drinking water, no-concern, hear, speak, hence, warm, backside)

Finally, Sadaf (2007: 81) cites Kipling's example in (2c), also within the realm of fiction but with the weight of personal experience behind it.

- (2c) The *chooper* you *choops* and the *jildier* you *chels*, the

better *kooshy* will that *sahib* be. (Kipling, 'The Three Musketeers' in *Plain Tales From the Hills*, 1888)
 (Word translations: quiet, fast, walk, happiness)

Scholars distinguish between lexical borrowing, a process available to monolinguals, and code-switching, practised primarily by bilinguals (Myers-Scotton 1993). Borrowing usually involves the adaptation of a loanword to the phonetic and morpho-syntactic constraints of the recipient language, while code-switching (or code-mixing, when intra-sentential) is more spontaneous, frequently retaining the original phonetic and grammatical characteristics of the material in question.

Allen's original sound recordings confirm what the transliterations in (2a) imply: English working-class dialect is prevalent in this mixed usage (*wot*, *'arm*, *guv'nor*, *ain't*, *goin'*, *'im*, *took*) but there is no evidence of Hindi phonology anywhere in the loanwords or the accent.⁷ Hindi words are completely incorporated into English phonology (*decko*, *kubbi*, *burra*, *durm*, *pargul*, *shester*, *hurry*, *ficker*).

The first salient feature of the colonial Hinglish examples, then, is their strict integration into English phonology, a hallmark of loanwords and greater monolingualism, or at least asymmetric code-switching.

The grammar of the variety reinforces this impression of limited familiarity (or effort) with Hindi. Bilingual code-switching usually involves a matrix or dominant language that provides the morpho-syntactic frame for the sentence, for example, word order and all grammatical structure and inflections (Myers-Scotton 1993, see Bhatia in this volume). Words from the embedded or subordinate language are generally content words only, sometimes accommodated through the use of standardized templates, for example, (VERB-*ify*) in Indian English or (VERB *karna*) in Hindi. In (2b) and (2c), English is clearly the exclusive matrix language; all function words and inflections are in English (*soono-ed*, *dekho-ed*, *this admi*, *a pargul*, *choop-er*, *chel-s*). In (2a), we see a few longer Hindi sequences, but only short, fixed phrases (*tumhara nahin*, *mehra admi*). Further, Hindi switches

in these extracts, though creative, do not always resemble structured bilingual code-switching: violations of Hindi word classes abound and very few structured templates are evident (*cooch-biwani*, *choop*, and *gurrum* used as verbs, *kooshy* as an adjective). All of these traits suggest limited familiarity with Hindi.

The one highly regular template is the familiar (as opposed to polite) imperative form of the verb as the base form (*lurro*, *decko*, *soono*, *bolo*, *giro*), bearing the imprint of the primary 'servant-ordering' function of this register for its users. Remarkably, this template was so widespread that it is now the standard loan template for contemporary Hindi-English code-switching (e.g., 'College principal gheraoed', headline from *The Hindu*, 12 January 2008).⁸

Social psychological studies have shown that adopting the linguistic traits of one's interlocutor increases solidarity and positive evaluation between speakers (Sachdev & Giles 2004). The above discussion shows that, in terms of phonetic and syntactic structure, this variety is marked by a spectacular lack of accommodation to the other code. This is accompanied by an equally spectacular lack of mitigating devices and negative facework that usually accompany limited competence (e.g., laughter, apology, self-deprecation, respect terms; Goffman 1967, Brown & Levinson 1987).

So why use Hindi at all? In other situations of severe status asymmetry, slavery conditions for instance, we do not witness the use of the subordinated code by the superordinate group. In other situations of low proficiency, tourists for instance, we either see earnest attempts to approximate the non-native system or copious negative facework to signal the foreigner's lowered status due to lack of proficiency.

Here, however, we see widespread and authoritative use of highly inexpert Hindi. Contemporary parallels of this type usually involve the explicit intent of mockery or injury. Racist parodies of African-American vernacular English by non-speakers ('mock Ebonics') fail to attend to phonetic and grammatical rules of the dialect (Ronkin & Karn 1999), and 'mock' or 'junk' Spanish in monolingual American parodic usage is characterized by

pejorative language, hyperanglicization, and bold mispronunciation (Hill 1993). Some British speakers had more command over the 'other' code than some of these cases, but they share many of the same properties, such as bold hyperanglicization and explicit insults. Code-switched insults do not always reduce solidarity, as we will see in the next section, but in (2) they have this effect partly because of the accompanying mispronunciation and other markers of social distance.

As we will see through a comparison to high solidarity uses of similar forms in the next section, it is not simply linguistic form alone but the combination of *form* and *context of use* that conveys high speaker status and low inter-speaker solidarity here. The ostentatious anglicization of Hindi forms first divests the speaker of any authentic alignment with Hindi, forcing an interpretation of the code as other-directed. Interlocutor distance initially remains ambiguous, however: anglicized Hindi could potentially construct solidarity, for instance in humorous banter or tourists' attempts to use a foreign language. It is the use of anglicized Hindi specifically in confrontational or authoritative *discourse contexts*, with no mitigation, that violates the expectation of lower status for a non-native speaker, construing the imprecise use of Hindi as a careless, derogated 'other' code and conveying a face-threatening stance. Bourdieu (1977: 655) proposes that an agent's 'chances for profit' using a given linguistic strategy derive from 'his specific competence and his authority'; even 'imperfect mastery' (p. 659) can accrue symbolic profits as long as it is marked by sufficiently empowered or authoritative conditions of formation. To some extent, junk Spanish, mock Ebonics, and what we might term 'junk Hindi' all constitute such cases.

Two period extracts cited by Sadaf (2007) support the view that Hindi was employed by these speakers as a status-marking 'other' code. The first, (2d), uses *Hindustani* metonymically as a verb to mean 'berate indigenous servants' and the second, (2e), describes a pejorative attitude to Hindi, reserved for orders and scoldings.

(2d) The spring of the carriage was broken . . . (so) he
Hindustani'd the syces . . .

(Letter, 17 April 1837. *Miss Eden's Letters*. London: Macmillan, 1919, cited in Sadaf 2007: 74)

(2e) He said he'd see the natives hung
 Before he'd learn their lingo;—
 If he'd his way, the British tongue
 He'd teach them all, by Jingo!
 His Hindostanee words were few—
 They couldn't well be fewer—
 As '*Jeldy jao!*' and '*Deckho, do!*'
 And '*Kupperdar*, you *soor!*'

(Word translations: go quickly, look, give, don't you dare, pig)

(Walter Yeldham, 'The Wonderful Shikaree', in *Lays of Ind*, Bombay: Thacker, Vining & Co. 1907, cited in Sadaf 2007: 75)

Contemporary British Asian Hinglish

Colonial Hinglish clearly involved vari-directional voicing (Bakhtin 1981; Rampton 1995), in which Hindi was used to denigrate a devalued voice of the other, not align with the self. By contrast, contemporary British Hinglish favours uni-directional voicing, such that the speaker's use of Hindi asserts a valued alignment of the self with the borrowed voice.⁹ Although contemporary uses thus stand in stark contrast to colonial uses, both sets of speech acts surprisingly achieve their divergent goals through the same linguistic mechanisms of form, context, and inference.

All the examples in this section come from individuals born and raised in Britain. Although the historical and contemporary cases are not directly comparable (a closer parallel to the colonial variety would be asymmetric, Hindi-dominant users of English), the comparison here illustrates how dramatically different the meaning of mixing of the same two languages can be, given different contextual conditions.

Loanwords

As earlier, I begin with loanwords, perhaps the more visible and widespread form of mixing in Britain. The British newspaper extracts at the start of this article focus primarily on loanwords and a dictionary of British Asian slang now exists (Mahal 2006). The first examples, listed in (3), are from popular British Asian fiction and comedy.

(3a) From *Londonstani* (Malkani 2006):

(The narrator Jas is a twenty-year-old boy in an Asian gang from West London)

- (i) . . . As soon as they've taken all their photos, sung *Heppi birthday* and then passed round **thookafied** (spit-afied) slices a birthday cake. (p. 62)
- (ii) You seen dat bitch in action when she is surround'd by *munde* (boys)? (p. 61)
- (iii) 'Or wudyu prefer it if I threw up in da street? **Oolti** (vomit) out on da pavement here where u cud slip in it? How **gandah** (dirty) is that? (p. 37)
- (iv) Amit takes one look at it an gives it—**Ehh ki hai?** (What's this?) Wat's wid all dis **gandh** (filth), man? You best gets your mum to do your laundry quick time or you'll have to wear da same smelly **kachha** (underwear) every day. (p. 52)
- (v) U sound like a poncey **gora** (white person). Wat's wrong wid'chyu, **sala kutta** (bastard dog)? U 2 embarrass'd to b a **desi** (Indian)? (p. 21)
- (vi) Right up until Hardjit raised his hand as if was gonna give me a **thapparh** (slap) across the face. (p. 61)

(3b) From *The Bhangramuffins*, a rap parodying young British Asian youth style, in comedy sketch show *Goodness Gracious Me* (1998):

- (i) Fierce place to pick up the **rasmalai** (sweet dish, attractive girl) . . .

- He's total *besti* (shame, embarrassment) man, whereas
we are cool
- (ii) And we don't drink, and we don't smoke,
If we do we get a *thapparh* (slap) from the old folks

An immediate difference between these loans and the colonial British loans noted earlier is in lexical domains and registers. Where colonial loans frequently filled cultural gaps or marked new social status boundaries, many of the loans in (3a-b) denote familiar, common, indeed base, concepts (*oolti*, *kachha*, *thapparh*, *gandah*). The voice of such loans is simple and juvenile, evoking the predominant functional register through which these young speakers acquire Hindi/Punjabi—childhood home life, an intimate register, unlike the highly asymmetric 'servant-ordering' register of colonial Hinglish. Not all aspects of this 'childish' register reduce status difference, however; the use of *thapparh* when a perfectly common English word is available—as in (3a.vi) and (3b.ii)—voices the status and conservatism of the parent generation.¹⁰

Structural properties also contrast strikingly with colonial Hinglish. In (3a-b) there is a complete *lack* of anglicization of Hindi in transliteration and a strict conformity to Hindi/Punjabi morpho-syntactic constraints. In my sound recordings with over seventy members of this community, the overwhelming majority of Hindi/Punjabi material retains its original phonology, often emphatically, when embedded in English.

Greater bilingual skill among these speakers is marked by the retention of not only phonetic but also grammatical detail from the embedded language. Word class violations in the colonial examples suggested a lack of familiarity with Hindi; word class in the present examples respects the constraints of Punjabi and loans are adapted using structured templates, as in *thookafied* (the standard Indian template additionally indexing transnational networks).

Another grammatical retention from the embedded language can be seen in *munde*, where the speaker uses the Hindi/Punjabi plural inflection. This is a sign of genuine code-switching,

as opposed to borrowing, which would use only the matrix language inflection, *munda-s*. We can even see evidence of a greater processing cost in mixing inflectional material from both languages in (3c). In line 3, the speaker corrects *gora* to *gori* to conform to Hindi gender agreement, but only with some disruption in speech production. The speaker is willing to take on this processing cost possibly in order to signal mastery of both codes through the use of Hindi grammatical agreement. Notice how dramatically this contrasts with the ostentatious signalling of disaffiliation through lack of skill in colonial Hinglish.

(3c) (Eleven-year-old British Asian boy)

she does the tuition for my other cousin,	1
he's a <i>gora</i> , half <i>gora</i> half Punjabi	2
cos his mum's a <i>gora</i> er- <i>gori</i>	3
and the other one er- dad's a Punjabi.	4

In (3d), we see another example of this practice of actively employing Hindi grammatical agreement (in this case plural agreement in line 7) where the simpler route cognitively might be to use the English plural *-s* inflection.

(3d) (Twenty-year-old British Asian girl and interviewer discussing language use)

Lavanya :	what about at work?	1
Rita :	er- totally depe- if I'm working where Basma's	2
	working which is for BA (British Airways)	3
Lavanya :	yah?	4
Rita :	then I'd be um English.	5
Lavanya :	mmkay	6
Rita :	cos they're all flippin <i>gore</i> there, innit?	7

Notice how, in line 2 of the extract in (3e), a white boy uses *gora* as well but uses English, not Hindi, agreement. His adoption of Hindi—and its corresponding cultural capital—is thus subtly shallower.

(3e) (White British teenager and interviewer, Rampton 1995: 498)

Peter : *gora* . . . I always call the people who didn't go to 1
 Southleigh (school) *goras*, yet I'm white myself 2
 Ben : the kids who didn't go to Southleigh you say 3
 Peter : yeh, cos we reckon they're, you know, 4
 a bit upper class

The examples above also offer a striking parallel to the colonial instances of race terms shifting to signal class. On the surface, *gora* is a race term. However, in Rampton's example in (3e) the form has explicitly shifted in local usage to denote class. Even in (3d) and (3a.v), the choice of modifiers (*poncey*, *flippin*) articulates deeper class ideologies. *Poncey gora* and *flippin gora* can both be construed as signalling class as much as whiteness. A significant proportion of airport workers for British Airways are Asian and Rita in (3d) may well be using *flippin gora* to describe the Standard English speech environment there, including both white and Asian employees. Precisely as with *competition wallah* or *memsahib*, the mixed-code forms *poncey gora* and *flippin gora* have acquired the potential to group individuals by class status, not simply ethnicity.

Code-mixing

As in the colonial case, more profound mixing of the two languages affords further devices for the negotiation of status. The examples in (4a-b) are both instances of English mixing with Punjabi and both examples come from conversational speech recordings conducted as part of a larger project on dialect variation and change in the British Asian community.¹¹

(4a) (Twenty-year-old British Asian girl [Rita], her friend [Basma], and interviewer [Lavanya] discussing her use of English and Punjabi when younger)

Lavanya : what about in nursery? 1
 Rita : in nursery. did I used to talk in nursery? 2

	I used to chew on my brush in nursery	3
Basma	: boys used to talk to you	4
Rita	: oy shut your face =	5
Basma	: = (<i>inaudible</i>)	6
Rita	: = TU SHUT UP HO JA , RIGH'?	
	TU SHUT UP HO JA!	7
	(you shut up become) (<i>smiling voice</i>)	
	hhhehhehh	8
Basma	: (<i>inaudible</i>)	9
Rita	: is that why you're my best friend, inni'?	10
Basma	: yeah	11
Rita	: sali (bitch)	12
Lavanya	: (<i>laughing</i>) so she was there in nursery	
	with you?	13
Rita	: no. thank the lord. i'd have been pretty	
	psychologically	14
	disturbed	15

As with the loanword examples, the two switches to Punjabi in lines 7 and 12 in (4a) show no incorporation into English phonology. This maintenance of distinct phonologies is typical of bilingual code-switching as opposed to borrowing.

Line 7 involves a particularly fine example of balanced bilingual skill, as Rita maintains the two distinct phonologies and grammars across no less than six language boundaries in a single utterance: *tu* and *ho ja* in Punjabi phonology and grammar, *shut up* in Indian English phonology and grammar, and *righ'* in urban London style (using a vernacular diphthong and glottal stop). Her production of *shut up* in Punjabi-accented English adds a layer of irony, whereby the mixed utterance *shut up ho ja* invokes a comedic contemporary Indian English voice. To some degree, the switch in line 7 is vari-directional, mockingly addressing her friend in a kind of authoritative Indian parent voice (see Rampton 1995 on the functions of stylized Asian English). However, her choice of a vernacular British form *righ'* at the peak of pragmatic force couches the violent Punjabi imperative within a solidarity-building local British 'friend' code.

Similarly, in line 12 Rita uses an insult, *sali*, but its embedding within mitigating laughter, solidarity, and complimenting (lines 8, 10) conveys solidarity and uni-directional voicing of Punjabi as a powerful self-aligned voice. At other points, Rita even Indianizes her English; at moments of high emotion or performance (lines 14–15), her British accent gains retroflexion, monophthongization, and lack of aspiration, all features of Indian English. This contrast with a very standard British accent in formal speech (line 2).

Thus, where in colonial usage English completely overshadowed Hindi in terms of phonology and syntax, here Punjabi infiltrates English at all levels, at times blurring the boundary completely and even becoming the matrix language in places.

And where colonial mixing unambiguously constructed social distance and status asymmetry, here exactly the *same* Hindi forms—the familiar (versus polite) imperative form and an insult—have precisely the reverse effect. The imperative and insult in Rita’s usage serve to *build* solidarity and *reduce* social distance. Bourdieu (1977: 655) observes that ‘the same linguistic productions may obtain radically different profits depending on the transmitter’; in this case, the contextual differences that permit the radically different effects in Rita’s usage are (1) the extensive phonetic and grammatical evidence of her own skill in the language, indexing her as an authentic Punjabi user; (2) the English-dominant environment, where Punjabi serves as an in-group code; and (3) conversational cues of playfulness (volume, laughter, the London vernacular tag *inni*, positive facework). As in all successful play confrontation, the playful use of face-threatening acts here proves that the relationship is beyond the threat of such acts; in (2e), by contrast, no such disambiguation is offered by the speaker, leading to a genuine face threat.

The example in (4b) shows an even richer cycle of stance alignments and indicates a wide range of functions of code-switches in the British Asian community.

(4b) (Middle-aged Muslim British Asian businessman talking on the phone with a Sikh school friend; only the businessman's speech is included)

<i>o kiddaan bhai? thik hai?</i> how's i' going man?	1
<i>nah phone aa gaya si ga- o bande da phone aaya si haan.</i>	2
<i>hor kiddaan?</i> everythin alrigh'?	3
yeah listen listen righ'? you started up in business	4
and eh i though' i'd give you a li'le head start as well	5
yeah i give you the yeah you take the balloon	6
orders from me all the balloon orders the arches and that	7
<i>tu kuchh changi job kariye da jab- er-</i> fuck about <i>na kari</i>	8
<i>changa sahi sahi kam kari</i>	9
<i>to m- dassi phir</i>	10
how much is i' a balloon?	11
come on <i>yaar!</i>	12
<i>sasta kar!</i>	13
<i>achha thik hai thik hai thik hai</i>	14
alrigh' then okay tha's fine	15
nice one	16
yeah yeah yeah yeah	17
tha's good yeah yeah yeah yeah	18
yeah we need these balloons you know	19
<i>jiddaan tin</i> balloon <i>honde a ik</i> tree <i>de ich</i>	20
yeah <i>haan haan kar le idda phir</i>	21
<i>thik hai accha</i>	22
yeah do it like that then	23
i don't mind	24
they gotta look nice you know with nice pretty	25
colours you know sometimes you get pinks and blues	26
and reds and yellows	
<i>byah de rang jede honde a</i>	27
<i>tennu pata hai yaar</i>	28
<i>hor kiddaan</i> what's going down man everything cool?	29
how's things at the yard	30
the old lady alrigh'?	31
you're not giving her any trouble are you?	32

yeh be'er behave yourself man	33
kick your arse in otherwise	34
yeah don't want any more complaints from you yeah?	35
yeah don't go out my home pissed	36
telling you	37
yeah you gon regret it man i'm telling you bloody	38
behave yourself right	
<i>nahin te tennu jutiyaaan maar ke bahar kar dena tennu</i>	39
<i>banda ban ja</i>	40
nah nah nah seriously man look listen hear	41
me ou' man look	

(Line translations:

what's up brother? you okay?	1
i got a phone call. that guy's phone call came.	2
what else is up?	3
do a good job. don't fuck about.	8
do a good, proper proper job.	9
so tell me	10
friend	12
make it cheaper	13
good okay okay okay	14
the one where three balloons are in one tree	20
yes yes do it like this then	21
okay good	22
the ones that are wedding colours	27
you know, friend	28
what else	29
or she'll throw shoes at you and kick you out of the house	39
be a man	40)

In brief, the broad stances, acts, and personae that this speaker evokes include: in-group solidarity-building (lines 1–3, 29), a haggling Asian businessman (8–10, 12–14), shared cultural knowledge (20–22, 27–28), a middle-aged traditional Asian woman (39), and honourable Asian masculinity (40). In each case, affiliation rather than denigration is asserted; these voicings

build solidarity, reduce social distance, and uni-directionally affiliate the speaker positively with recognizable aspects of Asian culture. This speaker, like Rita, has crafted a flamboyantly alternating linguistic repertoire—combining elements of Punjabi, Standard English, London vernacular, and Creole—to index a composite meaning of bicultural authority, claiming each culture as his own.

As with Rita, part of the solidarity-marking force comes simply from the displaced context of using Punjabi in England. Even in confrontational encounters, an element of solidarity persists: In (4c), despite the speaker’s intent to demote the addressee’s status, his code-switch necessarily marks a shared in-group membership within the UK context and contests the positioning of the foreigner as powerless just as the reclaiming of the insult term *paki* contests its asserted injurious value.

(4c) *Londonstani* (Malkani 2006: 21):

(British Punjabi boy heckling a Westernized Asian boy from his car)

Tu ki samajda hai? (What do you think?) U a Paki jus like me. Even tho u b listenin to U2 or someshit. Are u 2 scared 2 look at us?

A final, crucial element in the construal of Hinglish utterances is the *type* of English used. Young British Asian Hinglish almost obligatorily co-occurs with London vernacular and London Jamaican forms.

(4d) *Londonstani* (Malkani 2006: 16):

Kiddaan, man, ‘sup, homeboy?

For instance, typical greetings among British-born members of the London Asian community—as in lines 1, 3, and 29 in (4b) and the extract in (4d)—combine Punjabi (*kiddaan*), urban vernacular (*man*, ‘sup, homeboy’) and creole forms (*whagwan*, ‘what’s going on’) in a single utterance. Similarly, in (3a) the English included creole and African-American vernacular forms

(absence of *be* in *she surround'd*, *dat/da/wid* for *that/the/with*, non-standard verb agreement in *gets*) as well as London vernacular forms (absence of auxiliary in *you seen*). In (3d), Rita uses *flippin* and *inni'*. In (4b) we see vernacular and creole forms such as glottal stops (*be'er*, *righ'*, *li'le*), *man*, *fuck about*, *nice one*, *tha's*, *cool*, *going down*, *the yard*, *the old lady*, *pissed*, *arse*, *gon*. In the extract in (4e)—from the lyrics of a song by Birmingham-born British Asian bhangra reggae ('bhangramuffin') musician Apache Indian—the entire English component is Jamaican creole (complementizer *say*, subject pronoun *me*, *fe*, past participle *dress*, *wan*, *gal*).

(4e) *Arranged marriage* (Apache Indian)

Me wan gal fe me Don **Rani**
 Me wan gal dress up in a **sari**
 Me wan gal say **soni lagthi**
 Me wan gal sweet like **jalebi**

(Word translations: queen, sari, looks pretty, Indian sweet)

The composite meaning becomes paramount here—a unified, multi-ethnic, street-smart identity rather than a foreigner inadvertently mixing two languages. Without the high prestige urban elements in young British Hinglish, the risk of construal of Hindi/Punjabi switches as signalling direct alignment with older, first-generation Punjabi-speakers would be very high. Once more, the linguistic and cultural *context* of code-switches or loans constrains, but also potentially enriches, interpretation.

Colonial and contemporary forms of British Hinglish reveal that the structural choices made by speakers encode assertions and contestations of highly specific, historically situated identities, in particular relating to societal and interactional status. At the societal level, both colonial loans (*nabob*) and contemporary loans (*gora*) were seen to shift from a narrow ethnic denotation to optionally indexing primarily social class. At the level of interaction, Hindi-English code-mixing by both groups strategically exploited comparable linguistic devices, but differences in form, context, and cues, to produce diametrically opposed functions for Hinglish in British speech.