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The rise of Hinglish and hybrid identities in urban India

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Abstract

This is a review paper that discusses the emergence of Hinglish, and its contribution to the formation of hybrid identities in urban India. The article, based on works published in the timeframe of 2016-2025, discusses Hinglish as a language hybridization based on sociolinguistic processes like code-switching and code-mixing. It examines the major forces behind its adoption such as media, technology and globalization and the major role of the youth in its production and spread. The paper also explores how Indian culture and diaspora have helped the Hinglish language to spread the world over. The results of the research show that Hinglish is not only a convenient means of communication, but also the measure of changing cultural identity, the bargaining between tradition and modernity. The paper concludes that Hinglish is a dynamic and adaptive linguistic phenomenon that can be of great use to understand the language, culture, and identity intersections in the modern urban society.

Keywords; Hinglish; Language Hybridization; Urban India; Hybrid Identity; Code-Switching.

INTRODUCTION

Background and sustainability context

The linguistic environment in India has traditionally been diverse, fluid as well as in a state of constant flux. As everyday life is transformed by the forces of urbanization, globalization and technological advancement, new ways of communicating have appeared to represent changing social realities. The most conspicuous of them is Hinglish- a blend of Hindi and English and has become widely accepted, especially in urban India [1]. Quite on the contrary, Hinglish is a considerable sociolinguistic phenomenon which reflects more global cultural changes in the modern society. The emergence of Hinglish has a strong association with Indian colonial history, the prevailing educational and economic value of the English language and the cultural viability of Hindi. Hinglish has developed in urban areas, where people of varied language and cultural backgrounds are in constant contact with each other, as a communication tool that is both convenient and expressive. It allows speakers to move between various social worlds at once, and mix the familiarity and emotional appeal of Hindi with the aspirational and global connotations of English [2].

In addition to its practical use, Hinglish is also an important element of the hybrid identities. The young generation of urban Indians are constantly torn between tradition and modernity, localness and globalness. Hinglish turns into a linguistic mirror of this negotiation, and it enables people to create identities that are not entirely based on tradition and oriented to Western cultural norms [3].

Rather, it represents an amalgamation of influences, resulting in a multi-culturally conscious yet definitively Indian expression. The increasing use of the Hinglish in media, advertising, digital and daily communication, only emphasizes on its cultural importance. It has ceased to be a casual form of speech to an extensively accepted speaking style that determines the language of the people and popular culture. In this sense therefore, the analysis of Hinglish can be used to give very useful information on the ways language, identity, and social change interrelate in urban India [4].

Hinglish in Indian Writing

Compared to Indian writers, British and American authors have had an advantage. Their first language is English. Because they utilize the same idioms as the men and women of their creation, they have no trouble evoking regional colours. As a result, they can freely experiment with the novel's or short story's technique. However, there are several difficult issues that Indian writers must deal with when using the English language. Neither they nor their characters speak it as their first language. They find it incredibly challenging to accurately portray their nation in its real colours and to translate Indian idioms into English [5]. Hinglish is the arbitrary use of Hindi and English in a same statement, according to the definition. This is more prevalent in metropolitan and semi-urban population centers, but it is gradually making its way into rural and isolated places. When a language stops evolving and reflecting shifting societal ideas, it is said to have died. Hinglish and Benglish (Bengali English) hybrids are the finest means of self-expression when neither of the two distinct languages can adequately convey one's message on its own. They don't happen because individuals want them to [6].

Conceptualizing Hinglish: Language Hybridization and Sociolinguistic Perspectives

Hinglish, a mixture of Hindi and English, is a dynamic language hybrid that has come to the fore in urban India. It is not just a haphazard blend of two languages but an organized and socially significant language of communication. Considering sociolinguistic viewpoint, Hinglish can be explained in terms of the notions of code-switching and code-mixing when speakers switch between languages in a dialogue or even in a single sentence [7]. The flexibility of speakers in multilingual societies and their capacity to negotiate meaning in cross-cultural settings is expressed in this linguistic practice. Social interaction, exposure to a variety of linguistic settings, and the necessity to express oneself in a flexible manner are the common motives of language hybridization, as observed in Hinglish. Urban India with its diverse language and high rate of modernization is one such ideal environment where such hybrid forms can thrive. Hinglish enables users to enjoy the emotional and cultural richness of Hindi and the global usefulness and prestige of English. Consequently, it turns into an effective means of communication among various social groups [8].

Hinglish also has a role to play as far as identity construction is concerned, based on a sociolinguistic

perspective. It is a response to the changing identities of urban Indians who are both local and at the same time encounter the global cultures. Even though Hinglish might be an indication of modernity, education, and social mobility, it does not lose its cultural authenticity. It is mostly common in the informal setting where it is used in social media, advertising, entertainment and in normal conversations [9]. Additionally, Hinglish defies the conventional theories of the purity of language by proving that the languages are dynamic and ever-shifting. Most scholars see Hinglish as an innovative and adaptive linguistic form instead of a degradation of either Hindi or English. It also emphasizes the role of language change as a reaction to social change, globalization and technological progress. Hinglish is, in a way, not just a language phenomenon but also an embodiment of the socio-cultural changes that are taking place in urban India. It represents tradition and modernity, local and global forces, as well as individual and collective identities, thus it is a good sociolinguistic object of study [10].

Drivers of Hinglish Adoption in Urban India: Media, Technology, and Globalization

Media, technology, and globalization are few instances that can be cited as having led to the extensive use of Hinglish in urban India. All these forces have had a collective effect in changing communication trends and language inclination among urban people. The media has been instrumental in popularizing Hinglish. Advertisements, Bollywood movies, radio and television programs, often use Hinglish as a way of reaching a wider audience. This approach does not only increase relatability but also echoes the day-to-day language of urban Indians [11]. The language is also powerful and commercially feasible, and advertisement campaigns, especially, use Hinglish to come up with catchy slogans and reach the heart of consumers. The use of Hinglish has been further boosted by technology and more so by the emergence of digital communication platforms. The use of informal and adaptable language is promoted by social media platforms, messaging applications, and online content. Hinglish perfectly fits in this scenario, permitting users to express themselves swiftly and in a creative manner. Its accessibility has also been brought about by the use of Roman script to write Hindi words, particularly to younger users who find it easier to type in English [12].

The issue of globalization has had a profound effect on the language practices in that there has been more exposure to English as a global language. With increased integration

with the world economy, English has been linked to education, jobs, and promotion in India. But rather than displace Hindi, English has fused with it to create Hinglish as a viable and more culturally appealing option [13]. Moreover, urbanization and the movement of people have united people of various linguistic backgrounds, and a common and yet adaptable form of communication is required. Hinglish is up to this task, as it helps to fill linguistic gaps without losing cultural familiarity. In sum, media influence, technology, and globalization have converged to provide a good environment within which Hinglish can flourish, and it is now a predominant language of communication in urban India.

Role of Indian Culture and Diaspora in Spreading Hinglish Abroad

The Indian culture and the global Indian diaspora have been instrumental in the spread of Hinglish across countries. With migration of Indians and settlement of communities all over the globe, they bring with them their linguistic practices which contribute to the spread of hybrid languages such as Hinglish. Hinglish is commonly spoken by the Indian diaspora, which resides in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Middle East, and is a way of preserving the culture without losing it in new language settings. It enables them to remain attached to where they belong as they interact with the language of the majority in the host country [14]. Hinglish as a language of common identity in multicultural contexts occurs when communities in the diaspora are involved in the interaction of several cultural forces, especially the second generations of immigrants. Indian popular culture has greatly increased the spread of Hinglish all over the world. Hinglish is often used in Bollywood movies, music, web shows, and digital products, and therefore, it is available to foreign viewers. This has also been extended by streaming sites whereby the Indian content can be accessed by viewers all over the world. This has seen Hinglish phrases and expressions being more widely accepted and occasionally, used by non-Indians [15].

Hinglish is also spread indirectly through cultural exports like yoga, cuisine and festivals. When individuals interact with Indian culture, they are likely to be exposed to its linguistic aspects. The Indian Indian diaspora social media influencers and content creators also contribute to the spread of Hinglish through their online content, which now normalizes its use in the global online space. In addition, transnational communication and globalization have enhanced the constant communication between the diaspora communities and the motherland. This interaction

strengthens the fact that Hinglish is a dynamic language that exists as a living language, which is not limited by geographical borders. To sum up, the amalgamation of Indian culture and the diaspora effect has made Hinglish a worldwide linguistic phenomenon, as it is indicative of the interlocking nature of modern societies [2].

Role of Youth in Making and Using Hinglish

The use of Hinglish in urban India has its key participants in the youth who create, evolve and popularize it. Being active agents in a fast-evolving social and technological environment, youths are leading in the innovation of language. Flexibility and expressiveness are among the main factors that have made Hinglish popular among young people. It enables them to express thoughts, feelings as well as experiences in a manner that is natural and easy to relate. A combination of Hindi and English can help young speakers to adjust their language to various situations, audiences, and purposes [15].

This flexibility renders Hinglish especially attractive at informal communication like in peer interaction and online communication. Online media has greatly enhanced the contribution of the young generation towards the spread of Hinglish. The social media and messaging apps, as well as content creation platforms, are the environments that allow young people to experiment with language and develop new expressions. Hinglish is frequently used in memes, small videos, and trends on the Internet, which contributes to its rapid spread and normalization. Communication is also made easier, more accessible and efficient due to the use of Roman script [3].

Hinglish is also being used by the youth as a form of identity. It embodies their bicultural localism and globalism. The young people use Hinglish to demonstrate their contemporary attitude without losing touch with their culture. It turns into an icon of being a part of a generation of urban, educated and digitally connected people [16]. Moreover, school setting and peer groups promote the use of Hinglish. Students in most urban schools and colleges often alternate between Hindi and English and Hinglish is a logical consequence of a bilingual encounter. It will also be useful in bridging social and linguistic differences between students of diverse backgrounds. Simply put, young people are not only passive-users of Hinglish but creators and promoters of Hinglish. Their language preferences influence the development of Hinglish, which is to be relevant in modern society [5].

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Mohan, 2025) [15] examines the sociolinguistic ramifications, motivations, and patterns of code-switching behavior in this population. The study investigates how Indian urban adolescents use code-switching as a strategy for identity negotiation, social inclusion, emotional expression, and contextual adaptation. It does this by drawing on sociolinguistic theories and empirical data gathered from interviews and recorded conversations. According to the survey, the most common language swaps are English-Hindi and English-regional, which are impacted by peer culture, education, media consumption, and internet interactions. The study also looks at how code-switching is viewed by society, both positively and negatively, and how it influences Indian urban language usage. Results show that code-switching is a complex social strategy that reflects class dynamics, modern youth culture, and the changing multilingual fabric of Indian society rather than just being a language habit.

(Pratibha et al., 2025) [17] Because of its linguistic complexity, lack of organized grammar, and scarcity of annotated datasets, Hinglish—a combination of Hindi and English—presents particular difficulties for sentiment analysis. This study addresses the intricacies of this code-mixed domain and looks at and evaluates current approaches for Hinglish and English sentiment analysis. The study identifies major challenges such as language detection, complex grammar, and limited data availability by examining research articles, reports, and white papers. It also emphasizes how challenging it is to modify models for new situations. The study highlights the necessity of a multifaceted strategy to achieve reliable sentiment analysis in Hinglish and suggests creative solutions based on these difficulties. In addition to paving the path for future advancements in code-mixed language sentiment analysis, this can serve as the foundation for developing big language models for sentiment analysis and ill-understood Hinglish in existing capabilities.

(Singh et al., 2025)[18] provide HiACC, a benchmark Hinglish speech corpus, to enhance ASR performance in environments with limited resources. Although there are a few of monolingual Hindi and English corpuses, there are still few publicly accessible code-switched datasets, and none of them currently contain speech from children. By offering the first code-switched Hinglish speech dataset comprising recordings from both adults and children, our corpus closes this gap. It includes 1,858 audio segments from children and 3,318 audio segments from adult

participants, totaling 5.24 hours of spontaneous speech and reading. To aid in linguistic and computational research, the transcriptions contain comprehensive annotations and code-switching tags. Additionally, we give baseline ASR experiments that demonstrate the difficulty of the task by demonstrating that typical models trained on monolingual data perform about 42% worse on our test set. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first publicly accessible resource on code-switched Hinglish speech that includes both adult and kid speakers. Its goal is to spur advancement in this difficult but crucial field of speech recognition.

(Tiwari, 2025) [19] examines the frequency and trends of Hinglish code-switching in Mumbai and Delhi's public signs. It investigates how bilingual signage in urban India expresses identity, consumer orientation, and language mobility using photographic documentation and corpus-based analysis. Public signage uses hinglish as a performative act of hybrid identity creation in addition to being a useful communication tool. This paper makes the case that urban signage serves as a location of cultural negotiation where language choices convey social affiliation, economic desire, and symbolic power by placing findings within sociolinguistic theory and linguistic landscape research.

(Salwathura, 2020) [20] About 350 million people in India speak Hindi, which is the country's official language. Since India was colonized, there has been an incestuous relationship between Hindi and English. Since then, Hindi and English have blended together, earning the term "Hinglish" in Indian culture. "British-Raj" is thought to have been the first Hinglish term used during the colonial era. Today, Hinglish is widely used in daily life in India. Hinglish has expanded outside of India's cities as a result of the popularity of Hindi films and television. Examining the effects of Hinglish usage by Hindi-speaking individuals in India on the survival of the mainstream Hindi language is therefore anticipated. The key resources were the languages spoken in North India and the languages used in the media. Secondary sources included Hindi-language books, periodicals, and journal articles. This essay emphasizes how Hinglish has become quite popular in Indian society and how difficult it is to stop this tendency, which has a significant impact on Indians' daily conversation. This essay highlights how the widespread usage of Hinglish by Hindi speakers in India has become a major obstacle to the survival and ideals of the Hindi language.

(Deshpande, 2019) [21] focuses on code-mixing in modern print and digital media marketing. In India's rural

areas as well as megacities, Hinglish has become a popular language among youth. English is currently undergoing endonormative stabilization in India, where it has blended with indigenous languages to create a new identity. As a result, the English spoken around us is a synthesis of two or more cultures as well as other Indian languages and native English. The advertising industry mirrors India's socioeconomic realities. Multinational companies like Pepsi were aware of this and chose to use the Hinglish language to popularize their products in order to align with local emotions.

(Dixit, 2016) [16] Hinglish's etymology is a combination of words from the Hindi and English languages. Hindi is the official language of metropolitan areas like Delhi and Mumbai, although English is become a commonly spoken language. Young people in particular used to converse among themselves in English. Additionally, the taxi drivers, shops, and guides speak this language fluently. India is seeing an increase in multilingual English/Hindi classes, according to the most recent poll. While people in rural areas continue to speak their native tongue, English language influence is evident in urban areas.

According to research, a sizable portion of bilingual Hindi and English speakers are unable to speak proper Hindi and instead choose to speak Hinglish, a colloquial combination of Hindi and English. The emergence of Hinglish and the impact of Indian vocabulary on English are further indicators of the Indian subcontinent's emergence as a major economic force. "Hinglish," a trendy new language that is frequently employed in every industry, including music, movies, and advertising, was born out of the nation's economic boom. Globally, it is also perceived as giving India a new identity. The adoption and emergence of Hinglish in various fields will be the analytical emphasis of this research work. Additionally, it will showcase several instances of Hinglish being used in daily life.

(Sengupta et al., 2024) [22] Hinglish is a colloquial term for the blending of Hindi and English brought about by globalization and cultural adaptability. Code-mixing is the term used to describe the phenomena of combining many languages (like Hindi and English) in a single utterance. We demonstrate how a number of socioeconomic and demographic variables influence Hinglish adoption. We also develop dynamic models to investigate the socioeconomic drivers of Hinglish's expansion, predict the language's potential growth in the following years, and calculate the likelihood that users would alter their linguistic preferences.

Additionally, we discover that the effects of Hinglish development vary within word groups and have varying effects on the contextual meaning of individual terms. Our research can be applied to comprehend the dynamics and evolution of other code-mixed languages, such Spanish-English or Chinese-English, even though our conclusions are unique to the Indian Hinglish community.

(Verma, 2024) [14] This scholarly article's goal is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic traits of Hinglish, a combination of Hindi and English, as they appear in contemporary Indian literature. In order to clarify the development, importance, and influence of Hinglish on language, culture, and identity in India, this scholarly study critically analyzes direct quotations and references from a variety of literary works. The current study makes substantial contributions to comprehending the complex linguistic context of Hinglish within modern Indian literature by utilizing a broad range of empirical evidence and scholarly investigation.

The purpose of this article is to provide a thorough analysis of the linguistic characteristics of Hinglish, a linguistic blend that arises from the combination of Hindi and English in the Indian environment. This study looks into how Hinglish is used in modern Indian literature to portray the country's multilingualism and diversity. The study attempts to clarify the changing function of Hinglish in Indian writing through a thorough analysis.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite the availability of existing literature (2016-2025) that can be used to gain valuable insights into the code-mixed language of Hinglish, there are some gaps. The majority of the researches are either centered on the linguistic structures, the computational issues (e.g. ASR and sentiment analysis) or its presence in the media and advertisement. There is little literature that incorporates sociolinguistic views with identity construction, especially concerning hybrid identities in urban India. Moreover, although research indicates the impact of globalization and youth, lack of integral analysis bridging the media, technology, diaspora impact and culture dynamics in unison is evident. The influence of Indian diaspora in the dissemination of Hinglish around is also not thoroughly explored in an empirical context. Also, comparative and interdisciplinary approaches, investigating Hinglish in social, cultural, and generational contexts are lacking in compliance with the mentioned objectives.

OBJECTIVE

- To study the conceptualizing Hinglish, language hybridization and sociolinguistic perspectives.
- To study the drivers of Hinglish adoption in urban India: media, technology, and globalization.
- To study the role of Indian culture and diaspora in spreading Hinglish abroad.
- To study the role of youth in making and using Hinglish.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a qualitative research approach that is based on review research to analyze the emergence of Hinglish and hybrid identities in urban India. Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, books, and reports published between 2016 and 2025 have been used to gather secondary data. The literature is selected according to the relevance to some of the major themes:

language hybridization, sociolinguistic approaches, media presence, globalization, diaspora, and youth involvement. The study objectives are categorized and synthesized with the help of thematic analysis approach to present findings. The review has combined the findings of linguistics, cultural studies, and communication studies to give an all-encompassing insight. This research approach facilitates the establishment of trends, patterns and gaps in current research concerning Hinglish.

DISCUSSION

The literature analysis indicates that Hinglish has become a powerful medium of communication in urban India, and is influenced by various overlapping factors. It is being normalized by media and advertising and is spreading especially among the youth because of the digital technologies. As another finding, it is also important to note that Hinglish is not just a linguistic mixture but the formation of hybrid identity as people bargain between local traditions and global impacts.

The young people become the most important participants in developing and popularizing Hinglish via social media and personal interactions. Also, the Indian diaspora also helps in its worldwide spread, which further supports the idea of making it a transnational linguistic phenomenon. Yet, issues of the corruption of standard Hindi and purity of language still linger in certain research. In general, Hinglish is a vibrant interaction of language, culture, and identity, which can be observed in greater socio-economic changes in modern urban society.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of Hinglish in India in urban areas is an indication of a significant change in the way people use language due to globalization, technology and the changing culture. This work brings out that Hinglish is not just a casual hybrid between Hindi and English but an expressive and adjustive form of communication that is a result of the twists of contemporary urban living. It is important in enabling communication among different social communities and at the same time helping individuals to form hybrid identities that are not overly traditional or modern. The review also highlights the massive impact of media, digital platforms and globalization that has been instrumental in popularizing Hinglish as a popular linguistic form. Of particular interest is the role of youth, which is the main driver of innovation and dissemination. Also, Indian diaspora helps in spreading and popularization of Hinglish around the world, and this makes it even stronger as a transnational phenomenon. Hinglish is raising some critical issues of linguistic purity and the future of standard Hindi despite its increasing acceptance. Nonetheless, instead of seeing it as a threat, it can be interpreted as a natural change in language in reaction to shifting social reality. All in all, Hinglish is an interesting field of further interdisciplinary studies as it is a unique location of language, identity, and culture.

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