

*Dil Maange more***Cultural contexts of Hinglish in contemporary India**

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**Abstract:** After over a century of language nationalism and almost as long a period of intense competition and mutual contempt, in post-liberalisation and post-low caste assertion India the boundaries between English and Hindi have recently become more porous, and the hold of both “pure Hindi” and “British/pure English” has become much more limited. English is of course still the language of greater opportunities in local and global terms, and increasingly so, but as low-caste politicization and literacy widen the sphere of Hindi, and the “new middle class” remains resolutely bilingual in its everyday and entertainment practices, the relation between English and Hindi has become more a relationship of parallel expansion, though still perceived in public discourse as a zero-sum game.

**Keywords:** Hinglish, Hindi, English, code-switching, mixed language, advertising language, language of politics, media language

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*Dil Maange more*

## **Cultural contexts of Hinglish in contemporary India**

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A vivacious mixture of English and native tongues, Hinglish is a dialect pulsating with energy and invention that captures the essential fluidity of Indian society.

(Deep Kanta Datta-Ray, quoted in Jaikishan 2011)

It's a bridge between two cultures that has become an island of its own, a distinct hybrid culture for people who aspire to make it rich abroad without sacrificing the sassiness of the mother tongue. And it may soon claim more native speakers worldwide than English.

(Baldauf 2004)

The real triumph of the rise of Hinglish isn't that it's beaten back the English of, well, the English. That brand of English doesn't exist any more; in India, it's under siege from students who're rattooing too hard for their papers, yaar, to care whether they're speaking the Queen's English or some joshed-up masala mix.

(Roy 2004)

It's India's self-confident voice rising above the subservience that was once expressed in an English way... 'Hinglish' is all about the ascendant and emergent force that is modern India. If language reflects national identity, the speed at which 'Hinglish' is being adopted sends out very loud cultural and economic signals to the rest of the world.

(Khanna 2010)

These are some of the upbeat claims that are being made on behalf of Hinglish, a moniker used to cover a wide range of code-switching and mixed language phenomena that combine English and Hindi.<sup>1</sup> In common parlance

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<sup>1</sup> In India the phenomenon is of course not limited to Hindi but is common in other Indian languages, alongside combinations of Hindi with other languages (Mokashi-Punekar 2011 and Prasad 2011); for Taglish as the moniker for English-Tagalog-Spanish mixing in the Philippines see Rafael 1995.

in India Hinglish indexes code-switching and language mixing between English and Hindi within either an English or Hindi matrix, but also Indian English as well as English in Devanagari script or Hindi in Roman script.<sup>2</sup> But while from a linguistic point of view Hindi cannot be considered a stabilized creole or a fused lect, the fact that a single term is used for what several commentators have pointed out are a multitude of different varieties, practices, registers, styles, trends, and social forces is itself significant, since one of the large claims being made for Hinglish is that it is a unifying force that is breaking down once stiff social barriers between English and Hindi (or EMT and HMT).<sup>3</sup> As such, Hinglish is presented not just as the language of urban/metropolitan youth culture, but also as the language of a new, enterprising and confident India, in which skills and the right attitude trump social and caste background, and economic prosperity and global presence have translated into a growing confidence in one's own culture and language.<sup>4</sup> Hinglish is projected as *both* the informal language of the globalized Indian middle class *and* the aspirational language of the upwardly-mobile vernacular lower-middle, middle, and working classes who are "asking for more", but who clearly have very different linguistic repertoires and grasp of and within the two languages.

Code-mixing and switching between English and Hindi (and other Indian languages) has a long history that goes back to colonial times, and Hindi, like other Indian languages, has an equally long history of accommodating English loanwords (Snell 1990, Sharma 2011). Mixing was then largely a phenomenon of spoken language, though some, but by no means all, writers also used it in writing, usually for satirical purposes or in order to valorise linguistic inventiveness and current language practices.<sup>5</sup> By comparison, what we see from the 1990s onwards, i.e. in the post-liberalization period, is a new tolerance, indeed a *preference* for Hinglish in the

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<sup>2</sup> I broadly follow Auer's (1998) use of the terms code-mixing and mixed language.

<sup>3</sup> 'Is Hinglish a single force? Just *one* idea?' muses advertising guru and commentator Santosh Desai. 'Or is it a combination of several ideas—a word that captures multitudes of different strands or strategies...? Are there different intentions at work there?' (Desai in Kothari and Snell 2011, p. 203).

<sup>4</sup> As CEO of FM Radio Mirchi Prashant Panday puts it in rather stark terms, 'Since 1991, when liberalization happened, economic policy and progress started to dismantle the caste system—the age-old system where your occupation was pre-decided by the caste and place you were born in. Today, development has become much more egalitarian—which strata you come doesn't matter. As long as you have the right skill set and the right attitude, you can join any sector' (Panday in Kothari and Snell 2011, 193).

<sup>5</sup> Documented examples range from R. Kipling (Sharma 2011), Urdu poet Akbar Ilahabadi (Nijhavan 2010, 269-271), P. Renu's 1954 Hindi novel *Maila Anchal* (Hansen 1981), and of course S. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (savagely dismissed in Trivedi 2003 and more judiciously analysed in Srivastava 2005).

various guises mentioned above in a host of contexts where mixing would not have been allowed or was a marginal phenomenon before: TV news, newspapers, advertising, Hindi film dialogues and songs, etc. Indeed, the 26 September 2011 government circular that directed civil servants and clerks to write their files in “simple Hindi”, i.e. Hindi with current English words rather than Sanskrit coinages, aroused public controversy but also showed that an official barrier had been pulled down.<sup>6</sup>

As an example of code-mixing and code-switching, Hinglish has been studied extensively by linguists, who typically focus on live spoken interactions between individuals.<sup>7</sup> A few linguists have studied language mixing in *scripted* cultural products such as TV serials, films, and novels, and their approaches provide valuable models for textual and for cultural studies scholars.<sup>8</sup> But while linguists have been meticulous in tracking and analysing speakers’ interactions, when it comes to the broader cultural and social fields in which these interactions take place and the meanings they carry, their categories can become quite generic (e.g. Y. Kachru 2006). For this reason, it seemed useful to disarticulate Hinglish and try and identify the specific contexts in which speakers as well as cultural products use Hinglish as sub-fields, each with its own institutions, forces, and logics, and where different language ideologies coexist or clash.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the intense re-mixing, re-use, and re-accenting of Hinglish catchphrases such as “*Dil Maange More*” (this heart asks for/longs for more) or “*Emotional atyachaar*” (emotional torture) showing how much Hinglish is a consciously citational code (with invisible inverted commas) constructed and circulated through the commercial systems of advertising, TV media, films, and radio, which in turn eagerly pick up innovative phrases from speakers.<sup>10</sup> In this perspective, even the historical tendency to include English loanwords can become a self-conscious, re-

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<sup>6</sup> Reactions in Hindi media were mixed: some positive (Saini 2011), but most were critical, e.g. ‘Hindi par phahraya, Hinglish ka parcham’ (2012).

<sup>7</sup> The bibliography is vast, from B. Kachru 1975 and 1978, Malhotra 1980, to Dey and Funk 2014.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Viswamohan 2004, Mesthrie 2005, Bhatt 2008, Si 2011; for useful methodologies Androutsopoulos 2012 and Sebba 2012.

<sup>9</sup> This is the approach fruitfully taken by the Kothari and Snell 2011 volume, still the only one available.

<sup>10</sup> Thus Anuja Chauhan’s Pepsi ad “*Yeh Dil Maange More!*” (1998) was used as a title for a Hindi romantic comedy film (Mahadevan, 2004)—and sued for breach of copyright; it had earlier been adopted as personal motto by Indian Army captain Vikram Batra, who was killed in 1999 during the Kargil war and posthumously awarded India’s highest military honour; in the 2014 election campaign, Sonia Gandhi and Narendra Modi sparred over the latter’s use of the phrase in an election speech in Batra’s home town; see Ghosh 2014.

accented, usage.<sup>11</sup> By surveying advertising, newsmedia and politics, the workplace, education and college life, films and film songs, TV reality shows, this essay begins to disaggregate the varying contexts in which what is generally called Hinglish works. As such, it offers a research agenda and research context rather than specific case studies. Hinglish as a trend attracts intense public and media interest, and as a consequence this essay relies heavily on public commentary through newspapers and blogs.

## 1. Language ideologies

Debates around Hinglish in public media refract the polarization between on the ideology of Hindi as “mother tongue”, “national language” and “the language of the people”, thus wrapped up with national pride, echoes of the anticolonial struggle, and class critiques of English privilege, and the ideology of English as the language of opportunities and of social and spatial mobility (La Dousa 2014). So entrenched have these positions become in almost seventy years of India’s independence that different opinions, for example those recommending English-Hindi bilingualism, get automatically slotted into one of the two positions, either English-*wala* or Hindi-*wala*.<sup>12</sup> “Hindi views” on Hinglish, as in the case of the 2011 government circular, tend to frown at it as a conspiracy by the English-*walas* that ought to be stopped and strenuously resisted (Dube 2014). Even to study it with interest, or to view it as a social and cultural phenomenon that individuals can hardly stop, amounts to collusion according to this view. Popular English writing on Indian English, for a long time looked down on Indian English, language mixing, and Indian influences on English with a mixture of disapproval, humour, and forced acceptance (e.g. John 2007). But as already mentioned above, Indian English/Hinglish is now viewed more enthusiastically as capturing the current, post-liberalization Zeitgeist:

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<sup>11</sup> As the example of “Mera *number* kab aayega?” (When will my turn come?) below shows: “number” is a long-attested loanword in Hindi, but in the 2007 Pepsi ad, it was re-accented as part of aspirational Hinglish; it was re-accented again as the name of a call-in show on Star TV in 2011, where number meant phone number while referencing the popular ad.

<sup>12</sup> Witness the debate over the entrance test to Civil Service (UPSC) exams: in the television debate *We The People*, NDVT host Barkha Dutt consistently slotted positions that differed from a plain espousal of English as Hindi *and* anti-English, despite the fact that the speakers (Ashok Vajpeyi, Alok Rai, and Abhay Kumar Dube) repeatedly pointed out that they were not anti-English but wanted English-educated to also be tested for proficiency in Indian languages; see <http://www.ndtv.com/video/player/we-the-people/watch-the-language-debate-hindi-hain-hum/330772>, 20.7.2014, accessed 30.1.2015.

When Zee began airing a daily Hinglish news bulletin almost 18 years to the date, it seemed like a bad joke. Nowadays, however, Hinglish is widely accepted as the lingua franca of the young, allowing advertisers and producers of TV reality shows to overcome language barriers and reach out to a pan-Indian audience...

Indians have this remarkable ability to shuttle between idioms, as if they were two neighbouring balconies, joined by an invisible passage. The music of *Delhi Belly* moves from K L Saigal to punk, just like Indian girls today manage to slip out of a short black dress and into a sari with startling ease and self-confidence. (Mehrotra nd)

And if the dominant post-liberalization discourse has partly been about the struggle of the new India to “free” itself from the old feckles, it is clear which side Hinglish is perceived to be on:

There are two Indias in this country. One India is straining at the leash, eager to spring forward and live up to all the adjectives that the world has increasingly been showering upon us. The other India is the leash. One India says, "Give me a chance and I'll prove myself." The other India says, "Prove yourself first and maybe then you'll have a choice." One India lives in the optimism of our hearts. The other lurks in the skepticism of our minds...

(*Times of India* television commercial, in O'Barr 2008)

From this perspective, critiques of English privilege are often received as critiques of social mobility.

Yet rather than simply aligned with English in the Hindi-English debate, we can also view Hinglish as championing bilingualism and the ability to recognize and move between linguistic codes. The heroine of Anuja Chauhan's chick-lit novel *The Zoya Factor* (2008, 207) wonders about monolinguals as she enters Australia, 'People who knew only one language... which was *weird*. Because, hello, what would they switch to if they started getting pally, or angry, or fell in love?' If Hinglish, in Santosh Desai's words, 'allows us, in some ways, to loosen the idea of English, especially around the margins' and opens up 'the boundaries that generally separate English from other languages', at the same time it has also helped Hindi to acquire a brand

(cool *desi*), using a visual language that circulates in music videos, advertising, and photography (Desai 2011, 201).<sup>13</sup>

Yet how inclusive is Hinglish? And is it one phenomenon or is it many, whose meanings and dynamics vary from domain to domain—from newsmedia, politics, education, and work to advertising, films, music, youth culture, and so on? If one of the reasons given for the success of Hinglish is that it allows communication and breaks down barriers, its different realizations bear traces of the social group to which the speaker belongs, and thus Hinglish still subtly indexes class stratification through accent, inflection, word choice, etc. As Devyani Sharma points out, this makes Hinglish a paradox:

If you use fluent Hinglish, particularly mixing standard urban Hindi and English that you have been exposed to, it may be seen as a metropolitan privilege. In other kinds of Hinglish, there are indications of reduced competence and aspirations of upward mobility. (Sharma 2011, 205)

The crucial question, as she puts it, 'is not only that of the speaker but the one receiving it, hearing it, and *locating the speaker in a particular class*. This will always make Hinglish a part of a stratified context and it *cannot* become, in totality, a unifying force' (*ibid.*, my emphasis). For this reason, for each example and domain in this essay I will raise questions of inclusion and stratification. While I am mindful of linguists' warnings about the danger of imputing meanings to the codes speakers use (Nilep 2006), I will still do so when interpreting cultural products and performances, because their self-conscious use and mixing of different registers and accents of Hindi and English, word and phrase creativity, and implicit or explicit reference to language ideologies of English and Hindi make strong appeals to group identity (whether existing or imagined) and cultural and social distinction.

### *Yeh Dil Maange More*

Advertising has rightly been seen as crucial to the transformations of post-liberalization India, facilitating the penetration of MNC products and as a laboratory for manufacturing the "new middle class" dreams of affluent lifestyles and its aspiration of being both global and rooted in India. Advertising, Harish Trivedi notes, is also the one domain where Hinglish is now not the exception but the rule (Kothari and Snell 2011, xviii). Simply

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<sup>13</sup> As *Times of India* director Rahul Kansal put it, 'Hindi had mass appeal but no brand' (in Kothari and Snell 2011, 206).

translating MNC English slogans into Hindi, one advertising executive says, did not work: 'You may be understood, *but not vibed with*. That's why all the multi-national corporations in India now speak Hinglish in their ads.'<sup>14</sup> Thus Pantene's "Come on girls, it's your time to shine" became "Come on girls, *waqt hai shine karne ka!*" Thanks to former JWT India vice-president and executive creative director-turned novelist Anuja Chauhan, Pepsi's "Ask for more" became "*Yeh Dil Maange More*" (This heart asks/longs for more), with its clever alliteration between *Maange* and *More* and use of the subjunctive and of an elongated *aa* to visually and phonetically express longing.<sup>15</sup> Chauhan pioneered Hinglish in advertising with catchlines for Pepsi like the impatient question "*Mera Number Kab Aayega*" (When will my number/turn come?), the bubbly Punjabi-esque "*Oye Bubbly*", as well as "*KitKat Break Banta Hai*" (KitKat means/needs a break).<sup>16</sup> One of the many ads with *Mera Number Kab Aayega* features first a little boy in a playground awaiting his turn at the swings, then a boy overlooked by the basketball coach, and finally a boy who wants to kiss a girl: every time the boy asks, 'When is my turn going to come?' In the last scene, first the voiceover says, '*Ab to aa hi jaayega*' (Now it will come), because Pepsy bottle crowns then carried lucky numbers that lead to big prizes, and the boy, assured, repeats, '*Mera number aayega*' (My turn will come). In the words of an advertising professional,

It's a funny ad because, first, [the boy] looks like the perfect loser, and secondly, because, even at the end of the ad, he is a loser. His number still hasn't come. No brand wanted to associate with a loser. But with this ad, we tried to connect, not with the winner, but with the millions who wouldn't win. (quoted in Khanna 2010)

In advertising the linguistic inventiveness and creativity of Hinglish is exploited as a shortcut to "intimacy", the keyword JWT executive Swati Bhattacharya used with me.<sup>17</sup> It also carries meanings of rootedness for the English-educated and of social mobility (and of course dreams and aspirations) for the "vernacular" masses.

Hinglish in advertising consists of either a Hindi or mixed-language catchline in Roman script or an English catchline in Devanagari script, and

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<sup>14</sup> Ashok Chakravarty, creative head of leading ad agency Publicis India. His colleague and Executive Creative Director, Sanjay Sipahimalani, points out that the stock of Hindi is now high in the copyrighting business: 'Ten years ago if somebody used Hindi in an otherwise perfect English sentence, I don't think we would have hired him. It would be a sign of lack of education. Now, it's a huge asset'; both quoted in Beeson 2012.

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for pushing me to articulate these features.

<sup>16</sup> *Oye* is a Punjabi exclamation and *Bubbly* puns the English term for sparkling with the common Punjabi diminutive Babli.

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication, New Delhi 28.8.2014.



language switches and/or mixes between the visual slogan and brand name, the characters' dialogues or monologues, the jingle's song, and the catchline spoken by the character or the voice-over. Switches may also include shifts in accent and register (Indian English vs international English, regional variety vs formal Hindi), and intertextual references to film dialogues or songs. Each mix or shift, whether of code or script, unsettles the steadiness of the language in order to create an informal, intimate connection with the viewer. A connection that advertisers seek to transform into a steady relationship and brand loyalty over series of storied ads.

Two of the many ads for the Pepsi "*Yeh Dil Maange More*" campaign help us see the range of cultural idioms that just one campaign draws upon, and how the ads interpret the idea of aspiration ("This heart longs for more") for different target audiences. In the first ad, an "ordinary" and bored Mumbai college student is dazzled by a nightly vision of Bollywood stars Rani Mukherjee, Shahrukh Khan, and Kajol, which turns into a personal encounter when they dance for and with him. The song says 'Live more, ask for more' (*Jiyo more, maango more*).<sup>18</sup> In another ad from the same campaign we see village children dreaming of their cricket hero Sachin Tendulkar (cricket of course being one of the dream avenues of socio-economic mobility) while a rusty bicycle brings a rusty container of Pepsi bottles – "backward" village India as seen through a beautiful patina of warm and vibrant colours. The song, a catchy tune in the rough voice of a folk singer on a single-stringed instrument, reads the Hindi word *pyas* as thirst for a drink but also for a better life, unfettered and unshackled:

*Aihe, ghumar-ghumarkar! ghumar ghumarkar jiya garje, dil yah bole, jhumke bole, tare jhume, pyaas bari hai aur bhi barh le use, kholke bandhan, torke taale yeh dil maange more!* [Oho, round and round, round and round roars the heart, speaks the heart, swings the heart, soar the stars, says the heart – I'm so thirsty! Thirst even more, free the latches, break the locks, this heart longs for more!].<sup>19</sup>

Although both ads are technically all in Hindi, the Hinglish catchline is enough to convey the Hinglish "vibe."

At the same time, while projecting aspirational lifestyles ad agencies of course are intensely conscious of and work with precise target groups defined in terms of age, gender, economic power, and language (EMT vs VMT/HMT

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aog\\_A-lqla4&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aog_A-lqla4&feature=related) [last accessed 24.7.2014].

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMzZfzzG80s&feature=related> [last accessed 24.7.2014]. All the children wear Sachin Tendulkar masks, and at the end behind one of them is the real Sachin Tendulkar.

or Vernacular- or Hindi-Medium Types being widespread acronyms), thus reproducing hierarchies and differences that they are ostensibly also removing. Zoya, the heroine and advertising executive in the novel *The Zoya Factor*, looks down at Junior Maximilk ads which target 'Socio-Economic Category B+ (education: graduation, family income: 30000 per month or less, language of choice: Hindi)' (2008, 116). Even a sympathetic professional like Santosh Desai, MD & CEO of Futurebrands India Ltd., who believes that 'Advertising can play a powerful role if it creates a ladder of aspirations that inspires consumers to continuously move up in their lives,' points out that lower-income groups are either absent or caricatured:

When was the last time you saw a village in a commercial that was not out of a tourist brochure? Barring a few instances, advertising excludes large parts of India from its mental model of consumers. This is particularly true for rural India but also applies to a whole set of mass-market consumers at the lower end.

When it does depict them, it is most often as caricatures for the amusement of the rest of us. The implicit perspective is so metro oriented that Lucknow is seen as a small town and spoken down to. The 'us versus them' mindset is embedded deeply and conversations with 'people like them' are usually patronising, stereotypical or both. (Desai 2010)

In this, he views advertising as 'part of a larger discourse that includes popular cinema and news media where the rich have become the centre of our universe' (*ibid.*) and where the definition of "ordinary people" in public discourse, at least in English, has sharply moved upwards.<sup>20</sup> While advertising, and the role of Hinglish in it, embodies the dominant discourse of post-liberalization middle class aspirations, mobility, and self-confidence, other domains display quite different dynamics and question triumphalistic narratives of mobility and inclusion.

### **Newsmedia and politics**

While the "traditional" hierarchy of English and Hindi journalism has not disappeared in terms of social, cultural and economic capital (particularly visible where groups own both English and Hindi newspapers), the great boom in Hindi newsmedia that Robin Jeffrey (2000) has called "newspaper revolution" and that includes also TV news channels such as NDTV and Aaj

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<sup>20</sup> As journalist P. Sainath remarks, 'For the media leaders, the lives of ordinary people make no sense in their economic calculations, they cannot buy the products that these guys are selling.' Nero's Guests, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q6m5NgrCJs>, accessed 17.3.2012.

Tak has turned Hindi into the bigger player (see also Ninan 2007).<sup>21</sup> In the film *Peepli: Live!* (2010), Hindi journalist Deepak says: ‘Who watches [English news]? We are the true journalists, who feel the pulse of the people (*janta*).’

This Hindi media boom has had repercussions on language policy in the media. While Hindi newspapers were successful in the past in popularising Sanskritic neologisms, more recently they have debated whether to accept Hinglish and allow current English words (in Devanagari script). This is particularly true of *Naobharat Times*, the Hindi paper of the *Times of India* group. As *Times of India* Rahul Kansal says, ‘Our Hindi editors are told to use as many English words as the readers are used to—and it helps’ (in Kothari and Snell 2011, 206).<sup>22</sup> The pure Hindi of Doordarshan news, the Indian state TV, which was equally feared and made fun of in the past as impenetrable to all but the Hindi highly-educated, is a thing of the past even on that channel. Part of the “newspaper revolution” has been the growth of tabloid news supplements with an intense coverage of Bollywood and TV celebrities which have imported the older popular film gossip mode of address that pioneered Hinglish (Parameswaran 2012, 15). There have also been experiments such as the Hinglish newspaper *I-next*, which is basically in Hindi but has many English headings in Devanagari script.

This Hindi newspaper and newschannel revolution must be seen in connection with the rise of regional parties and of low-caste politicization. This creates an interesting tension: while TV news channels can be accused of providing a strongly metro-centric perspective on news—the central theme of Anusha Rizvi’s film *Peepli: Live!*, along the lines of Santosh Desai’s critique quoted above—Hindi newspapers and local cable TV news channels such as Citi Hulchul in Meerut have focused strongly on local and regional news. So while small-town and village India in Hindi films or advertisements appear mainly as a backdrop, which cool kids who speak the metropolitan youth lingo of Hinglish escape from, local news actors (and politicians) speak a different Hinglish, with a Hindi matrix despite the abundance of English words.

Linguistic and rhetorical skills are of course crucial to politics, and the ability to speak Hindi (or other regional politics) has been a must for politicians in north India ever since the rise of electoral politics in the 1920s, though Hindi-only proficiency becomes a handicap at the national level. This is a topic that requires much more systematic research, but we can begin by

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<sup>21</sup> Former Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav famously did not care about criticism from English-language journalists but wanted his photo taken: as he put it, his readers could not read English newspapers but could see his photograph printed.

<sup>22</sup> See also Rohit Prakash’s presentation ‘Remix ke daur men Hindi’ (Hindi in the time of remix) at the SOAS/SARAI Hinglish workshop in New Delhi, 18.8.2014, available at <http://sarai.net/hinglish-workshop-18-19-august-2014-recordings/>, last accessed on 30.1.2015.

observing that at a basic level Hinglish code-switching and language mixing have become a mainstay of political discourse in north India,<sup>23</sup> yet if we pay attention to *accent, fluency, and rhetorical skills*, very different types of Hinglish and bilingualism emerge, not just due to a politician's background and education, but also aimed at sending out particular signals to voters.

Thus in the 2012 elections in the Hindi-speaking state of Uttar Pradesh two "young" leaders were pitted against each other in the polls. Rahul Gandhi, clearly metropolitan and more comfortable with English, made a big but ultimately unsuccessful effort at appearing rooted and committed to the local constituency, and speaking in correct Hindi was part of this effort. But as his speech in Phulpur shows, his competence in Hindi did not amount to rhetorical competence.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, the winner Akhilesh Yadav, first-generation English (and Australia-) educated, who speaks English with a strong accent, was careful to project the image of a Hindi politician; while at ease in the world of English and of technology, he was keen to downplay his English and foreign education, and commentators judged that his perceived rootedness (also expressed in his Hindi rhetorical ease) contributed significantly to his victory.<sup>25</sup> And when former UP Chief Minister and Dalit leader Mayawati, who has always projected herself as a representative of the lower-caste (Dalit-Bahujan) masses and has always spoken in Hindi with a strong local accent, strained to include a large number of English words in an interview, it was to strengthen her short-lived prime ministerial bid, and thus able to work at the national and international level.<sup>26</sup>

Compared to other domains, then, in the post-liberalization period newsmedia and politics have seen the importance of Hindi and of regional roots *grow*, and it is an English accent, rather than a Hindi one, that is perceived as a hindrance. This trend has recently received a fillip from Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, who instructed his ministers to speak in Hindi in public as much as possible; though as one commentator showed, in his speech from Delhi's Red Fort on Independence Day 2014, he spoke only in Hindi for the first ten minutes to emphasise his cultural identity, but then switched to Hinglish catchphrases and slogans when he talked about his plans for

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<sup>23</sup> 'The politicians arguing about the Reservation for Women Bill in parliament swing back and forth between English and whatever language channel they may be giving a sound bite to. "Let me tell you," they declare, "*iska koi easy solution nahin hai!*" (Let me tell you, there is no easy solution to this issue)' Mohan 2010.

<sup>24</sup> See his speech on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3UC8fJ5nI0> [last accessed 23.7.2014].

<sup>25</sup> See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIiRIoyjf5Y&feature=relmfu> [last accessed 23.7.2014].

<sup>26</sup> See interview on *Walk the Talk* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iNUEB7B5do> [last accessed 23.7.2014]

economic development.<sup>27</sup> English TV news no longer dub or subtitle Hindi politicians' statements, and the same is true for Hindi TV news with statements in English, a clear indication of how expectations of viewers' understanding of and tolerance for the other language have changed.

At the same time, politics and newsmedia are also where the Hindi vs English language debate periodically resurfaces, with well-rehearsed and valid arguments against English privilege and social exclusion or Hindi's fustiness and unfair imposition, and in favour of the expediency of English or the social inclusivity and reach of Hindi.<sup>28</sup>

### **Hinglish in the workplace**

In the world of IT boom and globalization, English is of course pursued as the key to success for knowledge professionals and anyone aspiring to a good job (Upadhyaya and Vasavi 2008). This is one reason for the exponential growth of private English-*speaking* courses in small towns and metropolitan centres, not only to improve communicative skills but also to build self-confidence, alongside (and synonymous with?) courses in personality development.<sup>29</sup> Within this environment of intense investment in the English language as the key to professional success and social mobility even for groups who would not have dreamt of it a generation earlier, how does Hinglish play out? To what extent has the workplace become more inclusive and disregards accent or language repertoires?<sup>30</sup> Studying the presence and use of Hinglish at the workplace means paying attention not just to workers' practices in the workplace but also to the language dimensions of workers' management in the new economy.

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<sup>27</sup> Apoorvanand, 'Language strategies in political speech', SARAI Hinglish workshop, at <http://sarai.net/hinglish-workshop-18-19-august-2014-recordings/>, last accessed on 20.1.2015.

<sup>28</sup> See fn 8 above.

<sup>29</sup> As documented in many newspaper articles such as Kumar 2014. He notes that these are 'coaching classes, most of which offer two to three-month crash courses in spoken English. Interestingly, not only those from vernacular-medium schools, but also some from English-medium ones are enrolling themselves in such classes. Explaining the trend, Kishore Kumar Banerjee, director of British India, says, 'With premier management institutes like IIM-Ranchi, BIT-Mesra, etc, bringing students from metros with a fluency in English, local students are realizing the need to hone their communicative skills to survive competition'. Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase 2009 record urban middle class anxieties in Kolkata that the older pride in the Bengali language has jeopardized professional opportunities for the young generation.

<sup>30</sup> See Prashant Panday the workplace today 'has become much more egalitarian— which strata you come doesn't matter. As long as you have the right skill set and the right attitude, you can join any sector' (see fn4 above).

In the English-speaking professional workplace of large companies, Hinglish seems to exist only to mark a level of informality.<sup>31</sup> At the lower end of the IT sector, language becomes part of worker's management. For BPO (i.e. call centre) jobs, language and accent coaching are a regular and substantial part of workers' training, given the very high turnover of workers.<sup>32</sup> So while the triumphalistic discourse of Hinglish that harnesses it to Indian English and projects it as a variety of English that will acquire the same international legitimacy as American English and British English, in BPOs Hinglish is seen as a barrier that needs to be overcome. There Hinglish and Hindi/Indian languages can only be "furtive tongues" (Krishnamurthy 2011). But in the ITES workplace itself, among workers who are overwhelmingly young and who, according to A.R. Vasavi (in Upadhyaya and Vasavi 2008), like to distinguish themselves from other workers by their (higher) education qualifications and consumption habits, and redefine their work as education and entertainment, Hinglish seems to have a strong hold together with other aspects of metropolitan consumerist youth culture such as food or clothing.

At the same time, as scholars point out, one of the largest areas of employment growth – in India as elsewhere – has been at the lower end of the informal sector: maintenance, security, catering, cleaning ("housekeeping"), etc.<sup>33</sup> While substantive research still needs to be carried out, informal enquiries suggest that basic English/Hinglish is very much part of the training and (monitored) performance of such jobs, together with appearance (uniform), manners, and body comportment. And while Hinglish allows for communication between the vastly different classes of those who frequent shopping malls or gated-housing communities and those who guard them or clean them, it can hardly bridge the vast gap between the linguistic competence, economic and social power between them. Poor

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<sup>31</sup> 'Hinglish, for them helps to break the "formal" environment at office, and makes the boring dull office conversations more peppy and spiced-up. "An usual day at my office is all about work, work and more work, and added to that the late hours...it all can make life really miserable. So, we all colleagues try to keep the office environment as stress-free as possible, and conversing in a language that's fun, youthful and absolutely 'hatke', like Hinglish, does help a great deal." Proclaims Engineer, Amit Sharma'; Sujata Chowdhury 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Nofil, 'Hinglish, a strict no no in BPOs!', *Indian Express*, 13.5.2010, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/hinglish-a-strict-no-no-in-bpos/article1-542998.aspx>, last accessed on 31.1.2015.

<sup>33</sup> As Nandini Gooptu (2013, 11) puts it: 'Urban areas have witnessed a hitherto unprecedented proliferation of private hospitals, educational institutions, leisure and entertainment venues, hotels and hospitality units, large scale organized retail outlets and shopping malls. Maintenance, cleaning, catering and house-keeping in such mass private property, as well as the protection, safety and security of such spaces and their owners and users, have led to both an immense surge in demand for suitably trained labour and a radical transformation in the nature of work at the bottom of the urban formal sector'.

English/Hinglish is often taken by wealthy residents/consumers as a sign of poor intelligence and a sign that “they” are not “like us.”<sup>34</sup> Here Hinglish works less as a language of socio-economic mobility and more as one of servitude.

### **Education and college life**

Education is a crucial area *both* for aspirations of social mobility *and* for the reproduction of social division – roughly corresponding to the division between “private” and “government” schools and English- and Hindi-medium, though both kinds of schools comprise a great variety and stratification in terms of quality of education (La Dousa 2014). A direct inheritance of the colonial education system, in the two-tier system, educationist Krishna Kumar has often pointed out, Hindi-medium education is not seen as a separate project but as a “cheap edition” of English education. Thanks to the colonial (and postcolonial) organisation of knowledge, knowledge flows from English into the vernaculars, with teachers and schoolchildren often complaining about the poor quality of textbooks badly translated from English. The result is that despite the basic similarity between the two kinds of education, the language division creates right from childhood people who live in two different worlds. These separate worlds metamorphose into class consciousness created by the particular environment, cultural symbols and practices of the schools and from the “common knowledge” that surrounds them (K. Kumar 2001).<sup>35</sup> While the failure to invest in universal primary education can be counted as one of the great blunders of post-independence India, the last decade or so has seen both a renewed government effort at meeting targets for basic literacy and primary education in rural areas, and the remarkable growth in demand for English-medium private schools even among the poor (see e.g. Ramalingam 2009), thus decreasing the demand for government schools. Despite long-standing studies by Indian educationists on the advantages of first-language primary

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<sup>34</sup> Nandini Gooptu, personal communication, 25.7. 2012.

<sup>35</sup> As Krishna Kumar puts it, ‘The Hindi-medium schoolchild very quickly understands that the sources of his/her knowledge are a translation whose original text is in English; e.g. arithmetics and science, where the terminology is so artificial that one needs to know the English word in order to understand the Hindi one. S/he is socialised in a world of knowledge that is full of disparities/unbalances and which produces a lack of self-confidence.’ Whereas ‘the English-medium schoolchild perceives a harmonious world of knowledge and acquires self-confidence through praise and social respect. After the first pain of translations his/her world becomes a wide, international world (even in her actual means are limited), whereas the world of the Hindi-medium child will shrink and s/he will cover up that limited world with the “cover” (*jhalar*) of nationalism’ (2001, my translation). For a recent study LaDousa 2014, also Ramanathan 2005.

education in the child's learning process (including language-learning skills), there is very strong popular perception that in order to learn good English so as to join the enchanted circle of English-speakers and gain access to the opportunities they have, a child must learn English from the youngest age possible. In order to achieve that aim many schools enforce a rule that prohibits speaking in one's first language in the pre-school and primary school space so as to avoid first-language interference. Two direct consequences of the boom in private English-medium schools and of their insistence on English-only proficiency that devalues first-language skills are first, limited competence in English despite attending English-medium schools because of the poor quality of teaching and of the teachers' own proficiency; and second, decreasing *written* and *reading* competence in one's first language in English-medium schools, so much so that one can apply many of the observations on language shift in migrant communities to Indian schoolchildren within India (see Auer 1998 for studies on language shift). As a result, the competence in reading and writing Hindi English-educated children becomes strictly functional.

Against this background of formal English enforcement and aspiration, Hinglish nonetheless plays a crucial role in education and school/college life, both as a "furtive tongue" and a necessary bridge, and as an informal and inclusive language identity. Many college teachers testify to the pragmatic need to use a mixture of English and Hindi to teach students who ostensibly went through an English education, and to create their own teaching materials in the absence of Hindi translations of key texts.<sup>36</sup> College teachers also among those raising concerns that the growth of Hinglish and of bilingual *spoken* competence may occur at the expense of developing a full vocabulary in either language, so that speakers cannot operate *without* mixing.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, Hinglish has emerged as the informal language of choice of college students, at least in metropolitan centres, for whom Hinglish may have indeed acquired the status of a sociolect (Parshad, Chand, Sinha & Kumari 2014, also Kidwai 2014). College students view Hinglish both as a unifying medium for those coming from different regional backgrounds with varying bilingual competence, and as giving them a group identity:

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<sup>36</sup> E.g. 'Teachers of almost all the subjects, save languages, deliver their lectures in a mixture of Hindi and English, so that students coming from different backgrounds might easily comprehend them', Mishra 2011.

<sup>37</sup> See e.g. Kothari 2011, 194; but see also Tripathi's alarmist newspaper article (2003): 'Excessive use of "Hinglish" from an early age is now being linked with speech disorders like stammering and "faulty production of sound" among children. Unable to articulate well, because of "faulty" bilingual usages, the children end up in a situation where they are neither versed in English, nor in their own mother tongue.'



“Yes, its true that there is a certain divide between those who speak good English and those who do not. Most of the outstation students, for instance are not too comfortable with the language, and thus, feel left out. I think that is the very reason why the ‘Indianised’ version of English has become so popular. It has helped to make things less formal, and to generally, make everyone feel accepted” says Shreya Mukherjee.

“I believe that the reason why Hinglish is so popular is because of the fact that it’s a very “young” language. It has a certain funk-factor. In our college, none of us speak in proper Hindi or English, its always Hinglish that we prefer, and why not? It’s one of the most creative and flexible languages. We end up creating a new word everyday and its so much fun”, laughs off Ramandeep Singh, a student from Chandigarh. (quoted in Chowdhury 2008)

The close connection between college life and Hinglish is evident in the number of Hinglish poems on the web that deal with college studies, in the Hinglish spoken by college students in TV reality shows such as Channel V’s *Dare 2 Date*, and in the perception that the new kind of *hatke* films often set in Delhi (*Oye Lucky Lucky Oye*, *Delhi Belly*, etc.) that have Hinglish dialogues and feature college-going metropolitan youth are “realistic” and “represent” both young people and the language they speak. As we have seen, the presence of Hinglish in the professional workplace is also viewed as a direct spillover of Hinglish as the language shared by college-educated youth, evoking the same mood of camaraderie and fun.

### **Films and Television**

Together with advertising, Hindi cinema is one of the domains in which Hinglish code-switching and language mixing have become most visible in the last decade, notwithstanding the longer history of English in Hindi films (Kothari 2011). A vigorous debate is going on in film circles concerning the currency of Hinglish and the new crop of films that embrace it, and the consequences of this turn for the economics of film exhibition and distribution. A parallel discourse concerns the aesthetics of Hinglish in film songs. In the context of cinema, Hinglish seems to indicate films that may be almost exclusively in English (perhaps with some mixed-language song) set in an urban/metropolitan context with young characters (such as *Delhi Belly*). This suggests that Hinglish works less as a strictly linguistic definition and more as a broad cultural reference to a glocalized youth culture.

The Hinglish turn in Hindi cinema is viewed as a direct result of the changing conditions of exhibition and distribution, with the space made available in multiplexes for smaller-budget and more original films and the rise in cinema ticket prices that has made cinema-going into a largely middle-class affair (Athique 2011). A new crop of filmmakers are seeking to interpret the youth Zeitgeist and taking advantage of this conjuncture, and a growing numbers of speakers recognize themselves in the language spoken in these films and in the characters and attitudes they portray.<sup>38</sup>

The Hinglish of films is also seen as a result of a new practice of dialogue writing in which writers write dialogues directly in Hinglish (in Roman script, I presume) instead of writing them first in English and then translating them into Hindi.<sup>39</sup> As Anna Vetticad (2011) points out, 'This change has come through a painful transition period of at least a decade during which characters in Bollywood films would often utter a sentence in English and immediately translate it into Hindi, clearly reflecting the filmmaker's fear that audiences would be put off by too much English. Such dialogue writing was an awkward mish-mash of tongues, very much like the titles of many films that were released in the early part of the last decade... 'Baaz: A Bird in Danger', 'Karz: The Burden of Truth', 'Ek Rishtaa: The Bond of Love'.<sup>40</sup>

The discussion around Hinglish films suggests that in the context of films Hinglish at present is playing the role of a (growing) sub-culture and

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<sup>38</sup> 'Says trade analyst Amod Mehra, Entertainment Network, "Today, middle-class and poor people have virtually stopped going to the theatres, thanks to the spiralling prices of the tickets. Hence, the main audience for the film is the educated and the upwardly mobile urbanite. These people relate to Hinglish films better because this is exactly what they speak – a bit of Hindi and a bit of English. Besides, they relate to the characters in Hinglish films strongly; they find the larger-than-life image of characters in the candy-floss and action films too unrealistic"; Lalwani 2003.

<sup>39</sup> See Anna Vetticad (2011), 'There's something about the way language is being used in Bollywood these days. Characters in many major films now speak Hindi the way Indians do in real life – formally in formal situations, casually among friends, melding it with our mother tongues if our roots don't lie in the Hindi belt, and injecting English into our speech whether we are public-school-educated-city-bred folk or street urchins in small towns whose accents are a product of repeated interactions with foreign tourists. A number of Bollywood writers these days are working hard to ensure that the Hindi their characters speak is not textbook-ish or unreal; equally important, that their Hindi dialogues are not direct translations of English sentences; and that their English dialogues don't reek of Western serials and films.'

<sup>40</sup> She argues that such self-translation is now "incongruous": 'it's so incongruous when Amitabh Bachchan in Jha's 2011 release 'Aarakshan' more than once treats viewers to a direct English translation of a dialogue he's just delivered in Hindi – "Kya aap mujh par jaativaad ka aarop laga rahe hain?" followed by "Are you accusing me of being casteist?"' (Vetticad 2011).

niche market, while marking a deep cultural gap from Hindi-only films, the blockbusters that do well in the hinterland.<sup>41</sup> For example, according to Vetticad, Prakash Jha's 2010 film *Raajneeti* was a blockbuster 'but was still ridiculed for a sequence in which everyday Hindi was suddenly replaced by a more old-world variety in just one conversation, with words like "kintu", "parantu" and "jyesht putra" thrown in, seemingly to remind us that the film was based on the Mahabharat.'<sup>42</sup> 'Hinglish titles: empty coffers?' titles one newspaper article, reporting that:

Hinglish may be the order of the day in Bollywood, be it the film titles, lyrics or even dialogues. But while the films seem to have found takers in multiplex audience, barring a few films most apparently fail to strike a chord with the single screen theatre-goers and smaller towns. "In the smaller centres, people often find it hard to grasp the language. So catchy titles or lyrics may work for their catchy tunes, the dialogues often fail to make the impact they would with the multiplex audiences," says a leading distributor. (Naval-Shetye 2011)

Thus, rather than a unifying effect, Hinglish in cinema seems rather to mark the *limits* of its social and cultural inclusion, with the limited popularity and communicability of Hinglish films beyond the metropolitan multiplexes revealing the culturally and spatially stratified nature of Hinglish and its exclusions.

Together with advertising, film songs are the other domain in which the creativity and aesthetics of Hinglish have been discussed. Creative director (his catchline *Thanda Matlab Coca-Cola*, Cold drink means Coca Cola, won him the 2003 Cannes Lion Award at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival) and film lyricist Praseen Joshi is the most vocal supporter of the creative potential of Hinglish in film songs:

You must have heard the song '*Masti ki pathshala* from the film *Rang De Basanti*. It has a line that says: '*Talli hoke girne se, samjhi hamne gravity...*' Now this line has the English *gravity*, Punjabi *talli*, Hindi *samjhi*. Which language is the song set in? It expresses a youth's

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<sup>41</sup> Actor-turned-director Deepak Tijori makes the interesting observation that censors are less strict for Hinglish films—clearly reflecting their differential role vis-a-vis the urban middle class and the urban and rural poor; quoted in Lalwani 2003.

<sup>42</sup> Writes Trisha Gupta (2011), 'As a young woman who writes screenplays and dialogue for Bollywood recently informed me, people "in real life" no longer say things like "*Kya waqt hua hai?*" or "*Tum yahan kaise?*". The idea of speaking full sentences in Hindi is now so anachronistic as to be automatically funny'. This is obviously a metropolitan view that does not reflect practices outside Mumbai and Delhi and a limited social group.

experience... How does a language become potent? For one, you can express nuances, the grey shades...' (Joshi 2011, 194-5)

It is notable that Hindi film songs have long been praised for the musical and linguistic range and eclecticism, and English phrases and words have been used in film songs – to a humorous effect – since at least the 1940s (Vohra 2014 and Ravikant 2014). But what Praseon Joshi is pointing towards is the ability of contemporary Hinglish songs to engage in wordplay and word creation and to express the emotional world of contemporary metropolitan youth. In the same vein others have praised the Hinglish songs of films like *Dev D* or *Delhi Belly* for their inventiveness rejection of cloying romance, thus encapsulating the new emotional landscape of the post-liberalization generation:

The phrase 'Emotional Atyaachar', from the song of the same name written by Bhattacharya for the movie *Dev D*, has now passed into the vocabulary of a generation that, for the first time, is learning to deal with modern Americanized notions of love and lust in an Indian context.<sup>43</sup>

Since then, *Emotional Atyachaar* (Emotional torture) has become the title of a programme on the youth-oriented TV channel Bindass that has adapted the US format of *Cheaters*.<sup>44</sup>

What about Indian television? This is a fluid and fast-changing field, with channels and production houses diving for new trends and scrapping programmes that attract few viewers. Beyond the important field of news programmes and channels, currently the main genres of Indian television consist of soap operas, mythological serials, and reality shows. Hinglish appears prominently in youth-oriented serials on Channel [V] (Parmar 2014) and in reality shows, whereas mythological and family-oriented soap operas like those of Ekta Kapoor's production house use only Hindi (Munshi 2010).

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<sup>43</sup> '[Amitabh] Bhattacharya takes Hinglish seriously as a language, and treats it with respect. For him, it's less a medium to elicit laughs by some clever juxtapositioning of Hindi words and English ones, but more a hybrid language that nails contemporary reality... The new wave of lyric writers like Jaideep Sahni and Bhattacharya are at the forefront of these successful experiments with Hinglish, which has liberated the Hindi film lyric, allowing the film song to widen its ambit a wee bit; it can now talk about things other than eternal love and cloying romance. Even when the subject is as hackneyed as love, it is now approached in a more direct manner, like in the lyrics of 'Jaa Chudail', also from *Delhi Belly*, where a disgruntled lover spits out the following, "Ungli pe nachake tune/ Chuna jo lagaya mujhe/ Arey jaa jaa jaa/ Go to hell.../Arey jaa ja ja/ I want silence/ Jaa chudail, Jaa chudail"', Mehrotra nd.

<sup>44</sup> See videos on the official Youtube channels, <https://www.youtube.com/show/emotionalatyachaar> [accessed 23.7.2014].

In the first two episodes of Channel [V]'s dating show *Dare 2 Date*, which ran for two seasons between 2009 and 2011, young participants either college students or college dropouts, began speaking in English in their self-presentation or when they first met each but mixed or switched between English and Hindi when, particularly when one perceived that the other's English competence was limited. Hindi-only sentences were definitely marked and, particularly when voiced by the UK-born anchor Andy, used parodically, for example to invoke the cultural expectation of a "beautiful love story" (*ek larki thi anjani si, ek larka divana-sa, aur unke bich hui ek manohar prem kahani*, Once there was an innocent girl, and a lover boy, and they both fell in love) only to reject it (... *is show men aisa khuch nahin hoga!* There'll be nothing like that on this show!).<sup>45</sup>

In the first episode, 18-year-old middle-class Malvika, about to go to college, dates 22-year-old Delhi-urban-village Jat boy Kash, cash-rich but English-poor (Andy calls him a *desi* prince). Malvika introduces herself to the camera first in English ('Hi, I'm Malvika, I'm eighteen years old'), then switches briefly to Hindi before going back to English, '*Mainne apna school abhi khatam kara* ('I have just finished *school*', using the colloquial Delhi perfective *kara* instead of *kiya*) and I am looking out for college', and keeps an informal conversational style switching back and forth when talking about her favourite colour pink ('*Jo bhi pink dikh jae mujhe chahiye*', Whatever I see in pink I must have it) and her dreams to meet a Prince Charming. Kash introduces himself wholly in Hindi (with a strong Haryanvi accent), and the only English words and phrases he uses in his self-introduction are '*real estate*' and '*we are farmers*'. When he first meets Malvika accompanied by his trail of cars and an armed guard, she is impressed ('He's wearing pink, my favourite colour... I like his style, is the car his?') and begins speaking in English. When he replies to her in Hindi and she realizes his limited competence she quickly switches to Hindi until she *wants* to underline their socio-cultural difference.

M – So what do you do right now?

K – Fashion designer.

M – Fashion designing? [cut]

K – *Ap kya karte hain din bhar?* (What do you do all day?)

M – Well, I've just finished school now, I'm preparing to go to college.

K – Schoolgirl, ah.

M – I finished school, *to ab main college journalism ke lie ja rahi hun.* (*I finished school, so now I am going to college to do journalism*)

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<sup>45</sup> He then switches to mixing and switching '*Kya kar paaenge, ek dusre ko impress, uh?* So let's find out! *Aj kaun jaaega date pe?*' [Will they be able to *impress* each other, uh? So let's find out? Who will go on a date today?]; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hbOysIorv0> [accessed 23.7.2013]

K – *Patraakaar banna chahte hain?* (You want to become a journalist?)  
M – *Patraakaar?* (Journalist?) [cut. They discuss the future, what to do ahead]  
K – *Age barhne ki socha?... Bahut sare prastaav hain... Chunao laro, fashion laro, sundarta hai aapke lie.* (Have you thought about moving ahead?... There are many offers... Fight for elections, fight for *fashion*, you have beauty)  
M – *Kya karun, elections? Elections, kis chiz ke?* (What should I do, elections? Elections, of what?)  
K – *Sansad* (Parliament)... [M is incredulous. Cut.]  
M – Excuse me, we don't belong to the class that owns farmhouses and... We are all creative people. My mother's an artist, my father's an architect. *Aisi lifestyle nahin hai.* (We don't have that lifestyle)  
K – *Chalo chalo chalo. Apke papa kya, building banate hain?* (Never mind, never mind. Does your papa make *buildings*?)  
M – Architects.  
K – Building *banate hain.* (They make *buildings*)  
M – Well, if that's what you call it.  
K – *Karvaenge kabhi kaam unse.* (I'll make him work for me sometime.)

When the programme cuts to her comments to the camera on this first meeting, it is interesting that language is how she chooses to express their socio-cultural differences:

He's not bad, he's a decent-looking guy. Par jo apna munh kholte hain to we can run away. *Matlab ki kya bolte hain wo khud hi samajh sakta, aur koi samajh nahin sakta.* (But as soon as he opens his mouth, *we can run away.* I mean, he's the only one who can understand what he's saying, no one else can.)

Though they *look* compatible and inhabit the same metropolitan youth space of Delhi, wear similar kinds of clothes, and embrace similar consumer aspirations (fancy cars, fancy restaurants with champagne), their social and cultural values are very different (needless to say, she finds him very old-fashioned) and the way they speak and hear the other's speech is a precise index of their difference. Though they both understand each other in either Hindi, English or a mix of the two, they have different ranges of competence. When they *want* to be inclusive, this combination of languages allow them to do so, but they can equally use language to underscore their differences, as Malvika does. It is not only what Kash says (or does not say), his accent and

the way he speaks immediately locate him in a particular class. Hinglish strives to include but still indexes class and cultural difference.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the earlier colonial history of English and Hindi language mixing (Trivedi 2011), English and Hindi language ideologies in post-colonial India both resisted and snubbed mixing. Yet in the last two decades ideas of language purity have lost ground, and both Indian English and Hinglish, whether with a Hindi or an English matrix, have acquired public recognition and become symbols of the new upwardly-mobile, ambitious, and confident India in advertising and the media. Tellingly, in public discourse *both* are often called Hinglish. Hinglish then covers a range of phenomena, from Hindi with many English loanwords, actual switching, English with many Hindi words, and Indian English. And while claims over rights and entitlements continue to pitch the case for Hindi against English, a modicum of Hindi-English bilingualism is part of the everyday life and repertoire of a large and growing percentage of the population, even those with a very limited grasp of the English language.

Yet triumphalistic calls for Hinglish as the language of the future and as a unifying force not only downplay the limits of its social (and spatial) inclusion and the social and class stratification that language still indexes, they also ignore other processes at work, such as the parallel growth of Hindi as a language of politics and news and the limited bilingualism and language shift that attend to English-medium education. For this reason it is useful to disaggregate the domains of language use and investigate the extent, role, meaning, and acceptance of language mixing, and to note the tones and accents that accompany its use (unmarked, marked, parodic, informal, etc.), the role of mixing within the particular speaker's linguistic repertoire, and the listeners' reactions. More broadly, it will be necessary to study the social reach and variations of Hinglish in terms of speakers' age, background, location, and lifestyle, and to go beyond the ebullient discussions in the media, before we can have anything resembling a complete picture.

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