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Indo-British cultural dialogue and the phenomenon of Hinglish

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There has been much debate about the nature and use of hybrid languages. We would like to look at the existing research on Hinglish and explore its use and transformation further. Hinglish is a mixture of the languages Hindi and English, especially the type of English used by speakers of Hindi [1]. We want to highlight the problem, that examines Hinglish not just as a mix of two languages, but as a tool for what can be called 'soft decolonization.' Moving beyond the colonial past where English was used to control India, this analysis argues that India's adoption and transformation of the English language represents a form of 'cultural revenge.' By filling the colonial language with Indian words, grammar, and cultural ideas, India is changing the meaning and purpose of English while keeping its practical value [2]. This process, viewed through theories of post-colonialism and language power, shows how Hinglish helps rebalance cultural and economic influence, challenging the West's traditional control over the English language.

The story of English in India is a perfect example of the post-colonial struggle over meaning and power [3]. English was meant to be a tool of cultural domination. It became the language of the elite, the courts, and the path to a better life. For generations, speaking English meant accepting a colonial mindset.

However, today's linguistic reality in India is completely different [4]. The widespread use of Hinglish—switching between Hindi and English in everyday speech—shows a shift from passive acceptance to active ownership [5].

To understand this argument, we need two key ideas: hegemony and linguistic capital. Hegemony, as theorized by Gramsci [6], describes how a dominant group spreads its worldview so widely that it starts to be seen as normal or natural. For centuries, 'standard' British English held this position, with any other form seen as inferior. Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital [7] adds that language is not just a tool—it is a form of cultural wealth that can bring social and economic advantages. The colonial system gave 'standard English' enormous value while pushing local languages aside.

Hinglish challenges this hierarchy. By mixing English with Hindi, it creates a new kind of language value that more people can use and that feels truly Indian. This is not rejecting English, but reshaping it to fit local needs.

Calling this phenomenon 'cultural revenge' may seem strong for a process that is often natural rather than political [8]. However, it captures the significant power shift taking place. India is not just using English—it is fundamentally changing it. The language once used to control India is now the main vehicle for India's global rise [9].

This linguistic transformation achieves something that decades of political debate could not: it breaks the connection between the English language and Western cultural dominance. English in India no longer represents a colonial past; it represents a global, technologically advanced, and confidently mixed Indian future. The ultimate revenge is not rejecting the colonizer's language, but transforming it into a language of the global South, used with such confidence that it challenges the idea of the 'owner' of English. What remains is Hinglish—a powerful sign of India's ability to absorb, transform, and ultimately move beyond its colonial heritage [10].

Источники и литература

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