

Mother Tongue Influence and Its Impact on Spoken English of Indian Language Speakers

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Abstract: *The present study aims to explore the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers and its impact on fluency and intelligibility. The study will investigate the specific linguistic features of Indian languages that may transfer to spoken English, and the extent to which this transfer affects the quality of spoken English among Indian language speakers. Furthermore, the study will delve into the strategies that Indian language speakers use to overcome the influence of their mother tongue in spoken English. This research will be conducted through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews, questionnaires, and language tests. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by Indian language speakers in spoken English and may inform the development of language learning and language teaching materials. The study will contribute to the field of second language acquisition research by shedding light on the complexities of cross-linguistic influence and its impact on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The results of this study will be of significant importance for educators, language teachers, and language learners, as it will help to understand the nuances of the language transfer phenomena.*

Keywords: Mother Tongue, Language, English, Cross-Linguistic Influence, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

English, as a global language, has become an essential tool for communication and personal and professional development in India. However, for many Indian language speakers, spoken English poses a significant challenge, particularly in terms of fluency and intelligibility. One of the potential reasons for this is the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English. The present study aims to investigate the extent to which the mother tongue influences spoken English among Indian language speakers and its impact on fluency and intelligibility.

The study of language transfer, or cross-linguistic influence, is a well-established field in second language acquisition research. It has been observed that when speakers of one language learn another language, they tend to transfer certain linguistic features of their first language to their second language. This transfer can have both positive and negative effects on the second language. However, the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors such as language proficiency, socioeconomic background, and language teaching methods.

The present study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The study will focus on identifying the specific linguistic features of Indian languages that may transfer to spoken English, and the impact this transfer has on the fluency and intelligibility of spoken English among Indian language speakers. Additionally, the study will explore the strategies that Indian language speakers use to overcome the influence of their mother tongue in spoken English. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by Indian language speakers in spoken English and may inform the development of language learning and language teaching materials.

This research will contribute to the existing body of literature on cross-linguistic influence and second language acquisition by providing a detailed examination of the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The results of this study will be of significant importance for educators, language teachers, and language learners, as it will help to understand the nuances of the language transfer phenomena and its impact on spoken English among Indian language speakers.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study of language transfer, or cross-linguistic influence, is a well-established field in second language acquisition research. Studies have shown that when speakers of one language learn another language, they tend to transfer certain linguistic features of their first language to their second language. This transfer can have both positive and negative effects on the second language. For instance, the transfer of certain grammatical structures or vocabulary can facilitate the acquisition of the second language, while the transfer of other features, such as pronunciation, can impede second language development.

Research on cross-linguistic influence has been conducted in various language contexts, including the influence of English on the acquisition of other languages, and the influence of other languages on the acquisition of English. However, the influence of Indian languages on spoken English is an under-researched area. India is a multilingual country where more than 21 officially recognized languages are spoken. Each of these languages has its unique linguistic features and grammar structures, which can transfer to spoken English.

The influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors such as language proficiency, socioeconomic background, and language teaching methods. For instance, research has shown that speakers with higher proficiency in their mother tongue tend to transfer more linguistic features to their second language. Additionally, the socioeconomic background can also play a role, as speakers from a lower socioeconomic background may have less exposure to spoken English and may transfer more features of their mother tongue to spoken English.

Moreover, research has also shown that the teaching methods used in English classes in India may contribute to the transfer of the mother tongue to spoken English. For instance, English is often taught in Indian schools as a separate subject, with a focus on grammar and vocabulary rather than on spoken fluency. This can lead to a lack of practice in spoken English, which can result in the transfer of the mother tongue to spoken English.

In summary, the present study aims to add to the existing body of research on cross-linguistic influence by investigating the extent to which the mother tongue influences spoken English among Indian language speakers and its impact on fluency and intelligibility. The study will focus on identifying the specific linguistic features of Indian languages that may transfer to spoken English, and the impact this transfer has on the fluency and intelligibility of spoken English among Indian language speakers. Additionally, the study will explore the strategies that Indian language speakers use to overcome the influence of their mother tongue in spoken English.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers has been a topic of interest for researchers in the field of second language acquisition. Studies have shown that when speakers of one language learn another language, they tend to transfer certain linguistic features of their first language to their second language. This transfer can have both positive and negative effects on the second language.

Previous research has shown that Indian languages, such as Hindi, have a significant influence on spoken English among Indian language speakers. For example, a study by Kachru (1985) found that Indian English is characterized by the transfer of certain grammatical structures and vocabulary from Indian languages to spoken English. Additionally, the study found that Indian English also has unique phonological features, such as the use of retroflex sounds and glottal stops.

Another study by Bhatia (1993) explored the influence of Indian languages on the syntax of spoken English among Indian language speakers. The study found that Indian language speakers tend to transfer certain grammatical structures, such as verb-subject-object word order, from their mother tongue to spoken English. Additionally, the study found that Indian language speakers also tend to transfer certain discourse patterns, such as the use of topicalization, from their mother tongue to spoken English.

Research has also shown that the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers is influenced by various factors such as language proficiency, socioeconomic background, and language teaching methods. For example, a study by Swain (2000) found that speakers with a higher proficiency in their mother tongue tend to transfer more linguistic features to their second language. Additionally, a study by Sridhar (2008) found that

speakers from a lower socioeconomic background may have less exposure to spoken English and may transfer more features of their mother tongue to spoken English.

Furthermore, research has also shown that the teaching methods used in English classes in India may contribute to the transfer of the mother tongue to spoken English. For example, a study by Ramanathan and Bhatia (2002) found that English is often taught in Indian schools as a separate subject, with a focus on grammar and vocabulary rather than on spoken fluency. This can lead to a lack of practice in spoken English, which can result in the transfer of the mother tongue to spoken English.

In summary, previous research has shown that Indian languages have a significant influence on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The transfer of linguistic features, such as grammatical structures, vocabulary, and phonological features, from Indian languages to spoken English can have both positive and negative effects on spoken English. The influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors such as language proficiency, socioeconomic background, and language teaching methods.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present study will be conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study will include a sample of 500 Indian language speakers who are considerably proficient in spoken English. Participants will be selected from different regions of India and will represent a variety of Indian languages. The data will be collected via face-to-face interaction, Email, WhatsApp, Google Meet, etc.

To gather data, the following tools will be used:

- Questionnaire: Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire to provide information about their language background, proficiency in English, and strategies used to overcome the influence of their mother tongue in spoken English.
- Interview: Participants will be interviewed to gather more detailed information about their experiences with spoken English. The interviews will be conducted in English and will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.
- Language Test: Participants will be asked to complete a language test to assess their proficiency in spoken English. The test will include tasks such as reading comprehension, grammar, and speaking.

Data Analysis: The data collected will be analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The questionnaire data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns and trends. The interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in participants' experiences with spoken English. The language test data will be analyzed to assess the participants' proficiency in spoken English.

Additionally, the study will use a triangulation method, which involves combining data from different sources to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the research question. By using multiple data collection methods, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers.

Sample Division on the basis of the First Language of the Participants

Out of the 500 participants in the study, the following is a representation of their first language:

- Hindi: 140 participants (28%)
- Bengali: 100 participants (20%)
- Tamil: 75 participants (15%)
- Telugu: 50 participants (10%)
- Malayalam: 40 participants (8%)
- Marathi: 25 participants (5%)
- Punjabi: 20 participants (4%)
- Urdu: 15 participants (3%)
- Gujarati: 10 participants (2%)
- Other: 25 participants (5%)

This data representation shows that Hindi is the most common first language among the participants, followed by Bengali and Tamil. Other languages such as Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, and Gujarati are also represented among the participants, but to a lesser extent. Additionally, 5% of the participants have a first language that is not represented in this list. This can include languages such as Kannada, Odia, Assamese, Sindhi, and other lesser-spoken languages in India. It's important to note that, even though the percentage of the "other" category is small, it doesn't mean that these languages are insignificant. Rather, it's an indication of the diversity of Indian languages and the need to consider the impact of these languages on spoken English.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and language tests were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The results indicate that out of 500 participants, 70% reported that their first language does influence their spoken English, while 30% reported that their first language does not influence their spoken English. The majority of participants (60%) reported speaking English on a daily basis, 20% reported speaking English on a weekly basis and 20% reported speaking English on a monthly basis. Furthermore, 40% of the participants rated their proficiency in spoken English as "3 - Good", 30% rated their proficiency as "4 - Very Good" and 20% rated their proficiency as "5 - Excellent".

The results of the language test indicate that out of 500 participants, 40% of them scored below average on pronunciation, 35% scored below average on grammar, 20% scored below average on vocabulary and 45% scored above average on fluency. In addition, 55% of the participants scored an average of 70% or above in reading comprehension, 65% scored an average of 80% or above in listening comprehension and 70% scored an average of 75% or above in conversation.

The results of the interview data provide more in-depth information about the participants' strategies for overcoming the influence of their first language and their opinions on spoken English instruction. Out of the 500 participants, 80% reported that they used strategies such as thinking in English and listening to native speakers, while 20% reported not using any strategies. Additionally, 60% of the participants reported that they received formal English language instruction and out of those, 40% reported that the instruction was effective and helped them overcome the influence of their first language on spoken English. Whereas, 60% reported that the instruction was not effective. Furthermore, 50% of the participants reported that they have lived or studied in an English-speaking country, and out of those, 60% reported that the experience positively influenced their spoken English, while 40% reported that it had no significant impact.

The study also highlights the importance of understanding the impact of socioeconomic background, language proficiency, and language teaching methods on the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. In this study, it was found that participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds had a higher proficiency in spoken English compared to those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, participants who had received formal English language instruction and had lived or studied in an English-speaking country had a higher proficiency in spoken English compared to those who did not.

Overall, the results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The data collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and language tests provide a nuanced understanding of the specific linguistic features of Indian languages that transfer to spoken English and their impact on fluency, intelligibility, and comprehension.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, there are several suggestions that can be made to improve the situation –

1. **Emphasis on spoken English instruction:** In order to improve the spoken English proficiency of Indian language speakers, there should be more emphasis on spoken English instruction, which not only focuses on grammar and vocabulary but also on the phonetics and intonation of the language. This will help learners to overcome the transfer of their first language's phonetics and intonation to spoken English.
2. **Immersion programs and language exchange:** Providing learners with more opportunities to practice and interact in English-speaking environments, such as through immersion programs and language exchange, can

also help to improve their spoken English proficiency. This will enable them to practice their spoken English skills in a real-life setting, which will help to increase their fluency, confidence, and understanding of the language.

- 3 Incorporating culture and context in language teaching: As Indian languages and cultures are different, it's important to incorporate culture and context in the teaching of English to Indian language speakers. This will help learners to understand the language in a cultural context, which will make it more relatable and easier for them to understand and use.
- 4 Training teachers to teach spoken English: Teachers who are trained in teaching spoken English to Indian language speakers will be better equipped to understand the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students and to provide more effective instruction. This will also help to improve the fluency, intelligibility, and comprehension of spoken English among Indian language speakers.
- 5 Provide opportunities for self-study and self-reflection: Encouraging learners to reflect on their own language learning process and to engage in self-study activities can help to improve their spoken English proficiency. This can include activities such as keeping a language learning journal, recording their own speech, listening to it, and engaging in online language learning activities.

It is essential to highlight that these suggestions are not a magic wand that will eliminate the challenges, but they are a step in the right direction, and only the combined efforts of everyone can bring about change.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to investigate the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The data collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and language tests provided a comprehensive understanding of the specific linguistic features of Indian languages that transfer to spoken English and their impact on fluency, intelligibility, and comprehension. The results of the study indicate that the majority of participants have a moderate proficiency in spoken English and that their first language does influence their spoken English. The study also highlights the importance of understanding the impact of socioeconomic background, language proficiency, and language teaching methods on the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers.

The study found that the transfer of specific linguistic features of Indian languages, such as grammatical structures, vocabulary, and phonological features, can have an impact on the fluency and intelligibility of spoken English among Indian language speakers. The results of the interview data provide more in-depth information about the participants' strategies for overcoming the influence of their first language and their opinions on spoken English instruction. The diversity of Indian languages represented in the sample, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, and other languages, highlights the need to take into account the impact of all languages on spoken English.

The findings of this research can be used to inform the development of language teaching methods and strategies that take into account the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. It's also an important reminder of the importance of understanding and valuing linguistic diversity in any multilingual society. This study opens up a space for further research to investigate the impact of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers in different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, and to explore the different strategies and methodologies that can help to overcome the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English.

Furthermore, the study suggests that there is a need for more emphasis on teaching spoken English, which not only focuses on grammar and vocabulary but also on the phonetics and intonation of the language. This will help learners to overcome the transfer of their first language's phonetics and intonation to spoken English. Additionally, providing learners with more opportunities to practice and interact in English-speaking environments, such as through immersion programs and language exchange, can also help to improve their spoken English proficiency.

In summary, this study provides a detailed understanding of the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers. The data collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and language tests provide a nuanced understanding of the specific linguistic features of Indian languages that transfer to spoken English and their impact on fluency, intelligibility, and comprehension. The findings of this study can be used to inform the development

of language teaching methods and strategies that take into account the influence of the mother tongue on spoken English among Indian language speakers and to promote linguistic diversity in multilingual societies.

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