

What Bollywood can teach about English as a Lingua Franca

Robert Stevenson

Tamagawa University, Japan
rastevenson@lab.tamagawa.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this paper is to highlight India's global linguistic influence, focusing on English's role in Bollywood and the ways Bollywood films can enrich English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) classrooms. English in India has evolved beyond its colonial past, becoming deeply woven into both individual and cultural identities. In this context, Bollywood emerges as a compelling medium through which to understand the modern, adaptive use of English and offers educators an opportunity to investigate how one of the world's most influential media forms fluidly reinterprets English. Furthermore, by exploring Bollywood, students are encouraged to reflect on their own media environments and consider the role that English plays in shaping expression and cultural identity. This interplay between language and media not only illustrates the transformative power of English today but also invites learners to engage critically with the global narrative of self-expression.

KEYWORDS: ELF, World Englishes, ELF pedagogy, Authentic materials, Educational technology, Bollywood

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite growing research showing that most English communication worldwide occurs between non-native speakers, and an increasing awareness in academia of this fact, English language learning classrooms still tend to rely on teaching with native-speaker language models (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997; Lopriore & Vettorel, 2015; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). This approach is problematic, as students are more likely to use English with other non-native speakers after graduation than with native speakers, leaving them ill-prepared for the multilingual and intercultural situations they will

encounter (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Furthermore, promoting native English as the ideal standard creates unrealistic goals for learners, often leading to issues related to identity, self-confidence, and increased anxiety (Norton, 1997; Woodrow, 2006). It can also impair students' sense of self-efficacy (Pajares, 1996) and hinder motivation (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

English as a lingua franca within pedagogical settings can subvert this trend by exposing learners in the classroom to diverse varieties of English (Kongkerd, 2013; Matsuda, 2003). Classrooms serve as critical sites for the exploration and appreciation of multiple English forms, allowing learners to engage with the language in ways that reflect their cultural realities and global interconnections. This paper explores the multilingualism of Bollywood and ways to introduce this alternative form of English into the language-learning classroom. Through the strategic integration of Bollywood's multilingualism into language curricula, learners can develop a more nuanced understanding of English, transcending traditional barriers and broadening their communicative competence. This approach not only enriches their language learning experience but also helps them use English as a tool for communication and expressing their own identities and culture.

2. BACKGROUND

This section explores the historical context of English in India, provides an overview of Bollywood, and discusses the impact of English on Bollywood's industry and films.

2.1 English in India

There are approximately 120 languages in use throughout India, including English. While Hindi is most common and is one of the world's top languages with some 300 million speakers in India, it is a minority language in a country of 1.5 billion citizens. Virtually nowhere in India is monolingual (Mohanty, 2010). Estimates vary on the number of English speakers in India. Studies show that between four and thirty percent of the population speaks some degree of English (Sridhar, 2020). English competes, compliments, mixes, influences, and is influenced by this complex ecology of languages.

For an in-depth explanation of English in India, see Sridhar (2020), but briefly, English came to India in 1600 during what Jenkins (2009) describes as the first diaspora of English when only five to seven million people spoke English worldwide. Several centuries of oppression and millions of deaths later, India was mostly controlled by the British by 1820. In 1835, Macaulay's (1835) *Minute on Education* established English as the medium of instruction in Indian educational institutions under British rule, stating, "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions who we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (p. 430). In 1947, after India successfully won its independence, attempts were made to establish Hindi as the official language. However, this incited resistance among speakers of other languages, as substituting English with any other language would simply replace one dominant force with another. Despite the colonial history and violence that accompanied the English language into

India, the foreign-ness of English might be considered a relatively neutral option among the languages to be used in institutions and official positions.

English in India is situated within Kachru's (1990) second circle of his three concentric circles of English model. English in this circle functions in institutional roles, such as in administration, education, and other formal sectors. Studies from World Englishes have described Indian English's unique features in pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, and pragmatics (e.g., Kachru, 1983; Sedlatschek, 2009). For instance, Indian English often includes phonological traits like rhoticity (pronouncing the "r" sound in all positions) and specific vowel shifts, which differ from other English varieties. Vocabulary in Indian English reflects local languages and cultures, incorporating words like "*prepone*" (to reschedule earlier) or Hindi terms such as "*chai*" for tea. Syntactically, Indian English speakers may use progressive tenses with stative verbs (e.g., "*I am knowing*" instead of "*I know*") and often emphasize with words like "*only*" or "*itself*." Pragmatic choices reflect Indian social norms, favoring politeness and indirect requests. It must be noted that this is only a broad description of English as it is used in India and may not represent individual users of English in India.

The literature often refers to Indian English as *Hinglish*, but this infers a Hindi-English mix while overlooking the other linguistic combinations within India. For example, there is also *Banglish* (Bengali-English), *Tanglish* (Tamil-English) and *Teglish* (Telugu-English). Sridhar (2020) argues that traditional concepts such as code-mixing (Kachru, 1976, Sridhar & Sridhar, 1980) and code-switching (Myers-Scotton, 1993) fail to capture the complexities of India's multilingualism. These theories do not account for how the creative syntaxes and grammatical structures of various languages combine to produce meaning. To address this, Sridhar (2020) introduces the term *Minglish* to describe India's English, suggesting that the linguistic blending follows its own unique grammatical and stylistic constraints (p. 23). In a similar vein, author Salman Rushdie, in his novel *Midnight's Children* (1981), refers to the influence of Indian languages on English as *chutnification*, capturing the hybrid, eclectic nature of India's linguistic landscape.

Minglish occupies a crucial space where traditional English varieties, such as British and American English, intersect with the growing demand for English in non-native countries. As David Crystal (2005) points out, "India has a unique position in the English-speaking world. I see it as a linguistic bridge between the major first-language dialects of the world, such as British and American English, and the major foreign-language varieties, such as those emerging in China and Japan" (p. 3). This positioning highlights India's role as a critical player in the global expansion of English, with its distinct form of English emerging from its multilingual context. As India's economy and technological influence grow, particularly through sectors like IT, Indian English is gaining prominence on the global stage, influencing communication patterns worldwide (Ganti, 2016; Rajadhyaksha, 2003). The modern means by which English was transmitted into India now also enables Indian English to spread globally. This ongoing development underscores India's central role in bridging linguistic and cultural divides in the modern world.

2.2 Bollywood

The term Bollywood is an umbrella term covering the numerous film production areas throughout India. In particular, it refers to Mumbai (previously Bombay). This is a controversial term as it can be interpreted as a lesser Hollywood while fostering a monolithic impression of Indian cinema that marginalizes the rich diversity of regional cinemas, genres, and styles that exist across the country, such as Tollywood, Kollywood, and various independent films (Dywer, 2014; Mehta & Pandharipande, 2010). Alternative terms, such as Indian cinema, are generally preferred, but as the term Bollywood is commonly used within the Indian cinema industry, it will be used throughout this paper with the acknowledgment of its limitations.

Bollywood originated shortly after the rise of Hollywood in the 1920s, but with a distinct style, focusing on narratives that incorporate traditional Indian themes, values, and social issues. Typical films run between two and three hours and are known for their elaborate song-and-dance sequences, vibrant costumes, and emotive performances. They typically blend multiple genres, such as romance, action, and comedy, often with an emphasis on family values, social messages, and moral lessons. Bollywood movies are popular throughout South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, and an increasing number of Western audiences. In recent years, Bollywood has accounted for nearly one-third of the roughly 7,000 films produced globally each year (Hancock et al., 2024) and has sold approximately four billion cinema tickets- about one billion more than Hollywood (Thussu, 2008).

2.3 English in Bollywood

The multilingualism of India is reflected in its films. The majority of Bollywood films are in the Hindustani language, a mixture of Hindi and Urdu that is understood by many in India and Pakistan. Other languages such as Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam are also prominent. Regardless of the on-screen language, English plays an integral role in the production of most films. As an example, Ganti (2016) quotes from an interview with writer-director Sriram Raghavan, “If I’m making a Hindi film, I’m a Tamilian, but my DOP is a Malayali, and my editor is from Gujarat, so our common language is English” (p. 120). Due to the multilingual backgrounds of industry professionals, English was used as the foundational language in the early stages of scriptwriting, with translations later crafted for the screen (Ganti, 2016).

While English was present in numerous films for much of the century, the events of the 1990s saw English grow in prominence in India and on the screen (Kaur & Sinha, 2005). The Soviet Union collapse removed one of the largest Bollywood viewerships, while increasing globalization, developments in the Internet and cable TV technologies, coupled with access to smartphones have all affected Bollywood viewership. An unprecedented influx of capital created a large Indian middle class that saw English as key to building and maintaining social status. New markets emerged within India and internationally for Bollywood to exploit, with English at the forefront. In a lexical examination of Bollywood films from the 1980s to 2000s, Si (2011) reports that film scripts deployed English with increasing frequency over the course of three decades, a linguistic shift, suggesting an effect of screenwriters deliberately attempting

to reproduce real-world speech patterns.

The increasing prevalence of English in Bollywood films and the industry at large has led to the displacement of once-dominant languages like Hindi and Hindustani (Ganti, 2016). As the industry becomes more professional and corporatized, scripts, traditionally recounted orally, now rely on screenwriting software such as Final Draft, which is an English-only application, making it challenging to write in other languages. In addition, middle- and upper-class actors and directors who grew up in the film industry have limited knowledge of Hindi. On the other hand, new vernaculars are appearing on screen as filmmakers embrace setting as a key element of identity and authenticity (Ganti, 2016). Whereas Hindustani, a blend of Hindi and Urdu, was once used to unite a broad national audience, contemporary Bollywood films now utilize a range of local dialects and languages to broaden their appeal both domestically and internationally.

3. PEDAGOGY

This section examines academic literature on using films as a tool for language learning and then discusses specific methods for incorporating Bollywood in ELF classes.

3.1 Movies in the classroom

Using films in the classroom can be an effective method for learning English. Sánchez-Auñón and Férrez-Mora (2021) highlight the benefits of films in education across three key areas: linguistic development, intercultural understanding, and motivation. From a linguistic perspective, films improve students' listening skills, while subtitles support reading comprehension. Additionally, films offer authentic examples of grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic language use, which students can observe and incorporate into their own communication. Culturally, films provide rich insights into different societies, fostering intercultural awareness. On the motivational side, films are engaging and enjoyable, often sparking creativity and critical thinking in learners.

Several methodological approaches have been proposed for incorporating films into English language instruction. For instance, Li and Wang (2015) outline a four-stage framework: (1) preparation, which includes film-related tasks and student research; (2) pre-viewing, involving background information on the plot, characters, and key vocabulary; (3) viewing, where students first watch the entire film, then specific scenes, accompanied by various activities such as answering comprehension questions, analyzing character motivations or linguistic choices, identifying key phrases, or discussing cinematographic techniques; and (4) post-viewing, through activities like role-playing key dialogues, summarizing scenes, or writing reviews, as well as pronunciation training (e.g., practising intonation and stress with key lines from the film) and grammar/vocabulary explanations (e.g., analyzing idiomatic expressions or verb tense usage in dialogues). While such approaches can be effective for language learning, they tend to overlook or downplay critical aspects relevant to English as a lingua franca, such as the nuanced use of multiple languages and diverse communicative strategies as well as the cultural aspects that affect language and language use.

Several papers in the literature refer to utilizing films and video clips in classrooms (Kongkerd, 2013). Watkins and Wilkins (2011) discuss ways of using YouTube in class, including through World Englishes. Kim and Kim (2021) interviewed Korean international students in Korea about their experiences with YouTube and English inside and outside of class. Results showed that YouTube helps expand students' perspectives on cross-cultural understanding and enabled students to expand their knowledge of English as a lingua franca by taking ownership of their own language resources and identities through English. The study proposes that YouTube can also support students studying abroad to transition from their home to their host country.

While ELF literature on the use of movies in classrooms remains scarce, Chen (2023) offers a detailed study of utilizing film to promote ELF intercultural communication. Students watched videos of various varieties of English and wrote about cultural or societal aspects inspired by the video. This was followed by face-to-face interactions with guests from several of the countries represented in the videos. Post-activity questionnaire results indicated a notable increase in students' intercultural understanding, ELF awareness, and recognition of their own English as a legitimate form of communication.

3.2 Bollywood in the classroom

Incorporating Bollywood into my lessons builds upon my current approach, where students work in groups to select a film scene or video clip, often from platforms like Netflix or YouTube, and then recreate them in their own words on video. I begin by demonstrating this process with an example of a clip and my own recreation. If students are uncertain about finding a clip to use, Disney films serve as a familiar starting point. Students are encouraged to use props, costumes, or drawings and, with some guidance, they can edit their videos on their phones or computers.

After creating their videos, students present their videos along with reflections on the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and overall experience of using their own English. I provide a link to Google Slides where students can upload their videos into the slides to make presenting videos easy. By introducing Bollywood and elements of *Minglish*, students can explore cultural nuances and multilingualism beyond purely English films and clips. It is important that Bollywood is just one example among many varieties of English used in the classroom, helping students gain a broader understanding of English's diverse expressions and applications worldwide.

The following approach is based on Li and Wang's (2015) four-stage framework, expanding it to move beyond purely linguistic information to include cultural aspects, communication strategies, and the benefits of repeated viewings.

3.3 Preparation for international films

Students engage in discussions about the types of films and video clips they watch, both domestic and international. Questions might include:

- How much time do you spend watching domestic versus international content?
- What differences do you notice between domestic and international films and

videos in terms of storytelling, style, or themes?

- Why do you think certain international films and videos are popular in Japan? Are there any that you find particularly interesting?
- What cultural values or perspectives do you think are conveyed in the films and videos you watch?
- How do language and humor differ between domestic and international films and videos?

3.4 Pre-Viewing about Bollywood

Before beginning the discussion on Bollywood, provide a brief overview of India as a diverse and multilingual nation. Emphasize that India is a country where a multitude of indigenous languages coexist with English—a language that has evolved from its colonial past into a dynamic tool for global communication and creative expression. This context will help students appreciate how Bollywood emerges from a rich cultural tapestry, reflecting both traditional values and modern influences.

Move to an open discussion to gauge students' familiarity with Bollywood. Start by asking:

- Have you heard of Bollywood? What do you think it is?
- Have you ever seen a Bollywood film? If so, what was your impression?
- What do you imagine Bollywood movies might be like in terms of style, music, or themes?

Following this discussion, provide a brief introduction to Bollywood. Explain that Bollywood is India's Hindi-language film industry, one of the largest in the world, and is known for its vibrant storytelling, colorful visuals, and elaborate song-and-dance sequences. Touch on Bollywood's history, tracing its evolution from the early 20th century, and highlight its unique blend of traditional and modern influences, along with its impact on global cinema.

Finally, encourage students to think about what they might notice in a Bollywood film that's different from Hollywood, their nation's cinema, or films from other countries, particularly in terms of cultural themes, language use, and the expressive style often found in Bollywood productions.

3.5 Initial viewing for settings, cultural aspects, and communication strategies

For the first viewing, ask students to set aside a focus on language and instead pay close attention to the visual and contextual cues. Encourage them to observe:

- The setting: What locations are depicted, and what do they reveal about the culture or lifestyle being portrayed?
- Body language and gestures: How do the characters express emotions or convey messages non-verbally? Are there any gestures that stand out as culturally specific?
- Tone of voice and expression: How do characters' vocal tones convey different

emotions? Is the tone more dramatic or expressive compared to what they're used to in other films?

- Cultural symbols: Do they notice any traditional clothing, music, celebrations, or other elements unique to the culture being portrayed?
- Look for gender, age, nationality, and other characteristics of who speaks which language. Are they more authoritative, humorous, or seen as outsiders?

Afterward, discuss these observations to explore the cultural elements that stood out. This can help students understand how setting and non-verbal communication, such as facial language, gestures, physical appearance/dress, and meaning within objects, play a role in communication and cultural expression.

3.6 Re-viewing for linguistic meanings

Depending on the level of students, either first ask students to listen to English and try to remember what words and phrases are being used and share a script afterwards, or hand students printed scripts with words blanked out so students may listen and fill in the blanks. With a script, it is often better to hand out one sheet per group and ask the group to work together. This encourages discussion about words and meaning as they piece together the entire script. This task often requires multiple viewings as students strain to catch every word. Ask comprehension questions to check for understanding. Students can also answer multiple-choice or open-ended questions orally or verbally.

In addition, exploring which sounds vary and why these differences exist helps students tune into the nuances of pronunciation across English dialects. This discussion can also extend to why English is used in specific contexts within the dialogue and when other languages appear, encouraging students to consider the social and cultural reasons behind language choice. For example, characters may use English when discussing technical or global topics and then switch to a regional language when expressing personal feelings or cultural values. Additionally, students can explore how words serve purposes beyond their dictionary definitions, conveying emotions, social cues, or cultural references that enrich communication.

3.7 Post-viewing activities

The above lesson leads to a variety of engaging projects. Below are several optional activities that could be particularly interesting to explore. These supplemental projects offer additional opportunities to expand on the themes covered and can be integrated into a broader project exploring films from various countries, thereby deepening students' global use of English through world cinema.

3.7.1 Finding examples from their own media

Task students with finding multilingual video clips from movies, YouTube, interviews, advertisements or other sources that incorporate both their native language and additional languages. Instruct students to find clips by searching YouTube or the Internet with direct terms such as "English and [language] clip from TV", or perhaps compile a curated list of recommended websites, YouTube channels, films, or

advertisements with multilingualism in use. Clips should be short enough for a detailed analysis (two to five minutes) but rich with language. Once learners have chosen a clip, they can either find the script or transcribe the dialogue, paying close attention to the use of English and how it interacts with the other languages present. In class, learners can share and discuss their clips. Here are some post-viewing prompts for discussion:

- What impact does switching languages have? For example, does English add formality, informality, humor, or other tones?
- What contexts and nuances are apparent to help understand why specific language choices are made?

After analyzing the clip, students can write reports that cover several key points:

- Scene/context: Describe the setting, characters, and purpose of the scene.
- Meaning and nuance: Explain the dialogue's meaning in all languages present, noting how the choice of English or other languages impacts the message.
- Language choice justification: Discuss why certain phrases were spoken in English versus other languages and how these language choices affect the scene's tone or audience perception.

Additional projects can include recreating the scene, keeping the multilingual aspect intact, or creating an adaptation by rewriting the scene to reflect their own lives.

3.7.2 ChatGPT scripts

If ChatGPT is an option, students can use it to produce multilingual scripts. Here is an example script for a classroom in Japan. The prompt was, "Write a comedy movie scene set in a classroom. The language is a mix of Japanese and English." Below is what was produced by ChatGPT, with the Japanese in italics:

Setting: The same lively classroom. Mr. Tanaka, a Japanese-English teacher, stands in front of the class with his arms crossed, giving **Kenji** an amused but skeptical look. Kenji shifts nervously, scratching his head, trying to think of a good excuse. His classmates are watching with interest and trying not to laugh.

Scene:

Mr. Tanaka: (sighing) Kenji, where's your homework? *Kore wa mou san-kai me da yo.* This is the *third* time!

Kenji: (nervous, speaking in a mix of Japanese and English) *Ano... sensei...* I actually did it, you know? *Zenbu...* but, *sa*, there was a... um... accident!

Mr. Tanaka: (raising an eyebrow) Accident? *Nani sore?* Go on, explain this "accident."

Kenji: (getting into his story) So, I was doing my homework, *isshoukenmei*, but then my cat, Tama-chan... he jumped on the desk! *Mou, kore wa yabai...* then pyaa,

he just—he ate my paper!

Mr. Tanaka: (laughing, shaking his head) *Aa sou...* your cat, Tama-chan, ate your homework?

Kenji: (nodding earnestly) *Hai, sensei!* Like... chomp, chomp! I was like, “*Yamete, Tama-chan!*” *Demo*, he didn’t stop! *Zettai ni* no chance!

Mr. Tanaka: (smirking) Hmm, *sou ka*. And why didn’t you redo it? *Mada yo?* You had plenty of time after that, *ne?*

Kenji: (sheepishly) *Aa, eto...* then my little brother, he used my notebook for *origami* practice. He thought it was *kakkoi*.

Classmates: (giggling)

Mr. Tanaka: (pretending to be serious) *Aa, sou desu ne*. So your brother is a pro *origami* artist, and your cat is a homework connoisseur... Kenji, *sugoi* family you have!

Kenji: (grinning) *Hai, sensei!* (quickly) But next time, I promise—I’ll guard my homework like... like a *samurai*!

Mr. Tanaka: (nodding with mock seriousness) I think you should, Kenji. Next time, if you forget, I’ll make you stand in front of the class and tell us a *samurai* story!

Kenji: (laughing nervously) *Wakarimashita, sensei...* next time, *zettai ni*, no excuses!

Mr. Tanaka: Good! Now sit down, Kenji, before Tama-chan decides to eat my lesson plans, too!

Classmates: (laughing)

Kenji: (grinning, sitting down) *Hai, hai, sensei!*

As can be seen here, the scene depicts a humorous classroom exchange between a student and teacher using casual English with practical vocabulary. However, the dialogue leans heavily on stereotypical themes such as *origami* and *samurai*, that may inadvertently reinforce oversimplified cultural images. Discussion on these stereotypes can be initiated by asking questions like, “What assumptions do these images create?” or “How might these stereotypes affect our perceptions of a culture?” Alternatively, modified prompts can be provided to avoid such issues. Students can then use this script as a basic structure, adapting and expanding it with their own ideas to create more personalized and authentic expressions. Afterwards, they can work in groups to recreate the scene, either live in class or as a video production, allowing them to explore language and cultural expression in a collaborative setting.

3.7.3 Introduce Bollywood songs with English

Bollywood has many songs that blend English with Indian languages, often to create catchy hooks or appeal to a global audience. Introduce a song for students to listen to and discuss the use and purpose of English and other languages within the song. Here is a brief list of songs utilizing English and Indian languages:

- “The Disco Song” from *Student of the Year* (2012), Hindi/English
- “Gallan Goodiyaan” from *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015), Punjabi/Hindi/English
- “Tera Hone Laga Hoon” from *Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani* (2009), Hindi/

English

- “Swag Se Swagat” from *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017), Hindi/English
- “I Hate Luv Storys” from *I Hate Luv Storys* (2010), Hindi/English
- “Sheila Ki Jawani” from *Tees Maar Khan* (2010), Hindi/English
- “English Vinglish” from *English Vinglish* (2012), Hindi/English [some versions are Hindi only]
- “Girls Like to Swing” from *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015), Hindi/English
- “Hey Mr. DJ - Let’s Go Bananas” from *Kapoor & Sons*, (2016), Hindi/English

Students can find songs and artists from their own country who use English similarly and compare the two songs in discussion or writing using many of the prompts above.

In addition, using AI-powered platforms such as Suno.com for song creation, students can experiment with creating their own multilingual songs or generate lyrics based on a chosen theme. They can choose a genre to match the song’s mood, and while Suno may not fully replicate the traditional Bollywood sound, entering terms like “Indian rhythms” can produce a similar feel. This activity offers students a creative platform to explore and play with multilingual expressions in music, helping them think about how language choice impacts tone and style in song lyrics.

4. EXAMPLES OF BOLLYWOOD MOVIES AND SCENES FOR CLASSROOMS

With nearly 2,000 films produced annually in India, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. To simplify the selection, here are a few that are particularly suitable for classroom use. These, like many Bollywood films, are accessible via YouTube. It is recommended to watch several films to better understand the general concept of a Bollywood film and to find other instances of multilingualism to present to students.

4.1 Namak Hamaal (1979) and *My Name is Anthony Gonsalves* (2008)

The film *Namak Hamaal* (1979) is a Hindi-language comedy-drama about a man from a small village who moves to the city for a job at a nightclub. In one scene, the main character is interviewing for a job and is asked if he can speak English. The transcript is as follows, with English in italics:

Ranjeet [interviewer]: Yeh sab to theek hai, magar ab tum sheher main aiye ho, aise hi baatein karoge, ya tumhe *English* vagarah bhi aati hai?!

Amitabh [interviewee]: E lo kar lo baat. Arey aisi angrezi ave hain ke *I can leave angrez behind. I can talk English, I can walk English, I can laugh English, because English is a very funny language. Bhairon becomes barren and barren becomes Bhairon because their minds are very narrow. In the year 1929 sir, when India was playing Australia in the Melbourne city, Vijay Merchant and Vijay Hazare, they were at the crease. Vijay Merchant told Vijay Hazare, “look Vijay Hazare, this is a very prestigious match and you must consider this match very carefully.” So, considering*

the consideration that Vijay Hazare gave Vijay Merchant. Vijay Merchant told Vijay Hazare that “ultimately we must take a run” and when they were striking the ball on the leg side sir the consideration came into an ultimatum and ultimately Vijay Hazare went to Vijay Merchant...

Ranjeet: (shouts) *Oh!! Shut Up!!*

Amitabh: *Similarly, sir in the year 1979 when India was playing against Pakistan at Wankhade stadium Bombay, Wasim Raja and Wasim Bari were at the crease. Wasim Bari gave the consideration to Wasim Raja and Wasim Raja told Wasim Bari this ultimately has to end in a consideration which I cannot consider. Therefore, consideration that you are giving me must be considered very ultimately. Therefore, the run that they were taking, Wasim Raja told Wasim Bari, Wasim Bari you take the run and ultimately both of them ran and considerately they got out!*

Ranjeet: *Okay, okay* (Shemaroo Movies, 2018, 40:37)

He speaks English with apparent confidence, but what he says is nonsensical. The interviewer does not know English, so he assumes the speaker is fluent. Students watching this scene may catch some vocabulary but will not understand his English either. This opens the opportunity to discuss meaning by focusing on other communicative cues, such as body language, tone, facial expressions, and the setting. After the discussion, students receive a transcript (either in handouts or displayed on a screen) so they can translate it on their phones. Though the speech may be nonsensical, there's still intent and meaning behind his communication that students can explore and interpret together.

Additionally, a musical number from the film *My Name is Anthony Gonsalves* (2008), about a man who strives to become a Bollywood hero, is nonsensical English with challenging but amusing vocabulary. One verse is as follows:

You see the whole country of the system
Is juxtaposition by the hemoglobin in the atmosphere
Because you are a sophisticated rhetorician
Intoxicated by the exuberance of your own publicity (Bollywood Hits, 2021, 0:15)

After sharing and discussing these scenes, the teacher might show photos of English text on clothing, product packaging, and advertising, then highlight examples within the classroom on students' own clothing or bags. Students can be asked to reflect on their own surroundings: Do they understand the English phrases on their clothes and accessories that they encounter daily? What meanings or messages are these English words intended to convey? Beyond literal translation, students can consider the reasons English appears so frequently — whether for style, prestige, humor, or branding — and discuss how English adds unique layers of meaning within Japanese culture.

4.2 Idiots (2009)

3 *Idiots* (2009) is a comedy-drama that follows three engineering students at a prestigious college as they challenge the conventional academic norms. In this scene, the dean presents an astronaut's pen and is challenged by one of the characters.

Dean: *Let me tell you a very interesting story. Yeh astronaut's pen hai. Space me fountain pen, ball pen, kuch nahi chalta. Toh lakho dollar karch karne ke badh, scientist ne aisa pen ijadh kiya. Jise koi bhi angle, koi bhi temperature, zero gravity me, hum, likh sakte hai. One day, when I was a student, the director of our institute called me. He said, 'Viru Sahastrabuddhe.' I said, 'Yes, Sir!' 'Come here!' Main darr gaya. He showed me this pen. He said, 'This is a symbol of excellence. I give it to you. Aur jis din tumhe tumahre jaisa koi extraordinary student mile, to yeh pen usse paas on kar dena.'* Battis saal se Viru Sahastrabeddhe is waiting for that student. But no luck. kya yahaan koe hai jo is pen ko jeetane ka prayaas karega? Good. Put your hands down.

Rancho raises his hand.

Dean: *Notice board par doon? I said put down your hands.*

Rancho: *Sir, mera ek sawa hai, sir. Sir, space me fountain pen, ball pen chalta nahi hai toh astronaut ne pencil ka istamal kyu nahi kiya? Lakho dollar bach jaate, sir.* The crowd laughs. The dean looks confused.

Dean: *I will get back to you on this.* (Ultra Bollywood, 2019, 2:37)

Students can try to figure out the meaning of this exchange with the given English. What is special about that pen? Why do students raise their hands? What does Rancho say to cause confusion? In addition, students can discuss why English is being used here rather than Hindi and for what purpose it switches back and forth.

4.3 Queen (2013)

In *Queen* (2013), a woman, Rani, travels through Europe and encounters several situations involving two or more languages. In this scene, it is her first day in Paris. At a restaurant, the waiter speaks French and hands her a menu in French. She does not understand French and points randomly at an item. A fish head is brought to her table. When she runs outside to be sick, a group of Japanese tourists are present and take pictures. She runs and encounters a policeman who takes her back to her neighbour's apartment. The following script is in her French neighbor's apartment.

Neighbor: [to her friends dressed for a party] C'mon, get up. [To Rani] You, you must keep your passport with you at all times. What are you doing downstairs around Paris? You are lucky the cop is my friend. Okay? Sit down, sit down. [The parties speak to her in French. Rani does not understand.]

Neighbor: [to friends] You give me this. [to Rani] Come on. What do you want? You want something?

Rani: Food.

Neighbor: Food? Okay. Wait, wait.

[Rani is given a sandwich.]

Neighbor: It is cheese tomato. Eat it. So, where are you from? Pakastani?

Rani: I am from Rajori, India.

Neighbor: Ah, namaste.

Rani: Nameste.

Neighbor: Main bhi Hindi... half.

Rani: Tumhey hindi aait hai?

Neighbor: Little... I am how you say, mix Hindi, Spanish, French. Meri mama French and Spansih. Papa Hindi.

Rani: Tumharey papa Indian hain?

Neighbor: Mama met papa goa and boom boom. Main aa gayi. I am Vijalaxmi! Nice to meet you. You can call me Vijay. You?

Rani: Vijay? Myself Rani.

Neighbor: Rani... Water? Oui?

Rani: No, pah ni ni. Rani. Queen?

Neighbor: Ah, okay. Queen. [to boy who comes into room] What are you doing here?

Rani: bahut cute hai kiska hali?

Neighbor: He is my life, my son, Ricky.

Rani: [Hindi, not in script]

Neighbor: Merci beaucoup, thank you. (Viacom18 Studios, 2020, 2:13)

The scene begins with minimal language use, reflecting Rani's initial confusion and lack of understanding in her unfamiliar surroundings. The culture shock she experiences offers material for discussion, allowing students to reflect on their own experiences or imagine what it might be like to navigate a foreign country without knowing the local language. Four languages appear in this scene: English, French, Hindi, and Japanese from the tourists at the beginning. This linguistic diversity mirrors the international character of France, prompting discussions about cultural identity and the ways language shapes our interactions in foreign settings. As Rani encounters different languages, students can explore how nationality and identity are expressed through language use. This scene provides an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of navigating a multicultural environment and the nuanced ways language affects our sense of belonging.

5. CONCLUSION

The principal purpose of this paper has been to present India's place in language use worldwide, examining the influence of English on Bollywood, and how Bollywood films can be effectively integrated into ELF classrooms. While Mohandas K. Gandhi (1909) once wrote, "To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them" (p. 61), highlighting the language's colonial legacy tied to oppression and subjugation, the language has evolved significantly within the Indian context. English, as owned by the people of India and the international community, is enmeshed in personal identities and

cultural representatives. Today, English in India and among the international community has become an expression of personal identity and cultural representation, owned and adapted by the people themselves that transcends traditional linguistic boundaries. This principle serves as a fundamental tenet for all ELF classrooms to aspire to, promoting English as a versatile medium for authentic self-expression and cross-cultural understanding.

REFERENCES

- Bollywood Hits (2021, August 12). *My name is Anthony Gonsalves* | Amar Akbar Anthony | Amitabh Bachchan | Kishore Kumar [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORIfGLKTKUs>
- Chen, R. T. H. (2023). Teaching intercultural communication in an English as a lingua franca context. *RELC Journal*, 54(3), 839-847. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221074106>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486999>
- Crystal, D. (2005). *Mother-tongue India. Talk for lingua franca*. ABC, Australia.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learners revisited*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315779553>
- Dwyer, R. (2014). *Bollywood's India: Hindi cinema as a guide to contemporary India*. Reaktion Books.
- Gandhi, M. K. (1909). *Hind Swaraj or Indian home rule*. Navajivan Publishing House.
- Ganti, T. (2016). “No one thinks in Hindi here”: Language hierarchies in Bollywood. In M. Curtin & K. Sanson (Eds.), *Precarious creativity: global media, local labor* (pp. 118–131). University of California Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ffjn40.13>
- Graddol, D. (1997). *The future of English?* British Council.
- Hancock, D., Slee, J., & Wunsch-Vincent, S. (2024, March 28). *Resurgence of global cinema: 2022 and 2023 witness forceful comeback but still shy of pre-pandemic norms*. World Intellectual Property Organization. https://www.wipo.int/global_innovation_index/en/gii-insights-blog/2024/global-cinema.html
- Jenkins, J. (2009). Exploring attitudes towards English as a Lingua Franca in the East Asian Context. In K. Murata & J. Jenkins (Eds.), *Global Englishes in Asian*

contexts (pp. 40-56). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239531_4

- Kachru, B. B. (1976). Models of English for the Third World: White man's linguistic burden or language pragmatics? *TESOL Quarterly*, 10(2), 221-239. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3585643>
- Kachru, B. B. (1983). *The Indianization of English: The English language in India*. Oxford University Press.
- Kachru, B. B. (1990). World Englishes and applied linguistics. *World Englishes*, 9(1), 3-20.
- Kaur, R., & Sinha, A. (2005). Bollywood bazaar and Indian popular cinema. *Screen*, 46(4), 375-385. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464937032000060195>
- Kim, S., & Kim, H. C. (2021). The benefits of YouTube in learning English as a second language: A qualitative investigation of Korean freshman students' experiences and perspectives in the US. *Sustainability*, 13(13), 7365. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137365>
- Kongkerd, W. (2013). Teaching English in the era of English used as a lingua franca in Thailand. *Executive Journal*, 33(4), 3-12.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2012). *Language teacher education for a global society: A modular model for knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing, and seeing*. Routledge.
- Li, X., & Wang, P. (2015). A research on using English movies to improve Chinese college students' oral English. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(5), 1096-1100. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0505.26>
- Lopriore, L. & Vettorel, P. (2015). Promoting awareness of Englishes and ELF in the English language classroom. In H. Bowles, & A. Cogo (Eds.), *International perspectives on English as a lingua franca* (pp. 13-34). Palgrave. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137398093_2
- Matsuda, A. (2003). Incorporating world Englishes in teaching English as an international language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 719-729. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588220>
- Macaulay, T. B. (1835). *Minute on Indian education*. In H. Sharp (Ed.), *Selections from educational records, part I (1781-1839)* (pp. 107-117). Superintendent, Government Printing.
- Mehta, R. B., & Pandharipande, R. V. (Eds.). (2010). *Bollywood and globalization:*

Indian popular cinema, nation, and diaspora. Anthem Press.

- Mohanty, A. (2010). Languages, inequality and marginalization: implications of the double divide in Indian multilingualism. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2010(205), 131-154. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2010.042>
- Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Clarendon.
- Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 409-429. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587831>
- Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of educational research*, 66(4), 543-578. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543066004543>
- Rajadhyaksha, A. (2003). The 'Bollywoodization' of Indian cinema: Cultural nationalism in a global arena. In *The Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader* (pp. 18-27). Routledge.
- Rushdie, S. (1981). *Midnight's children*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Sánchez-Auñón, E., & Férrez-Mora, P. (2021). Films for EFL: Exploring the perceptions of a high school teacher. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i1.34634>
- Sedlatschek, A. (2009). *Contemporary Indian English*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Shemaroo Movies (2018, October 12). *Namak Halaal (1982)(HD) Hindi Full Movie - Shashi Kapoor |Amitabh Bachchan| Smita Patil |Ranjeet* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pBF4vSqKS4
- Si, A. (2011). A diachronic investigation of Hindi-English code-switching, using Bollywood film scripts. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 15(4), 395-411. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006910379300>
- Sridhar, S. N. (2020). Indian English. In A. Kilpatrick & K. Bolton (Eds.), *The handbook of Asian Englishes* (pp. 241-277). Routledge.
- Sridhar, S. N., & Sridhar, K. K. (1980). The syntax and psycholinguistics of bilingual code-mixing. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 34(4), 407-416. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0081105>
- Thussu, D. K. (2008). The globalization of “Bollywood”. In A. P. Kavoori & A.

Punathambekar (Eds.), *Global Bollywood* (pp. 97-113). NYU Press.

Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2013). Adult coursebooks. *ELT Journal* 67(3), 233–49.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cct007>

Ultra Bollywood (2019, June 13). *Life is a race (वायरस आया अंडे लेके) - 3 Idiots | Boman Irani, Aamir Khan* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UptwZdRtrkI>

Viacom18 Studios (2020, July 20). *Rani Aka Kangana Ranaut's First Day In Paris | Queen | Viacom18 Studios* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8l4ari7GVjQ>

Watkins, J., & Wilkins, M. (2011). Using YouTube in the EFL classroom. *Language Education in Asia*, 2(1), 113-119. https://doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/11/V2/I1/A09/Watkins_Wilkins

Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 308-328. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688206071315>

APPENDIX A
FILM STUDY WORKSHEET

I. Initial discussion

Complete these questions by answering or discussing each question using your own English.

1. How much time do you spend watching domestic films or videos? What about international films or videos?

Notes: _____

2. What are some differences you notice between domestic and international videos?

Notes: _____

3. What international films and videos are popular in your country? Why do you think they are popular?

Notes: _____

4. What cultural values or perspectives do you think are conveyed in the films and videos you watch?

Notes: _____

5. How do language and humor differ between domestic and international films and videos?

Notes: _____

6. What kind of music is common in the films and videos you watch?

Notes: _____

7. What kinds of characters do you usually see in the films and videos you watch?

Notes: _____

II. Pre-viewing Bollywood

Complete the questions by answering or discussing each question using your own English.

1. What do you think of when you think of India?

Notes: _____

2. Have you heard of Bollywood? What do you think it is?

Notes: _____

3. What are some features you think Bollywood has? (For example: characters, stories, music, etc.)

Notes: _____

III. Post-viewing

Complete the questions by answering or discussing each question using your own English using your own ideas.

1. What happened in the video you watched?

Notes: _____

2. How did the characters act in the video? Were they similar to characters in films from your own country?

Notes: _____

3. What cultural values or perspectives do you think were shown in the Bollywood video?

Notes: _____

4. What English words did you hear?

Notes: _____

5. Why do you think the characters use English with other languages?

Notes: _____

6. What did you learn about Indian culture from this video?

Notes: _____

IV. Comparisons

Complete the questions by answering or discussing each question using your own English using your own ideas.

1. How does the language used in the Bollywood video compare to the language used in videos from your country?

Notes: _____

2. Do characters in the Bollywood video speak differently than characters in videos from your country? How? (For example: formal/informal language, accents)

Notes: _____

3. What cultural differences can you see between the Bollywood video and videos from your country? Similarities?

Notes: _____

4. What role does humor play in the Bollywood video compared to videos from your country?

Notes: _____

5. Do themes in the Bollywood video (such as love, friendship, or family) seem similar to themes in videos from your country? How are they different or the same?

Notes: _____

V. Post-viewing

Complete the questions by answering or discussing each question using your own English using your own ideas.

1. What happened in the video you watched?

Notes: _____

2. How did the characters act in the video? Were they similar to characters in films from your own country?

Notes: _____

3. What cultural values or perspectives do you think were shown in the Bollywood video?

Notes: _____

4. What English words did you hear?

Notes: _____

5. Why do you think the characters use English with other languages?

Notes: _____

6. What did you learn about Indian culture from this video?

Notes: _____

VI. Comparisons

Complete the questions by answering or discussing each question using your own English using your own ideas.

1. How does the language used in the Bollywood video compare to the language used in videos from your country?

Notes: _____

2. Do characters in the Bollywood video speak differently than characters in videos from your country? How? (For example: formal/informal language, accents)

Notes: _____

3. What cultural differences can you see between the Bollywood video and videos from your country? Similarities?

Notes: _____

4. What role does humor play in the Bollywood video compared to videos from your country?

Notes: _____

5. Do themes in the Bollywood video (such as love, friendship, or family) seem similar to themes in videos from your country? How are they different or the same?

Notes: _____
