

Echoes of Influence: A Sociolinguistic Insight into Hindi and English Influence on Brij Bhasha

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Abstract

This paper investigates the influence of Hindi and English on Brij Bhasha (Braj Bhasha), a prominent Western Hindi dialect spoken in the Brij region of Uttar Pradesh. The study analyzes linguistic interference, code-mixing, code-switching, and lexical borrowing at phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels. Through a combination of field data and phonetic analysis using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), this research highlights the dynamic interplay between Brij Bhasha and the dominant languages, Hindi and English. Brij Bhasha (also known as Braj Bhasha or ब्रज भाषा) is a culturally and historically significant dialect of the Western Hindi group, predominantly spoken in the Brij region encompassing parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. Deeply rooted in the devotional poetry of Surdas and other Bhakti-era poets, Brij Bhasha carries immense literary value and spiritual resonance, particularly in Mathura, Vrindavan, and surrounding areas. Brij Bhasha, a historically rich dialect of the Western Hindi group, has long been the cultural and devotional voice of the Brij region, encompassing Mathura, Vrindavan, Agra, and surrounding areas. However, contemporary linguistic practices in the region reveal a gradual but profound transformation due to the growing influence of Standard Hindi and English. This research paper explores the sociolinguistic impact of these dominant languages on Brij Bhasha, focusing on lexical borrowing,

code-switching, syntactic restructuring, and phonological adaptation. Using field data collected from native speakers across urban and semi-urban areas of the Brij region, the study employs phonetic transcription (IPA) to analyze language contact phenomena in everyday speech. The findings reveal a generational shift in language use, where Brij Bhasha is increasingly blended with Hindi and English in both formal and informal domains. Hindi contributes to morphological simplification and syntactic standardization, while English introduces modern, technical, and aspirational vocabulary. The study underscores the urgency of documenting and revitalizing Brij Bhasha as a living dialect. It concludes that while language change is natural, strategic efforts are essential to preserve linguistic diversity and regional identity in the face of cultural globalization and educational homogenization.

Keywords: Braj Bhasha, code-mixing, code-switching, lexical borrowing

Introduction

Brij Bhasha holds significant literary and cultural relevance, especially in the Braj region encompassing Mathura, Vrindavan, Agra, and parts of Bharatpur and Aligarh. However, due to educational, administrative, and social changes, Hindi and English have become dominant languages in both formal and informal spheres. This has led to noticeable linguistic interference in the form of borrowing, code-mixing, and even structural modifications in native speech. This paper aims to examine the sociolinguistic outcomes of this contact. Despite its rich heritage, Brij Bhasha today faces increasing marginalization due to the sociolinguistic dominance of Hindi—the official language of India—and English, the language of aspiration, education, and global mobility. This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive sociolinguistic analysis of the dual influence that Hindi and English exert on Brij Bhasha. The study investigates the nature and extent of lexical borrowing, code-switching, syntactic restructuring, and phonological adaptation in Brij Bhasha speakers, particularly in urban and semi-urban contexts. Language contact phenomena are examined not only at the linguistic level but also through a socio-cultural lens, reflecting the shifting attitudes, aspirations, and identities of native speakers. The research explores how Hindi, through media, education, and governance, acts as a dominant contact language, gradually reshaping the grammatical and lexical structure of Brij Bhasha. Concurrently, English introduces modern and technical vocabulary, infusing Brij discourse with new semantic dimensions and prestige markers. The analysis is supported by phonetic transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), making the shifts traceable and quantifiable.

Through this study, we seek to highlight the ongoing transformation of Brij Bhasha, not as a vanishing dialect, but as a dynamic and adaptive linguistic system negotiating space within a multilingual environment. The findings also underline the urgent need for linguistic documentation and revitalization strategies to preserve this treasured vernacular of Indian cultural identity.

Objectives of the Study

To identify and categorize the influence of Hindi and English in Brij Bhasha.

To provide phonological representation of mixed/borrowed forms using IPA.

To assess the socio-cultural implications of language contact.

Review of Literature

The field of sociolinguistics and language contact theory has extensively documented the dynamics of dominant languages influencing regional dialects. Weinreich (1953) laid the groundwork by identifying key processes such as lexical borrowing, phonological assimilation, and syntactic restructuring in prolonged contact settings. Trudgill (1986) further demonstrated how language contact reshapes both linguistic structures and speaker identities. Ferguson's (1959) model of diglossia is central to understanding Brij Bhasha's relegation to informal domains as Hindi and English dominate institutional and educational spaces. Kachru (1983) highlighted how English has been Indianized and integrated into various regional languages, while Shapiro and Schiffman (1981) examined the role of language planning in promoting Hindi over dialects like Brij Bhasha. Pandey (2015) emphasized generational shifts in language preferences among Braj speakers, reflecting a growing inclination toward Hindi and English for socio-economic mobility. Dube's (2004) grammar of Brij Bhasha remains a critical reference for assessing structural change. Romaine (1995) and Labov (1972) offer frameworks for analyzing bilingualism and variation, while Gumperz (1982) provides essential insights into code-switching phenomena. Fishman (1967) and Annamalai (2001) studied the maintenance and marginalization of minority languages, supported by Schiffman's (1999) analysis of policy-driven dialectal erosion. The psycholinguistic dimensions of bilingualism explored by Bhatia and Ritchie (2006) further clarify how Brij speakers manage their linguistic repertoire across multiple codes.

Srivastava (1981) and Khubchandani (1997) linked language prestige and standardization with dialectal decline, noting how Brij Bhasha suffers from institutional neglect. Saxena (1995) and Kumar (2009) observed that youth and urban speakers lead linguistic change,

often adopting Hindi-English hybrids. The erosion of Brij oral traditions, as discussed by Shukla (2006), contributes to vocabulary loss. Mishra (2010), Bhatt (2008), and Dasgupta (1993) explored the deeper structural impacts of globalization and English contact on Indian dialects. Rai (1995) and Mukherjee (2005) documented the curricular exclusion of dialects and the rise of English borrowings. Verma (2004) and Pathak (2011) traced how popular culture and Hinglish usage lead to language dilution. Kapoor (2012) highlighted digital media's role in facilitating translanguaging, while Chand (2009) showed English-induced syntactic shifts. Agnihotri (2007) advocated for multilingual education policies to support dialects like Brij. Kumar and Tiwari (2013) confirmed the absence of Brij in schools, contributing to its marginalization. Tiwari (2017) and Pal (2018) noted the declining emotional and functional value of Brij Bhasha among youth. Finally, Sharma (2021) revealed the phonological influence of Hindi and English on modern Brij speech, demonstrating the deep linguistic transformation under current sociolinguistic pressures.

Methodology

Data Collection: Field interviews with native Brij speakers from Mathura, Vrindavan, and Agra districts.

Sampling: Stratified sampling covering age, gender, and education.

Tools: Audio recordings, phonetic transcription (IPA), observation of spontaneous speech, and literature review.

Linguistic Features of Brij Bhasha

Brij Bhasha is characterized by retroflex consonants, archaisms, and a vowel system similar to Hindi but more conservative in morphology. Notable phonological features include:

Phonological Features: Brij Bhasha preserves several archaic sounds, exhibits nasalization, retroflexion, and maintains diphthongs more consistently than Standard Hindi.

"कबहुँक ब्रज न आवत मोपे"

He never comes to Brij for me.

/kə.bə.ɦũk brədʒ nə a:vəʈ mo:pe/

वह कभी ब्रज मेरे लिए नहीं आता।

"अइहँ नंदलाल अबकी बेर"

Nandlal (Krishna) will surely come this time.

/ə.i.ɦẽ nən.də.la:l əb.ki: be:r/

नंदलाल इस बार अवश्य आएँगे।

"झुलावै जसुमति बाल गोपाल"

Yashoda swings baby Krishna.

/dʒʱo.laː.ve dʒə.sʊ.mə.ti ba:l goː.pa:l/

यशोदा बाल गोपाल को झुलाती हैं।

"तोहे देखि मन भयो मगन"

My heart rejoiced seeing you.

/to.ɦeː deː.kʰi mən bʱə.joː mə.gən/

तुम्हें देखकर मेरा मन आनंदित हो गया।

"घनश्याम मो पे कृपा करौ"

O Krishna, shower your mercy on me.

/gʱən.ɕaːm moː pe kɾi.paː kə.ɾoː/

घनश्याम, मुझ पर कृपा करो।

Morphological Features: Brij Bhasha verbs and pronouns often use older or regional forms and display unique conjugational patterns and auxiliary usage.

"मैं हौं ब्रजवासी"

I am a resident of Brij.

/mẽ̃ h̃õ brədʒ.vɑː.sɪː/

मैं ब्रज का निवासी हूँ।

"मो पे बड़ो उपकार भयो"

A great favor has been done to me.

/moː pe bə.ɽoː ʊp.kɑːr bʱə.joː/

मुझ पर बड़ा उपकार हुआ।

"तोहें कहा करत हो"

What are you saying?

/toː.ɦẽ̃ kə.ɦãː kə.ɾəʈ ɦoː/

तुम क्या कह रहे हो?

"हमहूँ चलिबे जात हौं"

I am also going to walk along.

/ɦəm.ɦũː tʃə.li.be dʒaːt h̃õ/

मैं भी चलने जा रहा हूँ।

"उ पिंयू बोल्यौ नाय"

That beloved didn't speak.

/ʊ pi.ju: bo:.ljɔ: na:.j/

वह प्रिय कुछ नहीं बोला।

Syntactic Features: Brij Bhasha retains the SOV order and employs poetic inversion for metrical and aesthetic effect. It uses unique postpositions and sentence constructions.

"लाज राखौ मोरी"

Protect my honor.

/la:dʒ ra:.kʰɔ: mo:.ri:/

मेरी लाज रखो।

"जसोदा हरि पालनैं झुलावै"

Yashoda swings Krishna in a cradle.

/dʒɔ:.so:.da: fiə.ri: pa:.lə.nẽ dʒʱɔ:.la:.vɛ/

यशोदा हरि को पालने में झुला रही हैं।

"तुम बिनु कौनु हरखू"

Who else but you gives joy?

/tʊm bi.nu ko:.nu fiə.rə.kʰu:/

तुम्हारे बिना कौन आनंदित कर सकता है?

"मो मन हरण्यो श्याम दरस पाय"

My heart rejoiced upon seeing Shyam.

/mo: mən fiə.rə.ʃjo: ɛa:m d̪ə.rəs pa:.j/

मेरे मन को श्याम के दर्शन से हर्ष हुआ।

"कहत सखियन कन्हैया मुसकायो"

Kanhaiya smiled at what the friends said.

/kə.fiət̪ sə.kʰi.jən kən.fiə.ja: mus.ka:.jo:/

सखियों की बात सुनकर कन्हैया मुस्कराया।

Lexical Features: Brij Bhasha has a distinct lexicon that includes unique native words, expressions, and poetic constructs not commonly found in Standard Hindi.

"लरिकाई" – childhood

"लरिकाई में ही रट्यो नाम"

/lə.ɾi.ka:i: me: hi: rə.tjo: na:m/

बचपन में ही नाम जप लिया।

"घेल" – to throw or pour

"घेल दियो प्रेम रस"

/g^he:l dɪ.jo: pre:m rəs/

प्रेम रस उंडेल दिया।

"बड़भागी" – fortunate

"बड़भागी तनु पायो"

/bəɽ.b^ha:gi: tənʊ pa:.jo:/

सौभाग्यशाली तन पाया।

"नंदलाल" – son of Nanda (Krishna)

"नंदलाल खेले बनवारी"

/nən.d̪ə.la:l k^he:.le bə.nvɑ:.ri:/

नंदलाल (कृष्ण) बन में खेलते हैं।

"गवाल-बाल" – cowherd boys

"गवाल-बाल संग रच्यो रास"

/gva:l ba:l səŋ rə.tʃjo: ra:s/

गवाल-बालों के संग रास रचाया।

These examples from original Brij texts reflect the rich phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features of Brij Bhasha. Its unique sound patterns, grammar, word choices, and poetic beauty set it apart from Standard Hindi, affirming its status as a distinct and culturally significant dialect.

Impact of Hindi on Brij Bhasha

The impact of Hindi on Brij Bhasha has been profound and multifaceted, leading to significant changes in the dialect's lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactic structure. With Hindi being the official language of administration, education, and media in India, Brij Bhasha has increasingly come under its influence, resulting in a gradual erosion of its distinct linguistic features. Lexically, many traditional Brij words such as "लरिकाई" (childhood), "मो" (to me), and "तोहें" (to you) are being replaced with their Hindi counterparts "बचपन", "मुझे", and "तुम्हें", respectively. This replacement is often accompanied by a shift in phonetic structure, where Brij's nasalized and retroflex sounds are

softened or regularized according to Hindi norms. Morphologically, Brij verb endings like “भयो” (became) or “करो” (do – imperative) are increasingly substituted with Hindi forms such as “हुआ” and “करो”, reflecting a simplification under Hindi’s grammatical framework. Syntactically, Brij’s poetic and flexible sentence structures are becoming more rigid and standardized due to Hindi’s influence, as seen in translations like “जसोदा हरि पालनैं झुलावै” becoming “यशोदा कृष्ण को पालने में झुला रही हैं”, where the beauty of inversion and rhythm is lost. Additionally, the rich pronoun system of Brij—with forms like “हौं” (I am) and “हमहूँ” (I also)—is being replaced with Hindi forms such as “हूँ” and “मैं भी”, further homogenizing the dialect. The impact is also evident in sociolinguistic domains, where younger generations often perceive Hindi as a symbol of modernity and formal prestige, leading to reduced intergenerational transmission of Brij Bhasha. As a result, Brij Bhasha, once a vibrant literary and devotional medium during the Bhakti era, is now at risk of becoming a passive or ornamental dialect, used sparingly in folk songs and rituals but increasingly absent in daily conversation, education, and digital communication.

Lexical Borrowing

Lexical borrowing refers to the process by which one language adopts words or expressions from another. In the case of Brij Bhasha, the influence of Standard Hindi has led to the replacement of traditional Brij words with Hindi vocabulary, particularly in formal, educational, and modern contexts. This borrowing is often subconscious and has led to the erosion of region-specific lexicon, especially among younger speakers. These examples clearly illustrate how Brij Bhasha’s rich and regionally unique vocabulary is being replaced by standardized Hindi forms. The borrowed lexicon not only alters the linguistic structure but also affects the emotive and poetic essence of Brij speech. While this shift aids broader communication, it also contributes to the gradual fading of Brij Bhasha’s cultural identity and oral heritage. Lexical borrowing through code mixing refers to inserting Standard Hindi words into Brij Bhasha sentences, often subconsciously. This results in hybrid constructions where the syntactic and phonological frame remains Brij, but certain words—nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs—are replaced by their Hindi equivalents.

“भक्ति” instead of “भजनी”

हम बाल्य में ही भजनी गाई।

“I sang devotional songs in childhood.”

/ɦəm ba:l.jə me: ɦi: bʱə.dʒə.ni: ga:i: /

हम बाल्य में ही भक्ति की गीत गाई।

/həm ba:l.jə me: hi: bʰək.t̪i: ki: gi:t ga:i:./

Inserts "भक्ति" and "गीत" from Hindi

“स्वास्थ्य” instead of “तन की दशा”

मो तन की दशा ठीक नहीं।

“My body’s condition is not well.”

/mo: tən ki: də.ʃa: t̪i:k na:.hi/

मो स्वास्थ्य ठीक नाये।

/mo: swa:s.t̪jə t̪i:k nə.hi/

“स्वास्थ्य” borrowed from Hindi replaces phrase

“समस्या” instead of “कष्ट” or “झंझट”

हमका एक झंझट आयो।

“I had a problem/trouble.”

/həm.ka: ek dʒʰən.dʒʰəʈ a:.jo:./

हमका एक समस्या होई गई।

/həm.ka: ek sə.mə.sja: ho:i: gə:i:./

“समस्या” from Hindi replaces local word

“विकास” instead of “तरक्की” or “बढ़ौतरी”

हमार गांव में बढ़ौतरी कछू खास नहीं।

“There’s not much development in our village.”

/hə.ma:r gɑ:v me: bə.ʈo:.t̪ri: kə.t̪ʰu: kʰa:s na:.hi/

हमार गांव में विकास नहीं भओ।

/hə.ma:r gɑ:v me: vɪ.ka:s na:.hi bʰə.o:./

“विकास” from Hindi replaces local word

“सुविधा” instead of “सुगमता” or “आसानी”

रास्ता में सुगमता नहीं है।

“The path is not convenient.”

/ra:s.t̪a: me: su.gəm.t̪a: na:.hi hɛ/

रास्ता में सुविधा नहीं है।

/ra:s.t̪a: me: su.vɪ.d̪ʱa: na:.hi hɛ/

“सुविधा” is a Hindi formal term

These examples show how Brij Bhasha speakers often mix Hindi lexicon into their sentences, especially in educational, bureaucratic, or urban conversations. Over time, these lexical insertions become normalized, leading to a gradual loss of traditional Brij vocabulary. The sentences still retain Brij grammatical structure and word order, but Hindi vocabulary increasingly dominates, a clear sign of linguistic convergence under sociolinguistic pressure.

Original Brij Word	IPA (Brij)	Hindi Borrowed Word	IPA (Hindi)	Meaning
मो / मोपे	/mo:/, /mo:.pe/	मुझे / मुझ पर	/mʊ.d͡ʒʰe:/, /mʊd͡ʒʰ pət/	To me / On me
लरिकाई	/lə.ɾi.ka:.i:/	बचपन	/bətʃ.pən/	Childhood
झंझट	/d͡ʒʰən.d͡ʒʰət/	समस्या	/sə.mə.sja:/	Problem
बढ़ौतरी	/bə.ɽʊ:.t̪ri:/	विकास	/vi.ka:s/	Development
भजनी	/bʱə.d͡ʒə.ni:/	भक्ति	/bʱək.t̪i:/	Devotion
तन की दशा	/tən ki: də.ʃa:/	स्वास्थ्य	/swa:s.t̪jə/	Health/Condition
सुगमता	/so.gəm.ta:/	सुविधा	/so.vi.d̪ʱa:/	Convenience
हरष्यो	/ɦə.ɾə.ʃjo:/	प्रसन्न हुआ	/prəsən.nə ɦʊ.a:/	Rejoiced
कहौ	/kə.ɦo:/	कहो	/kə.ɦo:/	Say (imperative)
तोहें / तोहैं	/to:.ɦē:/	तुम्हें	/to.mʱē:/	To you

Morphological Simplification

Morphological simplification in Brij Bhasha refers to the gradual erosion and replacement of its distinct and rich morphological structures—particularly verb conjugations, pronoun systems, auxiliary verbs, and tense-aspect markers—under the influence of Standard Hindi. Brij Bhasha traditionally possesses a vibrant system of inflections such as verb suffixes (-बो, -बे, -औ), unique person markers (like "हौं" for "I am"), and regional auxiliaries (like "भयो" for "happened"). However, in contemporary usage—especially among younger speakers or those in urbanized Brij-speaking areas—these native forms are increasingly replaced with simplified, standardized Hindi equivalents. For instance, the Brij phrase "हम चलिबे जात हौं" (I am going to walk) is now commonly heard as "मैं चलने जा रहा हूँ", where the Brij infinitive "चलिबे" is replaced by Hindi "चलने", and the auxiliary "हौं" becomes "हूँ". Similarly, "उ खेलत भयो" becomes "वह खेल रहा था", where the native past auxiliary "भयो" is supplanted by the Hindi continuous tense "रहा था". Such shifts simplify the verb morphology by aligning it with the more regular and predictable structures of Hindi. Additionally, pronouns like "तोहें", "मो",

or "हमहूँ" are being replaced by "तुम्हें", "मुझे", and "मैं भी", respectively, reducing the dialectal richness of Brij. This simplification is often accompanied by code mixing and is reinforced through formal education, media, and administration, which prioritize Hindi over local dialects. Over time, these morphological changes contribute not only to the grammatical convergence of Brij with Hindi but also to the decline of Brij's linguistic identity, poetic nuance, and cultural uniqueness. The trend indicates not just a linguistic shift, but a sociolinguistic transformation wherein Standard Hindi exerts normative pressure, gradually reshaping Brij Bhasha into a structurally simplified and hybridized vernacular. Native Brij verb forms are replaced by standard Hindi equivalents:

Original Sentence	Brij	IPA (Brij)	Hindi-Influenced Sentence	IPA (Hindi-Influenced)	Meaning
हम चलिबे जात हौं।		/ɦəm tʃə.li.be dʒa:t ɦũ:/	मैं चलने जा रहा हूँ।	/mɛ̃ tʃəl.ne: dʒa: rə.ɦa: ɦũ:/	I am going.
मोपे प्रेम भयो।		/mo:.pe pre:m bʱə.jo:/	मुझ पर प्रेम हुआ।	/mʊdʒʰər pər pre:m ɦʊ.a:/	Love happened to me.
उ पाठ पढ़त रह्यो।		/ʊ pa:tʰ pə.tʌt rə.ɦjo:/	वह पाठ पढ़ रहा था।	/vəɦ pa:tʰ pət rə.ɦa: tʰa:/	He was reading a lesson.
तोहें कहाँ जात हो?		/to:.ɦɛ̃: kə.ɦã: dʒa:t ɦo:/	तुम कहाँ जा रहे हो?	/tom kə.ɦã: dʒa: rə.ɦe: ɦo:/	Where are you going?
हमहूँ खाइबो करौं।		/ɦəm.ɦũ: kʰa:.i.bo: kə.ro:/	मैं भी खाना खाता हूँ।	/mɛ̃ bʱi: kʰa:.na: kʰa:.tʰa: ɦũ:/	I also eat food.
तोहें देखत हरण्यो मन मोरो।		/to:.ɦɛ̃ d̪e:.kʰat̪ ɦə.rə.ɦjo: mo:.ro:/	तुम्हें देखकर मेरा मन प्रसन्न हुआ।	/to.mʱɛ̃ d̪e:.kʰər me:.ra: mən prəsən.nə ɦʊ.a:/	My heart rejoiced seeing you.
वह खेत जोतत रह्यो।		/və kʰe:t dʒo:.tʌt rə.ɦjo:/	वह खेत जोत रहा था।	/vəɦ kʰe:t dʒo:t̪ rə.ɦa: tʰa:/	He was ploughing the field.

तू पाठ पढ़ो।	/tu: pa:tʰ pə.ɽɔ:/	तुम पाठ पढ़ो।	/tom pa:tʰ pə.ɽɔ:/	You read the lesson.
हम तो ठाढ़ हौं।	/həm to: tʰa:tʰ hɔ̃/	में तो खड़ा हूँ।	/mẽ to: kʰə.ɽa: hũ:/	I am standing.
मोहे भूख लागी।	/mo:ɦe bʱu:kʰ la:.gi:/	मुझे भूख लगी है।	/mo.ɖʒʰe: bʱu:kʰ la:.gi:ɦe/	I am hungry.
तू कहौ काहे न आवत?	/tu: kə.ɦo: ka:ɦe nə a:ɽəʈ/	तुम क्यों नहीं आते?	/tom kio: nə.ɦi a:ɽe:/	Why don't you come?
हम तौ बोलिबे नहीं चाहत।	/həm to: bo:lɪ.be nə.ɦi tʃa:ɦəʈ/	में तो बोलना नहीं चाहता।	/mẽ to: bo:l.na: nə.ɦi tʃa:ɦa:/	I don't want to speak.
उ घरे जात रहयो।	/ʊ gʱə.re: ɖʒa:t rə.ɦjo:/	वह घर जा रहा था।	/ʊɦi gʱər ɖʒa: rə.ɦia: tʰa:/	He was going home.
मो बालक पढ़ै लाग गयो।	/mo: ba:lək pə.ɽe: la:g gə.jo:/	मेरा बच्चा पढ़ने लगा।	/me:ra: bəɽʃ.tʃa: pə.tʰ.ne: lə.ga:/	My child started studying.
वह दरसन करै आयो।	/ʊə ɖər.sən kə.re: a:jo:/	वह दर्शन करने आया।	/ʊɦi ɖər.ʃən kər.ne: a:ja:/	He came to visit.

Influence of English on Brij Bhasha

The growing influence of English on Brij Bhasha is vividly evident in the increasing frequency of code mixing, where English lexical items are embedded into Brij syntactic frames. This phenomenon reflects not only linguistic change but also shifting cultural and social dynamics, especially among younger, urban, and educated speakers in the Brij region. English words, particularly nouns and technical terms, are often inserted into everyday Brij conversations because they are perceived as more modern, prestigious, or convenient than their traditional equivalents. For example, a speaker might say "मो phone घूम गयो" instead of the original "मो दूरभाष घूम गयो" (My phone got lost), or "हमार लरिको homework करै" in place of "हमार लरिको पढ़ई करै" (My child is studying). In these examples, the core Brij grammar and verb morphology remain intact, but specific content words like *phone* and *homework* are borrowed directly from English. This lexical intrusion simplifies communication in contexts where Brij lacks specific terminology for modern objects or concepts. Furthermore, in

phrases such as "हम meeting में बात करते" (I talk in the meeting) and "तू car ठीक करायो?" (Did you get the car fixed?), English replaces traditional Brij words like बैठक (meeting) and गाड़ी (vehicle), signaling a shift in lexical preference. Over time, such mixing leads to a functional bilingualism, wherein speakers subconsciously switch between Brij and English within the same sentence. This trend has profound implications for Brij Bhasha's linguistic identity. While the structure of the dialect may persist, its vocabulary becomes increasingly Anglicized, especially in domains like education, technology, business, and digital communication. Code mixing with English not only reshapes Brij lexicon but also influences pronunciation, as speakers adjust native sounds to fit English phonetics. The influence of English, driven by globalization, media, and institutional education, thus plays a critical role in the hybridization and modernization of Brij Bhasha, raising important questions about the dialect's preservation and authenticity in the 21st century.

Lexical Insertion and Code-Mixing

The phenomenon of lexical insertion and code-mixing reveals a significant transformation in Brij Bhasha, especially when comparing older literary texts with contemporary spoken usage. Traditional Brij literature, such as the devotional verses of Surdas or folk narratives, employed a rich and culturally rooted vocabulary: for instance, terms like "दूरभाष" (telephone), "चिट्ठी" (letter), and "पाठशाला" (school) were commonly used. A classical Brij sentence might read, "मो दूरभाष पर संदेशो आयो", meaning "A message came on my telephone." In contrast, modern Brij communication, especially among youth, incorporates direct English insertions, producing utterances like "मो phone पर message आयो", where the native words दूरभाष and संदेशो are replaced by *phone* and *message*. Similarly, where a traditional Brij speaker would say "लरिको पढ़ई करै" (The boy is studying), today's speaker might say "लरिको homework करै". This blending occurs not only due to lack of contemporary vocabulary in Brij but also due to the prestige associated with English in education, media, and technology. While the core Brij grammatical structure often remains intact, its lexical field is increasingly filled by English terms, resulting in a hybrid linguistic form. This shift marks a departure from the poetic, metaphor-rich traditional Brij to a more functional, globalized vernacular, reflecting both linguistic adaptability and the gradual erosion of Brij's lexical heritage.

Original Word/Phrase	Brij	IPA (Brij)	English-Inserte d Equivalent	IPA (With English)	Meaning
दूरभाष (durabhāṣ)		/d̪uːr.bʱaːʃ/	Phone	/fɔːn/	Telephone/Phone

चिट्ठी (ciṭṭhī)	/tʃiṭ.ṭhi:/	Mail	/me:l/	Letter/Email
गाड़ी (gārī)	/ga:.ṛi:/	Car	/ka:r/	Vehicle
पाठशाला (pāṭhśālā)	/pa:ṭh.ʃa:.la:/	School	/sku:l/	Educational institute
बैठक (baithak)	/beṭhək/	Meeting	/mi:.tɪŋ/	Formal gathering
खेल (khel)	/khe:l/	Match	/mætʃ/	Sports event
तसवीर (tasvīr)	/təs.vi:r/	Photo	/foʊ.tou/	Picture
नाच (nāc)	/na:tʃ/	Dance	/dæns/	Dancing
पसन्द (pasand)	/pə.sənd/	Favourite	/feɪ.və.ɪt/	Preferred choice
रोचक (rocak)	/ro:.tʃək/	Interesting	/ɪn.tres.tɪŋ/	Engaging
सन्देश (sandeshā)	/sən.ḍe:.ʃa:/	Message	/mɛ.sɪdʒ/	Text/communicatio n
पुस्तक (pustak)	/pus.tʌk/	Book	/bʊk/	Book
कागज़ (kāgaz)	/ka:.gəḍʒ/	Form	/fɔ:rm/	Document/form
आराम (ārām)	/ɑ:.ra:m/	Rest	/rest/	Relaxation
काम (kāṃ)	/ka:m/	Work	/wɜ:k/	Job/duty

6.2 Code-Switching Patterns

Brij speakers frequently switch to English in conversations with educated interlocutors, particularly in urban areas. Code-switching—the alternation between languages within a conversation or sentence—has become a defining feature of modern Brij Bhasha, especially under the influence of English. In contrast, older Brij texts, such as the devotional works of Surdas or village folk tales, exhibit linguistic purity and consistency, with no intrusion from foreign lexicons. A traditional verse might say, "मोहे नंदलाल मोरे अंगना आयो" (My beloved Nandlal has come to my courtyard), showcasing rich indigenous vocabulary and culturally rooted expressions. In contrast, contemporary Brij speakers—particularly among the youth and educated classes—frequently switch between Brij and English depending on context, topic, or audience. A modern sentence might read, "मोहे call आयो, फिर हम market गए", meaning "I got a call, then I went to the market." Here, "call" and "market" are English insertions used fluidly alongside native Brij grammar. Such code-switching typically occurs in intra-sentential (within a sentence) and inter-sentential (between sentences) forms, driven by domains such as education, technology, shopping, or digital media where English terms are dominant. While older Brij communication was poetic and consistent in style and register, the modern hybrid form is dynamic, informal, and often context-dependent. This shift

highlights not only the influence of English as a global lingua franca but also a transformation in the sociolinguistic identity of Brij speakers—from a linguistically insular community to a more cosmopolitan, bilingual one. Though this evolution enables flexibility and broader communication, it also poses challenges for the preservation of Brij Bhasha's traditional linguistic aesthetics and cultural depth.

Original Brij Sentence	IPA (Original)	Code-Mixed Brij Sentence	IPA (Code-Mixed)	Meaning (English)
मो दूरभाष घूम गयो।	/mo: d̪u:r.bʱa:ʃ g̪u:m gə.jo:/	मो phone घूम गयो।	/mo: fɔ:n g̪u:m gə.jo:/	My phone got lost.
लरिको पढ़ई करै।	/lə.ɾi.ko: pə.ɽʱə.i kə.ɾe:/	लरिको homework करै।	/lə.ɾi.ko: hoʊm.wɜ:k kə.ɾe:/	The boy is doing homework.
बैठक में बात करतो।	/beʈʰək me: ba:t kə.ɾ.to:/	Meeting में बात करतो।	/mi:ʈɪŋ me: ba:t kə.ɾ.to:/	Talking in the meeting.
गाड़ी ठीक करायो?	/ga:ɽi: ʈi:k kə.ɾa:.jo:/	Car ठीक करायो?	/ka:ɽ ʈi:k kə.ɾa:.jo:/	Did you repair the car?
हम चिट्ठी लिखै।	/ɦəm ʈiʈʰi li.kʰe:/	हम mail लिखै।	/ɦəm me:l li.kʰe:/	I'm writing mail.
वो खेल देखै।	/vo: kʰe:l d̪e:.kʰe:/	वो match देखै।	/vo: mætʃ d̪e:.kʰe:/	He watches the match.
हमार पाठशाला दूर है।	/ɦə.ma:ɾ pa:ʈʰ.ʃa:.la: du:r ɦe/	हमार school दूर है।	/ɦə.ma:ɾ sku:l du:r ɦe/	My school is far.
हम छाया में ठाढ़ हैं।	/ɦəm ʈʰa:.ja: me: ʈʰa:ɽʰ ɦẽ/	हम shade में ठाढ़ हैं।	/ɦəm ʃe:ɖ me: ʈʰa:ɽʰ ɦẽ/	We are standing in the shade.
हमार किताब खो गइ।	/ɦə.ma:ɾ ki.ta:b kʰo: gə.i:/	हमार book खो गइ।	/ɦə.ma:ɾ bu:k kʰo: gə.i:/	My book is lost.
कागज जमा करायो।	/ka:.gəɖʒ d̪ʒə.ma: kə.ɾa:.jo:/	Form जमा करायो।	/fɔ:ɾm d̪ʒə.ma: kə.ɾa:.jo:/	Submitted the form.

लरि की नाच रही थी।	/lə.ɾi.kiː naːtʃi rə.ɦiː tʰiː/	लरि की dance करै थी।	/lə.ɾi.kiː dæns kə.ɾeː tʰiː/	The girl was dancing.
चलो तसवीर खींची।	/tʃə.loː t̪əs.viːr kʰiː.tʃiː/	चलो photo ली।	/tʃə.loː foː.t̪oː liː/	Let's take a photo.
सन्देशा भेज्यो।	/sən.d̪eː.ʃaː bʱeː.d̪ʒoː/	Message भेज्यो।	/mɛ.sɪd̪ʒ bʱeː.d̪ʒoː/	Sent a message.
हमार पसन्द है।	/ɦə.maːr pəsən̪d̪ ɦeː/	हमार favourite है।	/ɦə.maːr feɪ.və.ɾɪt ɦeː/	It is my favourite.
बात बहुत चटपटी थी।	/baːt bə.ɦʊt tʃət.pə.t̪iː tʰiː/	बात interesting थी।	/baːt m.t̪ɾəs.t̪ɪŋ tʰiː/	The talk was interesting.

Semantic Extension

Semantic extension—where borrowed English words acquire new, locally adapted meanings in Brij Bhasha—marks a profound shift in the dialect's expressive framework. In classical Brij literature, words carried culturally embedded meanings rooted in local contexts, as seen in verses like "प्रेम की पीर कहि न जाये" (The pain of love cannot be expressed), where प्रेम (love) is deeply spiritual and metaphorical. In contrast, modern Brij speakers often use English words like "love" or "friendship" in everyday contexts, but with extended or localized meanings. For instance, "हमार love चल रही है" (We're in a relationship) uses *love* not in its classical or romantic English sense, but as a colloquial expression for a casual partnership. Similarly, "party" in Brij today may refer not just to a formal gathering but to any informal meet-up, unlike its more restricted English usage. Words like "smart" (used to describe someone stylish, not necessarily intelligent) or "time" (used to mean a moment of convenience, e.g., "जब time हो, आवे") also illustrate semantic stretching. This shift from contextually rich native terms to semantically broad or repurposed English words reduces the depth and cultural specificity once embedded in Brij vocabulary. While such extensions enable new forms of expression and reflect social change, they also dilute the nuanced meanings preserved in older Brij texts, signaling a linguistic evolution that aligns more with global trends than traditional ethos. English words often acquire local meaning:

Concept	Old Brij Usage	Modern Brij Usage (Code-Mixed with English)	Semantic Extension Observed
Love	"प्रेम" or "प्रीत" – deep spiritual or devotional love (e.g., Surdas)"प्रेम की पीर कहि न जाये"	"हमार love चल रहो है"(We're in a romantic relationship)	Love changes from divine emotion to casual romantic partnership
Smart	No equivalent; traditionally, someone would be described as "सुघड़", "चतुर", or "सीधो-साधो"	"तू तो बहुत smart लागत है"(You look very stylish)	Smart used to mean appearance/stylish, not intelligence
Time	"समय" or "बखत" – used in spiritual or moral contexts e.g., "समय बड़ो बलवान है"	"जब time हो, फोन करिए"(Call me when you get time)	Time used more informally for availability or convenience
Party	No equivalent; मिलन or सभा used for social gatherings	"काल party में चले जइहें?"(Will we go to the party tomorrow?)	Party used for casual social gathering (not necessarily formal or political)
Fashion	No such concept; clothing was described as "पहनावा", "वेशभूषा"	"नवो fashion आयो है कपड़ा को"(A new fashion has arrived in clothing)	Fashion extended to mean any new or trendy style locally
Enjoy	Old texts express joy as "सुख", "आनंद", "रस लीनो" e.g., "कृष्ण लीला को रस लीनो"	"हम तो खूब enjoy कर लियो"(We really had fun)	Enjoy shifts from spiritual joy to casual fun/entertainment
Friend	"मित" or "सखा" used in older poetry e.g., "सखा सनेह जानि हरषायो"	"वो हमार best friend है"	Friend becomes a status-based modern term, often tagged with best, close
Tension	Old Brij expresses anxiety with "चिंता", "व्यथा", "दुख"	"मोहे tension हो रहो है exam को"(I'm feeling stressed about the exam)	Tension takes on psychological/stress meaning, informal

Work	Traditionally "काम" used for "office work बहुत है physical labor or duty.e.g., आजकल" "ग़वाल बाल सब काम करै"	Work narrows from general to office/employment-related tasks
Support	Brij used "सहारा", "मदद", "Thank you for your "सहयोग"e.g., "भक्तन को कृष्ण support" सहारा"	Support becomes multifunctional: emotional, financial, professional help

Social and Cultural Implications

The rising influence of English on Brij Bhasha is not merely a linguistic phenomenon; it carries deep social and cultural consequences that reflect and reshape the identity, status, values, and relationships of its speakers. As language is a carrier of culture, the gradual encroachment of English into Brij not only alters the way people communicate but also how they perceive themselves, their heritage, and their aspirations.

Erosion of Traditional Cultural Identity: Brij Bhasha has long been a medium for devotional poetry (e.g., Surdas), folk tales, rituals, and oral traditions rich in local idioms, proverbs, and expressions. As English terms and structures replace native vocabulary, there is a progressive loss of culturally embedded expressions, metaphors, and poetic traditions. The shift from saying "प्रेम की पीर कहि न जाये" to "हमार love चल रहो है" reflects a dilution of the emotional and spiritual depth once embedded in the dialect.

Emergence of Linguistic Hierarchies: The ability to speak or mix English into Brij has become a marker of education, modernity, and social mobility. This has created a linguistic hierarchy where traditional Brij Bhasha is often viewed as "rural," "unpolished," or "backward," especially among youth. In contrast, those fluent in English-infused Brij or Hindi-English code-switching are perceived as more urban, modern, or aspirational. This fuels language-based social inequality within the same community.

Generational Communication Gap: Older generations, who are deeply rooted in pure Brij expressions, often find themselves alienated when younger speakers use hybrid language with English code-mixing. The intergenerational transmission of traditional idioms, folk stories, and oral culture is weakened, creating a disconnect between the past and the present.

Shift in Value Systems: Language carries values. As English infiltrates Brij Bhasha, the value systems embedded in Brij culture—respect for nature, spirituality, collectivity, and

humility—are increasingly overshadowed by modern values of individualism, consumerism, and speed, often conveyed through English expressions like "*success*," "*target*," "*focus*," or "*smart work*." This subtle shift changes what is considered important or desirable in society.

Decline of Oral and Performing Traditions: Brij Bhasha is historically tied to oral traditions—Rasa Leela, folk songs, Akhara performances, and devotional chanting. As English grows in educational and entertainment domains, the younger generation is less exposed to and less interested in these art forms, leading to cultural amnesia. Many traditional expressions don't translate well into English, resulting in their eventual abandonment.

Transformation of Local Education and Aspirations: In schools and higher education across the Brij region, English is prioritized, and Brij Bhasha is often excluded from formal curricula. This has led to low prestige and limited functional space for Brij in formal domains like education, governance, or technology. Consequently, parents and students may discourage the use of Brij at home, favoring Hindi or English for "better futures."

Digital and Media Influence: social media, mobile phones, and entertainment are key drivers of English influence. Phrases like "*video call*," "*status*," "*message*," and "*chat*" dominate digital discourse, often used alongside or within Brij sentences. This encourages translingual practices that favor short, efficient English expressions and marginalize the descriptive richness of Brij.

Threat to Linguistic Diversity: Brij Bhasha, as a regional dialect with no official status or standardized orthography, is vulnerable to language shift. The unchecked spread of English, coupled with the dominance of standard Hindi, poses a serious threat to the survival of Brij as a vibrant spoken language. Without proactive preservation efforts, Brij may become limited to ceremonial or nostalgic usage only.

Generational Shift: Youth increasingly prefer Hindi-English over Brij: One of the most striking social changes observed in the Brij region is the generational shift in language preference, where the youth increasingly gravitate toward Hindi-English hybrids instead of their ancestral dialect, Brij Bhasha. This shift is largely driven by education, digital media, and urbanization, which expose younger speakers to global and pan-Indian cultures. As a result, traditional Brij expressions are often considered old-fashioned or unsophisticated, while code-mixed speech using Hindi and English is viewed as modern, practical, and aspirational. In schools and social gatherings, it is common to hear statements like "*हमें homework करना है*" rather than "*हमें पढ़ाई करनी है*", or even "*class में presentation है*",

replacing traditional vocabulary. This generational divide not only affects day-to-day communication but also weakens the intergenerational transmission of Brij's cultural heritage, including idioms, songs, and folk narratives, leading to a gradual erosion of linguistic continuity.

Prestige Factor: English words are used to reflect education/status: In modern Brij-speaking society, the use of English vocabulary has become a symbol of social prestige, educational attainment, and upward mobility. English is no longer just a language of instruction or global commerce—it has permeated everyday speech as a status marker. For instance, inserting English words like *"meeting"*, *"project"*, *"status"*, or *"schedule"* into otherwise Brij or Hindi sentences is a common strategy among the educated and urban population to signal sophistication and modern identity. This linguistic behavior reinforces class distinctions and often stigmatizes pure Brij speakers as rural, less educated, or backward. Consequently, Brij Bhasha is pushed to the periphery in formal and elite domains, surviving mainly in informal, rural, or ritual contexts. The perception of English as a language of power deepens this trend, marginalizing traditional dialects and promoting code-mixing as a form of linguistic capital.

Loss of Identity: Gradual dilution of traditional vocabulary and syntax: The widespread adoption of English through lexical insertion and code-mixing is leading to a gradual dilution of Brij Bhasha's linguistic identity. Native words, expressions, and grammatical structures are increasingly being replaced or reshaped under the influence of English, resulting in a hybrid dialect that often lacks the poetic depth and cultural specificity of traditional Brij. Words like *"चिट्ठी"* (letter), *"बैठक"* (gathering), or *"संदेश"* (message) are being replaced by *"mail"*, *"meeting"*, and *"message"*, respectively, leading to the loss of culturally rooted vocabulary. Additionally, English syntax and phrase patterns subtly influence Brij sentence construction, leading to unnatural word orders and a breakdown of idiomatic expressions. This linguistic transformation threatens to sever the dialect's ties to its devotional, agrarian, and oral traditions. As younger generations embrace a globalized linguistic identity, Brij Bhasha risks becoming a hollow shell of its former self—functionally alive, but culturally and aesthetically diminished.

Conclusion

The present study, titled *"Echoes of Influence: A Sociolinguistic Insight into Hindi and English Influence on Brij Bhasha"*, reveals how prolonged language contact has led to

profound lexical, morphological, and semantic changes in Brij Bhasha. Through processes such as code-mixing, lexical insertion, semantic extension, and morphological simplification, both Hindi and English have deeply reshaped the structure and usage of this regional dialect. While Hindi's institutional dominance and English's global prestige have offered new avenues for communication and mobility, they have simultaneously marginalized Brij Bhasha in both formal and informal domains. This shift is particularly evident among younger generations, who increasingly associate Brij with rural identity and limited utility, in contrast to the aspirational status of Hindi-English hybrids. As a result, traditional Brij expressions, cultural idioms, and poetic forms are being steadily replaced or diluted. This sociolinguistic evolution reflects broader cultural transformations in the Brij region, where modernity, education, and digital media redefine language practices. The findings underscore an urgent need for conscious efforts toward documentation, intergenerational transmission, and community-based revitalization to preserve the linguistic and cultural essence of Brij Bhasha before it fades into symbolic memory. While the evolution of languages is inevitable, conscious preservation efforts are needed to document and revitalize Brij Bhasha. Promoting the dialect in education, literature, and media could mitigate the loss of linguistic diversity in the Brij region. The influence of English on Brij Bhasha has produced a double-edged outcome. On one side, it reflects adaptability, modernization, and access to global discourse. On the other, it causes the gradual erosion of linguistic purity, cultural identity, traditional aesthetics, and social cohesion. To maintain the richness of Brij Bhasha, there is a need for community awareness, documentation, mother-tongue-based education, and cultural revival—ensuring that Brij evolves without being consumed.

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