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Guru English and Spiritual Enchantment

Among Hare Krishnas

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in Anthropology

by

Teruko Vida Mitsuhara

2013



ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Guru English and Spiritual Enchantment

Among Hare Krishnas

by

Teruko Vida Mitsuhara

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Elinor Ochs, Chair

This study argues that the adoption of what Srivinas Aravamudan (2006) called “Guru English” by the first generation of Anglo-American Hare Krishna priests plays a key role in their ability to attract followers. Analysis of spontaneous uses of Indian English shows that Hare Krishna priests rely on a small number of morphosyntactic and phonetic features to constitute the canonical Guru English register of their Indian Guru, Srila Prabhupada. The study is based on four years of ethnographic research on patterns of languages use, religious ideologies, and conversion experiences in the Hare Krishna temple in Los Angeles, California. Data analysis focuses on 10.5 hours of scripture lectures delivered by three priests to the mostly Anglo-American congregation. The findings reveal that the priests’ followers are sensitive to the accumulated effect of different combinations of such features. Data also suggest that linguistic appropriation of minority language varieties by Anglo-Americans is not always “mocking” (Hill 1998; 2006; 2008; Chun 2004; Barrett 2006; Ronkin and Karn 1999).

The thesis of Teruko Vida Mitsuahara is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2013

***This thesis is dedicated to my Roots and my Heart.***

*To my Roots:*

*Thank you for giving me a vision and sacrificing your own visions so that I could realize mine.*

*My success is yours.*

*To my Heart:*

*Your love inspires me and you give renewed purpose to all that I do. Thank you for staying up*

*late with me as I figured out the intricacies of Guru English!*

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# **Guru English and Spiritual Enchantment Among Hare Krishnas**

Teruko Vida Mitsuhara, UCLA

## ***PART ONE***

### **1. Introduction**

This study argues for an account of non-mocking appropriation of Guru English by Anglo-American leaders of the Hare Krishna religious order as a means of inscribing an Indian cosmology and spiritual identification. The study is based on four years of ethnographic research on languages use, religious ideologies, and conversion experiences in the Hare Krishna temple in Los Angeles, California.

Analysis focuses on enregisterment (Agha 2007), the formation of a register, by three Anglo-American Hare Krishna priests during scripture classes to the congregation, which comprises mostly Anglo-American devotees. The priests' phonetics and morphosyntax indicates that they are attempting to speak the Indian English dialect of the Hare Krishna Indian Guru, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

The term, "Guru English" was introduced by literary theorist Srivinas Aravamudan (2006) to characterize how native Indian gurus around the world reach their Western audiences. Aravamudan's analysis of Guru English focuses on the commodification of language by Indian gurus over the course of two hundred years. His analysis is primarily literary, focusing on how Guru English is used to convey Indian philosophy and culture to Western audiences. He conducts no systematic linguistic analysis of Guru English as a linguistic register.

Through focusing on one Guru and his disciples, the present study offers a contribution to defining Guru English and understanding its potential effect on audience spiritual affiliation. In particular, it analyzes phonetic and morphosyntactic features of the English used by Indian Guru, Srila Prabhupada in delivering his lectures and the appropriation of these features (for example, retroflexed consonants, article deletion, Indian English prosody, topicalization) by his Anglo-American devotees who serve as priests within the Hare Krishna community.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, I argue that the appropriation of Guru English attempts to apprentice devotees into conflating Indian-ness with authentic spirituality. A form of spirituality becomes imbued in the register, which facilitates emotional movement from the scripture lecture toward a state of spiritual enchantment among congregants. Analysis offers an understanding of how linguistic resources orient congregants towards “holy” and against “profane,” identities, to connect with a positively valenced Indian spirituality and disassociate with Anglo-American secular desires. Data from this study also suggest that linguistic appropriation of minority language varieties by Anglo-Americans is not always “mocking” (Hill 1995; 1998; 2008; Chun 2004; Barrett 2006; Ronkin and Karn 1999) and that a comparative perspective on register imitation is of critical importance for understanding the appropriation of linguistic features of minority languages and communities by Anglophone speakers.

## 2. Data & Methodology

The study draws upon four years (2008-2012) of ethnographic fieldwork with the Los Angeles Hare Krishna community. Data collection included person-centered interviews, video-recordings of festivals, and audio-recordings of daily scripture lectures in the temple. The

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<sup>1</sup> This study does not focus exclusively or comprehensively on native Indian gurus like Vivekananda, celebrities like Mahatma Gandhi, and “spiritual entrepreneurs” such as Mahesh Rishi Yogi and more recently, Deepak Chopra. Instead, analysis of Guru English is limited to investigating the extent to which Prabhupada’s Indian English dialect becomes the canonical Guru English register that his Anglo-American devotees try to speak.

present study focuses upon a corpus of seven lectures, each approximating an hour and half, delivered by three visiting and resident priests. Their speech register is compared to that of the Founding Acarya (“teacher” is Sanskrit) also referred to as the Founding Guru of the Hare Krishnas, Prabhupada. Lectures were delivered to an audience comprised mostly of Indian and Anglo-American congregant members.

Data are analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The priests’ speech will be compared to that of the Hare Krishnas’ Founding Guru, Srila Prabhupada’s using the phonetic analyzing software, Praat. In addition to using Praat, linguistic analysis of their speech will be made consulting three texts: *Dialects of English: Indian English* (Sailaja 2009), *Contemporary Indian English: Variation and Change* (Sedlatscheck 2009), and *The Syntax of Spoken Indian English* (Lange 2012). This study will provide qualitative analysis of transcribed excerpts from the audio-recorded data of scripture lectures, surveys to the monks and nuns called “ashram women” living at the temple, and devotees’ evaluations of scripture lectures.

### 2.1 *Scripture Lectures*

Scripture lectures are discussions led by a Hare Krishna priest. These lectures begin with chanting a Sanskrit verse from their holy texts, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-Gītā*. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* literally means “Divine-Eternal Pastimes of Supreme God” in Sanskrit. This text contains the stories about Krishna from his birth, childhood, and adult life. Devotees hold scripture lectures on this text Monday through Saturday. On Sundays they read the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, a conversation between Lord Krishna and his friend, Arjuna. This book is but one section within the Indian epic, *Mahabharata*. These scriptures form the philosophical basis for not only the Hare Krishnas but also many Hindu sects around the world.

Scripture lectures begin with one priest singing one to two verses everyday in the original Sanskrit. After singing the verse, the priest recites the verse one line at a time after which the congregation repeats it in a call and response style. Once the priest recites the verse, he asks the men in the congregation to volunteer and lead the congregation in recitation. When the men have finished, the devotee women then lead the congregation in reciting the Sanskrit verse. This portion of the lecture generally lasts about seven to ten minutes and is followed by the priest's scripture lecture where he expounds the meaning of the verse. This study focuses on the priests' use of the Guru English register while they are giving scripture lectures.

## *2. 2 About the Priests*

Among the dozens of priests considered for this study, the audio-lecture corpus focuses on three of Prabhupada's Anglo-American disciples, Sankirtana, Narada, and Muditah.<sup>2</sup> These devotees, who are now in their mid-sixties, were chosen for this study because they are direct disciples of Prabhupada, meaning that he initiated these men himself in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These men, unlike newer preachers in the movement, have heard Prabhupada speak in person and have a stronger connection to him and the religion as they have been preaching Hare Krishna religious doctrines for over forty years. They also share many anecdotes of their time around him and in their lectures they speak of their great love and devotion to Prabhupada.

Narada was raised in New York and is an award-winning speaker in the movement and is often hired as a "home preacher" – meaning that Indian families hire him to perform sacrifices and give lectures at their home for special religious festivals. Muditah was raised in Louisiana and is one the movement's premier Sanskrit scholars and translators. During my stay with the devotees, I was always encouraged to hear his lectures and many Indian devotees prefer his lectures because of his pronunciation and singing of Sanskrit with the "right accent" – meaning

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<sup>2</sup> Devotee names have been changed.

he sounds like a trained Indian singer who is able to control the vibrato in his voice. Sankirtana was raised in Missouri and is temple co-president along with his wife in one of the Texas temples. He was visiting the LA temple for a few weeks and during his stay, I was encouraged to hear him talk. His prolific use of Indian English in his lectures launched my interest in the Guru register. For these reasons, these priests were chosen for analyzing language ideologies in the community, the socialization of an Indian spiritual identity, and register formation within the priest class.

### 3. Focus Questions of this Study

In addition to examining the linguistic practices of Anglo-American priests and lecturers and demonstrating that they are speaking a non-mocking type of Indian English (called quasi-Guru English) based largely on their guru, Prabhupada, this study asks:

- 1) Given that every language practice implies a set of ideologies and aesthetics of speaking and speakers, how do priests and lecturers reify positive stereotypes about India, Indians (especially gurus) through speaking in Indian ways?
- 2) How can the enregisterment of Guru English among the priest and lecture class be understood in terms of spiritual enchantment among converts? In other words, what does speaking in a Guru English register accomplish for the Anglo-American speakers and congregation?

## Theoretical Background:

### 4. The “Mock” Gap

In her book, *The Everyday Language of White Racism*, Jane Hill (2008: 159) positions “linguistic appropriation” within Marxist theory. There, the term, “appropriation” describes how capitalists profit by collecting the value of the work of the workers, who do not control these means (160).

In this way, “linguistic appropriation” describes how “words are commodified and become property, with their meanings and uses determined by their owners” (158). She argues that in the United States, Whites’ appropriation of the linguistic resources of subordinate populations allows them to not only claim the desirable qualities of the populations from whom they are appropriating language, but also denigrate and marginalize those communities (160-1). But what if linguistic appropriation and language stereotyping by Anglo-Americans does not denigrate and marginalize the communities from whom they are appropriating language?

As will be shown in the section on the linguistic structure of Guru English, the Anglo-American Hare Krishna priests do appropriate the Indian English (IE) features of their guru—but they do so not in a pejorative manner. Neither the Indians at the temple, nor the ones to whom I have played the Anglo-American priests’ lectures reacted negatively. When asked if the speaker sounded Indian, some informants replied, “yes, sometimes” — and when I asked them why they believe that is the case, one Indian woman said, “I don’t know. I guess he learned it from his guru.” Other informants could not tell that the preachers were using IE features, which at first might seem odd. However, after considering which features are appropriated, many are syntactic in nature and not easily identifiable as “Indian” to a non-linguist. For example, a Standard American English question like, “What good will their promises do?” is said in Guru English as: “And what good their promises will do.” The salient differences between the two are

in the placement of the auxiliary verb and the declarative intonation in an otherwise question-statement. Such a construction will be examined further in later sections, but the crucial point here is that part of a Hare Krishna priest's rhetorical skill includes the ability to speak in the Indian English reminiscent of their guru. These subtle changes in syntax and in some cases, intonation, have an effect on devotees' positive evaluations of the priests' lectures as "great" or not.

#### 4.1 *Speaking like a Guru...? Examples in Film:*

The linguistic structure of a well-known "guru" has been investigated once before. In a linguistic study of Yoda, the Jedi master in the *Star Wars* (1977-2008) film franchise, "Yodish" is examined as a unique speech variety (Rempel 2011). The study focuses mostly on the syntactic structure of Yodish such as Yoda's use of topicalization – that is, most of the objects in his sentences are fronted to the beginning of the sentence. There are other features that characterize this speech as singularly Yodish like his intonation and lexicon but, as this is not a study on Yodish, I will not provide an exegesis of Yoda's linguistic behaviors. However, I mention Yodish as an example of what "Mock Guru" could be. Foreign or "incorrect" verb placements in addition to the wise "old-man" voice in a body of a wrinkled, undersized, yogi are stereotypes that make Yoda recognizable as a guru figure in the film.

There is also a documentary film, *Kumaré: The true story of a false prophet* (2011) directed by and starring Vikram Gandhi about his journey as an American-born Indian male who wanted to prove to himself and "spiritual seekers" that anyone could amass disciples simply by growing a beard, performing yoga, dressing in saffron robes, assuming an Indian guru name like "Guru Kumaré," and most germane to this present study: putting on a "guru" voice. Part of his artifice as an authentic Indian guru was grounded in speaking in Indian English. Suffice it to say

that Vikram Gandhi was extremely successful in duping his followers and when Guru Kumaré was revealed to be a normal, jeans-wearing, clean-shaven, American English speaking Indian man, some of his followers and believers understandably felt betrayed by his ruse.

If we take into account the work of Barbara Meek (2006) who studied Native American speech representations (called Hollywood Injun English) in white public space, labeling Yodish or “Guru Kumaré” as part of the “mock” genre is appropriate. For even when a member of the same racial group “mocks” the language variety of their own community’s speech (like in Guru Kumaré’s case), it can still be labeled under the “mock X” genre. As Elaine Chun (2004:263) shows in her work on Mock Asian, a Korean American comedian, Margaret Cho, speaks in stereotypical ways that to an extent “reproduces particular ideological links between race, nation, and language despite the apparent process of ideological subversion.” Chun goes on to say that even though Cho “is ‘Asian’ according to most racial ideologies in the U.S [...] her use of Mock Asian may necessarily reproduce mainstream American racializing discourses about Asians [while also being able to] simultaneously decontextualize and deconstruct these very discourses” (ibid). In this way, an Indian American man speaking like a guru or Yoda can still reproduce “mainstream American racializing discourses about Asians” and be categorized as mocking.

This “guru” stereotype can be negative for Indians. Lippi-Green (1997:227) in her book, *English with an Accent* discusses the stereotypes in film and TV about Asians being spiritual people of the mystical Orient who are “hardworking but simple people” who study “arcane philosophies, attaining wisdom and a spirituality specific to their race.” This stereotype can restrict Asians who do not fit that stereotype and moreover Lippi-Green (ibid) asserts that, “we are uncomfortable with Asians unless they correspond to the stereotypes we have created for them.” Nevertheless, despite the fact that this has the potential to be a very racist ideology



around Indians and Asians, in a Hare Krishna temple setting, this type of stereotype works in Indian congregants' favor.

In a Hare Krishna temple, being Indian is the enviable ideal. To be Indian in a temple community is to already be endowed with an authentic spirituality and any non-Indian person has to work extremely hard to evidence their spirituality. Even though there is the Hare Krishna religious doctrine that we are not our body, but rather souls, the belief in *karma* renders the body to be a mirror of one's past. This means that if you were born into an Indian body, your karma is considered better than everyone else in so far as liberation from the material world goes—because at least (even if you have nothing else) “you were born into a body and culture that predisposed you to Krishna.” However, if you are born into a White body, especially in America, devotees say that “such a person is in a more precarious situation so far as the spirit is concerned because in this world, White people are materially favored and that means that they will be more attached to material things and have a more material, rather than spiritual, focus.” With this in mind, “mock” is not the appropriate label for the Indian English Anglo-American devotees speak.

There is a difference between the cinematic manufacturing of a stereotype as done by the creators of *Star Wars* (1977-2008) and *Kumaré* (2011) – mainly, the difference lies in the socio-historical backdrop of the Hare Krishna movement and the religious ideologies that encourage the genuine and complete merger of the self with an Indian spiritual identity. The priests in this study along with the majority of devotees I have encountered over the past four years are seriously trying to save their souls and reach *goloka*, Krishna's abode. Many wholeheartedly believe the only way to reach *goloka* is to shed their prior, material and “Western” identity in favor of the Vedic Indian one.

Calling the priests' Indian English "Mock Guru English" or "Mock Guru" would be to imply that to some extent, racist ideologies and the reinscription of negative stereotypes were taking place at the Hare Krishna temple. However, as will be discussed in Part Three, that is not the case in a religious community that upholds India, Indians, and an Indian God, Krishna, to be humanity's superiors in the realm of spirituality and Truth. The priests in this study are devoted preachers of Krishna whose lives have revolved around serving Krishna for almost forty years. Perhaps similar to orthodox rabbis, imams, or Catholic priests, Hare Krishna priests continue to be priests even when they are not inside their temple. For example, Narada and Sankirtana are married to devotees, live on the temple grounds, and spend their vacations at other temples worldwide. They, like the majority of longtime devotees, wear their robes or saris, beads, prayer bags, protective talisman-like markings called *tilak* on their foreheads both in and outside of the temple. While traveling on planes, going to work, or picking up their children at school, it is very common and a sign of unabashed devotion to Krishna to dress as a devotee outside of the temple community.

Though I have not accompanied the study's focal priests outside the community grounds, I used my four years of association with devotees as a foundation on which to presume that because they take seriously their role as a servant of Krishna, these preachers are not like Vikram Gandhi's fake prophet, "Guru Kumaré," who put on an "Indian priest" artifice only when giving scripture lectures at the temple.

#### *4.2 Not Mock Guru*

With this continuity of practice in mind, this analysis is in line with Rusty Barrett (2006), who questions the term "mocking" as an umbrella gloss for linguistic appropriation by Anglo-Americans of minority language varieties. Barrett argues that the "label (or misnomer) 'Mock

Spanish' obscures the importance of Anglo Spanish as a form of linguistic appropriation" (166). His concern over the gloss "mock" does not mean that he discounts the notion that racist ideologies are at play in Anglo Spanish use. Indeed most of his argument concerns how Mock Spanish reproduces derogatory racial portrayals of Latinos for the amusement of the Anglo community. His concern lies in what "mock" implies, which is that linguistic appropriation is merely a tool for reproducing negative stereotypes. The implication of "mock" is what this study veers from by calling the variety of Indian English that priests use, *quasi-Guru English*. "Quasi" is meant to capture the in-between-ness of this register.

## 5. Hare Krishna Background

Devotion to Krishna is a literary culture. Potential converts are introduced to the Hare Krishna world through the book distribution of devotees on streets and at colleges, or by browsing through the Eastern philosophy sections in bookstores and libraries. Many find Krishna after searching the Internet for information on where to join spiritually minded New Age or religious groups. By the time these spiritual nomads arrive at the doorstep of a Hare Krishna temple, many have engaged in an intense reading of different strands of American-style Hindu and Buddhist groups.

What exactly motivates people to convert to new religious movements like the Hare Krishnas has intrigued religious studies scholars (cf. Shinn 1987; Bromley and Shinn 1985), sociologists (Rochford 1985, 2007), anthropologists (Judah 1974), and cognitive scientists of religion (Ketola 2008) since the movement's inception in the 1960s. These scholars documented the movement and its members in its early days and have tried to ascertain what people gained from conversion to the Hare Krishnas.

The first major ethnography on the movement is J. Stillson Judah's (1974) *Hare Krishna and the Counterculture*, which is based on literature, questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation in Berkeley and Los Angeles temples. Judah argues that devotees were generally dedicated hippies who displayed their upset with the "far right" by joining a religion that is characterized by countercultural values. Two years later, Francine Daner (1975) explores identity and alienation issues in the Boston, New York, London, and Amsterdam temples. Yet, the most cited is E. Burke Rochford's (1985) ethnography on the growth and development of the Hare Krishna movement in America during the 1970s, a burgeoning time for new religious movements in the U.S. Subsequently, Larry D. Shinn (1987), analyzed the social response to new religions and the issue of "cult" stereotypes prevalent in media and popular literature. Most recently, Kimmo Ketola (2008) focuses on the religious charisma of Srila Prabhupada, the Indian founder of the movement.

Many devotees cite the founding Guru, Prabhupada, as the chief impetus for conversion. Prabhupada's books, teachings, and movement inspired a generation searching for spirituality and stability in the midst of the revolutionary feeling of the Sixties. The priests in this study, Sankarshana, Narada, and Muditah, joined the Hare Krishnas during that time.

### *5.1 Prabhupada*

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, called "Prabhupada" by the devotees, was born in Calcutta, India in 1896. He was a college-educated pharmacist who, in solidarity with Mahatma Gandhi's Independence Movement, rejected his diploma from the Scottish Church College in 1920. Before adopting the life of a renunciant in 1933, he was a pharmacist and married with children. In 1965, at the age of 69, he came to the U.S. and started the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), popularly known as "the Hare Krishnas." When

Prabhupada died in 1977, ISCKON spread across the globe with hundreds of temples and fifty thousand official North American members (Rochford 2007:14)<sup>3</sup>. *New Dwarka*, my fieldsite, is one of those Hare Krishna temples.

## 5.2 *Beliefs and Practices*

Though the movement was formed in the United States in 1965 it “traces its beginnings to the Krishna-bhakti movement founded by Caitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533)” (Rochford 2007:12). The *bhakti* tradition recognizes other gods but they are all subordinate to Lord Krishna. Kimmo Ketola (2008: 45) categorizes ISKCON as “a monotheistic tradition within a larger Hindu culture.” The yogic system of *bhakti*, which is the art of devotional worship to Lord Krishna, promulgates love and service to Krishna as well as practices of austerity and control of the senses. Controlling one’s senses begins with following four prescribed rules: (1) No meat-eating (including fish and eggs); (2) No illicit sex (sex is appropriate only if the couple are married and intend to conceive); (3) No intoxication (including caffeine); and (4) no gambling. Moreover, every devotee chants the *maha-mantra*, which means the ‘great mantra’:

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna  
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama  
Rama Rama Hare Hare*

Chanting this mantra in public venues (called *sankirtan* in Sanskrit) is the single most important activity for devotees. The mantra is why they call themselves “the Hare Krishnas.” Devotees believe that chanting Krishna’s holy names spreads good energy and karma to those who hear it while also purifying the soul of the chanter. They ideally chant sixteen rounds of the *maha-mantra*, which is 1,728 times every day. The purpose is to clear the bad karma and cultivate a spiritual consciousness. After devotees have dedicated themselves to chanting and

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<sup>3</sup> For more on Prabhupada’s charisma in affecting this movement’s beginnings, read Kimmo Ketala’s (2008) *The Founder of the Hare Krishnas as Seen by Devotees: A Cognitive Study of Religious Charisma*

following the four prescribed rules for a certain amount time determined by their home temple administration, they are initiated into the movement and given a holy name from the Sanskrit scriptures like ‘Shastra’ or ‘Rama.’

Though not an official ISKCON rule, devotees are encouraged to engage all their senses in the service of Krishna. They are discouraged from watching television or listening to music unless it is about Krishna. They are constantly discussing Krishna’s pastimes. For example, devotees derive great pleasure from recounting his escapades with his cow-herd girlfriends called *gopis*, his antics when stealing butter and milk from his neighbors, and his heroic adventures with his brother, Balaram. They also relish discussing the histories of Vedic India in general.

Many devotees only eat *prasadam*, which is holy food that clears bad karma and predisposes the body toward working for Krishna. This food has been prepared for and ritually offered to Lord Krishna, thereby rendering it spiritual in essence. These are ideal practices and not all devotees can adhere to these rules, especially if they work and live outside of a temple community. Nonetheless, devotees are highly aware of these regulations and attempt to live by these standards.

Unless newcomers surrender fully to Krishna and begin to see the “miseries and errors in their past behaviors,” many leave the faith because of the rigid regulations. If they do stay in the religion, the ultimate goal is for devotees to spend their life changing their karma by engaging in behaviors that use the material senses for loving and serving Krishna: the mouth chants and talk about Krishna, the ears listen to stories or “transcendental pastimes” of the Supreme, the eyes watch Krishna-centered videos and they read literature about God<sup>4</sup>, the hands make food for

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<sup>4</sup> Devotees use the personal reference “Krishna” when talking about God, but they also use the impersonal reference of “God”.

Krishna and write about God, the mind remembers Krishna throughout the day, the genitals are engaged to make children who would serve Krishna and so on (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 7.5.23).

Prabhupada translated this particular value system of the ancient Indic texts and scriptures into English over the course of his twelve years touring the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Russia, and many other countries. His most widely read text is the *Bhagavad-Gita: As It Is*, one of the most popular English translations of the Hindu scripture.

### 5.3 *Fieldsite*

*New Dwarka* is located on a residential street off of Venice Boulevard in Los Angeles. This temple serves thousands of devotees and Hindus of other *bhakti yoga* traditions in the LA area. Its location is unique because approximately two hundred devotees live within three blocks of the temple making it the second largest Hare Krishna devotee community in the United States after a temple commune in Alachua, Florida. On the block, there is a vegetarian restaurant, publishing house, yoga studio, two ashrams, the Bhakti House where they host informal lectures to novices, and a museum dedicated to their holy text, *Bhagavad-Gita*. The temple also owns a number of apartment complexes on the street and reduces the rent for some devotees who participate in administrative temple duties at the temple. Other devotees work outside of the community and live scattered across Los Angeles. They come to the temple for Sunday services, classes, and festivals. In many ways it is a religious enclave similar to Goffman's (1961) "total institution" where temple devotees like the celibate monks, married priests, women in the ashram (similar to nuns), and temple families spend the majority of their time.

Since ancient Indian spiritual culture is deeply valued and Indian gurus are considered spiritual beings sent to liberate the material world, the ability to speak like a guru grants Anglo priests the spiritual authority typically granted to Indian gurus. In other words, if you sound

spiritually powerful then you must be spiritually powerful and that means that you can help deliver people from the material world. This logic permeates in the Hare Krishna religion where hierarchy is paramount and the guru's authority (i.e his ability to liberate/deliver his followers) is ranked second to Krishna. Below is an analysis of the type Indian English Hare Krishna priests speak followed by an analysis of both the functions of this register as well as the language ideologies in the community.



## ***PART TWO***

### 6.0 Linguistic Analysis of Guru English

The priests appropriate only a few of the Guru English linguistic structures (prosody, topicalization, article deletion and so on), and they do so in an inconsistent manner. The inconsistencies of their Indian English evidence that their speech is in the developmental, early stages of a register. Since it is not a stable register, each speaker appropriates different features of their Guru's Indian English and with varying frequency. In some ways they overcorrect and use Guru English features that their Guru does not. They do not use this register throughout their lectures or even in the same semantic or syntactic environment of their earlier utterances. Nonetheless, they do appropriate Guru English and the questions of interest for this study are *why*, and *what* is the function of this appropriation?

#### *6.1 Guru English and quasi-Guru English*

The Introduction lists a few linguistic features that many Anglo-American Hare Krishna priests and lecturers in the Los Angeles temple use while preaching to their congregation: dropped articles, retroflexion, and Indian English intonation. Not all priests speak in a quasi-Guru English and the ones who do, do not use every feature. For example, some will drop articles but not retroflex the plosives /t/ and /d/. Others will pronounce the /t/ as a dental ejective [t̪ʰ] and not use Indian English pitch or intonation. The aim of this section is not to focus on why some priests choose one feature over the other, but rather to illustrate how the priests' speech is a quasi or reduced variety of their guru's Indian English. To do that, a brief introduction to Indian English and the Indian English of their guru is necessary.

## 6.2 *What is Indian English? Whose Indian English Influences Hare Krishna Priests?*

Since the first Englishman settled in India in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, English has been an inseparable part of Indian history. Even after two hundred years of colonial rule and more than sixty years after Independence in 1947, English continues to impact the linguistic character of India. There are approximately 37 million proficient speakers of Indian English (IE) in India (Melchers and Shaw 2003) and due to the mass emigration of Indians to English-speaking countries there are also millions of Indian English speakers worldwide.

British English dominates educational settings (Sailaja 2009: 17). Most teachers of IE model their English classes towards an ideal of Britain's Received Pronunciation (RP) but the variety of English that has grown in the Indian subcontinent "approximates RP yet has some distinctive features that mark it as Indian" (17). The following sections will only cover the features of IE that ISKCON's Founding Guru A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada used in the Hare Krishna community. All Hare Krishna devotees, especially the preaching priests, listen to the audio lectures of their Founding Guru several times each week if not every day. They play Prabhupada's lectures in the car; they listen to his singing and teachings on their iPods while walking or exercising, and when on New Dwarka temple grounds, Prabhupada's singing voice is heard nonstop from the speakers playing in the background. His voice, for many devotees, is a constant sound throughout the day. Though these Anglo-American priests interact with Indians in their community, Prabhupada's IE is the only consistently heard model of how to gauge how a guru sounds. For this reason, this study focuses on Prabhupada's IE as the base for Guru English.

### 6.3 Prabhupada's Indian English v. The Hare Krishna Priests

Below are rules for Prabhupada's phonology based on analysis of Prabhupada's Indian English as shown in one of his most downloaded lectures in, *Lecture at Rotary Club – There are so many Anomalies* given to English-speaking devotees at Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat, India on December 5, 1972. The linguistic analysis of IE relies chiefly on Pingali Sailaja's (2009) *Dialects of English: Indian English*, Andreas Sedlatschek's (2009) *Contemporary Indian English*, and Claudia Lange's (2012) *The Syntax of Spoken Indian English*.

#### A. Phonetics and Phonology– Consonants

A.1 /r/ or /ɹ/ – In Standard IE Pronunciation (SIEP), /r/ is like the RP /r/ meaning that r is not articulated in words like *card, park, smart* (Sailaja 2009:19). The /r/ in *card*, for example, surfaces as the near-open central vowel [ɚ]. Yet, in non-standard varieties of IE, /r/ is rhotic and sometimes it is pronounced as an alveolar flap [ɾ] (Bansal 1976). For Prabhupada, the sounds are:

Table A.1: Prabhupada /r/ or /ɹ/

	Prabhupada Rule	Prabhupada's IE Example	HK priests	English Orthography
1.	/r/ → [ɚ] / [+syllabic] __ /r/ becomes the near-open central vowel [ɚ] after vowels.	['madɚn]	∅	<i>modern</i>
2.	/r/ → [ɾ] / [+syllabic] __ [+syllabic] /r/ becomes the alveolar flap /ɾ/ intervocally.	['wi ɹr 'i:ɪŋ] [vɛɾi]	∅ [vɛri] [sə'vɪr. ɑ'stɛ.ɪti:z]	<i>we are eating</i>  <i>very</i> <i>severe auserities</i>

#### The Priests

The priests do not pronounce /r/ as [ɚ] in any phonetic environment. However, the second rule is applied by two of the priests analyzed in this study, Sankirtana and Narada. The word, 'very' [vɛri], is the most commonly said word with an alveolar flap although Sankirtana did say 'severe

ausertities’ with an alveolar flap in the word “severe;” but austerities” [sə'vɪr. ə'stɛ.ɪti:z] ‘severe ausertities’. As noted, the three priests analyzed in this study do not use their guru’s IE throughout the lectures. Sometimes Sankirtana would use [vɛri] and in the next breath say, [vɛri] using the American English central approximate [ɹ]. For example, in one of Sankirtana’s lectures he says, “Then our pathway back to home, back to Godhead, is very very solid, very very clear.” There, the first set of “very” is said with the alveolar flap as [vɛri], while the second set is pronounced as the American English [vɛri]. The application of Guru English varies between speakers and within the speakers’ own lectures.

*A.2 /w/ and /v/ or /v/* – In SIEP the distinction between /w/ and /v/ is maintained just as in RP however, “the amount of friction that /v/ carries in RP is greater than the friction in IE” (Sailaja 20). The tendency is to articulate the labio-dental approximate [v], which occurs in many Indian languages (ibid). In non-standard varieties of IE the phonemic distinction between /v/ and /w/ is almost always neutralized and /v/ prevails as shown in this playful “advertisement for a recent Hindi film that says, ‘villager, visionary, winner.’” It was meant to be alliterative (ibid). For Prabhupada, the phonemes are /w/ and /v/.

*Table A.2: Prabhupada /w/ and /v/ or /v/*

	Prabhupada Rule	Prabhupada’s IE Example	English Orthography	HK priests	English Orthography
3.	/w/ → [w] /w/ remains [w]	['wi. əɹ. 'i:ɪŋ] [ 'hau. 'wi. 'hæf]	<i>we are eating</i> <i>how we have</i>	[ʌ'vei] [ʌ. 'vɹɪd]	<i>away</i> <i>a word</i>
4.	/v/ → [v] /v/ remains [v]	['vɛri]	<i>very</i>	[vɛri]	<i>very</i>

### *The Priests*

Prabhupada maintains the distinction between the two phonemes, and in the lecture analyzed, there was no [v] in place of /v/. However, one of the devotees analyzed for this study,

Sankirtana, merges /w/ and /v/ into one sound /v/ intervocalically. He overgeneralizes Prabhupada’s IE and adds a feature stereotypical of other IE dialects. What is interesting here is that Sankirtana does not use the IE phoneme /v/ but instead uses his own American English phoneme /v/ making his IE sound less like Prabhupada’s. This is similar to when Anglophones try to speak Spanish and instead of using the voiced bilabial approximate [β], they use [v].

A.3 /t/ and /d/ – In IE, the RP alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ are often retroflexed in the articulation of the first sounds in words like *today*, *tomorrow*, *terrific*, and *demand* (Sailaja 2009: 21). In SIEP the voiceless /t/ is generally maintained while /d/ tends to become retroflexed [ɖ] (21).<sup>5</sup> Also, /t/ is not retroflexed after /s/. Yet, in non-Standard IE varieties the retroflex sounds are consistently used (22). For Prabhupada, the sounds are retroflexed syllable-initially.

Alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ become dental ejectives [t̪ʰ] and [d̪ʰ] in syllable final position. This phonetic distinction of Prabhupada’s IE has been copied by most of his priests. It is becoming a pervasive speech marker among the devotees including the Los Angeles New Dwarka community.

Table A.3: Prabhupada /t/ and /d/

	Prabhupada Rule	Prabhupada’s IE Example	English Orthography	HK priests	English Orthography
5.	/t/ and /d/ → [t] and [ɖ]/ σ[ _ Alveolar plosives become retroflexed in syllable initial position	['tu] ['mæ.t̪ɜz] ['d̪i.fɛn] [dis. 't̪iŋ.ʃʌn]	<i>to</i> <i>matters</i> <i>defend</i> <i>distinction</i>	[t] N/A <sup>6</sup> [b̪ɖi]	<i>body</i>
6.	/t/ and /d/ → [t̪ʰ] and [d̪ʰ]/ __ ]σ Alveolar plosives become dental ejectives in syllable final position	['ʌl.t̪i. m̪t̪ʰ] ['fuɖ̪ʰ .stʌf]	<i>ultimate</i> <i>foodstuff</i>	['pɜ.p <sup>h</sup> ɔ̪t̪ʰ] ['fɔ̪ .ti. 'ei̪ t̪ʰ] ['yo.gɜt̪ʰ]	<i>purport</i> <i>forty-eight</i>

<sup>5</sup> Whether these sounds are retroflexed or not has been found to depend on many factors like age, gender, schooling, class, and the context of the speech act (Khan 1989).

<sup>6</sup> There were no incidents of retroflexed [t] in the priests’ speech corpus.

				['jɜː.l.n'ei̯t̪ʰ] [di.'tɛkt̪ʰ] ['ɪn.sɪ.dnt̪ʰ]	<i>yogurt</i> <i>urinate</i> <i>detect</i> <i>incident</i>
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### *The Priests*

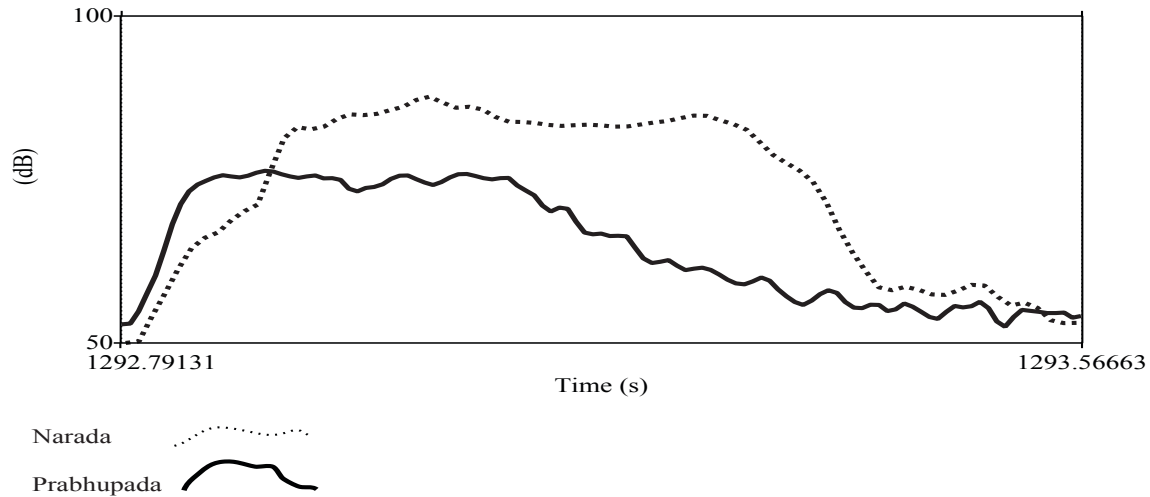
In example 5, Prabhupada’s consonants are retroflexed. Narada and Muditah do not retroflex their consonants, but Sankirtana does. Yet, he only occasionally retroflexes the /d/ in the word, *body*. All other words with the /d/ in a similar environment are pronounced as [d]. He will retroflex *body* when talking about both spiritual and material bodies, which rules out the possible explanation that a retroflexed /d/ is associated with talking about Indian spirituality. This is a perfect example of how IE features are applied inconsistently. As mentioned, the dental ejectives are the most consistently used IE feature in the devotee community at large. The priests use this throughout the lectures and at first it sounds as if they are trying to speak British English; but that is because the dental ejectives give an impression of hyper-articulation.

#### *B.1 Intensity and Pitch*

The most obvious use of the priests’ appropriation of their guru’s Indian English is with intonation. According to linguist, Bruce Hayes (2009:15), “intonation is the use of the voice for linguistic purposes other than distinguishing words; for instance for distinguishing questions from statements.” The priests vary in the words they use to “sound Indian,” but a common pattern to all three is that the word *so* is lengthened and trails off in an undulating fashion similar to how vibrato is used in songs.

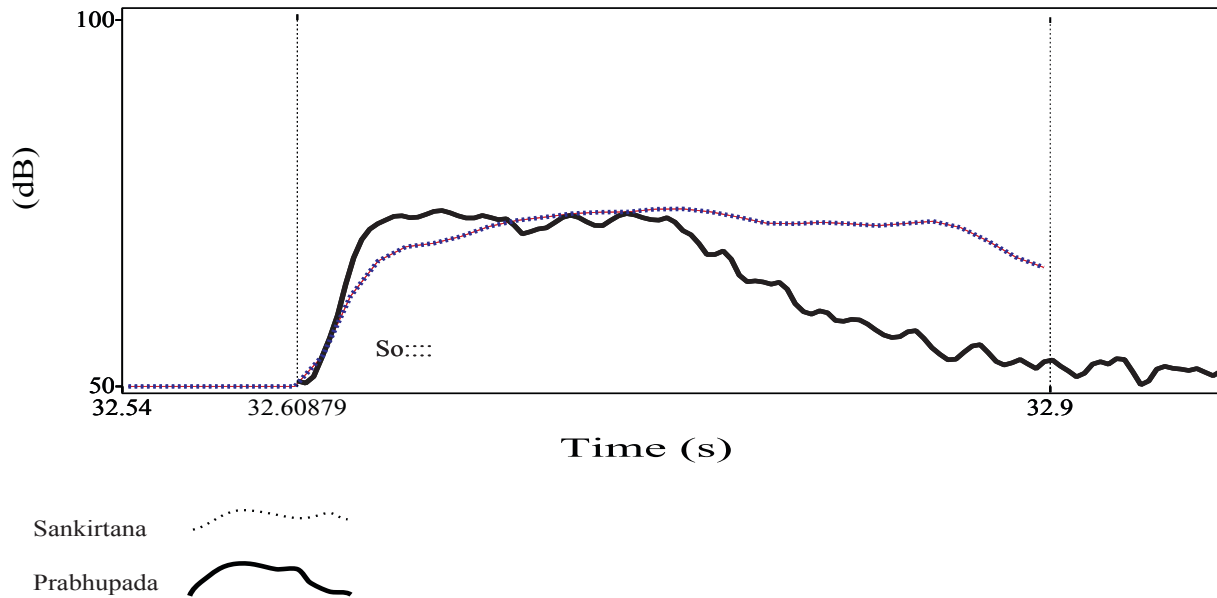
Below is a graph of intensity (dB) comparing Narada and Prabhupada, which show the undulations.

*Graph 1: Narada and Prabhupada intensity (dB)*



The following graph compares the intensity waves of Sankirtana's *so* with that of Srila Prabhupada's. Prabhupada's *so* lasts for a total of 1.223 seconds and Sankirtana's is .36 seconds. The numbers may hint that the two versions of *so* do not resemble each other but when comparing Sankirtana's other pronunciations of *so* in his lectures, the *so* that begins a sentence is twice as long as his other sentence initial pronunciations of *so*. When playing Sankirtana's recording of *so* to both native English speakers and Indians, both groups indicated that he sounded Indian (though not as Indian as Narada does). Perhaps the lack of continuous vibrato towards the end of the utterance is why he sounds less like Prabhupada than Narada to Hare Krishna devotees who heard the recordings.

Graph 2: Sankirtana and Prabhupada intensity (dB)

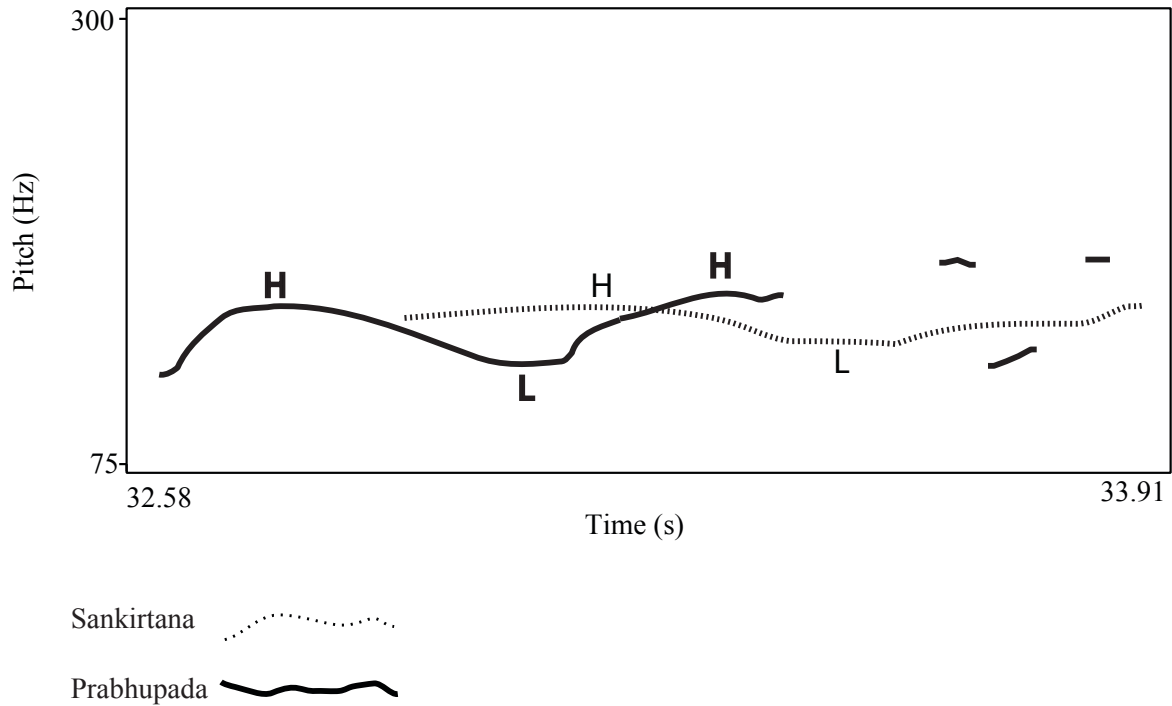


## B.2 Intonation

Central to intonational analyses is the idea that every utterance delivers two messages: a text and a tune. The text is the lexical items of the utterance conveyed through phonemes, stress and phrasing (Hayes 2009:294). The tune is “the pitch pattern with which the words are said” (ibid). To analyze tune, linguists focus on tonal autosegments such as H, M, L. The “H” indicates a high tone, “M” a middle tone, and “L” a low tone. These features specify pitch (Hz) and can be used to determine declarative tune, question tune, emphases, and so on. Intonational meanings can be very difficult to establish. In the influential article describing the meaning of intonation in English, Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (1990) focus on making clear the distinctions of tune, phrasing, stress, and pitch range. Much work has yet to be done on intonational meanings and fortunately, the present study has a straightforward application of pitch analysis. Only one thing concerns us: the comparison of the HLH pattern of Prabhupada’s sentence-initial *so* with the priests. Below are two graphs of Narada’s and Sankirtana’s pitch contour of *so*.



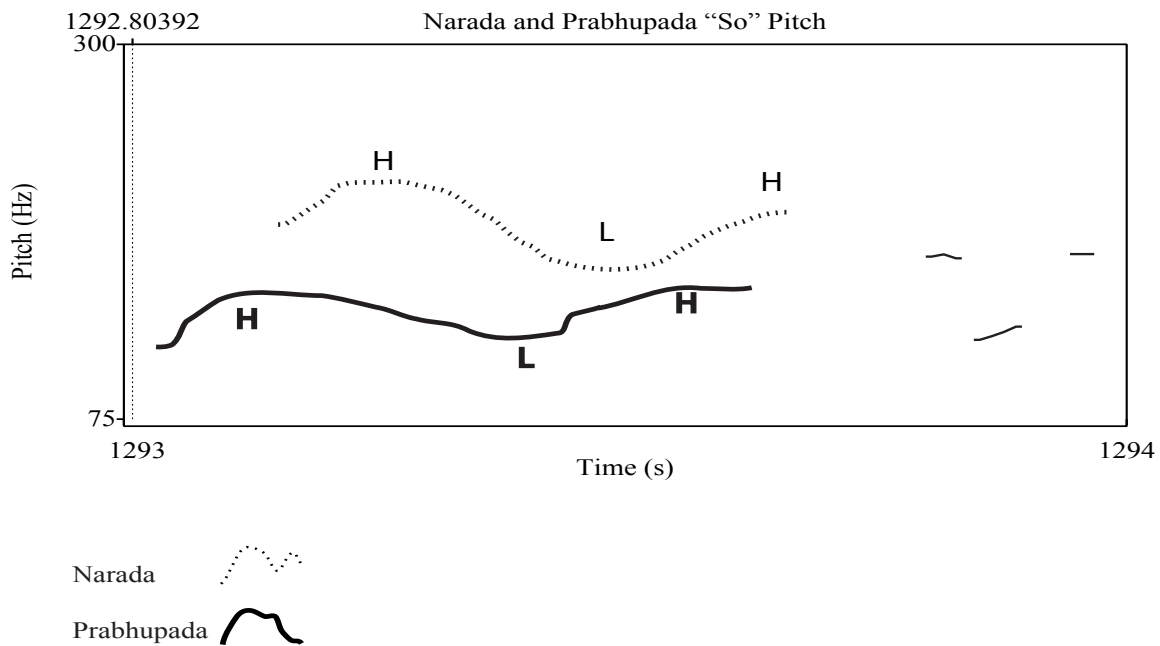
Graph 3: Sankirtana and Prabhupada pitch (Hz)



Sankirtana’s pitch is in the same range as Prabhupada’s but is mostly HL and not HLH. His pitch increases slightly but not nearly to the degree as Narada’s. When played for Indian English speakers<sup>7</sup>, Sankarshana’s *so* was less commonly labeled, “Indian” and that, I argue, is due partly because he is missing the increased H tune at the end of *so*.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to playing clips for Hare Krishna devotees, I also played clips of the priests’ lectures to Indian English speakers who are not associated with the devotees to see if these priests sounded “Indian” to them.

Graph 4: Nirantara and Prabhupada pitch (Hz)



Narada's pitch range follows the HLH pattern. It is interesting that the English intonation of sentence initial *so* is not applied in Narada's speech. When played for Indian English speakers, Narada's *so* was labeled as "Indian."

The third priest, Muditah did not approximate Prabhupada in either intensity or pitch. He appropriated mostly the morphosyntax of Indian English whereas the other two relied more on the phonetics and phonology.

### C. Morphosyntax

The syntax of SIE as opposed to its phonology is supposed to more closely resemble British English (BritE) but the ways in which IE differs from or maintains BritE morphosyntax is debated among IE linguists (Sailaja 2009: 39-41). From my analysis of Prabhupada's IE morphosyntax, the following morphosyntactic features were the most copied by Sankirtana, Narada, and Muditah.

### C.1 Topicalization and Left-Dislocation

Both Standard and non-Standard English topicalize their sentences. “A non-subject is ‘topicalized,’ i.e. marked as a topic expression by being placed in the sentence-initial position normally occupied by the topical subject” (Lambrecht 1994:147). In this sense, topicalization is an umbrella term for fronting, left dislocation, and cleft constructions. Fronting refers to when the Noun Phrase (NP) is fronted to the beginning of the sentence without an overt trace in the main clause. For example, in the sentence: *Faith<sub>i</sub>, you can change  $\emptyset$ <sub>i</sub>*, “Faith” is fronted to the beginning of the sentence. I include the trace “ $\emptyset$ <sub>i</sub>” to show the movement of the object.

Left dislocation (LD) is “similar to a topicalization construction in that an argument of the verb is placed in sentence-initial position. The greater syntactic complexity derives from the fact that in LD construction, a referential resumptive pronoun is introduced (Lange 2012:90). For example, *Children<sub>i</sub>, they<sub>i</sub> want to play all day long*.

Similar to fronting and left dislocation, cleft constructions can also emphasize topics or constituent: “Cleft-constructions belong to the repertoire of focus constructions, more specifically, they represent one option of realizing contrastive focus” (Lange 2012: 176). Though quite common in British and American English, “clefts in spoken IndE [Indian English] are an even more marginal phenomenon than in ICE-GB [International Corpus of English-Great Britain]: there are only five texts (0.32. tokens per 10,000 words) (178).” However, Lange (2012:178) asserts that a more conclusive analysis on Indian English clefts cannot be made because of the overall lack of examples in her corpus. Given the rarity of clefts in Indian English, it is surprising that Prabhupada uses clefts. In Example 3 below, Prabhupada says: *Whatever is changeable<sub>i</sub>, that<sub>i</sub> is not sanatana-dharma*.

### Prabhupada's Utterances

1. *Faith<sub>i</sub>, you can change  $\emptyset_i$ .*
2. *Animals<sub>i</sub>, (pause) and we have got the same propensities  $\emptyset_i$ .*<sup>8</sup>
3. *Whatever is changeable<sub>i</sub>, that<sub>i</sub> is not sanatana-dharma.*
4. *Here in this material existence<sub>i</sub>, I am serving  $\emptyset_i$ .*
5. *These things<sub>i</sub> are we missing  $\emptyset_i$ .*

In a study documenting recurrent features of across varieties of English, Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008), conclude that topicalization is used in several new varieties of English. However, in IE, topicalization is “widespread even in embedded clauses” (Bhatt 2008:554). This is the case for Srila Prabhupada’s use of the “that” in example 3. Below is a chart of the various types of topicalization the priests employ:

*Table C.1: Topicalization and Left-Dislocation*

	Sankirtana	Narada	Muditah
6.	<u>Human body<sub>i</sub></u> , it <sub>i</sub> looks much nicer when it's dressed, you see.	<u>They<sub>i</sub></u> , songwriter <sub>i</sub> gives us a glimpse.	<u>Housewife<sub>i</sub></u> , if she <sub>i</sub> has an illicit lover, she's very careful.
7.	<u>Very nice poetry in the C.C.<sub>i</sub></u> she's giving $\emptyset_i$ .	Everybody likes to play, right? <u>Children<sub>i</sub></u> , that's all they <sub>i</sub> wanna do.	<u>Children<sub>i</sub></u> , they <sub>i</sub> want to play all day long.
8.	<u>This mood<sub>i</sub></u> we have to have $\emptyset_i$ .	<u>It's interesting<sub>i</sub></u> , this <sub>i</sub> scene.	<u>So three things<sub>i</sub></u> Krishna says $\emptyset_i$ .
9.	N/A	<u>Yashoda<sub>i</sub></u> , since she's <sub>i</sub> the queen of Vrindavan, her husband Nanda Maharaj was the king.	<u>In Bhagavad-Gita<sub>i</sub></u> , we have um, many many wonderful instructions given $\emptyset_i$ .
10.	N/A	<u>So much disturbance<sub>i</sub></u> he has caused today $\emptyset_i$ .	<u>On account of raga<sub>i</sub></u> , we become afraid $\emptyset_i$ .

Some of these examples are more canonical than others. For example, introducing the subject or topic and then taking a one second pause before uttering the sentence is quite frequent in

<sup>8</sup> Prabhupada's intonation and pause makes it clear that he is introducing the object of “Animals” first as if the sentence's underlying form would be: We have got the same propensities as animals.

Prabhupada's Indian English and fronting is also common in other Indian Englishes (Sailaja 2009:53).

### C.2 Article Deletion ((AD))

Several empirical works on Indian English article use (Sailaja 2009:52; Sand 2004; Sharma 2005) indicate that the variation of when IE speakers will and will not use them is difficult to generalize (Dixon 1991). Nonetheless, article elision or article deletion (AD) as I call it in this study, is common in Prabhupada's Indian English and the priests also elide articles when speaking in the Guru English register.

#### Prabhupada's Utterance

11. *What is ((AD)) SOUL*
12. *So that's ((AD)) classic example of PREyas.*
13. *He's completely in ignorance about the existence of ((AD)) soul.*
14. *As it is explained in ((AD)) English dictionary, "kind of faith."*

Table C.2: Article Deletion

	Sankirtana	Narada	Muditah
15.	But his body was so strong that even ((AD)) lightning bolt would strike [...]	They, ((AD)) songwriter gives us a glimpse.	And ((AD)) human form of life is a very short opportunity to, well, it's called [...]
16.	He is blessed with a strong material body and we are blessed with ((AD)) eternal spiritual body. That is ((AD)) very big difference.	Superman was ((AD)) imitation Krishna.	So it's not just a new thing. This is going on ((AD)) long long time Krishna says.
17.	But actually, an ugly body is very:: a- n-naked body is ((AD)) very ugly thing.	((AD)) comic book character.	So that's ((AD)) classic example of <i>preyas</i>
18.	Prabhupada points out in his purport, in ((AD)) other place [...]	You're far more beautiful than what you see in the mirror. ((AD: The)) Spirit soul is beautiful.	So it's a very dangerous path in ((AD)) human form of life.
19.	It wasn't a BBT publication those days, some kind of manuscript,	And the flowers in ((AD)) comb were falling from	It's only ((AD)) two sentence purport.

you know, ((AD)) hand copied thing.	her hair.	
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### C.3 Object Elision

Similar to the section on Article Deletion, this section also deals with elision. However, this is the elision of objects following transitive verbs. In non-standard IE, transitive verbs are converted into intransitives (Sailaja 2009:45). For example, “Ok, I’ll take for transport;” “I didn’t expect;” and “We enjoyed very much” (ibid).

#### Prabhupada’s Utterances

20. *We practically see ((XX)) in our experience.*
21. *So actually my position is (.) that I can go everywhere. Just like we are trying ((XX)).*
22. *I was a child. Everyone was ((XX)). Everyone remembers ((XX)).*
23. *It is compared with the tree because the living entity's enjoying the fruit of the tree, and the other living entity, Supreme, Paramatma, He's simply witnessing ((XX)).*
24. *A hog is eating stool, but he's thinking that, "I am enjoying ((XX)), very nice." He's becoming fat. This is called illusion.*

Table C.3: Object Elision

	Sankirtana	Narada	Muditah
25.	The scientists are promising ((XX)).	Yashoda can hear that the milk that she was, uh, boiling, had boiled over, so she has to take care ((XX)).	So when the body dies, even ((XX)) we may be respected as Prabhu or Isa [...]
26.	But an-a no other <i>acarya</i> has ever done ((XX)).	When your chanting is pure, then and only then, will Krishna reveal ((XX)).	In Bhagavad-Gita, we have um, many many wonderful instructions given ((XX)).
27.	Don’t get in any accidents because very soon, we will co-come up with the m-means to keep you alive eternally, this scientist was promising ((XX)).	Just like you cannot say, NOW I'm going to lift 800 pounds today. When I've never even lifted ten. No. You have to build up ((XX)). SO you cannot JUMP to this	You have simply to look in the past and find so many examples of those who have gone before ((XX)) and who have successfully carried out

		spontaneous platform.	this process.
28.	The greatest <i>acarya</i> in the history has come ((XX)).	No. You have to just keep ((XX)). You cannot fake it.	N/A
29.	That gives the greatest enlivenment to Sri Radharani. She is given very very nice poetry. Radharani is given ((XX)) she says.	Krishna's leading her and Yashoda's trying to capture ((XX)).	N/A

#### C.4 Minimal (or absent) Contractions due to Syllable-timed Rhythm

When I first visited the temple, I was struck how British the older Hare Krishna priests sounded. For years, I thought they were trying to sound sophisticated and smart by indexing what I thought was a prestigious British accent. Only after listening to several audio files of Prabhupada's lectures did it dawn on me that the lecturers sounded British because they not only use ejectives (See A.3 in the Phonetics Section) for the consonants, which make their speech sound hyperarticulated, but they also avoid contractions. For example, an utterance like "How it is setting?" will be said with dental ejectives like [tʰ] in the word, *it*. Both the dental ejective and the avoidance of contractions are characteristic speech markers of Prabhupada's Indian English. However, though Prabhupada never used "don't" and contractions are generally minimal in his speech, his disciples consistently use "don't." Below are but a small sample of the environments in which contractions are not used.

#### **Prabhupada's Utterance**

30. *It is the same*
31. *that does not mean*
32. *how it is working*
33. *how it is setting*
34. *as it is explained in English dictionary*

Table C.4: Minimal (or absent) Contractions

	Sankirtana	Narada	Muditah
35.	So, <u>it is</u> very amazing thing, to see the great power of Brahmaji.	So, when <u>you are</u> working in the spiritual world, <u>it is</u> actually play.	As described above, <u>it is</u> very difficult for a person <u>who is</u> too materially affected.
36.	<u>She is</u> given very very nice poetry.	<u>He is</u> bewildering her.	Some of <u>you have</u> heard of him (.) uh (.) <u>he is</u> commenting on this verse.
37.	The constitutional position of living entity, is that <u>he is</u> the eternal servant of Krishna.	My great devotee Narada once cursed the two sons of Kuvera and <u>they are</u> in those trees.	The things that drive us in material existence, <u>they are</u> available eternally.
38.	Svarupa. We already have that (.) sort of (.) but now <u>it is</u> simply covered.	Because <u>it is</u> SO special.	Srila Prabhupada's purport is very short but he encapsulates <u>what is</u> written.
39.	You have to-hhh-a condition soul becomes in contact with liberated soul, by the power of that sanga. That liberated sanga you see. That transforms him (.) gradually gradually gradually into liberated consciousness. In other words, <u>it is</u> something like amnesia.	<u>There is</u> no dispute. <u>It is</u> confirmed by Caitanya Mahaprabhu	And because <u>they are</u> too materially absorbed (.) the conception of retaining the personality after liberation from matter (.) frightens them.

### C.5 Some Indian English that the Priests do not appropriate: Verb Complements

This section encompasses a variety of morphosyntactic phenomena that I am placing under the heading of “verb complements.” These phenomena include the various ways that the verb “to be” surfaces (or is elided). In example 40, Prabhupada elides “are” in a sentence that SAE speakers would say as, “we are advanced.” In examples 41-43, the verb remains in a position that, for SAE, would indicate that a question is being asked. However, Prabhupada’s declarative intonation makes clear that he is not asking questions. In examples 44 and 45, the tense concord is absent. In English, *concord* refers to when the noun and verb agree in number and tense. For example, in the sentence: “She hikes up the hill,” *she*, as the subject, is followed by the present



tense verb ending, –s. Prabhupada does not add the progressive –ing ending to the verb *to defend* nor does he pluralize *body* in example 45.

**Prabhupada’s Utterances**

- 40. *But because we are eating on tables and chairs (.) we ((XX)) lvanced.*
- 41. *Very few men know what is the ultimate goal of LIFE.*
- 42. *These things are we missing.*
- 43. *Because with our blunt material eyes (.) we cannot find out where is the soul in this body.*
- 44. *Animals they are concerned (.) with eating (1.0) sleeping (.) sexual intercourse (.) and defend.*
- 45. *We are now encaged in two types of body.*

Of the three priests, Sankirtana is the only one who mirrors Prabhupada’s IE in so far as occasionally having an absent tense concord (Examples 46-47) and forms declarative sentences as questions. Narada and Muditah did not do this in the lectures analyzed.

*Table C.5: Absent Verb Complements*

	Sankirtana	Narada	Muditah
46.	That is our mission, each one of us. And then everything <u>become known</u> . Nothing becomes unknown to such a person	N/A	N/A
47.	Their demigod bodies are transformed into Vaikuntha bodies or Goloka <u>body</u> .	N/A	N/A
48.	I’m- I show Krishna driving a chariot for Arujn. When I see <u>how kind is Krishna</u> , that he's acting as the chariot here, of his beloved devotee, I simply cry.	N/A	N/A

6.4 Conclusion

In Part Two, I have shown through linguistic analysis of these priests’ phonology, phonetics, and morpho-syntax that they are speaking a sort of quasi-Guru English—meaning that their English

has not completely merged to Indian English of their Indian Guru, Prabhupada, but that they do appropriate some of his Indian English linguistic structure. See the chart below for an overview of the features appropriated.

*Chart 1: Overview of Features Appropriated*

	Prabhupada (Kolkata, India)	Sankirtana (St. Louis, Missouri)	Narada (New York)	Muditah (Baton Rouge, Louisiana)
<b>Phonetics and Phonology</b>				
1. Retroflexion	Y	Y	N	N
2. GE Alveolar flap /l/ instead of SAE approximant /ɹ/	Y	Y	N	N
3. NonStandard IE: /v/ instead of /w/ and /v/ <sup>9</sup>	N	Y	N	N
4. Dental ejectives [tʰ] and [dʰ] syllable finally	Y	Y	Y	N
5. Connected Speech <sup>10</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y
6. Rising intonation for statements that are used for questions and other words <sup>11</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y
7. Minimal contractions due to syllable-timed stress	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>% of Prabhupada's GE features used</b>	<b>6/7 = .86</b>	<b>7/6 = 1.16</b>	<b>4/6 = .67</b>	<b>3/6 = .50</b>
<b>Morphosyntax</b>				
8. Tense concord (absent) <sup>12</sup>	Y	N	N	N
9. Article deletion <sup>13</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y
10. Pseudo-Cleft	Y	Y	Y	Y
11. Verb Elision	Y	Y	Y	Y
12. Transitive to Intransitive <sup>14</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y
13. Topicalization <sup>15</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y

<sup>9</sup> Prabhupada's IE is in the regard reflective of the Standard IE Pronunciation which maintains the phonemic distinction between /w/ and /v/. Many nonstandard varieties neutralize that distinction by collapsing the phonemes in to the labio-dental approximate, /v/. Both are placed in the same row, to better illustrate that Sankarshana uses the nonstandard IE whereas Prabhupada does not, so Sankarshana is overcorrecting.

<sup>10</sup> Connected Speech: "Connected speech in IE are the emphasis, exaggeration, and surprise expressed through lengthening – both of consonants and vowels" (Sailaja 2009: 36). For example, 'It was the happiest day of my life' will have extra long /p/.

<sup>11</sup> Example: You are √waiting?; You are √Nirmala?;

<sup>12</sup> Tense Concord: "When a sentence is complex, the tense across the clause often does not match as it does in native varieties of English" (49). For example, IE: "Girish thought that he will pass" vs. Native English varieties: "Girish thought that he would pass."

<sup>13</sup> Article Deletion (AD): So it is a very dangerous path in (AD) human form life; What is (AD) soul?

<sup>14</sup> Ergativization: "Use of verbs in non-Standard IE typically converts transitive verbs into intransitives: 'I didn't expect'" (Sailaja 2009:45). This can also be called "ambitransitivization."

<i>% of Prabhupada's morphosyntactic GE features used</i>	<i>6/6=1.0</i>	<i>5/6 = .83</i>	<i>5/6 = 83</i>	<i>5/6 = .86</i>
<i>% of Prabhupada's GE features used</i>	<i>12/13=.92</i>	<i>12/13 = .92</i>	<i>9/12 = .75</i>	<i>8/12 = .67</i>

Among the three priests' speech analyzed, Sankirtana showed the most phonological Guru English features (116%) and Muditah, the devotee who is hailed as one of ISKCON's greatest preachers, uses the most morphosyntactic features of GE (86%). As discussed in the Phonetics Section, Sankirtana's percentage of phonological GE features is more than his Guru's because Sankirtana says [v] instead of [w] in words like *away*, which is an over-generalization of Prabhupada's GE.

Muditah only appropriates 50% of Prabhupada's phonetic and phonological features and 86% of the morpho-syntactic ones. He is considered "the best" speaker in some of the surveys given to devotees and I surmise that this is because morpho-syntactic appropriations are less obvious than the phonetic ones.

Based on surveys to men and women living on the temple grounds, the only reason I can point to as to why these priests sound like Indian English-speaking gurus and yet, are not pegged as "mockers" of Indian English by the community is because 1) Indian Hare Krishnas are not voicing any dissatisfaction about Indian English and 2) these priests, for the most part, appropriate grammatical features that are not easily identifiable with Indian English. For example, Hare Krishna congregants noticed when Sankirtana, the St. Louis devotee used [v] instead of [w] intervocalically in the word, "away." Yet, they did not notice that the pseudo clefts in the priests' speech converge more with Indian English than with SAE. The devotees also did not notice that the following sentence, "So much disturbance, he has caused today," is a non-

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<sup>15</sup> SAE speakers topicalize to emphasize or for poetic reasons but in IE objects are frequently placed at the beginning of the sentence. In IE: "Bees, the way they communicate with each other, is an example of this" (Sailaja 54).

SAE use of fronting but is actually quite common in Prabhupada's IE. The best speakers are the ones who appropriate Prabhupada's syntax and alter the phonology in subtle ways. In other words, these varying levels of awareness affect which language ideologies are formed in what ways they are manifested in interaction. This is similar to the Arizona Tewa who despite their ideology of purism and policing of the Tewa lexicon, display a lack of awareness of the phonological and semantic influence of the Hopi language on Tewa (Kroskrity 2012).

## ***PART THREE***

### 7. Affective Registers, Language Ideologies, & Spiritual Enchantment:

This study distills some of the language ideologies of the community that ultimately socialize devotees into conflating Indianness and stereotypical Indian ways of talking with authentic spirituality. Or to state this in a way that situates this as a form of social interaction, Indian English *keys* (Goffman 1974) both the scripture lecture and priest as being spiritual. It is this spirituality imbued in the register that facilitates converts' evaluations of the lectures and lecturers as being "good," "powerful," and "truthful." For example, a question that I often asked devotees, "How do you know that the speaker speaks the truth?", received responses as variable as: "He doesn't change what Prabhupada (the Hare Krishna founder) said;" "It's in his voice, the knowledge of the scriptures;" "He is wise. He has the gift of speech." These evaluations indicate how a register can move the emotion of the scripture lecture and congregation toward a state of spiritual enchantment. As Irvine (1990:127) asserts, "[t]he study of registers is a convenient way to look at the verbal aspects of affective display, because it suggests a set of complementary representations of feelings that are conventionalized among a community of speakers." This section of the study considers the conventionalization of affect or the "genre-ing of emotion" (Ochs and Garro 2013).

#### *7.1 Affective Registers*

"Conventions, linguistically expressed, represent a cultural construction of available emotions, personalities, and so on that [...]" the person has to draw on for affective display, the terms in which his or her behavior will be interpreted by others, and the framework of interpretation for the experiencer as well" (Irvine 1990:131). *Affective registers* are distinguished by not only linguistic features, but also affective performance. In this sense, performance of an Indian guru

stereotype through speaking in Indian English conveys an affective stance of desire for Indian spirituality and evokes spiritual enchantment among devotees.

## 7.2 *Enchantment, Enregisterment, and Experiencing Language*

This study draws upon the notions of *enregisterment* (Agha 2007), *experiencing language* (Ochs 2012) and “*enactment of ethos*” (Garro 2011) to analyze the enactment of enchantment and desire in the Hare Krishna community.

### 7.2.1 *Enchantment*

The term “enchantment” is the opposite of “disenchantment” or “de-magification” (Weber 1958). Disenchantment is viewed as following from the privileging of rationalization wherein Western scientific understanding reigns supreme over tradition, religious beliefs, and magic. “Modern society is godless, and prophets as well as saints are singularly out of place” (Weber 1958:28). Enchantment speaks to the resurgence of traditional values, the return to religion, and the pushback against Western scientific understandings. Enchantment is not restricted to the realm of religion – for example, converting politicians into saviors (like Obama being made into a Jesus figure in the 2008 U.S. Presidential elections) should not have happened according to Weber’s vision of the “modern, disenchanted” world. This study focuses upon religious enchantment, specifically, how Guru English transports potential converts to a state of enchantment and spiritual desire.

### 7.2.2 *Enregisterment*

Agha (2007:55) defines *enregisterment* as the

“processes whereby diverse behavioral signs (whether linguistic, non-linguistic, or both) are functionally reanalyzed as cultural models of action, as behaviors capable of indexing stereotypic characteristics of incumbents of particular interactional roles, and of relations among them .”

Enregisterment depends upon enactment of a “semiotic register”—defined as a “repertoire of performable signs linked to stereotypical pragmatic effects by a sociohistorical process of enregisterment” (Agha 2007: 80). The idea of enregisterment follows from research on the formation and implications of *linguistic images* (Irvine and Gal 2000:30) and *linguistic stereotyping* (Hill 1998; 2008). In New Dwarka, Prabhupada’s Guru English reifies positive stereotypes about Indian-ness — and because of the ideological power undergirding Indian-ness, his Guru English acts a linguistic vehicle transporting potential converts to a state of spiritual enchantment.

From statements garnered in interviews and surveys, devotees considered the speech of their Founding Guru, Srila Prabhupada, to be “beautiful”, “honest”, “wise”, “sweet,” “transformative,” and so on. This paradigmatic set of adjectives form what Agha (2007: 119) calls a “*denotational stereotype*” – meaning the “set of expressions predicable of [the expression].” When I asked devotees, “How would you describe a good speaker or lecturer?” or “What makes a good speaker?,” the metasemantic descriptions included a set of predicates:

‘A good speaker  
(is wise, is kind, is good, is honest, is deep, practices what he  
preaches, doesn’t change Srila Prabhupada’s teachings, touches my  
heart, etc.)’

This class “of which *all* of these properties are predicable” (meaning that a speaker is not simply “wise” but also “deep” and “practices what he preaches”) creates a stereotype that corresponds to all of these properties (Agha 2007:120). When these descriptions are regularly repeated within a population of speakers like the Hare Krishnas, a normalization or standardization (i.e denotational stereotype) of a ‘good speaker’ is created. Once the stereotype

of a good speaker was made clear, I considered the role of Indian English in the speech style of the priest class. Speaking in Guru English makes one sound like a “good preacher.”

### 7.2.3 *Experiencing Language*

Ochs (2012:142) asserts that, “ordinary enactments of language, i.e. utterances, are themselves modes of experiencing the world.” In this sense, speaking like an Indian can create an experience of Indianness for a HK preacher and congregation. The experience of speaking in Indian ways evokes a sense of spiritual enchantment for the New Dwarka community.

According to Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), when people interact, especially with those to whom they are attracted and share similar beliefs, they adjust their speech, syntax, gestures, intonation and other vocal patterns to accommodate their interlocuter (cf. Tarone 1980; Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991; West and Turner 2000). Given the high prestige accorded to ancient India and Indians in the New Dwarka community, linguistic accommodation could be a reason why HK priests use Guru English linguistic features. Yet, these priests are *not* speaking to a room comprised only of Indian congregants. If that were the scenario, CAT and “foreigner talk” (Ferguson 1971, 1975)<sup>16</sup> would be explanatory frameworks for why these native, American English speakers would speak slowly and in ways that sound Indian. Instead, the Hare Krishna congregation consists primarily of Anglo Americans. As such, the priests are not “speaking Indian” to be understood by the Indian congregants. Nevertheless, the notion that speakers adjust their linguistic behaviors when surrounded (even if it is an imagined community) by people with whom they are attracted and share similar beliefs applies to the New Dwarka congregation. Hare Krishnas love their Founding Guru, Srila Prabhupada

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<sup>16</sup> FT: In this type of talk native speakers adopt features such as “slower speech rates, shorter and simpler sentences, more question and question tags, greater pronunciation articulation amongst others” (Zuengler 1991: 243).



and love the India that both he and their deity, Krishna, represent. I propose that speaking in Indian ways facilitates a genre of experience-near Indianness. This means that the enregisterment of Indian English as being the prestige, “spiritual” register is enacting an ethos of Indian spirituality in the temple.

#### 7.2.4 *Enacting Ethos*

“Ethos” describes how a “culture standardises the emotional reactions of individuals, and modifies the organisation of their sentiments” (Bateson 1958:115). Garro (2011:304) argues that “enactments of ethos [are] potentially revelatory of goals, values, and moral orientations.” These orientations are akin to Husserl’s phenomenological modifications (Duranti 2009:216).

Speaking Guru English can be understood as constant modifications of the congregation’s attention to Guru English sounds (retroflexed consonants, article deletion, connected speech, Indian English prosody and so on) as “enacting the ethos” of spiritual truths and Krishna’s messages. As linguistic “forms encode all-important temporal, epistemic, affective, modal, actional, stative, attributive, and locative meanings” (Ochs 2012:148), so too does the Hare Krishna Guru English register encode the spiritual affective meanings. Before Anglo-American priests were lecturing congregants on spiritual truths and Krishna, their Indian guru, Prabhupada, was preaching the Indian philosophies in his Indian English. And devotees adore Prabhupada’s lectures. His voice is hailed as being “divine,” “powerful,” “sweet,” “transformative.” On the basis of four years of fieldwork, I propose that Prabhupada’s Indian English (his Guru English) has become iconic of him. When recordings of his voice are played for devotees, the temple attends to his voice in a reverent and loving mood. It is possible, then, to have recursive<sup>17</sup> “enactments of ethos”.

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<sup>17</sup> “Recursivity” meaning the “projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level” (Irvine and Gal 2000: 23).

Spirituality attributed to Prabhupada's speech is projected onto the speech of the priests. Enacting this ethos transpires through the utterance of either Prabhupada's speech or a speech variety that approximates Guru English. The iconicity of Prabhupada's Guru English register enacts the emotion and personality of his speech and is then recursively applied to the Anglo-American priests when they speak in Guru English. Thus, when Anglo-American HK priests utter the religious doctrines and preach to their congregation in a register associated with their beloved guru, Prabhupada, then their speech, along with other semiotic resources, realizes the setting as a place of spirituality. This enactment of spirituality would not be efficacious if not for the ideological power undergirding Indian English and the guru figure in the HK community. Guru English register is a vehicle for the enactment of enchantment—to speak it is to key affect, to genre emotion.

## 8. Returning to Ideologies

In an attempt to understand why priests are speaking in Indian ways, the next sections explore Irvine and Gal's (2000) work on linguistic differentiation and Jacquemet's (2005) *transidiomatic practices*.

In the Hare Krishna community, ancient India, Sanskrit language, Indian philosophy, their guru, traditional food and clothing, and classical Indian music and instruments are all considered better than anything the “modern” world could offer. The prestige of ancient India refracts upon those who can evidence their knowledge of and affiliations with India. Speaking Guru English not only enacts a holy space, it also creates a linguistic space for the priests that distance them from the modern and wider Anglo-American community. Appropriating features of Prabhupada's Indian English is a counter-discourse against Western hegemonic norms, which includes its banner language, English. If “Standard English becomes the unifying emblem of

nation-statehood” (Silverstein 1996: 286), then devotees moving away from standard American cultural and linguistic norms makes sense. The priest group maintains its identity as the educated class separate and distinct from the American English-speaking community by speaking in Indian ways.

The Hare Krishna convergence towards their guru’s IE and divergence from a Standard American English (SAE) can be understood in terms of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000). Iconization describes the process whereby “linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them” (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37). Devotees consider Prabhupada’s speech to be “beautiful”, “honest”, “wise”, “sweet” and so on. In lectures to the congregation, one priest noted, “Prabhupada’s transcendental sound vibrations carry the potency to awaken anyone’s dormant, spiritual consciousness.” Gurus are considered spiritual beings sent to liberate the material world and their words “carry the potency” that gurus have been endowed with by God. Prabhupada’s words have become iconic of him. His “transcendental sound vibrations” are representative of him. Given that his own initiated devotees speak in a sort of quasi-Guru English, Indian English phonology and syntax “carry the potency” of Prabhupada as well. Similar to Spitulnik’s (1998:174) study of ethnolinguistic diversity on Zambian radio, there is an “indexical transfer of social stereotypes about speakers to the languages they speak.” In the Zambian case, the radio stations did not give as much air time to languages linked to “rural,” “backward” people. In the Hare Krishna context, Prabhupada’s GE speech is revered. In and of itself, it is believed to be wise and powerful because he, as a guru was wise and powerful. Applying the notion of iconicity to Prabhupada’s GE, we can see that GE is iconic of wisdom, truth, and numerous other positive indexes.

Guru English is not the only code in the Hare Krishna spiritual repertoire. Sanskrit, the holy language of India, is considered to be a living language of transformation and power. Because it is believed to be the language spoken by Krishna Himself, the sounds and mantras are representations of Him. As it says in the seventh chapter of their holy text, *Bhagavad-Gita*: “I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable OM in the Vedic mantras” (tr. Prabhupada 1983: 313). OM along with many other Sanskrit mantras and texts is Krishna in the form of the Holy Word. They are iconic of Him. Sanskrit, as the iconic representation of Krishna, stands separate and above all non-Sanskrit languages. To use the analogy of A:B=C:D, we can say that Sanskrit is to non-Sanskrit languages as GE is to non-GE languages. Defined as the “projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level,” recursivity is seen between the relationship of Sanskrit and GE. On the utmost holiest level, Sanskrit is iconic of God. When others (gurus), speak it they become spiritual. On the local temple level, GE has become iconic of wise gurus, specifically of Prabhupada. When others (*Anglo-brahmanas*) speak like him, they become wise. The prestige of holy language is reproduced at the temple level with Guru English being the register iconic of wisdom. Thus, invoking the language of an Indian guru makes a speaker, irrespective of ethnicity and native dialect, authentic. To sound like a guru is to be wise like a guru. But we must keep in mind that Guru English is the variety that the *priests* are trying to speak. What actually ends up happening is that a reduced form of Guru English is spoken by priests, which is I have labeled it *quasi-Guru English*.

Finally, Hare Krishna generalizations about Sanskrit being the one true holy language erases the legitimacy and power of other languages. And in Guru English, the retroflexed sounds, article deletion, IE intonation etc., erases the fact that these priests are still, after all

speaking English. Compared to Sanskrit, English is *supposed* to be a mundane language holding no spiritual power. Yet, Guru English by way of iconicity and recursivity mirrors the prestige of Sanskrit. It is English enough to be understandable but Indian enough to be spiritually powerful – Guru English in this way acts as both foreign and local. It exists between the spiritual world (Sanskrit-filled) and the material world (English-filled).

Jacquemet (2005:264)'s notion of transidiomatic practices, defined as “communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes” can be extended to the case of Anglo-American priests and their quasi-Guru English. The transidiomaticity of Guru English is the result of “ideological syncretism,” meaning the synthesis of “disparate ideas about language” (Meek 2009: 165). The spiritual prestige of Sanskrit and the unavoidable lingua franca, English, are merged in Guru English. Priests try to move towards a more spiritual language while at the same time remaining understood by their English-speaking audience. They are both linguistically distancing themselves from “Western English” while converging towards an Indian English.

### **Concluding Discussion**

Guru English provides a rich illustration of how, in the Volosinov (2003) sense, a sign is never final. Historically, Indian English was the result of mixing Indian grammar with RP British English. Over time, Indian English became iconic of South Asian Indians. Gurus who come from India and preach to the West, preach in a variety of Indian English. Their guru way of speaking - Guru English - becomes iconic of them and of wisdom. Guru English is partially appropriated by Anglo-priests, and their quasi-Guru English continues the stereotype that wisdom and Indianness are linked. Who knows how exactly the signification of “Guru English” will change, but one thing is for certain, it will change. As Volosinov (2003: 46) asserts,

“No cultural sign, once taken in and given meaning, remains in isolation: it becomes part of the *unity of the verbally constituted consciousness*. It is in the capacity of the consciousness to find verbal access to it. Thus, as it were, spreading ripples of verbal responses and resonances form around each and every ideological sign. Every *ideological refraction of existence in process of generation*, no matter what the nature of its significant material, *is accompanied by ideological refraction in word* as an obligatory concomitant phenomenon.”

As Bakhtin (1981) posits, words and languages are heteroglossic. That is most definitely the case with an English that is at least four tiers down from its original iteration: British English to Prabhupada’s Indian English to Hare Krishna Guru English to the Anglo-American priests quasi-Guru English.

For Anglo-American priests and audiences, who may never master the language of the spiritual world (Sanskrit), Quasi-Guru English can be an intermediary step to Krishna’s paradise. The “linguistic otherness” (Stasch 2007: 97) of Sanskrit is to some extent recursively assigned to Quasi Guru English. It is so rhetorically attractive that devotees find themselves swept up in the sounds, swept up by spirit, swept up by their power. Devotees have cried while priests speak, because their words “awakened [their] dormant spiritual consciousness.” Guru English enchanted them.

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