



Hindi Language & Indian Culture

As seen in the translation industry

Introduction

From Indian languages to the many religions that it cradles, from various traditions to the complicated architecture, from music to dancing, India is a country like no other—a colorful, diverse mixture of cultures, languages, people and history. We’ve deliberately chosen to showcase only one language—Hindi, rather than trying to fit all its diversity into one small book only. Additionally, we’ve picked up some different fragments of its cultures and traditions to offer you a glimpse into its fascinating heritage.

Welcome to the week of “Hindi language & Indian culture”!

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Diversity

India is a country like no other—a colorful, diverse mixture of cultures, languages, people and history. We've deliberately chosen to showcase only one language as trying to show every facet of the country's multiple faces is simply impossible to achieve in a series of posts.

That is why our first post is dedicated to the DIVERSITY of India and not only one language or culture.

Cultural differences: saying “no” in India – how to read between the lines

In this blog, we're often writing about cultural differences and peculiarities – habits some cultures have adopted that some of us cannot even imagine. Today we are going to go over why Indians are not using the word “no” and how to read between the lines to understand if they want to back off. No, this is not going to be the plot of the famous comedy “Yes Man”, but a real personality trait Indians adopt since childhood.

India – a country of politeness

A lot of newcomers' first impression when they arrive in India is how unnaturally kind everybody is. There are a lot of reasons behind this, but one of the main factors that make the people of India so careful and polite is their poor infrastructure. This results in people constantly needing to

ask each other for help. In such cases, refusing or saying “no” directly in India's culture seems very cruel and rude.

Another reason behind this is that from a very young age, Indians are taught how they should live in harmony with themselves and the world around them. Not refusing anything seems like the natural flow of harmony.

The people of India are also very conscious of their environment. They take into account all the setbacks that might occur when deciding if they could carry out a task. Receiving a bland and unsure answer about whether an Indian will do something for you shouldn't be considered rude. That means they have in mind different circumstances that might appear in their way. They still wouldn't straightly say it, however.





How to read between the lines: forms of refusal in the culture of India

Direct refusals, such as saying the word “no”, might be interpreted as rude and harsh. In the mindset of an Indian, refusal often leads to disagreements or disputes, which are usually avoided. That explains when an Indian doesn’t plan on doing something, it is much likely for them to say something like “I’ll try”.

“*I’ll do my best*” is another phrase that you might hear in India. As opposed to what westerners understand upon hearing the phrase, in India, it actually means that it is most probably not going to happen.

“*It might be possible later*” – in the Indian culture means that the person is just buying time for both of you before you actually see that the thing in question is not going to come about.

“*I understand*”. This doesn’t mean anything else but that the listener understands. It is neither refusal nor an agreement. So don’t get your hopes up.

If the person you’re speaking to gets silent and doesn’t give you an answer, then you should be sure that the thing you’re

talking about is not happening. Postponing a conversation under whatever pretext means the same thing.

Indian body language and how to understand them

People often say that Indians are not so straightforward. It is true to an extent but this is the mask they wear in front of strangers only. The level of honesty and straightforwardness in communication depends on the level of closeness between people. In such cases, with people they know very well, Indians often get into disputes (except with the elderly, as they are highly respected).

An interesting gesture you might notice is the way Indians tilt their head to the side or shake it to both sides to indicate agreement and understanding. This movement is similar to how westerners show that they don’t know something but in India, it equals a compassionate nod.

Indians do the nodding as well – in this way they show that they’re following the discussion. This does not, however, mean that they have understood or agreed with you. A bit of fellow advice, when in India is to never point at something with your index finger as it is considered rude. Instead, point at the desired direction with your palm facing down.

Another thing to avoid doing is showing the soles of your feet. They are considered the dirtiest part of a human's body, thus they should not be shown.

How this can help your business?

Or in other words, why are we explaining this to you? Knowledge about the cultural differences of a certain country, especially when it is a very different one from what we are used to, can help you with your clients. If your clients need translation into the Hindi language, that might be for a few reasons including a trip there or a business development plan. Showing knowledge on the country for which they need translations will also build you as a credible and very trusted advisor for them.

We have always aimed to share our knowledge with our partners. This is the reason we take the time to carefully explain the useful and beneficial information that you can actually use to **communicate** with your clients.





Rangoli

Colors are one of the first things to notice about India—they are simply everywhere! Buildings, clothing, temples, traditions and whatever else comes to mind is splashed in colors. We're showing you one of India's traditional arts which despite being traditional is also very different from region to region—Rangoli.



Theyyam

Now prepare for something truly amazing—the art of Theyyam. It is a traditional form of art, which tells us a tale for past times, heroes and ancestors. The ritual comes from Kerala, India and the special costumes are a wonder to behold—colorful, intricate and very impressive.

The ritual has over 400 variations and we've chosen to show you a variation called “Pottan Theyyam”—a manifestation of Shiva traditionally performed with a large fire.

Quite impressive, isn't it?

Hinglish – the rapidly spreading Indian phenomenon

As observed in many other countries, the English language is slowly altering the face of local languages due to its popularity and simplicity. While other nations merely add English loanwords to their mother tongue, preserving the meaning of terms in India is affecting the Hindi languages itself. It is rapidly growing into a hybrid language that wholly consumes Indian society and gives a completely new and fresh meaning to the English vocabulary. This newly created language is referred to as Hinglish and we will talk about it in detail in this article.

Origin and development of Hinglish

Hinglish started receiving popularity in the 1960s when Indian author Shobha De started using a mix of these languages in her works. By the beginning of the 21st century, with the

arrival of music and entertainment channels, the trend of using this kind of mix became widely recognized.

The vast usage and popularity of this hybrid language comes from the combination of two principles – being modern, yet staying locally grounded. In India, it is considered prestigious to be able to speak in English. However, exposure to English in its clear form is tightly limited to the upper social classes. This is why the largest Indian group that is fluent in Hinglish is the young members of society.

Hinglish speakers – bilinguals or creators of a new trend

India is home to a very large number of English speakers. The number is hard to confirm as it is quite a difficult task to determine what level of English proficiency is considered





to be enough for a person to be fluent in the language. Nevertheless, statistics show that there are between 55 to 350 million people in India that can speak in English. Hinglish is a hybridized language that serves as the lingua franca of people speaking Hindi and those speaking English, but does that make them bilingual?

A couple of studies demonstrate that Hinglish speakers do not necessarily have to be bilingual. The studies have been conducted by having short conversations with Hinglish speakers with only one condition—to speak only in Hindi. The results show that most of the subjects couldn't speak clean Hindi without using English words to express themselves. This might serve to conclude that Hinglish is a whole new language emerging, rather than just a fashionable slang.

Hinglish and the translation business

With Hinglish becoming more and more sought-after, the translation business has taken on a new adventure of trying to incorporate it in its process. Many international companies prefer using Hinglish for their advertisements when introducing products on the Indian market.

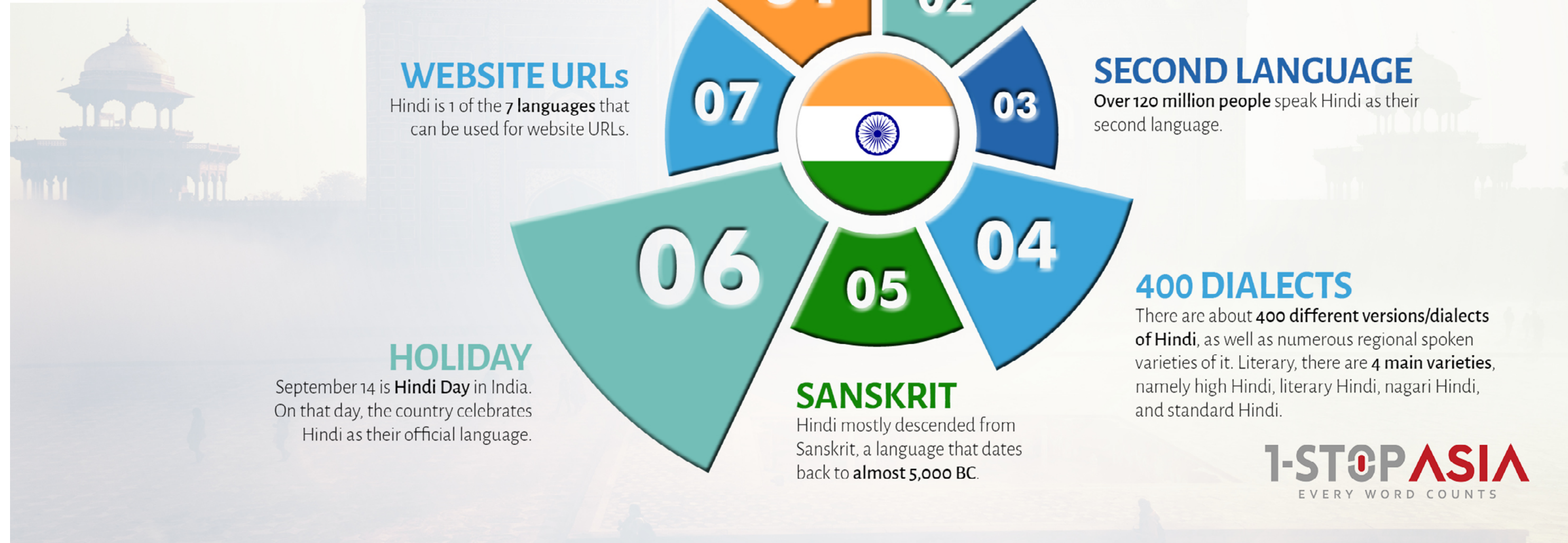
Pepsi's slogan 'Yeh Dil Maange More!' (The heart wants more!) is a perfect example of how international companies use the trend to popularize their products.

Another example is a shampoo commercial in India starring the Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra that shakes her glossy hair before looking at the camera and says "Come on girls, waqt hai shine karne ka!" (Come on girls, it's time to shine!)

While this mix of languages has earlier been seen as a dialect of the lower classes, it is now the means to catch the attention of the largest Indian group of consumers. This is where you might need the services of an experienced representative of the translation business. 1-StopAsia can help you in placing your product on the **Indian** market in the proper way as our professionals are adept not only at the correct use of languages but also to their trends.

Hindi language: Infographic

HINDI LANGUAGE *facts*





Sari

Sari (साड़ी) is probably the most famous traditional way of clothing, which is known all over the world. Consisting of a cloth which is wrapped around the body in a particular way, it is nowadays considered an icon of Indian culture.

Being such we cannot miss to show you a fine sample of it.

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