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Between Vernacular and English: Language Debates in India

Dr Karumuri Sunil
Faculty Member, Department of English,Andhra University,Visakhapatnam, India

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Abstract

English in post-colonial India is a highly contradictory entity, on the one hand being ‘a legacy of British colonialism', and on the other being one of the major means of social mobility, empowerment, and globalization. Colonial structures are perpetuated in modern-day India through the current supremacy of English in education, administration, jobs, and public communication. Simultaneously, there has been growing exclusion from English-medium education, leading to class and caste base, regional and economic privilege divides which have deepened. English can also be seen as a sign of a generalized cultural capital that has afforded social mobility in terms of access to higher education, work, and international economic agents, and people learning in vernacular languages may be excluded and have social disadvantages.

In the debate over English education in the Indian context, ideologies of regional cultural identity clash with the needs of the age of globalisation. The privileged communities assure the education of English while marginalized communities are either pushed or kept in vernacular education. Even so, over time English has been seen by disability communities, tribal communities, and the poorer half of society as a language of hope, empowerment, protest, and challenge to traditional caste-based societies. The ongoing discussion is on bilingual and multilingual educational provisions which blend home languages with English with a view to establishing pedagogical environments that are inclusive and effective. This paper examines the connection between language, identity, power and inequality in India.

Keywords: English education, Indian context, empowerment, multilingualism, inequality, English policies, social justice, globalization etc.

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Introduction

One can almost claim English to be the language of British colonialism, and even today, it strongly echoes the colonial past in India. English was not only a linguistic phenomenon in India; it was also a political and cultural policy that was used by the British colonial administration to gain control and establish intermediaries who were dependent on British rule. The dominant colony influence is reflected in Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous *Minutes on Indian Education* (1835), where he claimed that India must be cultivated into a nation of "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (729). As a result, the education of English was established as a tool of consciousness formation and validation of dominating systems.

According to Tejaswini Niranjana (1990) the colonial subject is active in the dominant order in a process of "subjectification" and "practices of power/knowledge" (p. xx). Her analysis reveals that the reason for the importance of English is not a natural one, but has been culturally and politically produced in colonial societies, schools, and practices. English was thus linked to concepts of civilization, modernity, and mental superiority, whereas indigenous languages were demoted and seen as being second-class. This colonial attitude persisted even on attaining independence and had geopolitical consequences on the socio-cultural framework of post-colonial India.

Since colonial times, there has been a strong link between English, power and status. English in South Asia has a "two-fold fascination and power" which wraps up as the language of the rulers till now" (p. xx), During and after British rule, English continued to have symbolic power in the areas of administration, higher education, the law, media and corporations. Language knowledge, particularly of English, can be the key to access of employment opportunities, social prestige, and economic advancement. In this regard, the phrase English-medium has become synonymous with intelligence, sophistication and modernity both within Indian society and in the education system.

Richa Nagar and David Faust (2001) have stated that uneven disparities in educational resources are correlated with linguistic inequalities. They argue that India's 'class divided system of education' (p. xx) has been a major cause for dis-enfranchisement, and for differential social development. This English, vernacular divide is rather stark in the context of urban India especially. While English-medium schools are seen as privileged and good schools and better opportunities for career, vernacular schools are perceived as ineffective and suffering from social stigma and lack of funding.

The linguistic division has played a part in the rise of a global Indian middle class, primarily because students are educated in English and in a globalized manner. The Anglo-centric/hishtoriya division has also enabled the creation of what Sunaina Maira's (2002)

terms as the “global Indian middle class”, largely through education in English and globalized cultural practices. English-medium education has turned into a vehicle to social upward mobility and access to high status jobs. Kothari (1993) maintains that English education has fostered the development of a “modernised techno-managerial elite” that occupies a massive position in the public discourse, in shaping development processes, and even in formulating policies for English. This "elite," which may be the most institutionalized, is often the most dominate in intellectual and institutional domains, further consolidating class structures. Meanwhile, English is also used to aspire and empower many marginalised groups. The writers from the Dalit community, tribal intellectuals and women writers all use English to resist the oppression of castes, patriarchy and social exclusion. English on its own turns into a language of resistance and self-expression in this context. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) cautions, however, that colonial languages have the potential to alienate people from their indigenous languages, cultures and identities. He says that “language contains culture, culture contains, especially in orature and literature, the entire assemblage of values with the help of which we perceive ourselves and our world” (p. 16). His "arguments" emphasize cultural implications of favouritism for English over native tongues.

At the same time, Frantz Fanon (1967) mentions that “colonial language” renders one psychologically dependent on a culture and a world:

“To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture” (p. 38).

In the Indian context, English has usually brought about conflicts between tradition and modernity, local identity and global aspirations. English can create global opportunities but at the same time, serve as a facilitator of cultural and economic polarization within the society. Moreover, English is entrenched as a part of the process of globalization and neo-liberalism economics. Today English is more relevant and prominent in the context of expansion of information technology, multinational companies, and digital communication in contemporary India. Consequently, English is not just thought of as a language associated with the colonizing powers, but also as a language that makes the world go round and enables economic success. Yet, the use of English is disparate and this disparity will perpetuate class, caste, regional, and educational divisions.

Hence, the present state of English in India is significantly intricate and in contradiction. It can be colonial, social and cultural privilege, and cultural domination; it can also be a medium of opportunity, empowerment and global participation. The fact that English remains the dominant language in postcolonial India in terms of education, public discourse and the media is a testament to the unfinished colonial legacy. The controversial

issues before English, then, provide a framework for the larger issues of identity, inequality, nationalism and cultural autonomy of present-day Indian society.

English Education, Linguistic Inequality, and Social Privilege in Postcolonial India

The resistance to the promotion of ELTs is often articulated as a concern for local language and cultural traditions; there is also a deeper degree of social incongruity in the Indian society. Though certain parts of society are still privileged enough to provide their children with education in English in private institutions, public discourse largely concentrates on the importance of saving indigenous languages. While the marginalised groups are encouraged to keep local languages and traditions, there is very little motivation to keep them up and running and they are denied equal access to English education which is very much associated with economic mobility and social improvements. This paradox brings to the fore the unevenness in the linguistic landscape of postcolonial India.

While discussing the attempt of the government of Andhra Pradesh for one-time environment publishing in government schools under the leadership of Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Subroto Dey (2019) had spoken about the opposition from many quarters regarding the breakdown of the Telugu language and culture. Reddy, however, raised question if they themselves put their children in Telugu medium schools. The majority were from affluent families, and would favour the use of private English-medium institutions for their own offspring. Thus, the drive towards language preservation is revealed to be hypocritical as the elite want English to be available to them, yet look down upon vernacular education of the poor. Therefore, English is not just a language; it's a symbol of sorts of class privilege and opportunity.

Mohan (2014) also states that India's society has come up with a divide where Indian languages are seen as ‘warm’ and ‘intimate’ while English is viewed as the language to portray progress, employment and prestige. However, in less affluent areas around the globe, says she, English is becoming equated with “a way of life and survival” for their ability to secure employment, raise their social status and access to the world. As a result, sometimes students' love for English is stronger than their love for their first language. The role of English in India is thus paradoxical, feeling far removed but far too needed in social terms.

Colonialism's unfinished legacy can also be unearthed from the dominance of English in Indian society. English still has a pivotal role in the administration, higher education, law, science and in a worldwide conversation but it does not have a constitution. The Constitution of India (343) declares Hindi as the official language of the Union and initially intended to make the use of English as a link language for the first 15 years following the Independence of the nation. However, English remains dominant in public life as it has a historical connection with modernity, power and economic opportunity. In India, English

is typically called an "invisible or untouchable language" (p. xx), belonging to a "classic" or traditional "chaturvarna" order of Indian languages, of which English supposedly is out. For all intents and purposes, it remains the determinant of access to social mobility and privilege, even though English is not officially taught in schools and is not mandatory for admission to universities.

Meanwhile, English also has become a language of empowerment for many marginalized communities. Jawaharlal Nehru realized that English continued to have a significance even after the nation's Independence and described it as "the nearest approach to an international language" (cited in Rai, 2017, p. xx). English has been a weapon of liberation for oppressed communities such as Dalits and marginalized castes. To the oppressed community, especially to Dalits and marginalized castes, English has often meant an escape from castebased exclusion existing within the Sanskritised language system. S. Anand (1999) points out the unique position of English vis-à-vis Sanskrit in Indian society. Although English does not have the same ancient association of scriptural restrictions on lower caste communities that existed with Sanskrit, it is "theoretically accessible to the Dalits as it is to the Dwijas" (p. xx). But Anand also contends that like all other education systems, English education remains stuck in the hands of the haves and the have-nots, resulting in a lack of access and reduction of equality.

Encouraged by Kancha Ilaiah, Anand adds that education in most of the scheduled Indian languages, particularly Hindi, is Sanskritized and has a culturally distant character for members of the marginalized communities. The often-used language of instruction for Dalit children is bound up in the culture and values of Brahmanical people, and is divorced from their own experiences. By contrast, many out-of-core communities view English as a not-valued language and see it as a language that has the potential to cross caste divisions by empowering. The performance of the language may be described as "language of liberation" as the English language gives an opportunity to the oppressed people to liberate themselves from the social hierarchy, to participate in the modern democratic discourse. (Kancha Ilaiah, 2003) Fluency in English for many first-generation learners is synonymous with dignity, confidence, higher education and better employment opportunities.

B R Ambedkar also understood the empowering role of the education and language in oppressed sections of the society. His famous saying "education is the milk of a tigress; whoever drinks it may roar" (as quoted in Zelliot, 2001, p. xx) captures the emancipatory promise of the access to modern education, that is, to the language of English, as well. Many Dalits and marginalized communities had gained access to various professions, universities, public institutions etc. through English education which they were traditionally barred from

gaining access to. So then, English, as a language, still stands in relation to the colonial power and elitism but also plays a role in social mobility as well as resistance to caste oppression.

However, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) cautions against the possibility of colonial languages separating individuals from their indigenous culture and identity. He says that "language carries culture" and that language and cultural domination often create cultural alienation (p. 16). This leaves a fine balance between the conservation of regional languages and the need for English in a globalized economy in India. English provides access to technology, higher education and international networks, and control over English can lead to marginalization of local languages and knowledge systems.

Globalization of English Language

The new globalisation and the spread of the free-market economy have increased the proliferation of English language in India. The use of English is becoming more dominant in information technology industries, multinational companies, digital communication, academic networking and so on. Thus, the education in English has become a vehicle to enter into the global economy. But, unequal quality education of English keeps perpetuating caste, class, gender and regional inequalities. Many students, particularly in the rural areas and government schools, do not have the English language skills required to succeed in higher education and the labour market as do their more privileged counterparts.

In this way the politics of English in India continues to be very paradoxical. At the same time, English represents a sense of social empowerment, of being an outsider, of being an insider, of the presence of the crown, of the will to escape colonial control, of democracy, of one's own empowerment, of being at one's own level, of rising above one's own level, of seeking "enlightenment" through attachment to the Enlightenment rather than submission to it. Although regional languages still hold an element of culture and emotional attachment, English is considered the language of economic and social mobility and higher education. The discussions on English, thus, raise a set of issues that addresses the concepts of caste, class, identity, nationalism and social justice in postcolonial India.

As is the case with vernacular education, it is not a guarantee of empowerment of the marginalized community. It is believed that India's education is more often than not fraught with social hierarchy showing through its English-medium and vernacular-medium institutions. Like Dash (2009) has noted, "education in English or vernacular teaches elitism and elitism is one of the ingredients for India" (p. xx) This discussion underscores the discriminatory underpinnings of the education system in India in which quality education continues to be highly associated with the privilege of class, caste and region. An argument further put forward is from Francesca Orsini's (1995) assertion of India's 'two elites' - the Hindi elite and the English elite (p. xx). English-speaking elites dominate in globalized

islands of professional work, business and trade, while Hindi-speaking elites can work in the sphere of the Indian political and cultural elite. Linguistic divisions therefore continue to work to deepen, and not abate, social inequalities in opportunities.

For centuries English education has been monopolised by privileged social groups in India who have the financial means to go to English speaking elite schools and thereby internalise English language and culture. Use of English accent, pronunciation, and tone and style of consistent communication often serve as overtones of class distinction and social status. The term "cultural capital" as coined by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1977) is pertinent in this context. Edu cordial inequality is rooted in an educational system that reinforces the cultural dispositions, linguistic norms and modes of knowledge that are already prevalent in society. English is a strong cultural asset in India which equips one to enter into highly esteemed educational institutes, job opportunities and well-respected social circle.

Culture is frequently equated with social/economic status in and through the use of the English language. There is a strong linkage between employment in multinational companies, in the information technology industry, in the media sectors and English ability in the corporate sectors. With the economic liberalization of the 1990s, English has become even more important as India became increasingly involved in global capitalism. Globalization increased inequalities in access to resources and power and the result was "heightened inequalities in accessing resources and power in an era of escalating transnational networks between the elite" (David Faust and Richa Nagar 2001, p. xx). They also insist that liberalizing reinforced the hegemony of the elites that spoke English and isolated the masses in the international economic system.

Faust and Nagar agree with GPD (1996) that those casting their stones at the "belief and practice of 'Vernaculars'" are mainly an "elitist mindset" (p. xx). This is an expression of the language policy of the powerful community in India, to use English for economic advantages and to have access to the world outside India, while the vernacular communities skillfully use their own languages to relegate the masses to older bonds of power. Language is thus intricately linked with questions of class power, political power and economic power.

Use of English in state-run vernacular-medium schools often creates a great disadvantage for students in the mainstream economy, where "the language of social advantage and exciting economic opportunities" (Kumar, 1996, p. 71) is still pertinent. Quality education in English language is unavailable to many in rural and marginalised communities, causing them to be disadvantaged in higher education or job market opportunities that are largely open to English-speaking elites. This imbalanced socio-

economic order has led to a higher desire in the eyes of the ordinary people to learn English especially in the era of globalization and neoliberal economic reforms.

As the service sector and industries of the world become stronger and more dynamic in growth, the need for English medium instruction also has to pick up in India. (Tanuka Endow, 2021). Organisations such as software establishments, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), business process outsourcing (BPO), aviation, hospitality and digital services are increasingly relying on the skills of English-speaking workers. For this reason, in the modern day and age, proficiency of English is an economic skill which has become crucial in contemporary India. Men who spoke English with fluency earned about 34% more per hour, with each hour, than men who did not speak English. This is the proof of the straightforward connection between English skills and economic mobility in the local job market in India.

Professions (even those that only involve a modest degree of education) are increasingly finding that English language skills, whether advanced or basic are being expected. In service sectors like retail, customer service, tourism and hospitality, having English-speaking staff is often considered a priority as these organizations engage with an international clientele and business environment. English is no longer restricted to high level professions, but has already been translated into the routines of daily life in terms of finding economic survival. This spread of English in different contexts has contributed to the sense of marginalised groups that there is a need for proficiency in English to allow them to be mobile in society and economically progressive. But at the same time academics have noted that greater exposure to the English does not necessarily lead to a decrease in inequality. Rather, unequal access to quality English education, typically serves to recapitulate a system of dominance. Elites attend private schools in the town where teaching is in the English language, with much better infrastructure, communication training, and cultural exposure than the shoddy infrastructure and training of the poorly funded government schools. English is therefore envisioned as a language of opportunity and empowerment, but is not equally available to all in terms of caste, class, region and gender.

Politics of English Language Education in India

In postcolonial societies, cultural and educational institutions can be seen to perpetuate the colonial structures, claims Aijaz Ahmad (1992). English is still an aspirational language as well as an exclusionary tool in the Indian context. Likewise, the predominance of English has led to the emergence of a new "linguistic aristocracy" in India as noted by Alok Rai (2001) where English language expertise is a basis for entry into “elite intellectual circles.” This linguistic hierarchy further marginalizes students who are taught in linguistic forms other than English, as they often feel inferior, excluded and lacking in confidence in

English-dominated contexts or curriculum, such as academics and the occupation. However, English remains for many marginalised groups a liberation weapon. English has been conceptualized as a means for the Dalit thinkers like Kancha Ilaiah and Chandrabhan Prasad as a liberator from the castes based linguistic and cultural oppression found in Sanskritization of vernacular education. English, as the "language of liberation", for the Dalits access to modern democratic institutions and opportunities for accessing global opportunities as famously pointed out by Chandrabhan Prasad. From this perspective, English can be seen as having a uniquely paradoxical role in India, as the instrument of the elite group and as the instrument of social empowerment for the oppressed groups.

In this context, the Politics of English education in India comes across as the imbrications of language, caste, class, globalization, and economic power. Equality of access to English education does not fully ensure social justice, but it can help to sustain inequalities. English is being spoken by more and more members of the marginalized groups because that is the most viable means of communicating among the people in a globalized society in order to deal with their socio-economic realities. English is thus a sign of privilege and a battleground of aspiration, mobility and resistance in present day India.

The BPO and ITeS sector's growth, too, led to increased demand for English-medium education by the public as noted in an editorial in Economic and Political Weekly (2003). The editorial stated:

> The middle-class in India, and the aspiring middle class "adopted English medium education as the only form of education worth having" (p. xx).

In addition, it asserted that English was now a key language in the global economy due to its predominance in international trade. This the need gave rise to the so-called institutes of "Spoken English" in the Indian towns and cities. But, Peggy Mohan (2014) argues that there does not appear to be any natural connection between English and "good" jobs, but rather a "socially constructed" one. She argues:

> Not all good jobs are English jobs, but rather English is a gate keeper (p. xx).

English, is an easy tool that helps privileged groups to find better employment opportunities for their children. While the middle class have traditionally gained from access to English education, access to quality learning in English has been denied to the marginalised communities. Subroto Dey (2019) also notes that grassroots communities are keen on their children learning English as a second language for them to be able to compete with the rest of the community. In Hindi medium Bollywood film, 2009, he talks about the problems of poor families to get their children admitted in English medium, elite schools under the Right to Education. But many of those families are unable to access good quality English education.

Government policies in education recognise this vision and it is typically not adequately addressed. The concept of 'functionality and fluency' in teaching English, which was highlighted in the Draft National Education Policy 2019, and has been mentioned in the previous policy documents, is reiterated in these documents. Reports from studies indicate that textbooks, in government primary schools in seven states of India (NCERT, 2012), emphasized mainly reading and writing skills and not listening and speaking. The Government of India also has a home/regional language up to Class 5 (up to this level to be taught in home/regional language) and Sanskrit media of instruction at various stages of education recommended. The study reflects on the marginalization of language in the policy, i.e. people from marginalised groups are not accessing language, the privilege of Sanskrit, i.e. privileged caste groups are accessing Sanskrit (p.xx).

The issue of English as medium of instruction came to the fore in the State of Andhra Pradesh when the Government had introduced the English medium of instruction in government schools from Classes 1 to 6. Later, the Andhra Pradesh High Court declared the order to be unconstitutional but Dey (2019) supported the move. A significant issue in government schools is the lack of education in English language and hence elite students turn to private schools, he said. Government schools became the schools for the poor and the privileged went to private English schools. This also promoted the development of unregulated private English language schools since the 1990s. Hence, Dey proposed the use of English language in government schools and this will engage the children of other castes and classes, he suggested.

Many parents opt to send their children to lower cost private schools (LCPS) due to poor education in English in Government schools/institutions. According to Endow (2021), the schools frequently advertise their English medium education, thus the parents of government schools come to them. The effectiveness of English instruction, however, is a very controversial subject. Based on this survey conducted in Delhi and Noida, Endow (2021) found that children learning in English language as language of instruction in their LCPS could learn to read English but they could comprehend English language well, but they could communicate very little in English. She thinks that learning in a foreign language is a barrier to learning and decreases children's learning agency.

Endow further suggested that low level proficiency of English at Primary level has negative impact in the learning of other subjects taught in English. She believes does, that these students are "cut off from both language and content" (p. xx). Moreover, these learning gaps are not identified from one level to another as teachers are not competent and the teaching is based on memorisation, she adds.

Mohan (2014) attributes problems of EWS students in English medium schools to the diglossia nature of Indian society. The middle-class children in India are getting diglossia children whereas in bilingual societies children are bilingual. Mohan explains that "Once they learn English, however, it is used in all 'non-trivial activities' and their native language is almost forgotten" (p. xx). She claims that foreign children are on the whole bilingual while middle class children of India start losing their first language as English becomes the dominant language in the formal and educational sphere.

The children of the private English medium schools are indeed facing the problem of diglossia as highlighted by Peggy Mohan (2014). It is a serious problem with the economically weaker section (EWS) children of private English Medium schools. She believes the learning of English in a diglossia environment should be continuous and sustained; that is, the environment of English should be present all the time, outside of classroom.

The most difficult obstacle to the diglossia approach to learning English is that the learners would have to be given reasonable opportunities to engage in meaningful communication in English other than grammatical learning activities they are taught in the classroom. As in L1, Peggy Mohan (2014) believes that language is acquired best when children have opportunities to engage in naturally occurring English interactions, such as those they have within friendships and classroom discourse as well as in their everyday social world (p. xx). For many Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of child population, it is a challenging process emotionally and socially. These children usually do not internalize English as a living language until classes 4 or 5, and then they start to think about themselves as "deficient and unintelligent" (p. xx). Quite the opposite, says Mohan, diglossia is not a pedagogical way to learn a second language, but rather, it is a "transformation of a child's basic identity" (p. xx). Learning of English in India is therefore entangled with issues of self-worth, class identity and social belonging.

Mohan draws attention to these instances in comparison with students studying in Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) schools where English is being taught separately, and the core subjects are in Hindi. To her surprise, MCD students are able to be more confident and more willing to experiment with English even though they make mistakes. What was special about these MCD children was that they were not silent but were "adventurous in their English speaking" (p. xx), according to Mohan. In this bilingual situation, students do not consider errors in the English language as a sign of lack of intellectual ability, since their identity is still that of the mother tongue. English is used not as a measure of good or bad value but as another means of communication. Conversely, in diglossia EMEs, a person's use of English becomes less and less personal, and more

associated with social positioning and identity, consequently he/she fears "mistakes" and does not participate.

This is in line with Arvind Sardana's (2020) calling for multilingual approaches to education. Studying schools in Maharashtra with a dual language system of education paid an English language supplement to the Marathi-language teaching system of government schools, Sardana noticed that science and mathematics were taught in the English language, and other subjects were taught in Marathi language. Majority of the classroom explanation and interactions was in Marathi giving away opportunities for students to learn some of the English terminology in the appropriate situations. Sardana believes such bilingual classroom cultures help to ensure students can effectively engage in the English language and learning without losing their local language culture and cognitive system. In this way, the concept of multilingual education gains an additional dimension of filling the gap between a worldly image and a lived reality.

It follows that the whole issue of whether the medium is English or another one is not the one to be addressed in the debates on English-medium education, but the ways in which the language is taught. In traditional settings, textbooks are used extensively, and limited importance is placed learning language by participating in what is essentially a conversation in isolation or in a purely repetitive manner. When students learned simple conversational phrases and familiar words language, they showed more interest and enthusiasm towards the lessons. Many of the prescribed textbooks, however, featured lengthy, complex and culturally removed parts of the text that didn't resonate with the lived experience and lived context of their students. This caused difficulty for students in comprehending and interest in learning the language.

In the same, Mohan takes on critique of English textbooks in MCD schools, stating that the content is outdated and the language is too difficult for the students, which is significant in causing students' alienation from learning English. Her complaints are that it is "the issue is the textbook" (p. xx). She denounces the use of outdated English, esoteric allusions and difficult understandings passages that render learning impractically inaccessible for ordinary students. This type of education, writes Mohan, is of a "pre-modern upper-caste mentality" that sees English as a "prize that has to be won through struggle" (p. xx). This attitude makes learning a language an exclusionary process and not an educative one.

A more natural and easier to comprehend teaching of English is Mohan's vision, one which is rooted in the real-world scenarios of students and teachers. She highlights the need to organize sentences and provide explanations in the context as aids to the use of home languages in a bilingual classroom. This view is similar to contemporary theories in

multilingual education and translanguaging. Certain scholars, for example Jim Cummings (2000), suggest that students will learn other languages better if their first language is treated with respect and utilized in their studies of other languages. Cummins (1998) presented a theory of "Common Underlying Proficiency" which argues that understanding in one language can transfer positively to the other language. Enhancing the use of mother tongues in addition to L2, can therefore be beneficial in regard to more inclusive and effective education.

Likewise, UNESCO (2003) underscores the importance of mother tongue based multilingual education, especially early education in the familiar languages of the respective children. UNESCO states that multilingual education facilitates cognitive development, enhances classroom involvement and curbs dropout rates among marginalised groups. Thus, bilingual education can act as a connector between one's local identity and the external possibilities of India, a multilingual country rather than a disjunction between them. In the other hand, Subroto Dey (2019) too talks about the rights that ought to be upheld by parents when selecting the medium of instruction for their children. He claims that bilingual and multilingual education is more viable and will remain more comprehensive, given that many students in English-medium schools lack linguistic support from their families or communities and thus have difficulties understanding and taking part. Mohan (2014) suggests that promoting regional and home languages in conjunction with strong promotion of English in the education system can facilitate educational transitions for both students and families, as does Dey. In this context English is used for communication and opportunity; the regional languages retain a role in identity and heritage.

The multilingual approach also disrupts the binary opposition between English and indigenous language. Bilingual education sees English as not a barrier to the use of local languages, but a supplemental language. Multilingualism is a practice that is balanced and can be practised side by side with the requirements of the new reality of globalization, language demands English without losing touch with the language and culture background of the learners in an India today, where world class demand for English ability is everywhere. In addition, those following the Indian English studies have suggested that English in India has developed into an "Indian English," influenced by the linguistic and cultural context in which it is used (e.g., Braj B. Kachru, 1986).

Conclusion

English is no longer the merely colonial language, but it is localised and made into an Indian language. This view comes out of a questioning attitude to abandoning local identities while trying to learn English. Rather, Indian English is a hybrid linguistic field which communicates with the world while also drawing with its local culture.

The debates about English-medium education in India highlight greater debates of globalisation, identity, pedagogy and social justice. Incorporating the English language for instruction in any class is not enough. To be effective, English education must be able to ensure an environment that is welcoming, communicative and culturally sensitive. Bilingual and multilingual models offer opportunities to mitigate language isolation and increase access to social & economic opportunities. Ultimately, the issue isn't English vs. regional language; rather it's the education systems' commitment to regional language as source of diversity and equal opportunity.

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