

GLOBALIZATION: A THREAT FOR MOTHER TONGUES IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

'Globalization' is used in so many different contexts, by so many people, for so many purposes, for example sociolinguists, political scientists, economists and anthropologists define the notion of globalization within the framework of their respective models. But the general consensus is that the process 'globalization' represents the world in the form in which people around the globe, are closer in terms of information transfer, goods and money flow, communication efficiency etc. The present state of the nations is that people can travel from one corner to another in this annihilated world within no time; and interacts so frequently that it asserts of creating the '*Global Village*' --- where people feel each other's problems and realize each other's presence.

Globalization is inevitable process, in which everyone; anywhere; has to adjust in changing paradigms in the whole scenario. An individual has to choose either of the two choices: to resist or to adjust, but one's security lies in the second option i.e., adjustment, not in resistance, from which there is no escape. These adjustments demands change in lifestyle, value system, and cultural setup.

This increasing integration has no doubt enriched and facilitated life of the people in different ways but simultaneously we find globalization has also created new problems. It has both negative and positive impact on different societies. On one side, to a large extent, globalization promotes integration under one economical, political, and cultural power and calls for the removal of all the barriers, while on the other side, it is seen as the domination of few economically and materially powerful nations over developing and underdeveloped nations. Globalization has led both the compactness of the world and the escalation of perception of the humankind as a whole.

Social theorists believe that the world at present is organizing by increasing 'globalization', which is growth of the domination of a world capitalist's economic

system, supersede the primacy of nation state by worldwide corporations and organizations and eroding local cultures and traditions into the global culture. Further, Globalization in the universal perspective "entails the Westernization of the world" (Latouche 1996), it also "involves a cover for ascending of capitalism" (Ferguson 1992). Some theorists see it as generating increasing homogeneity, while others see it producing diversity and heterogeneity through increased hybridization.

Globalization in present scenario has been widely debated often focusing on its economic and political issues. But to further the understanding of the legacy of globalization, the debate on its linguistic, cultural and social domains is the need of the hour.

The present paper will limit its study to expedite the linguistic aspect of globalization within its specific framework of the emergence of *global language*, which is found to be one of the absorbing changes associated with the globalizing world. Here in this process, the one language i.e. English is emerging as the common language for different dimensions of communication due to which linguistic diversity is largely being surrendered.

2. GLOBAL LANGUAGE: GLOBAL ENGLISH

The large scale application of English for interaction of the people hailing at distant poles of the world leads English towards attaining the global *lingua franca*. The Global English Newsletter defines "Global English in a sociolinguistic context refers almost literally to the use of English as a Global Language". In Crystal's (1997) statement, English can be made to operate in both capacities: it can operate as World Standard Spoken English and it can appear in the guise of "New Englishes," as English dialects made local, indigenous, and informal. So, "Global English" here is more or less shorthand for English in use around the world in the latter half of the twentieth century with a particular acknowledgement of local dialects (Englishes). Crystal does see it as a contemporary phenomenon driven by both British imperialism and the ascension of the US economy after WWII.

Globally it is imposing itself as the language of business, aviation, global media, academies and scientific research. Global English has now come to stand in such a position that has made it possible to transgress the boundaries of nations. English, at present, is the third most spoken *native language* after Chinese and Hindi with total speakers approximately 380 million and the second most spoken *second language* with total speakers approximately 150 - 1,000 million. Due to the economical, cultural, political and scientific impact of British Empire in 18th upto early 20th century and that of United States from mid 20th century to the present, English has *Lingua Franca* status to connect people all over the world. English is now the most widely learnt second language due to its global prestige or influence in mass media, education, science and

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internet in recent decades. Its widespread acceptance as the first and second language is the main indication of its global status. It has been declared the official language for aviation communication by international treaty.

Further in computers and electronic communication particularly on the internet, approximately 80 percent of the information displayed is in English. Internet is acting as an important tool for circulating linguistic management of English around the globe. However, recent observations have noticed that other people are increasingly logging on, to search out or create content in their own languages. The newsletter asserted in 1998 that "Non English speakers are the fastest growing group of new Internet users."

3. THE LINGUISTIC PROFILE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

India is the composite nation with linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity. People hailing in the Indian soil are classified into diverse language families like Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Munda, Sino-Tibetan etc. associated with these language families are the speakers of large number of languages and the dialects. Hindi/Urdu is the *lingua franca* by means of which Indian masses communicate in the communicative situation where the native languages become unintelligible. Viswanatham states "The constitution of India, adopted on 26th November, 1949 in the constituent Assembly, has recognized 18 languages (initially 14) as national languages of the Indian Union though British India had, as listed by the linguistic survey of India, a total number of 179 and 544 dialects excluding the provinces of Madras and Burma and the states of Hyderabad and Mysore (Grierson 1927:17-18). One of these languages, Hindi was recognized as the official language of the Union, and the others were called the 'regional Languages; some of which were recognized as official languages of the state later when the linguistic states were formed. The 1991 census recognized a total of 114 languages and 216 mother tongues (MTs), each having speaker strength of 10,000 and above. But how did the founding fathers of the constitution arrive at this magic figure of 14 to be included in English schedule and what was their logic of this and what reason did they have in mind? Was this based on the demographic strength of these languages, or their geographical spread, or their literature and the cultural advancement of their speakers, or domination of various language speakers as members in the constituent Assembly? Is recognition of only a few out of host of languages is justified? Is it no impinging upon equal opportunities for all citizens? Does it not violate the Fundamental Rights guaranteed in the constitution elsewhere? It is very difficult to find answer to these questions, and also the real reason for the list of languages in the English schedule". (2001:299)

Linguistic situation in India is so complex that most of the population ratio acquires more than one language. For example in Tamil Nadu, Tamil, Kanad and Malayalam are the languages besides Hindi/Urdu or English. Similarly in Kashmir, people have

immediate access to Kashmiri, Hindi and Urdu. Thus multilingualism of this kind needs at the minimum the preliminary explanation of native language/mother tongue/second language and the role of native language in ethno linguistic makeup and cultural identification of a person with the group he belongs.

4. CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE/CULTURAL IDENTITY

In the process of internalizing one's identification, the native language is an integral part of identification of a person by which he identifies himself as a member of a particular group and distinguishes himself from different groups. Language identity functions to demonstrate the group unifiers within the group and group diversifier between groups. Gilles and Johnson (1981;1987) states, " An individual adopts positive linguistic distinctiveness strategies with members of-out group when he identifies with an ingroup which considers its language important, makes insecure comparison with other ethnic groups, perceives his groups ethnolinguistic vitality as high, perceives closed boundaries between his group and other groups, does not identify strongly with other social categories, perceives little category-membership overlaps with interactant and perceives his status as higher in his ethnic group than in other social category membership" (quoted in Hamers and Blanc 2003:207)

Other important role played by language is that language is considered as one of the important component of culture therefore by acquisition of native language, cultural socialization to which person belongs also takes place. According to Tylor that "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".(quoted in Hoijar:1964)

Hamers and Blanc considered that, "language is a component of culture along with other entities like for example, values, beliefs and norms; language is a product of culture, transmitted from one generation to the next in socialization process; it also moulds culture, that is to say, our culture representations are shaped by language. However, unlike other components of culture language interacts with it in specific ways: for language is a transmitter of culture; furthermore, it is the main tool for the internalization of culture by the individual. Although culture and language do not exist independently of each other they are however, not homologous". (2000:199)

Consequently, taken some of the dimensions into consideration, it would be noteworthy to mention that one's identification both the ethnolinguistic and cultural identification with a particular group is like a genealogical relation where the ancestral language acts as an important component and this ancestral language is the mother tongue of an individual. "A mother tongue is the expression of the primary identification of human being. It the language through which initial concept formation takes place ... ". (Patnayak 1986:7)

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He further states, "the role of the mother tongue is anchoring the child to its culture ... also be seen from the point of myth. Whether the myth is transmitted through grandparent's tales, feasts and fasts at home, the ancestral tombstones or portrayal of Gods and demons in sophisticated temple architecture, the child is slowly socialized into a system of belief and practices through mother tongue The mother tongue is that language, the loss of which results in the loss of rootedness in tradition and mythology of the speech community and leads to intellectual impoverishment and emotional sterility". (ibid: 7-8).

5. MOTHER TONGUE: A BRIEF SURVEY OF DEFINITIONS.

UNESCO defines it as "The language which a person acquires in the early years and which normally become its natural instrument of thought and communication" (1953:49)

Christopherson defines it as "there is something unique about the 'mother tongue', the 'native language'. It is our own language imbibed in early childhood, effortlessly as it seems, at least in retrospect". (1973:34)

Nigam defines mother tongue as that language "...in the individual home during his childhood or individual's parents spoke or he first learnt to speak".(Nigam 1972:XIII).

In monolingual context, it is easy to speak about the identification of an individual with a particular ethnic and cultural group with the help of his mother tongue. Almost all the above mentioned definitions are adequate. But what happens in multilingual context, in case of acquiring other tongue or foreign language first in early stage, which language would be called as the mother tongue of a person among the various choices: either the first acquired language which is other tongue or the ancestral language which is learned during latter period as the second language? Which language is said to reveal his ethnolinguistic and cultural identity or it is somewhere in between? Which of the definitions is found to be adequate? Does all the languages learned by an individual share equal status or does it leads to marginalization of the people and languages into dominant and subordinate or majority and minority groups?

" Skutnabb-Kangas in her report on Language, Literacy and Minority (1990), a Minority Rights Group Report, critically examines the four different criteria used for defining the term 'mother tongue'. These criteria are: origin, identification, competence and function.

Definition of mother tongue	
Criterion	Definition
1. Origin	the language one learned first.
2. Identification	
a. internal	the language one identifies with.
b. external	the language one is identified as a native speaker of by others.
3. Competence	the language one knows best.
4. Function	the language one uses most.
From Skutnabb-Kangas (1984) reproduced in MRG Report 1990:9	

Skutnabb- Kangas holds the opinion of the four criterion used in educational institutions for defining child's mother tongue, competence and function are more vulnerable to criticism. According to her, these criteria are not only primitive but also reflective of "cultural and institutional linguicism" (1990:10) which can be either open, conscious, visible and passive. Competence can never be developed because its users may not have been offered the opportunity to use and learn the original mother tongue. Function on use. Minority children may not be using their language because they are forced to use second or foreign language in educational and other domains, the facilities in their mother tongue or first language are not available.

Hence what is left are the other two criteria, namely, origin and identification which, the author believes are better suited for defining a minority child's mother tongue. In as much as the mother tongue is the language one has learned first and identifies with, the use of combination of these two not just helps us provide a better definition of mother tongue but also "show the highest degree of awareness of linguistic human rights".(quoted in Hasnain 2001:62-3)

6. MINORITY LANGUAGES: A BRIEF DEFINITION

In multilingual, multicultural and multiracial societies, marginalization results in grouping of people in dominant and subordinate groups leads to unequal status of

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language i.e. majority language and minority language . “More frequent, the majority imposes its own language upon the minority as the only legitimate one and pursues a policy of assimilation. In this case minority language is devalorised, stigmatised and sometimes even eradicated; in order to survive as individual, minority group member have to learn the legitimate language.”(Hamers and Blanc 2003:279)

Further they state, “Minorisation, or the imposition of minority status on subordinate group by the dominant group, produces negative group identity and some members strive to achieve a more positive identity by ‘passing’ into the majority. Passing includes, of course, speaking the legitimate language, and the individual that do will acculturate linguistically, and i.e. they converge upwardly in their speech patterns towards the dominant group, even if for a time some remains bilingual.”(ibid 2000:279-80)

7. ENGLISH AS GLOBAL LANGUAGE IN INDIAN LINGUISTIC SCENE

Education and Media has played a considerable role to pervade English on the language and prestige status due to its application in a range of learned domains. English has entered into the Indian soil during British rule and has attained the prestigious position in the social psyche of the members. The Education, print and electronic media, electronic communication (like internet) etc are largely based on English language. According to Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1994), “The post-independence simply witnessed a continuation of colonial policies and English became more strongly entrenched in places of learning and society”. (Agnihotri 2001:196)

The frequency of the use of English language in the Indian context is so wide that it is at the verge of enlisting as the native language among other Indian languages.

8. RECEDING OR WEAKENING MAJOR DOMAINS OF FUNCTION OF THE NATIVE LANGUAGES OF THE PEOPLE IN INDIA

In the multilingual perspective, language in education and used for medium of instruction in education, mass communication, administration etc., is one of the most significant issues. A language survives when it is learnt as a mother tongue by its native speakers, grows and develops when it is used progressively in major domains for example, education, media and electronic communication like internet, etc. Education and Media are the primary tools in the society to work for the mechanism of language consciousness. However the linguistic power of English in education, media and

electronic communication etc at present is such that it certainly threatens mother tongues of the people in multilingual nations like India.

In the education system in India, the language policy ensures the teaching of mother tongue of the people and its use for medium of instruction. The constitution of India also confirms total freedom to the state to choose a language(s) in a region as official language(s) (Article 345). It also allows the linguistic minority group to be given education in their mother tongue and to setup institutions of their choice for this purpose. (Article 30). In order to guarantee the safety of the mother tongue of the people, a *Three Language Formula* is recommended by the Education Commission with the purpose of giving prominence to mother tongue as the medium of instruction; the three languages are: the mother tongue and two non-native modern languages: English, and Hindi. Still, this formula only protect the mother tongue of the majority but the minority languages cannot be approved for imparting medium of instruction, as a result spelled away in this formula. "For several linguistic minorities, it has become virtually a four-language formula, as many states insist on the compulsory teaching of the respective regional language. At certain places language programs are allotted an out-of-proportion share in the total teaching load in order to suit the climate of language privileges".(Patnayak 2001:34)

On the contrary, the situation is quite different. The process of globalization spreading across the world is bringing changes in every sphere of life in many countries. "The world's formal education very often leads to the disappearance of linguistic and cultural diversity. If the present-day evolutions continue, over 90 percent of the world's oral languages may be lost in the next one hundred years" (Krauss 1992 <http://www.answer.com>). The acceptance of globalization as a dominant economic model has introduced certain necessity to modify even language and identity issue in the psyche of mass population in India; as English is fast replacing other languages as the *lingua franca*. The linguistic right and three language formula is least bothered even in government institutions. Majority of private educational institutions are imparting education only through the global language i.e. English thus enjoying the highest prestige. For example, in Kashmir, in the entire Private and the Government educational institutions, Urdu, Hindi and English are three language used in formal education and at present, use English for medium of instruction. The government educational institutions have altered from Urdu medium to English medium in 2003. Kashmiri was not taught as a subject and used for medium of instruction because very few books of the primary and secondary level were written in this language with the result most of the Kashmiri people are less proficient in writing and reading skills of Kashmiri language. However, in primary schools, Kashmiri was recently introduced as a subject from 5th class onwards. In secondary schools Kashmiri is taught as an optional subject. In some of the colleges and in the Department of Kashmiri in Kashmir University it is taught as subject and offer research programs.

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In the process of globalization, media discourse is acting as an important tool for spreading of global English. English-language videos, television, and popular music have replaced folk storytelling and other traditional medium, contributing to language shift among youth. However, It has been observed that indigenous people around the world establish their local media "to preserve and restore an indigenous language, to improve the self-image of the minority, and to change the negative impressions of the minority that are held by members of the majority culture" (Browne, 1996, p. 59)

Like education, major aspects of administration, English as a linguistic resource has dominated the print media in Kashmir. The electronic media like radio makes maximum use of Kashmiri language. But the situation is quite reverse in print media. Koul and Schmidt have portrayed the following picture of language in media in Kashmir:

"No daily newspapers are published in Kashmir. Some weekly news papers are published. Therefore Kashmiri newspapers are not for news value.

Newspapers in Urdu are quite popular. Several daily newspapers are published in Urdu from Srinagar. They mostly cater to the local needs of the population.

No Hindi local newspapers are published in Kashmir but a number of Hindi and English newspapers from Punjab and Delhi are sold here.

English News papers appear to be quite popular in the valley ... English papers are mostly read for their national news value" (1983:40-43)

Hassan (2009) has made the following findings about language-based media in the valley:

1. The number of languages in which newspapers are published are three; Urdu, English and Kashmiri. No newspaper is printed in national language Hindi from the valley.
2. The number of Urdu dailies launched till date including both offset and litho is 23 and 33. Urdu dailies rank top position in number.
3. The number of English offset print dailies launched till date is 13. Urdu dailies are approximately four times the English dailies.
4. No Kashmir daily newspaper has been launched in the native language of the masses i.e. Kashmiri.
5. The number of Urdu weeklies including offset and litho printed is 15 and 33. Urdu weeklies also rank top position in number.

6. The number of offset printed English weeklies is 11. Urdu weeklies are also four times the English weeklies.
7. Only two Kashmiri weeklies *Sangar Mall* and *Soan Meerass* are launched. But these newspapers cover limited audience.
8. Rest is quarterly, fortnightly and monthly newspaper in Urdu and English. The number is 13.
9. Like other societies, electronic media is expanding its domains in the valley. This media is not maintaining the balance between Urdu and Kashmiri. The radio uses Kashmiri and Urdu besides providing small segments for some other language, like Pahari, Balti, etc.
10. Major portion of population here are the audience of television.
11. The television channels aired for the audience in Kashmir valley are innumerable.
12. In comparison to total number of television channels viewed by the Kashmiri audience a marginal segment cover the programmes in Kashmiri language. The survey has shown that approximately 80% of the programmes in TV channels use Urdu language

The linguistic environment of this nature has laid a due impact on building the concept and behavior of language valorization. This observation has been tested with empirical evidences.

Internet is acting as an important instrument for circulating English around the globe. The consensus is that Internet users in languages other than English will exceed internet users in English-language within the next few years. However, As far as India is concerned, efforts are being made to develop contents in Hindi but no step has been taken so far for the other language for example Kashmiri, Dogri etc.

9. CONCLUSION

“We are distinctly no longer in a moment of Thomas Babington Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education"--a moment in which English and an English education can be imagined as the formers of an educated populace that is English in all but "blood and colour.”(Raley 2000)

Each language has value in itself, therefore should be conserved. The purpose of our paper is to add force to the moral support from natives of the language, education and media so as to gather new ideas and contributions, and to unite efforts in order to arrive

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at the objective we all wish for i.e., linguistic and cultural harmony based on understanding and appreciation of language rights and their reflection at the grass root level. Subsequently we should think about the protection and promotion of linguistic diversity and cultural diversity. Therefore Jose Bengoa rightly remarked that:

“...the challenge is to incorporate the topic of cultural multiplicity and respect for minorities into the education, school, the media and, in short, all those involved in education [and the need to have] a positive and optimistic way of looking at an increasingly interrelated, globalized and culturally interactive world in which cultural and ethnic diversity is valued more and more as one of mankind's main source of wealth”. (Hasnain 2001:59).

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