

Importance of English and the Mother-Tongue Cohesion in Indian Journalism



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Abstract

Third world countries struggling hard for gaining access to modern knowledge have, by and large, realized the importance of English. It is to be noted that English in India is a legacy from the British who colonized the country and their language permeated through some of the most important parts of society; the government, the media, the education system, the legal system, and gradually the social sphere as well. An estimated 4 percent of the Indian population use English at present that is about 40 million people.

Journalism is a powerful tool of social change. English is used widely in Indian journalism. The English press in India began serious journalism in the country and English language newspapers are published in practically all states. Not only has it impacted print media, but broadcasting media as well. There are several English news channels as well as several media courses offered at various institutions, which focus on journalism in English.

English has played a big role in Indian journalism. Indian journalist of being proficient in English, got lots of job-opportunities available all over the world. English has been opening a huge new market potential for them. However, English journalism required full co-operation of the mother-tongue. Here we are going to witness a new era in Indian journalism.

Keywords: Journalism, Media, Mother-Tongue, Second Language, Lingua Franca, Contrastive Analysis.

Introduction

The importance in communication has given rise to a new, international language, that is, International English. English has now become an accepted form of communication in India. The dependence of the world on computers has been the main reason for the sudden climb in the language's significance. It is very important, therefore, for a journalist to be fluent in English, because of his/her daily interaction with the general population. Using English in print media makes it easier for the editor, gives more status to the journalist, and ensures fewer errors in the final product. A journalist with an expansive vocabulary and a flair for the language is definitely more qualified and makes a good first impression. Moreover, his/her writing is thought provoking and interesting to read, leaving no room for misunderstandings or unintentional double meanings. The average Indian reads very little on a daily basis, and newspapers can therefore, make a lasting impression on the way the entire country writes. Yes, Indian journalists should have complete knowledge of English, a lingua franca in the profession, at the same time the knowledge of Hindi, the mother-tongue is very important for Indian journalists. Since, a number of language mistakes, including those made in foreign languages, proceed from the lack of knowledge of one's mother-tongue. The position of mother-tongue in English journalism is not of subordination, but that of co-operation or co-ordination. The co-operation of the mother-tongue is desirable in Indian English journalism. Therefore, journalists are expected to acquire a high level of literacy.

In broadcast media, since there is no or very little editing on the basis of language, the journalist needs to speak English fluently. A journalist is seen as a role model for many, and he holds in his hands, the power to improve and maintain the already existing standard of English in India and change the way the world sees it.

Statement of Purpose

The paper aims to analyse the importance of English language in modern Indian journalism and the role of the mother-tongue in enhancing the language proficiency. It also seeks to establish the global role of today's media and the necessity for the active usage of English that can add the profession's competitiveness.

Hypothesis

The basic question and purpose of this research paper was to analyze the significance of English in the field of journalism in India and to determine whether the mother-tongue interferes or enhances the professional capabilities. The intended result and outcome of this study was to determine if there was a need to emphasize the use of English in Indian journalism. The null hypothesis was that there was no problem with the standard of English in Indian journalism. The alternate hypothesis stated that a lot needed to be done to utilize the mother-tongue in English journalism.

General Discussion

In its broadest sense, culture may be understood as a comprehensive view of history. It encompasses politics, economics, social history, arts, religion and customs. Culture includes the spiritual aspect of a society, embracing its ideological, artistic and religious trends. It may also be understood as a picture of everyday life, including everyday activities and entertainment, clothing, fashions, living conditions, family and social relations, customs, beliefs, morality, acceptable patterns of behaviour and rituals. Finally, social consciousness, which is expressed in the language of events and processes, institutions and organizations, social values and artistic creativity are also part of culture expressed in the language. B. Suchodalski says, "It is seemingly permanent, yet constantly changing reality, which is ever present to all individuals belonging to the same cultural group."

Since the telecommunications network is global, journalism has become a global enterprise. For professional journalists, this has very big implications. The global nature of the new communications network means that individuals can consume journalism made all over the world, and discuss it across national boundaries. But this scenario enhances the importance of English in the profession as it is, undoubtedly the world language. The same is true about the profession of journalism in India.

The English press in India initiated serious journalism in the country. The number of English newspaper, journals and magazines is on continuous increase. According to Kachru, at present there are approximately 3582 newspapers in English. English newspapers are published in practically all states of India. Interestingly, the first printed newspaper of India was in English named Hicky's Bengal Gazette. It was edited and published by James Augustus Hicky, an ex-employee of the East India Company. The first issue of this newspaper came out in 1780 and carried only classified advertisement on its front page. It was a weekly newspaper and generally dealt with the arrival and departure of Europeans, timings of steamers, fashionable news from London, Paris, and Vienna and personal news. Many other Anglo-Indian newspapers emerged after Hicky's pattern- such as John Bull, Calcutta Journal, Bengal Harkaru.

Later on, another type of newspapers emerged, Indo-Anglican papers. They were English newspapers run by Indians primarily for English educated elite Indians. The first newspaper of this type was Bengal Gazette started in 1816. Between

1860 and 1899, hundreds of newspapers came up demanding freedom of expression and criticizing the repressive measures taken by the British. Some newspapers of this period were The Hindu of Madras and Amrit Bazaar Patrika of Calcutta.

In 1947, the major English newspapers in India were The Times of India (Bombay), Hindustan Times (New Delhi), Hindu (Madras), Indian Express (Bombay and Madras), Statesman (Calcutta) etc.

At present, there are four major publishing groups in India, each of which controls national and regional English-language and vernacular publications. The Times of India is the largest English daily, with a circulation of 701000 published in six cities.

Despite English being used in Indian Journalism for years, it is not without problems. Though English is, generally, a compulsory language from the very beginning of schooling, a misuse of borrowings or derivatives found daily in the media reflects poor knowledge of not only English but Hindi as well. There are a number of ways in which we can communicate, but natural languages, such as English and Hindi are certainly the most frequently used and most efficient carriers of messages among people of India. A natural language is sometimes described as a communication tool consisting, in most simple terms, of a vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation and spelling rules, i.e. a list of words and a system of rules governing their use in speech and writing. The question is: if even the majority of native speakers of English are incapable of using fully the existing vast potential, what about learners of English as a second language in India?

In addition to the mistakes arising out of the contrastive analysis of the two languages, cultural differences, also leading to unsuccessful communication, should be observed. The media has a big role in this regard as J. Gvozdanovic observes, "The media has an educational role, and they must be aware of their role."

Conclusion

Every journalist should have complete knowledge of English and good command of the mother-tongue as well. Once Indian journalists understand the importance of the socio-cultural element in communication, and start applying it in their work, the situation in the media will be more optimistic from the linguistic point of view. English expressions will no longer be simply *copied* from English and *pasted* into Hindi, and the Hindi sentence will no longer suffer under the influence of English syntax.

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