

Development of English Language in Bengal under the East India Company Rule

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Keywords:

East India
Company,
Technological
Development,
Language
Acquisition,
Educational
Institutions,
Curriculum

Abstract: The development of English language demonstrates a historical chronology of continued events like renaissance, and reformation and serves as a mechanism for carrying out the world from classical to modern to post-modern duration. Dialects of English have extensively developed in many of the former colonies of the British Empire. The English Civil War of 1642-1649 and the Revolution of 1688-1689 played a major role in the alteration of political and economic life within the state. The significant development in institutional changes resulted in European mercantile expansion to overseas colonies where they extracted great amount of wealth. The foundation of joint-stock companies, such as the East Indian Company (1600) in England, was considered a great development in capitalist-mercantilism (The Washington Review, 2011). English was considered as a medium for exchanging business relations and flourishing colonial power exercise along the Indian beautiful landscape. There are distinct forms of the English language spoken in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and many other parts of the world. Businesses operated by British merchant class and advances in Industrial and French revolution have tremendously acknowledged English as a medium of language for building communication, carrying out business and administering governing activities across the globe.

Introduction

The principal distinction between early- and late-modern English is vocabulary, Pronunciation, grammar, and spelling are largely the same, but Late-Modern English has many more Words. These words are the result of two historical factors. The first is the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the technological society. This necessitated new words for things and ideas that had not previously existed. The second was the British Empire. At its height, Britain ruled one quarter of the earth's surface, and English adopted many foreign words and made them its own. The industrial and scientific revolutions created a need for neologisms to describe the new creations and discoveries. For this, English relied heavily on Latin and Greek. Words like oxygen, protein, nuclear, and vaccine did not exist in the classical languages, but they were created from Latin and Greek roots. Such neologisms were not exclusively created from classical roots, though English roots were used for such terms as *horsepower*, *airplane*, and *typewriter*.

This burst of neologisms continues today, perhaps most visible in the field of electronics and computers. *Byte*, *cyber-*, *bios*, *hard-drive*, and *microchip* are good examples. Also, the rise of the British Empire and the growth of global trade served not only to introduce English to the world but to introduce words into English, Hindi, and the other languages of the Indian subcontinent, provided many words, such as *pundit*, *Shampoo*, *pajamas*, and *juggernaut*. Colonialism and control over the world's main commercial routes enabled Europe to exploit vast natural resources from overseas colonies and to import immense wealth. Unlike Chinese emperors, European monarchs were the main supporter of foreign trade and Sought to Surpass domestic economic stagnation through overseas expansions, thereby catalyzing the further development of communications, trade systems, and

military industry (Marks, 2007). Just as in the Caribbean, the English Language arrived in South Asia as a result of colonization. Unlike its history in the Caribbean, however, English has always co-existed in the Indian subcontinent alongside thousands of local languages. So for most of the population, it has only ever been a second language. English has been gradually introduced as a fundamental necessity for operating and expanding business relations beyond the territory.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study focuses on identifying the underlying factors for developing English as a language in Bengal under the East India Company Rule and thereby demonstrates the current status of English across the globe. The present study also stresses on measuring the relationship between technological development and access to Indian trade in the backdrop of addressing English as a resultant of British colonialism. Furthermore, this study extensively emphasizes on a variety of language acquisition and changing trends on neologisms based on scientific and technical innovation in the global perspective.

Methodology

The current study consults secondary sources of data based on content analysis. In order to analyze the role of East India Company Rule in progressing English in India, I consult contemporary treatises, books, pamphlets, magazines and newspaper articles have been consulted. This piece of research mostly adopts qualitative approach, which is instrumental for exploring the underlying factors for developing English as a language in Bengal.

Rationale of the Study

English has now inarguably achieved global status. Whenever we turn on the news to find out what's happening in East Asia, or the Balkans, or Africa, or South America, or practically anywhere, local people are being interviewed and telling us about it in English. To illustrate the point when Pope John Paul II arrived in the Middle East recently to retrace Christ's footsteps and addressed Christians, Muslims and Jews, the pontiff spoke not Latin, not Arabic, not Italian, not Hebrew, not his native Polish. He spoke in English. One of the more remarkable aspects of the spread of English around the world has been the extent to which Europeans are adopting it as their internal lingua franca. English is spreading from northern Europe to the south and is now firmly entrenched as a second language in countries such as Sweden, Norway, Netherlands and Denmark. As a language, English had developed in Indian subcontinent following a wide range of political and economic reasons set for strengthening business relations across the landscape. With the help of East India Company Rule, English was taught and applied for making communication and operating offices smoothly. Being colonized and governed by British government, time had placed a great significance on reshaping the image of English in the present context.

The perception of this standard variety as correct, 'good English was also supported by attempts at codification, notably Johnson's dictionary and many prescriptive grammars of the 18th century. The vocabulary of English was consciously elaborated as it came to be used for an increasing variety of purposes, including translations of classical works rediscovered in the Renaissance, a burgeoning creative literature, and the description of new scientific activities. Thousands of words were borrowed from Latin and Greek in this period e.g. education, metamorphosis, critic, conscious. In the present day, English is used in many parts of the World, as a first, Second or foreign language, having been carried from its country of origin by former colonial and imperial activity, the slave trade, and recently, economic, cultural and educational prestige.

Development of English Language

English, as we know it, developed in Britain and more recently in America and elsewhere around the world. It did not begin in Britain but was an immigrant language (Algeo, 2010), coming there with the invading Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century. Before that, English was spoken on the Continent, bordering on the North Sea. And even longer before, it had developed from a speech way we call Indo-European, which was the source of most other European and many south-Asian languages. English is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today. The Indo-European family includes several major branches: Latin and the

modern Romance languages (French etc.); the Germanic languages (English, German, Swedish etc.); the Indo-Iranian languages (Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit etc.); the Slavic languages (Russian, Polish, Czech etc.); the Baltic languages of Latvian and Lithuanian; the Celtic languages (Welsh, Irish Gaelic etc.); Greek.

The influence of the original Indo-European language can be seen today, even though no written record of it exists. The word for *father*, for example, is *vater* in German, *pater* in Latin, and *pitr* in Sanskrit. These words are all cognates, similar words in different languages that share the same root. Of these branches of the Indo-European family, two are, as far as the study of the development of English is concerned, of paramount importance, the Germanic and the Romance (called that because the Romance languages derive from Latin, the language of ancient Rome). English is a member of the Germanic group of languages. It is believed that this group began as a common language in the Elbe river region about 3,000 years ago. English is a West Germanic language that originated from Anglo-Frisian dialects. The development of English Language has started very humbly with the arrival of three Germanic tribes—the Angles, the Saxon and the Jutes who invaded Britain during the century AD. At that time the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. The Angles come from —England' and their language was called —English'—from which the words —England and —English' are derived. The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages which in Britain developed into what we now call old English. This Anglo-Saxon language is a synthetic language which expresses changes of tense, number and person either by modification of the root vowels or differences of termination. The middle English language the Vernacular spoken and written in England from about 1000 to 1500...the descended of Old English language and the ancestor of Modern English.

Middle English Language was spoken in parts of the British Isles after the Norman Conquest until the late 15th century. This stage of the development of the English language roughly followed the High to the late middle Ages. Modern English is the form of the English language spoken since the Great Vowel Shift in England, which began in the late 15th century and was completed in roughly 1550. Modern English has a large number of dialects spoken in diverse countries throughout the world. This includes American English, Australian English, British English (containing English, Welsh English and Scottish English), Canadian English, Caribbean English, Hiberno-English, Indo-Pakistani English, Nigerian English, New Zealand English, Philippine English, Singaporean English, and South African English.

[*Celtic Language—The Celtic Language are descended from Proto-Celtic or —Common Celtic'; a branch of greater Indo-European language family.] The term —Celtic' was first used to describe this language group by Edward Lhuyd in 1707.]

Late Modern English has many more words, arising from the Industrial Revolution and the technology that created a need for new words as well as international development of the language. The British Empire at its height covered one quarter of the Earth's surface, and the English language adopted foreign words from many countries. British English and American English, the two major varieties of the language, are spoken by 400 million people. Modern English can be regarded externally as starting with the introduction of printing.

East India Company

The British East India Company, sometimes referred to as "John Company," was a joint-stock company which was granted an English Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth on 31 December, 1600, with the intention of favoring trade privileges in the Indian subcontinent. The Royal Charter effectively gave the newly created The Honorable Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies (HEIC) a 15 year monopoly on all trade in the East Indies. The Company transformed from a commercial trading venture to one which virtually ruled the subcontinent as it acquired auxiliary governmental and military functions, until its dissolution in 1858. Increasingly, the company had been compelled to promote the material and moral progress of its Indian subjects, as, while trade remained the main goal of Empire, the British started to justify imperialism by speaking of a duty to —civilize and —educate. Servants of the company, though, could make vast amounts of money and were highly paid while their counterparts at home received modest salaries. The Utilitarian philosopher John Stuart

Mill, who worked for the company, defended its record and argued that it ought to continue to govern India, since it was above party-politics and completely devoted to Indian affairs while London was too distant from India to administer it properly.

Establishment of East India Rule in Bengal

A close study of the history of the company shows how the British imperial project was re-imagined over the course of its history. It began unashamedly as a money-making, commercial activity but increasingly re-conceived itself as a moral enterprise. This was arrogant but it resulted in many initiatives, such as education provision and measures aimed at creating social equality that raised many people out of poverty and imbued them with a sense of shared values and human dignity. The eminent British historian, Thomas Babbington Macauley (1800–1859) made his fortune from a few years spent in the company's service, and advised in his 1835 Minute on Indian Education that official funds should only be spent on English and Western education in India to produce a class of persons who would be racially Indian, —but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. Such people would also be loyal to the British out of recognition of their superior moral worth. He claimed to never have met anyone who believed that, —the Arabic and Sanskrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations (Macauley, 2015). The founding fathers of independent India later said that they admired English literature for its concern for liberty and justice, and the underdog.

Introduction of English Language in the Curriculum

English in India is a global language in a multilingual country (Sec. I). A variety and range of English-teaching situations prevail here owing to the twin factors of teacher proficiency in English and pupils' exposure to English outside school. The level of introduction of English is now a matter of political response to people's aspirations rather than an academic or feasibility issue. The goals for a language curriculum (Sec. II) are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency Such as is acquired in natural language learning, and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through, for example, literacy. This argues for an across-the-curriculum approach that breaks down the barriers between English and other subjects, and other Indian languages. At the initial stages, English may be one of the languages for learning activities that create the child's awareness of the world; at later stages, all learning happens through language. Higher-order linguistic skills generalize across languages; reading, for example, is a transferable skill. Improving it in one language improves it in others, while mother-tongue reading failure adversely affects second-language reading. English does not stand alone. The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilingual that can enrich all our languages; this has been an abiding national vision.

Teaching of English Language in the Educational Institutions

By the early 1820s some administrators within the East India Company were questioning if this was a sensible use of the money. James Mill noted that the declared purpose of the Madrasa (Muslim College) in Kolkata and the Hindu College in Benares set up by the company had been "to make a favorable impression, by our encouragement of their literature, upon the minds of the natives" but took the view that the aim of the company should have been to further not Oriental learning but "useful learning." Indeed, private enterprise colleges, had begun to spring up in Bengal teaching Western knowledge in English ("English education"), to serve a native clientele which felt it would be more important that their sons learnt to understand the English than that they were taught to appreciate classic poetry. Broadly similar issues (classical education vs 'liberal education) had already arisen for education in England with existing grammar Schools being unwilling (or legally unable) to give instruction in Subjects other than Latin or Greek and were to end in an expansion of their curriculum to include modern subjects. In the Indian situation a complicating factor was that the 'classical education' reflected the attitudes and beliefs of the various traditions in the sub-continent, 'English education' clearly did not, and there was felt to be a danger of an adverse reaction among the existing learned classes of India to any withdrawal of support for them.

Review of Charles Francis Adams Report (1835-1915)

Adam's Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal have long-been held in high esteem for their valuable statistics and re-researches on a subject of great social and political importance - the intellectual condition of the masses of Bengal.- The investigations were conducted with great diligence, and

extended over a space of three years, at an expense to Government of more than a lac of rupees. In some points, as was to be expected from the difficulty of the enquiry, there are inaccuracies, but, on the whole, they afford a mass of information of great value. As more energetic measures are about to be adopted towards the extension of Vernacular Education in Bengal, and as the Reports have long been out of print, it has been thought desirable to re-print those parts of them which bear on this vital question. But as Adam's Reports close with 1838, it has been deemed necessary to give a resume of what has been done in Bengal since that period towards carrying out a system of Vernacular Education, as well as to glance at its previous condition.

Study of English till the Establishment of Calcutta University

—That it be also an object of this Society to select pupils of distinguished talents and merit from elementary and other schools, and to provide for their instruction in seminaries of a higher degree; with the view of forming a body of qualified teachers and translators, who may be instrumental in enlightening their countrymen, and improving the general system of education. When the funds of the Institution may admit of it, the maintenance and tuition of such pupils, in distinct seminaries, will be an object of importance." In 1821, it had 115 Vernacular Schools, containing 8,828 scholars, under its patronage, i. e., it gave books, examining and superintending the Schools by its officers and agents. In 1823, they received a monthly grant of Rupees 500 from Government, and worked admirably until 1833.

Role of Missionary in the Development of English Language

In 1819, the London Missionary Society directed its attention to Vernacular schools, —impressed with a sense of the exceeding great importance of well conducted schools in this country." They established them in 1820 at Chitla and other places in the neighborhood of Tallygunge, but there were strong prejudices at that time amongst the Indians against attending schools where the Scriptures were read. Still in 1820 a Vernacular School attended by 25 boys was opened in a bungalow chapel at Kidderpore. The Calcutta Church Missionary Association had for many years 600 children under instruction in their Vernacular Schools in Calcutta. The Baptist Missionary Society had also several hundreds. In 1821, the Calcutta School Society transferred some of its schools to the Church Missionary Society, and Jetter became Superintendent of them. An examination of 600 boys took place in 1822; E. H. East, the Chief Justice, who was one of the founders of the Hindu College, presided. Jetter states, in 1822, that the mention of the name of Jesus in a book has kept several joys away from school; that on introducing writing by dictation into a class, he offered one boy a tract as a prize for his good dictation, — the boy flung it on the ground saying it contained the words of Jesus Christ.

East India Company and Emergence of English in India

The British first arrived in Indian subcontinent in the early 1600s and soon established trading posts in a number of places under the control of The East India Company. By 1765 the Company's influence had grown to such an extent that the British were effectively controlling a large part of the country. This date is often taken as the start of what is referred to as The Raj - a period of British rule in India that lasted until Independence in 1947. Initially English was only taught to the local population through the work of Christian missionaries - there were no official attempts to force the language on the masses. But by the 1700s, English had firmly established itself as the language of administration and many educated Indians were demanding instruction in English as a means of social advancement. By 1857 universities were opened in Bombay, Kolkata and Madras. English was increasingly accepted as the language of government, of the social elite, and of the national press. The British treated Indians like inferior humans. British building had boards saying "dogs and Indians not allowed". During the British rule an estimated 40 million Indians died due to massacres and famines. As a matter of fact: regions longest under British rule were the poorest regions in India. British involvement in India during the 18th century can be divided into two phases, one ending and the other beginning at mid-century. In the first half of the century, the British were a trading presence at certain points along the coast; from the 1750s they began to wage war on land in eastern and south-eastern India and to reap the reward of successful warfare, which was the exercise of political power, notably over the rich province of Bengal.

By the end of the century British rule had been consolidated over the first conquests and it was being extended up the Ganges valley to Delhi and over most of the peninsula of southern India. By then the British had established a military dominance that would enable them in the next fifty years to subdue all the remaining Indian states of any consequence, either conquering them or forcing their rulers to become subordinate allies. At the beginning of the 18th century English commerce with India was nearly a hundred years old. It was transacted by the East India Company, which had been given a monopoly of all English trade to Asia by royal grant at its foundation in 1600. Towards the end of the 17th century India became the focal point of the Company's trade. The Company's main settlements, Bombay, Madras and Kolkata were established in the Indian provinces where cotton textiles for export were most readily available.

English Education and Westernizing India

One of the most significant things the British did to Westernize India was to introduce a modified version of English education. Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Education had a decisive impact on British educational policy and is a classic example of a Western rationalist approach to Indian civilization. The education system which developed was a very pale reflection of that in the UK. Three universities were set up in 1857 in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, but they were merely examining bodies and did no teaching. Higher education was carried out in affiliated colleges which gave a two-year B.A. course with heavy emphasis on rote learning and examinations. Drop-out ratios were always very high. They did little to promote analytic capacity or independent thinking and produced a group of graduates with a half-baked knowledge of English, but sufficiently Westernized to be alienated from their own culture (Government of India, *Report of the Education Commission 1964-66*, Delhi, 1966). It was not until the 1920s that Indian universities provided teaching facilities and then only for M.A. students. Furthermore, Indian education was of a predominantly literacy character and the provision for technical training was much less than in any European country. Education for girls was almost totally ignored throughout the nineteenth century. Because higher education was in English, there was no official effort to translate Western literature into the vernacular, nor was there any standardization of Indian scripts whose variety is a major barrier to multi-lingualism amongst educated Indians.

British Education Policy and Development of English

Gradually English became the lingua franca of the educated people in India. It united them and gradually made them politically conscious of their rights. It also gave opportunity to the Indians to study in England and learn about the working of democratic institutions there. The writings of John Locke, Ruskin, Mill, Rousseau and many others instilled in them the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, human rights and self-government. The French and the American Revolutions, and the unifications of Italy and Germany further strengthened their appreciation of these ideas. Cavour, Garibaldi and Mazzini became their favorite heroes. They began to aspire for these ideals for India.

The British took a keen interest in introducing the English language in India. They had many reasons for doing so. Educating Indians in the English language was a part of their strategy. The Indians would be ready to work as clerks on low wages while for the same work the British would demand much higher wages. This would reduce the expenditure on administration. It was also expected to create a class of Indians who were loyal to the British and were not able to relate to other Indians. This class of Indians would be taught to appreciate the culture and opinion of the British.

Conclusion

English has a history in India that dates back to British colonialism and the consequent implementation of the English language in education and politics. Although this history of British rule has left a sour taste in the mouths of many Indians, the roots of the English language in the region of South Asia have grown too deep and are now too indispensable to eradicate in the spirit of post-colonialism. The result has been a category of South Asian English that comprises a countless number of sub-varieties, including the outer circle variety of Indian English that has become standardized and is used in various realms of Indian Society. These South Asian varieties of English possess their own phonological, syntactic, and lexical characteristics that make them unique from other varieties of world English. These characteristics have led to a large amount of "Indianisms" that are prominent in the use of Indian English today and may merit inclusion in South Asian English classroom instruction.

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