



Domino Effect of Regionalism Upon English Language Teaching & Learning in India: A Review of Challenges and Recommendations

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ABSTRACT:

While the English Language has engulfed the globe by its characteristic of holding huge flexibility and adaptability, the consequences of regionalism have reached its peak. English has asserted itself to be uniquely the fastest growing language across the globe. Due to this reason, the language has made its way into most of the classrooms in India during the contemporary time. Scholars and researchers have however highlighted many challenges that the students and teachers face in the list of various issues dealing with English Language. One of the major problems reported is the effect of regionalism. It thus makes it more important to identify the levels of complexity that students as well as teachers deal with, due to the existing diversity of English Language. With different versions of English in the form of British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English and now Indian English; it has become a rising challenge for all to encompass the understanding of functional English and use the same with proper confidence. The rising vogue of regionalism affects the language administration inside the Indian classrooms and at various institutes at multiple levels. This paper aims to assert the major crises faced by English Language practitioners due to the effect of regionalism on English Language. The paper will also discuss the solutions of overcoming the issue for smooth conduction and use of English Language by students and educators both.

INTRODUCTION:

The language that has won most hearts across the globe due to its characteristic of being flexible & adaptable is English. Swiftly, the English language permeated the air, evoking trepidation among the uninitiated. An overwhelming sense of inferiority plagued those in the Indian subcontinent who lacked proficiency in this linguistic force. It was the language of colonizers and foreigners as they had introduced it to the Indians. The language was made familiarized during 200 years of British Raj. Hugely because of this, the language received much resistance and less acceptance by the public in general. With the aim to uproot the colonizers and to end the British rule over India few dared to learn English. "Tagore was primarily a poet in Bengali but himself translated many of his poems into English". Even, "Gandhi expressed himself well in excellent English and had a fine appreciation of the words he

used" says Dr Sarvepalli Gopal. Mahatma Gandhi's book *Hind Swaraj* (1909), in which he states the fact that the British government's legal proceedings are in English, the Indian Congress corresponds in English, the highest-quality publications have been released in English, and our strongest opinions are communicated in English. It provides important perspectives into the role of the English language in India during the years prior to independence.

Those who have gained knowledge of the English language have then clarified that the English language lived in a silhouette during modern times and it demanded maximum attention further. However, soon the language of colonizers became the language of necessities & daily practice with increasing trade and commerce. Public understood that to retort and revert the colonists they needed to speak the same language. The English language has made information and knowledge



more accessible. Indian foresighted leaders recognized this reality and took good action to prepare the children for the challenge that English presents. More than eighteen state languages coexist in India as a whole, and English has emerged as the language that unites them all, possibly more so than Hindi, the country's official tongue. English's development as the preferred language for communication has been greatly accelerated by India's expanding economic and intellectual horizons, and it is continuously expanding. Thus the use of English grew unpredictably fast. The English language holds untamable potential in contemporary times and has engulfed the globe with its charm. The English language in India has spread its roots to form the National Constituent and most of the official documentation is legally used at micro and macro level. Due to the unprecedented power of language adaptability, local practitioners of the English language use it as a binding bridge and link multiple states having more than 21 official languages.

The burgeoning prominence of the English language has brought to the forefront pressing issues for regional languages. Its rapid expansion has given rise to concerns about the preservation of the original language patterns' authenticity. This captivating phenomenon has sparked the curiosity of research scholars, who now delve into the impact of English on practitioners from specific regions and, in turn, the reciprocal influence the language undergoes through its users' interaction.

GLOBAL ENGLISH ACCEPTANCE AND ITS IMPACT

English Language has been accepted across the globe in most of the foreign countries as a common medium of use because it holds the capacity to mold and flex to the maximum. Lexicographer Kory Stamer observed that around 80% of the English vocabulary is borrowed. English being a part of the Indo Germanic Languages has borrowed words from Latin, French, German, Sanskrit, Hindi, and more rising to the number of 300 above. The superior-inferior binary divisions between the U.S. and Korea have contributed to the construction of the local intellectual habitus marked by the domination of American educated elite groups and the emergence of English as the language of the center (Cho 65).

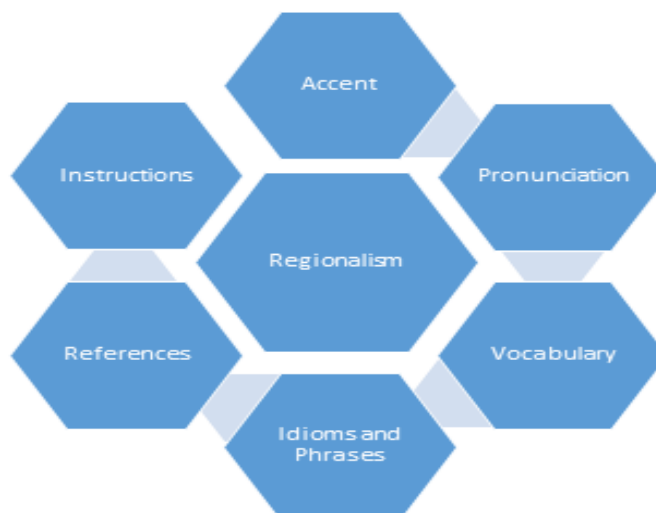
Addition to this, the English Language falls into a limbo of standardization to examine morphology and phonological validation when it deals with the variety of

its own evolution such as American & British English. The variety of English is in the process of continuous evolution has extended to form & develop into Canadian English, Australian English, Indian English, American English, British English and more. Also due to regional effects and constant code shifting of language, a blend of other languages has formed its sub variety as well. To illustrate, India being a country with more than 21 major languages itself has cloned English to be Hinglish & Gujlish and Tamilish, etc. the use of other languages with English is commonly seen in India today.

This usage is not wrong but however transforms the standardization of English Language and questions its stability and correctness of use in formal and academic scenarios. The effect on the constituent Standard English of these regionalisms has been dangerous for the practitioners and new learners acquiring the language. This is majorly due to the great effect of regionalism, but to understand regionalism in context of the English Language it is crucial to learn of its development and evolution through time.

REGIONALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Definition of the term 'Regionalism' differs from one individual to another, however in general it means the effect of a particular geographical region upon something. Regionalism refers to the strong identification and attachment of individuals or groups to a particular region or locality. It is a form of collective identity and solidarity that emphasizes the distinctiveness and uniqueness of a specific geographic area. Regionalism can manifest in various aspects, including culture, language, traditions, history, and economic interests. The famous scholar Richard Nordquist shares on his blogs that Regionalism upon English Language is when a word expression & pronunciation is affected by geographical area (Sánchez). The effect of this favoring of word or pronunciation is there but in addition to it the changes observed in the structural pattern of syntax and semantics also shows the direct effect of regionalism. Therefore, it can be said that an overall ripple effect is created upon the English language due to a geographical region. Regionalism can significantly affect English language teaching and learning in a number of ways as mentioned in the following image:



Hence, regionalism certainly affects the instruction and acquisition of the English language through its influence on accents and pronunciation, word choice and phrases, references to culture, educational resources, and variation in linguistics. To study the effects of regionalism upon its components it is must to understand the fundamental dilemma faced by the students and educators.

Regionalism and Language Teaching & Acquisition in India

Due to India's extensive diversity of languages, regionalism is important in the context of language teaching and learning in India. Hindi and English are the recognized national languages of India, a country that also has many more languages and dialects. The following are some significant elements of regionalism in language learning and teaching in India:



As per the National Education Policy 2020, the importance of regional (vernacular) language teaching and learning has been strengthened that has resulted in

emphasizing on bilingual education system. However, historically the context of English Language Teaching and acquisition has been maintained with the thorough



binding of curriculum served to the pupils. With proper language teaching and implementation of education policy the system is fighting with various elements of regionalism affecting English such as cultural relevance lost in translation, influence of mother tongue and more. However, to achieve the targeted result, in India, mostly, the impact of the elements of regionalism can apparently be seen upon the following English language components:

1. Use & Structure
2. Vocabulary
3. Grammar
4. Phonology

LANGUAGE USE & STRUCTURE:

English is used differently at various places such as at courts and at hospitals, at Universities and at Multinational Companies, etc. The judicial use of language will make use of more legal and official vocabularies much practice inside the courtrooms. However, medicinal terminology and its use in daily language is also reflective. Kind and humble tone versus the strict directives and harsh tone of commands are different environments which are created by uses of English models such as:

“Can you do this action or move your wrist please?” opposed to “You must do this and get your hand moving fast in the ask direction.”

The style and structure of using the language does not only vary from place or environment but also from Rural to urban as well as social and temporal such as,

“Oh! That is flabbergasting.” and “-re you kidding! What the heck is that?”

English varies in expression through the choice of words and tonality depending on a person’s use, its environment, the place and social lingo they are into.

Addressing this issue, educators must avoid emphasizing on direct speaking exercises rather must teach grammar and give much reading practices. Exercises with fundamental grammar helps the practitioner to focus more on sentence formation and improves the quality & speed in Second Language acquisition.

VOCABULARY:

Language use varies across different contexts, ranging from formal settings to informal interactions in personal and social realms. This diversity in language styles can significantly impact the choice of words that individuals make. With the advent of ongoing Media age and its influence on communication, the vocabulary employed at specific contexts has undergone substantial changes. The vocabulary used on popular social media platforms has significantly affected the evolution of mixed English, incorporating both American and British variants. This amalgamation of American and British English features has blurred the lines between formal and informal language, affecting how individuals express themselves in different settings. As social media becomes a central platform for communication, it shapes linguistic norms and introduces new linguistic innovations.

Moreover, it delves into the repercussions of integrating this mixed English language into classroom environments, which has led to misconceptions among a substantial number of Second Language practitioners. This difference in Language is taught by teachers inside the classroom by highlighting different stylistic forms and structures used in varying environments.

Types of Environment	Language use
Professional (Highly Formal)	What are the discrepancies faced in project credentials?
Formal	What is the problem in the project pin code?
Informal	How is it going with project pin code issues?
Casual (Highly informal)	What’ya up with that project pin code, man?



GRAMMAR:

A language is seldom ruled by norms but rather governed through varying guidelines. This is the very reason why English language has flourished this fast as well as the reason for its incongruities that brings its fame down and cause of rising terror when it is compared to other regional languages. The importance of input – access to oral and written examples of the language is widely recognized. Fewer authors, however, has written about the importance of output. Swain (1985) and her colleagues (Swain, Lapkin 324) highlight that it is not necessary to know the grammar of a language in order to understand it, whereas it is necessary to know the grammar in order to create spoken or written messages. Thus, output may be more effective than input in reaching language proficiency (Mitchell, Myles 28). For those language learners and practitioners who have the habit of thinking in their first language and are trying to speak in the second, complications of grammar become challenging.

In English, the usual word order is subject-verb-object (SVO), where the subject comes first, followed by the verb, and then the object. For example: "She plays Basketball."

In Hindi, the typical word order is subject-object-verb (SOV), where the subject comes first, then the object, and finally the verb. For example: "Basketball khel rahi hai" (Basketball playing is she).

Changing the sentence type to interrogative form;

In English, interrogative sentences typically start with the verb, followed by the subject. For example: "Are you going?"

In Hindi, interrogative sentences often begin with question words (who, what, why, how, etc.) and then the verb, followed by the subject. For example: "Aap kon hai?" (You who are?).

These differences in word order and sentence structure are crucial to understanding and effectively communicating in both languages. Language learners need to be aware of these distinctions, as they can significantly impact how sentences are formed and interpreted. Learning to think in the language being spoken or written can help learners become more proficient and fluent in expressing themselves accurately.

PHONOLOGY:

Considering the fact asserted by J.Sethi and P.V.Dhamija , "No language is written exactly as it is spoken" (Sethi and Dhamija 7), it is utmost crucial to learn phonology distinctly than its written form. The phonological acquisition of a second language is a complex process that requires learners not only to integrate the new linguistic features of the second language to their own system, but also to be able to materialize that knowledge through the correct perception and articulation of the sounds (Iruela 64). This is where the effect of regionalism is maximum seen. The tongue is trained to pronounce the certain vowel sounds as per the first language acquired.

A research from a Spanish scholar records the data of how First Language(FL) affects the pronunciation of the Second Language(SL) resulting in specific mold of sound articulation. The study discussed analyzing the difficulty of vowel sounds for students learning pronunciation in a particular language or context. The study utilized logistic regression to process data obtained from recordings. The researchers then ranked the vowels from the most difficult to the easiest, and compared these findings to survey data collected from learners and teachers.

The results of the study indicated that the three most challenging vowel sounds for students were /i/, /æ/, and /ʊ/. These vowels were found to be particularly problematic during pronunciation practice. However, interestingly, there were differences between the perceptions of difficulty reported by learners and teachers in the surveys compared to the actual difficulty identified through the recordings and logistic regression analysis (Garita Sánchez, et.al. 45).

The discrepancies between learners' and teachers' perceptions and the actual difficulty found in the recordings can have significant implications. For instructors, it means that they might be prioritizing certain vowel sounds for teaching or focusing on areas that may not necessarily align with the real challenges students face. This could affect the effectiveness of the pronunciation instruction.

On the other hand, for students, these differences in perception might lead to a lack of awareness about their actual pronunciation problems. They may think they are struggling with different vowel sounds than the ones that are objectively difficult for them. This lack of awareness



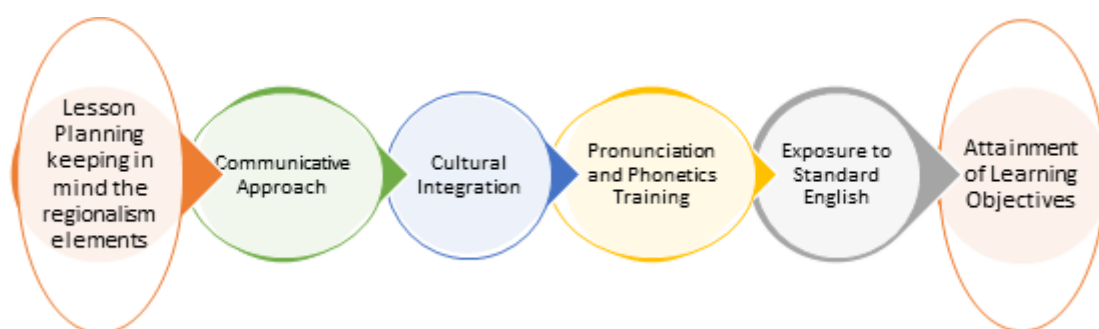
could hinder their progress in improving their pronunciation skills.

To address these discrepancies, teachers might need to reassess their teaching strategies and materials, taking into account the actual difficulty of different vowel sounds as identified by the recordings and statistical analysis. Additionally, raising students' awareness of their specific pronunciation challenges through feedback

and targeted practice on the challenging vowel sounds can help them make better progress in improving their pronunciation.

OVERCOMING REGIONALISM

To overcome the impact of regionalism and enhance English language teaching in India, here are some suggestions in form of teaching model in Indian context:



Lesson Planning: An educator must plan ahead of class with complete awareness of incorporating the above four fundamentals essentially correct. If the tutor/ educator ensures the feasibility of implementing correct sentence structure, grammar, pronunciation, etc. to the students during delivery of session, the effect of regionalism may substantially decrease.

Communicative Approach: Just as an infant's or a toddler acquire any language naturally through communicative approach, learning a second language should be more promoted to be acquired with the receptive and productive skills of communication.

Cultural Integration: To learn a language is a first stage and use it with complete effectiveness is another. When an individual acquires a second language, it becomes crucial simultaneously to understand the etymology of the words, idioms- phrases, cultural semiotics, etc. to make comprehensible and sharp conversations.

Pronunciation & Phonetics Training: It is essential to pay attention to articulation and acoustic signals that the speaker uses to convey the desired meaning. To teach/learn the pronunciations or phonetical training must be given/taken at the very initial stage to avoid landing of disastrous messages and acquire English correctly.

Exposure to Standard English: Though Indian population is facilitated with language and linguistic

specifics from a long time ago, however, it is a constant strive to employ English language as there is less exposure to standard English regulations even to the facilitators. Training workshops and domain knowledge transfer in appropriate process, can fix the core of exposing Standard English to those yet to benefit.

Attainment of Learning Objectives: Be it teaching or learning attainment of goal accomplishments and achieving learning outcomes is important to check. The sheer purpose to teach/learn English is to be a better communicator and knower of a language and thus should be monitored regularly whenever used. Attainment of learning objectives can be verified by the touchstone method of Chomsky's Language Acquisition model and measuring if an individual is able to –

1. Understand nature and structure of Target Language(TL)
2. Incorporate TL in communication & thought
3. Develop and enhance the use of it by implementing liberties of language and cultural context

By putting these recommendations into practice, in India, the teachers can effectively tackle the repercussions of regionalism during the teaching-learning of English language.



CONCLUSION:

Overall, the study highlights the importance of using empirical data and objective analysis to inform language instruction and shows how discrepancies between perceived difficulty and actual difficulty can impact both teachers' decisions and students' learning experiences. Being careful of the four major components Structure, Vocabulary, Grammar and Pronunciation with Chomsky's device of language acquisition, one may overcome the teaching- learning problem faced with English. Therefore, it actually takes a conscious effort to articulate correctly when the mind is racing to speak out. The hard but possible way to pronounce correctly is to learn the Second Language basics and not directly jump to imitate the language.

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