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## LITERATURE INSTILLING ABOUT THE DECLINE OF HINDI LANGUAGE

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### **Abstract:**

*The present research paper entitled as 'Literature Instilling about the Decline of Hindi Language' discusses an issue which has been highlighted in the selected Bollywood films. It is to be said that the films show mirror to the cultural practices and reflects it on the silver screen. Now-a-days, communicating in English is in vogue, more than as a medium of communication it is a style statement and matter of pride and because of this everyone wants to learn this language. English is a lingua franca and one must learn it to match with the pace of the world but not at the cost of ignoring one's native-tongue. The language of any region is not just a language but it is an inheritance of one's roots and unique identity. It must be preserved because it connects one with his culture. Culture is transmitted from generation to generation as tradition via one's native-tongue and at the same time, it is passed on as a legacy to the next generation. In the present research paper, the researchers have underscored the plight of the characters who feel second to other people of their own country because they can't speak English.*

**Keywords:** Film studies, Bollywood films, Cultural studies (popular culture), English language and Hindi movies, English language and Indian education system, Native-tongue

### **Introduction:**

English language was introduced in India by the British colonizers. When Britishers came to India, they found that a huge mass of land was divided into small provinces and each province had its unique culture, food, dressing and religion. The factor behind this division between the two regions was their diverse language. It is observed that, in India, language and its dialect changes by every mile. The colonizers found it as an opportunity to divide the people of this scattered terrain and to introduce their language, English, as a medium to instruct and rule. When one studies Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, one finds that Britishers tried to romanticize all the unique features of the oriental countries on the name of development. They use the construct of language for it. They made English as an official language of their colonies and forced the colonized countries to learn

English by making it mandatory in their education system. By doing this, they aimed and achieved two goals, first, they found it convenient to rule the larger mass of land by appointing hired hands who could carry their orders and promote their language and secondly, to improve their missionary objective. It became very convenient for them to conduct sermons on Christianity and Christ in English.

There are number of benefits of taking education especially, primary education and communicating it in native-tongue. The countries like China, Japan and Russia have the education system which give importance to their native language and as a result of that these countries have made a mark of their own in the field of education, technology and development. But so far this paper is concerned, the researchers are not discussing the advantages of communicating and learning in native language but they are trying to trace the decline of Hindi language and how English language has dominated the minds and tongue of the colonized.

One can correlate the present paper with the novel *In Custody* (Ladlow) by Anita Desai, where Desai has shown the decline in the flair of Urdu language. She has shown this by sketching the character of Hindi professor Deven, who teaches Hindi literature. Deven has a penchant interest in Urdu language. He is very much interested in the shayari i.e. Urdu poetry. As the story progresses the readers find that Deven gets an opportunity to interview an Urdu poet, Nur for a periodical which had a section dedicated for Urdu poetry. Deven grabs this opportunity and goes to interview Nur. When he goes to Nur's place, he finds that Nur is an old man who has lost his senses, and has turned eccentric. The condition of Nur is metaphor for decline of Urdu language.

Today, the condition of Hindi language is similar to that of Urdu in the novel. There is an urgent need of young and educated individual to raise their hands for the sake of Hindi language. Youngsters must opt for Hindi language and study Hindi literature. With the time, every language undergoes a transition. It acquires new vocabulary and some words get less in usage. In India, presently the young generation thinks speaking in Hindi at cafe, malls and on digital platforms like chat groups make them a subject to laugh upon. They think communicating in Hindi or in the regional language builds up inferiority for them to the ones who can communicate fluently in English language. Here, the researchers have tried to highlight this inferiority complex which is felt by the people who are shy in spoken English. For this the researchers have selected three Bollywood films which would bring forward the plight of the people who cannot speak and understand the English language. The researchers are here concerned about the status of Hindi language in our society. They find that the Hindi language is not given respect which should be given to a language, which is spoken by majority of people in India. The impact of British colonizers is still seen on the minds of the people. There is a need for decolonization of Indian minds.

The movie *English Vinglish* (Shinde) starring Sridevi as an Indian housewife named Shashi

Godbole. She is an entrepreneur, she makes 'laddu' a popular Indian sweet offered to God after prayer and distributed among the disciples. It is made and distributed as part of good ritual. Shashi is never respected by her husband and daughter because she cannot speak English. In one of the instances from the film which the researchers want to point out, when Shashi goes to her daughter, Sapna's school, there she feels nervous because she doesn't understand English language and she is unable to communicate in it. The nervousness is turned into humiliation when her daughter refused to introduce Shashi, as her mother, to her class teacher and batchmates. Sapna feels embarrassed of her mother because her mother cannot communicate in English. Shashi faces such humiliation several times in a day when her husband, Satish and children make fun of her attempts to communicate in English but she always takes it sportingly. Somewhere, deep inside her heart she feels inferior to stand in public because of her fragmented English. When the story moves ahead, Shashi is invited to USA for her niece's wedding, she is asked to join a month prior for the rituals and preparations. Her sister convinces Shashi's family to send her to USA alone. When Shashi reaches to the Manhattan City she is welcomed by her niece, her niece takes her to college campus so that she feels as a part of the family and which can make her feel better in new country but when her niece goes for her lectures, Shashi is left again in the room of aloofness. She goes to a cafe where the lady at the counter asks her for the order.

While ordering she feels very hesitant because she doesn't know English. The lady at the counter shouts at her and asks her to place the order quickly. Because of her weak communication skills she is unable to place the order and gets tormented. She runs out of the cafe as if she has seen a ghost. She feels humiliated again. In response to this incident, Shashi joins a spoken English class and learns English. After three weeks when her family joins her at Manhattan City, her daughter and husband again make fun of her by saying that how she must have survived in a foreign country without knowing English. At marriage ceremony when Shashi is asked to say something about the bride and advise her about marriage, before she could start speaking her husband announces that she doesn't know English. This time she takes the mike and delivers a good speech in English. She learns English not because she considers it superior language but just to make her family realize that English is just a language which anybody can learn. In the climax of the movie when Shashi and her family are going back to India, on the flight she asks the airhostess for Hindi newspaper. When the airhostess tells her they don't keep Hindi newspaper, Shashi replies that they should keep Hindi newspaper at least in the flights which are landing in India. This shows that Shashi has learnt English language but still she prefers using Hindi, her mother tongue. She doesn't take false pride in speaking and reading foreign language above her native language when she has an option.

*Hindi Medium* (Chaudhary) starring Irrfan Khan is another film in Bollywood that attacks on the obsession of Indian people to learn English language and make their children to study in English



medium schools. The film brilliantly highlights the lacunae in Indian education system and the corruption for taking admission at certain English medium schools. The film starts when Raj Batra (Irrfan Khan), wins the heart of his costumers at his boutique by his skill of flattery. His wife, Mita calls him and expresses intense desire to admit their daughter, Pia to one of the best English medium schools in Delhi. The film in a very comic manner attacks the high fee charged by these English medium schools. It also shows the deteriorating condition of municipality and corporation i.e. Government undertaken schools which teaches English in Native-tongue. The movie highlights the fanatic attitude of people for getting admitted at English medium schools. It dramatically shows the extent to which parents go to get their children study in English medium schools. When they go for admitting their daughter, at particular English medium school, they find that the schools give admission to the students whose parents can pay high donation to school's trust and not only that they see the life style and income of the parents.

Raj and Mita are trained to communicate in English and learn a false manner because according to them 'English' is not a language but 'a class'. They go to an extent that they shift their locality several times to fit in certain criteria for the admission of their daughter. Finally, they understand it is not the huge and posh buildings of the school and not even the medium of school that matters. What matters the most is the values that a child can learn anywhere. The film shows that at the end, Raj and Mita realise, their obsession to take admission of their daughter in English medium school is wrong and they finally take admission of their daughter at Hindi medium school where she will learn the values, morals and ethics in practice and not mere on paper. This film advocates the Japanese education system where most of the education is given in Native- tongue and development of values in students are more important than anything else, like learning any foreign language for instance, English. Only a few higher degree courses in Japan are programmed in English language. This film has been awarded as a best film and Irrfan Khan is awarded as a best actor male at Filmfare awards.

At last, for this paper the researchers studies Bollywood movie *Half Girlfriend* (Suri) which is based on the novel of renowned Post-millennial Indian author, Chetan Bhagat. The story revolves around Madhav Jha, a basketball player from Bihar who gets admitted in one of the prestigious institutions in Delhi. On the first day of college when Madhav is interviewed in English, he gets nervous because the committee asks him questions in English. Somehow, he manages to get admission under reservation for sports players. On the first day at basketball court he sees a girl, Riya Somani, she is young and beautiful, who plays basketball. Soon, they become friends and Riya asks Madhav to train her to ace her basketball skills. He agrees because he already falls for her. Madhav learns that Riya is from upper class society and she has a different lifestyle than him. Whenever she speaks in English with him, he feels disconnected but his unrequited love gets a hope

when she says that she can be his half-girlfriend. She invites him to the marriage anniversary celebration of her parents where Madhav feels like a bear in a cage because all of the people over there were communicating in English and for Madhav, it was difficult to construct even a sentence in English. Eventually, Riya parts her ways from Madhav but destiny unites them again and this time in Bihar, where Madhav wants to build hygienic toilets for girls at schools in rural Bihar. He knocks at several doors of government officials but he doesn't get help from anywhere. He comes to know from somewhere that Bill Gates Foundation is helping schools around the world to build clean and hygienic toilets for girls. Madhav feels it as the only chance when he can do something for the society but the problem is that the officers who are coming for the assessment understand English only and he is very weak to deliver it.

Somehow the fate plays its dice again and he meets Riya in Bihar. He tells her about his initiative and he needs her help in preparing a good speech in English language that he can deliver before the officials of Bill Gates Foundation. Riya agrees to help him and they prepare a speech in English language. While doing it, seeing the intentions and dedication of Madhav, Riya's heart starts lurking for Madhav. When the day arrives and Madhav had to deliver the speech in English and that to in front of such large audience, Madhav gets nervous and finally delivers his speech in Hindi. The officials from Bill Gates Foundation tell him, they are not making donations on the merit of speech and proficiency of English language but on intension and dedication. They grant the funds to the school.

From the above discussion on the films one can reach to a conclusion that English is not just a language in India but it is a class. It is also a measuring tool to evaluate the merit of a person, the researcher argues that it is completely wrong. This thought process is rooted in the minds of Indian people. The obsession of speaking in English is a typical mentality and mindset of Indians which is a sign of colonial construct that needs to be deconstructed by decolonizing mindset.

### **Conclusion:**

The above discussion can be concluded on the note that we need to maintain the equilibrium between the aboriginal language of India which is Hindi and the lingua franca English. It is a misconceive notion that knowing English language is the qualification for being educated. One must take pride on speaking and communicating in one's Native-tongue. English language is globally spoken language so it should be used to a certain extent but it must not become a status symbol and a parameter to judge anyone. We need to decolonize our minds and stop giving it the elevated status that too at the cost of sentiments and emotions of the people who find our native languages more comfortable and take pride in speaking them.

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