



The Impact of English language on different languages

Aanya Chahal

mypublishedpaper@gmail.com

Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Haryana

ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the impact of English on different languages, German, Hindi and French. It looks at how English has evolved from being a regional language confined to a small area to a lingua franca through colonial expansion and globalisation. This research shows that the impact of English is neither uniform nor superficial. This paper highlights how the English language influences each of these three languages differently based on different historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts. This paper demonstrates how English simultaneously opens a path for global opportunities, but at the same time presents a challenge to linguistic integrity and heritage.

Keywords: Language Erosion, Language Imperialism, Language Hybridization, Loanwords and Borrowing, Globalisation.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few centuries, English has developed from originally being a regional language in England to becoming the most influential means of communication globally. It has attained the status of a lingua franca. A lingua franca is a shared means of communication for people with different native languages. This status however, carries a heavy past of colonial power, dominance, and the erasure of other cultures.

With the rise of the British empire, which was eventually followed by America becoming an economic powerhouse, English was gradually consolidated as a global language, replacing various native languages. English has an important role in bridging cultural gaps, because most of the media and the internet uses it as a means of communication. But one must not forget the reason for this prevalence is tied to imperialistic roots. There is an overestimation of the purity of English and correct grammar and syntax structures. This overreliance on English glosses over the fact that it has evolved out of influences of multiple languages. This research paper aims to explore how the spread of English as a global language has reshaped other languages, particularly French, Hindi and German.

Each of the languages present a unique perspective of how English has intertwined itself with the local linguistic format of speech. French reflects a desire to maintain linguistic integrity and the unavoidable adaptations of English into regular linguistic patterns due to globalisation. The hybrid “hinglish”, a combination of Hindi and English, bears the mark of colonial rule. The legacy in colonial India, where the ability to speak and write English used to symbolize class, education, and power, still continues in today’s modern world. The allied occupation of west Germany, saw English gaining a strong foothold in daily German vocabulary. The large influx of American media had a definite impact on German youth. English was seen as the opposite to the nazi authoritarian past they were trying to leave behind, and gradually became the main language of communication in the modern world of technology and business, and embedded itself into the German vocabulary.

This topic is important because in today’s world, language is not simply a tool for communication, it has become the main mode of communication in the modern world of business and technology. The milestones of this research trace how English entered into the vocabulary of these languages- through colonialism in India, with resistance in France, and through post war spread of globalisation in Germany.

By examining these three languages, this paper seeks to uncover the influence English exerts on not only the vocabulary and grammar, but also in the way people express themselves, and how they perceive their own cultural identities. This paper seeks to explore how, while English opens doors to opportunity, and diversity, for some the fear of erasure of linguistic tradition looms in the back of their minds. This paper does not intend to justify or condemn this influence, it shows how each language has grown and adapted to the introduction of the English language into their traditional linguistic formats.

GERMAN

“One of the most influential studies on the impact of the English language on German grammar is Der Einfluss des Englischen auf das Deutsche: Grammatische Probleme ‘The Influence of English on German: Grammatical Problems’ by Broder Carstensen. Carstensen’s research of the newspaper articles revealed English interference in German grammar. He investigated many news magazines in the time period from 1945 until 1980. One of them was named Spiegel. He catalogued and elaborated on many grammatical constructions that appeared to be modelled after the English grammatical pattern.” (Ganić 21) Carstensen’s study shows how English started influencing even the structural parts of German society, not just the vocabulary. The study proves that the influence of English media had also affected how Germans thought and expressed themselves, and not just the language.

“A detailed look at the morphological grounds for the verbal inflection in German shows no variances in the formation of the grammar formation. German verbs were inflected as they are commonly inflected. In addition, the press language of Spiegel signals a regular pattern of the past participle formation of the English loan words.” (Ganić 22). Even with the rise of English as a global language and its influence, German grammar remained stable and applied its own linguistic rules. English loanwords have been so incorporated into the German language, that the English words are replacing the original German ones. These loanwords added new vocabulary, particularly in culture and technology.

“These words are considered to be German regular plural morphemes, whereas plural -s merely accounts for 4% of all plural endings in German, and this is the case only of unassimilated borrowings, onomatopoeic words, acronyms, pluralized names, eponyms and lexicalized phrases.” (Ganić 23). This shows that the “-s” plural appears only in specific cases, for example, when the word has been borrowed from another language but not fully adapted into German, when it is an acronym, a personal name, an eponym, or a phrase that has become fixed in usage. Therefore, we observe that the “-s” plural is not part of the standard German system, but is reserved for a certain limited class of words.

“To conclude, the language contact between England and Germany dates back to the fifth century. Following the Second World War, there was a significant influx of English linguistic elements into the German language. The massive transference of English elements continued until the present, and the language contact between Germany and England resulted in the borrowings at many different levels, such as the borrowing of sounds, lexical items and grammatical processes.” (Ganić 24). Most of the significant influence of English on German occurred after the end of the Second World War, when as part of the allied forces, the United States occupied West Germany. When this happened, English became increasingly common in everyday life, media, and culture. As a result, a large number of English words, and even grammatical structures entered into the German language. This process has continued into the present day, with German borrowing heavily from English in various spaces of life and communication. The global reach of English has become visible in the German linguistic culture, and the country’s population. Many of the younger Germans are now bilingual or at least fluent in English, which influences how they express themselves, their communication patterns, and how they engage in communication across different cultures. English loanwords in German have become so common that they are now a normal part of everyday German speech, sometimes even replacing native German terms. This shows how deeply English has embedded itself into German linguistic culture, reflecting broader cultural globalisation and the dominance of English as a lingua franca. “Language contact can influence all levels of language – spelling, pronunciation, morphology, syntax and pragmatics (Görlach and Busse 2002). However, as it has been observed, ‘the most common specific type of influence is the borrowing of words’ and ‘loanwords are easier to establish because they betray their origin directly’. However, in lexical borrowing, units of different size, from morphemes to sentences, can be affected.” (Ganic 2). In the 18th century English outreach became much more prevalent in European countries, like France, Germany. “During this period, England again became an important model for politics, this time with respect to democratic movements. Under the British influence, Germans adopted words such as *Demonstration*, *radikal* and *Imperialisms*. By the end of the century, English had gained such status that the language eventually challenged the long-standing position of French as the code of social prestige.” (Ganić 3) Germany was highly impacted by the globalisation of English, and English replaced French as the language of the rich and powerful.

HINDI

“There are a massive amount of English loans in Hindi, and for that, new English phonemes that do not exist in Hindi were introduced. Naturally, there was a need to reflect this foreign sound in Hindi spelling.” (Svobodová 183) These loanwords gave new vocabulary in both urban and rural areas, this led to the rise of Hinglish- a mix of Hindi and English that is “The use of English in its bilingual context in India is inextricably linked to social and cultural context. India’s long history of foreign rule has fostered what Clarence Maloney terms “the linguistic flight of the elite.” (Svobodová 14) Over the span of more than 400 years of the complex history of the English language in India, the importance, influence and distribution can be divided into five phases both from the chronological and from the sociolinguistic point of view. The use of English in India is deeply tied to the colonial background of the language in India. Due to the long period of British colonisation, and English being treated as the language of the ‘betters’, rather than the unsophisticated language of the barbarians, it gradually became associated with power, education, and higher social status—something Clarence Maloney describes as the “linguistic flight of the elite,” meaning that the upper classes increasingly turned to English for communication and prestige. This was because access to English during that period granted the natives the means to a better means of life rather than starvation and humiliation they were subject to under colonial rule.

Over the years, English in India has gone through various stages of development, but although its role in society has changed, it still continues to be seen as the language of the elite, and literate.

“From the syntactic point of view, the written mode of Hindi has been influenced by English because the whole system of punctuation marks has been adopted from the English writing system. In Hindi the punctuation marks were traditionally restricted to two vertical lines “II” termed virām, for marking the end of a paragraph, or a thought unit, and one vertical line “I” termed and ha virām, for a full stop. Unlike in English, no capital letters are used. Neither for proper nouns nor when the word is at the beginning of the sentence etc.” (Svobodová 14). This shows that initially Hindi only relied only on two marks: the “II” sign, which indicated the end of a paragraph or a complete thought, and the “I” sign, which functioned as a full stop. With English becoming the widespread mode of communication in the education system and in media, Hindi gradually adopted its punctuation system, including commas, question marks, quotation marks, etc. Unlike English, Hindi has never had capital letters in its script, so proper nouns or the starting of sentences are not marked with capital letters in the same way that they are in English.

“Hindi has had different phases, different sources and different influences which all contributed to the nature of this rich language which belongs to a vast family of Indo- European languages, particularly to its Indo-Aryan branch. Throughout the complex history and contacts with East Asians, Arabs, Persians and Europeans, Hindi has absorbed countless words from many languages, often totally integrating these borrowings into the core vocabulary. The most common loan words and influences came from the English language.” (Svobodová 24). Even after the influence of other languages on Hindi slowed, English prevailed, not only due to its colonial history, but also due to the globalisation of English as a language. While Hindi contains borrowings from many non-European languages, the most significant linguistic influence has been by English. Due to the historical, political, and socio-cultural effects caused by British rule, English has contributed heavily to Hindi’s lexicon.

“The history of English in India begins on December 31st 1600 when the East India Company (EIC) was granted an English Royal Charter to trade in the East Indies, as the subcontinent was then referred to. What marked the turning point (in favour of the English influence) was the decisive British victory over the Mughals at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Not only did this victory establish the EIC as a military as well as a commercial power but it was also a crucial point when English words started to be borrowed massively and the English influence upon Hindi started to be felt.” (Svobodová 27)

“We have seen, over the span of four hundred years, the English influence was established as a lingua franca among western-educated Indians, the language of press, magazines, administration, justice, technology, medicine, science and especially higher education. Subsequently, English was and still is virtually the first language for many educated Indians, and for many, who speak more than one language, English is the second one. The English influence on Indian society and culture can be divided into five chronological phases, the most important of which was the last one- The Globalisation Phase.” (Svobodová 37). While the functionality of using English as a language of communication has changed to a certain extent with the exit of colonial powers and development of India, the underlying undercurrent continues to persist, with English still being seen as the language of superiors. Anyone incapable of speaking it, or not upto the mark with even their accents are bound to be disparaged and disregarded in the professional world. In this phase of Globalisation of English, the influence of the language on modern Hindi and India has been the greatest, and can be seen in fields like science, IT technologies, advertising, sports, Indian film media, politics, fashion, and most importantly the language dialects and loanwords.

FRENCH

“Language borrowing occurs when terms and phrases in a language become part of a new language's lexicon. Most times, language development is necessitated by a lexical gap, and for new concepts and ideas not yet in use in the borrower language (Durkin, 2014). Words are borrowed from another language when one language takes words or expressions from another language and begins using them as part of its own vocabulary. This usually occurs because the language borrowing from another, does not already have a suitable word for a new object, idea, or concept. So, when they encounter something unfamiliar that their language doesn't have a word for, people adopt a term from another language. Over time, these borrowed words become a natural part of the language, like in the case for certain English words.

For French, intake of English terms of use have been significant, with most taking place in the later 20th century and spilling over into the 21st century. Not only is language borrowing prevalent in informal use, but even in use in the media, and it is through the media that most such terms gain access and become prevalent.” (Ashrafova 117). English words have gradually slipped into daily normal speech patterns of the French language. English words are appearing in more and more newspapers, television shows, advertisements, and digital and social media. Because people are exposed to English constantly through the media, and the borrowed words quickly become familiar and spread like wildfire, eventually becoming part of everyday French vocabulary. It is important to recognize this, because it demonstrates the power English has garnered as a global language, to infiltrate into even French, a language that is very deeply traditional and keen on maintaining language integrity and heritage. It also shows how English influences the way different languages change and develop over time. It also highlights how cultural influence spreads, through entertainment, media and technology, and communication. This helps us understand how debates around linguistic identity, preservation, and cultural influence arise in conservative societies like France.

The existence of English as a global language in France is also prevalent in its media and citizens. “Mass media, such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet, act as a catalyst for rapid dissemination of English loanwords. Media use English terms in a move to make them accessible to a larger group and to convey specific terms in a shorter and newer format. Media drives language change in a considerable way in that not only repeats but also molds its speakers' use of language, and in the process, accelerates acceptance of loanwords.” (Ashrafova 118). The media often uses English words to sound modern and reach a wider audience. When the media consistently repeats these English loanwords, and people start hearing them daily, these words eventually get adopted into the speech patterns of these people. This shows how media actively influences and in many cases accelerates or even unknowingly propagates the adoption of various loanwords into a language. It shows how the media is capable of influencing linguistic patterns and how English can casually enmesh itself into French vocabulary through consistent exposure.

“For a section of society, such borrowings stand for language development and an expression of globalisation, but for many, a threat to French language purity. There can be a significant range of variation in attitudes between groups in a community speaking French, conditioned, for example, by age, educational level, working environment, and contact with English.” (Ashrafova 117). English had an important impact on French media, with English loanwords replacing the French words and phrases. This suggests that the influence and impact English has on the French language, garners different reactions from different people. For some people, the adoption of English words into French vocabulary seems to be the natural progression under the effects of globalisation. For these people, borrowing vocabulary from English is not a big deal, and seems to serve only as a way of making the language more modern and relevant. However, others may view this increasing assimilation of English loanwords into French, as a threat to the integrity of the language. These people worry that too many English loanwords might erase the traditional nuances of the French vocabulary. Younger people who work in large corporations may be more comfortable with English loanwords, while older generations who value linguistic tradition more, will resist the changes to the French language.

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the impact of the English language on various different languages- focusing the research on three core languages - German, Hindi, and French. English was originally a minor regional language, but it has expanded into the world's most influential means of communication, due to the rise of the British Empire, American globalisation, and various other factors. The paper looks at how English integrated itself into the linguistic systems of these three languages, and how this influenced the cultural identities of the people, their communication patterns, the manner in which they express themselves, and social hierarchies having or not having the knowledge of English created in societies. This research depicts the influence of the English language on these three languages in particular.

The research shows how each language interacts with English in different ways depending on historical, political, or social context. In the case of Germany, the influence of English strengthened significantly after the Second World War, with the American occupation of west Germany, and the huge inflow of American media, news and information.

My research shows how English loanwords gradually inserted themselves into the native vocabularies, through media, entertainment, technology, etc. and eventually even influenced the grammatical structure of the languages. The spread of English language in Germany for most of the younger generations seemed to feel natural, while for the older generations, it separated them from the past Nazi Germany. In India, the use of English language is deeply tied to its colonial history, education, and upward social mobility it promised the natives. The English language created new social hierarchies based on how well the natives could speak their colonisers language. This paper shows how Hindi adopted a large enough amount of English loanwords to create a hybrid 'Hinglish' language as well as how the English punctuation and capitalization system completely reshaped the traditional punctuation systems in the language, forcing it to adapt a new system, completely changing how the written script functioned. The French society immensely values linguistic integrity and cultural identity, and the integration of English loanwords through various mediums, into their daily vocabulary, has generally not been seen with favour. The research shows that people are generally divided on the opinion of whether the integration of English into their native tongue has helped push their language forward, or contributed to eroding it, much like the colonial past and history of the language. This shows how English not only alters the daily linguistic vocabulary of the language, but also alters the very way in which they think and express themselves.

This research shows how English has become a global force- a lingua franca. Finally, this research shows that the impact of English is neither completely positive nor completely negative. It acts as a common medium of language, granting people the ability to access technological and medicinal advancements, information from across the globe, and opportunities to communicate with people from around the globe, but at the same time, it also affects the traditional linguistic patterns of speech of each of the three languages and may erode the depth and complexity of these languages.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ashrafova, Ilaha. "Crossing Boundaries: The Integration and Impact of English Loanwords in French Media." *Acta Globalis Humanitatis Et Linguarum*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2025, pp. 116-127.
- [2] Ashrafova, Ilaha. "The Language That Rules the World: What's Behind English's Global Power?" *Acta Globalis Humanitatis et Linguarum*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2025, p. 9.
- [3] Ganić, Mirela. "The Influence of English on German: A Morphosyntactic Analysis." 2015, p. 25, The-Influence-of-English-on-German%3A-A-Analysis-Gani%C4%87/180b4720fad6350fe7921fda71524ae0bb673afd.
- [4] Svobodová, Blanka. "The impact of English on modern Hindi." *FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA UNIVERZITY KARLOVY*, 2008, p.183,efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglefindmkaj/https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/15026/DPTX_2007_2_11210_ASZK10001_132282_0_59524.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.