Research Article

Death of English and the Language of the Internet: Mistakes and Errors

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ELT was introduced in the Western world in the 1970s, but it took another decade to reach India. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to the many problems ELT practitioners face in a linguistically and culturally diverse country like India. Emojis were the first language to emerge from the Internet. They evolved from the first emoticons, a blend of punctuation marks and other symbols. Emoticons have used cultural, ethnic, and gender cues to depict nearly every imaginable segment of our society. Internet has brought about a paradigm shift in human communication, expression, and human conscience. The sharp increase in the usage of emojis has made critics wonder about print-based literacy. Emojis are a popular choice among social-media platforms, facilitating a smoother interaction between intercultural speakers. This paper presents the finds of an error analysis conducted on the answercripts of the students of a management school. It is found that Students' inability to recognise or overlook a high number of faults in their work indicates a lack of concern for acceptable English use. Students' apparent disrespect for English language and usage was also attributed to their constant exposure to social media and other internet-based communication platforms.

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Introduction

On the political and national level, Indian economic reform in the 1990s rekindled interest in learning English in India. New job prospects in the Indian information technology-enabled services (ITES) industry have drawn young people to English to gain instant employment. As communication skills grew more in demand, various opportunities arose for reporters, translators, global professionals, and others. Students avidly sought tests such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System) to

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access western educational and job possibilities. English language instruction began to gain traction in traditional English (literary) departments at universities across the country. Prior ways of teaching English required a great deal of contextualisation for students to gain fundamental language skills (Dhanavel, 2012; Raimes, 1983).

English is taught as a second or foreign language all over the world. Social and economic variables determine the extent and level of time, exposure, and quality of language acquisition. In most situations, English is learned for professional or career goals. Despite these shortcomings and economic problems, many parents select English as a medium rather than a topic for their children (Jayadeva, 2018; Parameswari, 1993). According to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2006), "English is increasingly a question of political reaction to people's desires rather than an academic or feasibility problem." In government schools, English was commonly taught as a secondary language, and Indian ELT practitioners leaned on Western models and concepts. At the institutional level, curricular experimentation was challenging, but with the emphasis on English as a language of the "market," "business," and "global trade," institutional mechanisms were being revitalised (Chiswick & Miller, 2015: Lazaro & Medalla, 2004; Ku & Zussman, 2010).

The classic Grammar-Translation System (GMT) dominated the Indian ELT scene, and it still has ardent supporters who consented to add 'tasks' and 'activities' to contextualise the method. Despite its flaws, many ELT practitioners believe it is appropriate for underdeveloped nations like India (Rao, 2017). Later, a slew of new 'methods' emerged on the scene, spearheaded by Western experts, and Indian ELT practitioners experimented with them without claiming any method, strategy, or procedure as the definitive solution. ELT literature discusses a range of methodologies, including the Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, The Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Content-Based Instruction, and Task-Based Language Teaching (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Many of these strategies found their way into Indian classrooms via ELT enthusiasts, with varying degrees of success described in the literature; nevertheless, such codification of methods as part of language teaching history has been experimentally challenged by researchers (Hunter & Smith, 2012). Rather, a general agreement arose in India that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to all of the varied issues that ELT practitioners encounter in a linguistically and culturally diverse country like India. It has become increasingly clear that teaching English is to enable students to utilise the language for 'practical purposes' (Kalia, 2017; Sachdeva, 2018).

In India, ELT environments have altered over time, and modern socioeconomic circumstances have significantly influenced such transformations. The liberalisation of the Indian economy in the early 1990s allowed multinational corporations (MNCs) and global brands to enter Indian marketplaces. People from the new generation travelled more frequently to foreign nations for jobs and education. The need for communicative skills in English has begun to develop. The Internet also provided the Indian populace with access to and exposure to a broader range of media and entertainment content, including English television channels, soap operas, drama series, music, and infotainment programmes (Dua, 1998; Khorana, 2012; Islam & Roy, 2015; Malik, 2018). With the rise of over-the-top (OTT) media platforms and more streaming movies on the Internet, the dynamics of English language use were rapidly shifting (Singh, 2019; Venkatasubramanian, 2018).

Since the 1960s, learners' requirements have been increasingly recognised as a beginning point for establishing language teaching techniques. A needs analysis was critical in curriculum creation, particularly for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners in professional or vocational institutions (Phan, 2005). The ESP teachers were tasked with teaching their students how to utilise English in their professional and academic sectors, and they were eager to determine the students' language requirements (Bloor, 1998; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Munby, 1978; West, 1994; Widdowson, 1998). ESP arrived in India in the late 1980s because of a British Council initiative at Anna University (1988) that taught Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to teachers who had spent a year training overseas. When they returned, they introduced an ESP-oriented textbook (Anna University, 2006), which is now used as a mandated textbook in various Indian universities (e.g. Tezpur University). The ESP project at Anna University, on the other hand, had "little success," and courses in "communication skills" were established to assist learners in finding jobs (Dhanavel, 2017).

The 'employability' of graduates drew the attention of policymakers and educational planners in the nation due to various socioeconomic variables that rapidly affected every element of life in India. According to industry organisations such as the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), barely one-quarter of the country's information technology graduates are prepared for work (Julka & Mishra, 2011). The situation worsened when the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst & Young (EY) announced in 2016 that nine out of ten MBA graduates are unemployed (FICCI & EY, 2016). According to the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM), 93 per cent of MBA graduates are unemployed in India

(Chakrabarty, 2016). In India, the job market emphasises soft and higher cognitive abilities such as communication and negotiating.

Johnson (1989) claimed that needs analysis should be used while developing or constructing a curriculum. The course material and sequencing would also play an important part in simulating real-world' scenarios in classrooms to give effective exercise-based education. Curriculum creation was anticipated to be a process that responds to the needs of learners while also attempting to enhance the learning process by identifying flaws and requirements. The requirements analysis supplied curriculum creators with information about the learner's previous history and prospective language course demands (Johnson, 1989; Nation & Macalister, 2010). The industry demands, learners' interests in gaining a 'work,' government rules, and rising interest in professional colleges and institutions providing maximum campus placements to graduates prompted English teachers to shift their focus to 'communication' (Niranjana, 2015).

In India, communicative language instruction (CLT) supplanted the previous Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in the 1980s. It arrived late, but in the absence of sufficient planning, teacher training, unrealistic teacher-student ratio, and general uncertainty about the methodology, many institutions' 'communicative' classrooms resembled the conventional 'talk-chalk' situation (Gupta, 2004). It appears that the approach received the most emphasis, with the other social, intellectual, and pedagogical aspects being overlooked. As with any educational programme, "the learning context" and "learner factors" are perhaps more significant in CLT classrooms (Bax, 2003a, 2003b). The scenario began to change with the introduction of the Internet, globalisation, and the country's drive towards a digital revolution with high-speed connection at a low cost. Learners are increasingly keener to 'connect' in English, not just for employment opportunities but also social acceptance in today's culture. Some researchers believe that the first obstacles experienced by CLT practitioners were blessings in disguise since, between the late 1980s and the 2010s, instructors were exposed to more specifics about the approaches, and learning settings were improved (Gupta, 2004). Harmer (2003) disagrees with the concept that methods should take a back seat and learning contexts should be the primary emphasis, arguing that both learning contexts and technique may work in tandem to guarantee the accomplishment of learning goals.

Communication-Oriented Language Teaching

For a long time, language acquisition was regarded as knowing grammatical rules and using them to 'translate' expressions from the original language to the target language. In India, methodological breakthroughs and experiments were sluggish to emerge. New approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) were introduced in the West in the 1970s, but it took another decade for them to reach India. It took another two decades and an unwavering push from the country's economic liberalisation and the internationalisation of the world's economies for the ELT scenario to shift about 2000. (Gupta, 2005). Although CLT came to India in the 1980s, the initial experience was not promising, and it only acquired traction after the mid-1990s. Different techniques and methodologies were tested under the wide tent of 'communicative approaches' in India, and CLT became a set of general concepts applied to ELT in various ways (Gupta, 2005; Richards & Rogers, 2002).

As the twenty-first century enters its second decade, scholars worldwide are re-examining CLT methodologies and approaches. Professor William Littlewood launched a discussion debate on the lack of a specific definition of CLT technique or strategy and how diverse versions of the 'communicative approach' were adopted in different nations (2013). As more individuals became interested in using English as a 'lingua franca,' innovative methodologies such as task-based language instruction (CBLT) gained prominence (Costa, 2019; Kachru, Sirsa & Redford, 2013). Researchers questioned if ELT approaches could be the same internationally or whether local cultures, settings, and requirements should be considered (Bhat, 2001; Kachru, 1994, 1995; Sridhar, 1994). An intriguing corpus-based qualitative study discovered that, while the word "communicative" was most frequently used as a core idea in the literature published in ELT Journal (Oxford University Press) between 1958 and 1986, it became a qualifier for other words like "competence," "approach," and "activities" during the later part (1981-1986) of the study period (Hunter & Smith, 2012). The authors also highlighted two major findings from the study: (a) even though 'the learner' was prominent in the CLT discourse, the learners were not linked to the discussion of 'communicativeness', and (b) words like 'tasks' or 'activities' appeared in the CLT literature more frequently in the later years (1981-1986) than in the earlier years. Hunter and Smith (2012) agreed with CLT practitioners that CLT was an 'approach' rather than a strictly defined 'method,' that it incorporated a diverse set of procedures and classroom implementation strategies, and that it opposed any attempt to establish a 'standard' or 'classical' version of CLT.

Against this backdrop, Littlewood (2013) emphasised CLT's "indefinability" and the vast range of what it means to diverse individuals, countries, and settings. He refuted Bax's (2003a, 2003b) 'end of CLT' argument by emphasising the 'nature' of CLT as a broad word encompassing a wide range of techniques, processes, and behaviours in many nations. Teachers and academics from many nations have noted conceptual discrepancies, misunderstandings, and disputes surrounding CLT (Gudepu, 2013; Ho & Wong, 2004; Takal & Ibrahim, 2019).

Because of the 'indefinability' of CLT and the many approaches taken by language instructors, Littlewood proposed a new name for 'communication-oriented language learning' (COLT) that emphasised 'communication' and teacher flexibility in pedagogy (2004).

There seems to be a growing consensus among ELT instructors and scholars in India and overseas that, after years of sifting through various 'methods,' various pedagogical tactics and instruments are now at their disposal. Instead of a top-down, watertight 'method,' instructors now have the freedom to develop their ways in response to the needs of their unique teaching-learning settings (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Gupta, 2004, 2005; Kalia, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006; Littlewood, 2011; Sachdeva, 2018). Teachers may now take charge of the pedagogy, techniques, and practises they want to apply and develop their own "theory of practice" (Chen at el., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Senior, 2006a, 2006b; Stofflert & Stoddart, 1994).

English and the Internet

It is euphorically said: "What are the two biggest things online? Selfies and emojis (Baron, 2012). Something strange happened in 2015. The Oxford dictionary chose its *word of the year*- an emoji, "a face with tears of joy." One of the most prestigious dictionaries in the world had not chosen a word to be tagged as the year's word. Instead, it chose a pictogram and crowned it the word of the year; strange enough; this choice evoked no protest within the academic circle.

> "There were other strong contenders from a range of fields...but [Face with Tears of Joy] was chosen as the 'word' that best reflected the ethos, mood, and preoccupations of 2015...Emojis are no longer the preserve of texting teens," the statement said. "Instead, they have been embraced as a nuanced form of expression, which can cross language barriers." (Oxford Dictionary, 2015)

The Internet has brought about a veritable paradigm shift in human communication, human expression, and human conscience. The internet age keeps demanding novelty in all areas of language usage, writing practices, and the way we express ourselves, and it has led to inevitable changes in literacy. The sharp increase in the usage of emojis has made critics wonder about the decline of print-based literacy. It has led to the increased usage of something not bigger than a letter of the alphabet but encapsulated with wider emotions. Something that has eased the scope of global communication, adding an extra level of language semantic and communication intelligibility amongst the circles that do not share the same language. Emojis are a popular choice among social-media platforms, facilitating a smoother interaction between intercultural speakers who share no cultural or linguistic homogeneity.

Shigetaka Kurita, a Japanese mobile designer, gifted the world with emojis in 1999. Kurita, the father of emojis, invented them in pixelated packed images of 180 emojis to be used in the cell phone. There has been no looking back. Statistics have revealed the popularity of these emojis and how they have become a nuanced form of expression that can cross all language barriers. Emojis have turned most significant in revealing emotions. The fluidity of meaning and the fact that they do not come with a dictionary proved more advantageous for its user. The right and the wrong of an emoji lie within the scope and context of its usage. The word 'emoji' has been adapted from the Japanese; e- means picture, and moji stands for letter or character, hence 'picture word.' The Internet now encourages different modes of writing, both visual and audio, to be utilised in tandem with the alphabetic and non-alphabetic script. Emojis have led to a new form of a blended writing system, wherein the preconstructed, standardised pictorial writing induces a universally usable artificial writing code. Emojis have been intentionally constructed, unlike the traditional writing systems that have naturally emerged. They have not resulted from a historical linguistic or cultural influence. Instead, they are an evolving contextual tendency of socio-cultural and technological usage.

Fred Benenson, who translated and experimented with the language of the famous American classic Moby Dick, is trying to turn emojis into a bonafide language (Bourdieu, 1999). Benenson intends to design software that can deliver a word-by-word translation of English sentences in emoji language (Beneson, 2015). His translation project (Wang, 2015) is tailored along the lines of Google's High-powered translation engine, first gathering texts in English and emoji produced by human translators; then running those texts through a machine-learning algorithm, which searches the two data sets for patterns; then waiting and watching as the algorithm spits out a synthesised, codified grammar.

The debate continues. Arika Okrent, a linguist who authored *In the Land of Invented Languages (2009)*, finds Benenson's initiative absurd. She readily accepts emojis' overpowering influence in daily life but considering them as capable languages are futile. She points out the fundamental intricacies and the semantic chaos inherent to the realisation of emojis. We still cannot agree with the meanings of several emojis. It is an extremely difficult task to convey abstract emotions and sentences with past-perfect tense through emojis. A lack of pattern or fixed algorithm in emojis will make it impossible for the machine to detect the pattern for semantic deliverance in translation; hence emojis cannot be learned as a machine language.

Moreover, emojis possess unique characteristics and have both pictographic and logographic tendencies. They can represent objects as well as replace words. Currently, the world has no such pictorial languages dependent on images alone. The idea of image-based languages is not new. Charles Bliss once aimed to devise a global pictorial language named Blissymbol to promote intercultural exchanges. Blissymbolic was proposed as an alternative to the vagaries and variabilities of phonetic writing systems. Despite the easy-to-deduce images of the proposed language, he failed to establish the foundations. Years after the first proposal by Bliss, emojis have a different momentum around them. If not in print literacy, digital literacy is heavily laden with emojis. The increased usage of emojis is what propels Benenson to consider the emoji lingua as the road ahead. Early writings were essentially pictographic. They later emerged in various logographic, ideographic, or alphabetic systems. Marshall Mc Luhan (1962) designated the shift from pictography to alphabetic writing as the first true cognitive paradigm shift in human history, embarking on the migration of humans from a tribal society into an interactive civilisation. This migration marked the beginning of written transactions and documents that would serve as the basis of all future correspondences and keep a record of all that was worth recording. Emojis could bring about a second paradigm shift, characterised by amalgamated writing, including pictures and alphabets. This full-fledged image-based, picture-phonetic hybridisation of language will lead to the beginnings of a new civilisation with a uniform and awakened consciousness for visual perception. Or the trend might perish. Emojis could be a temporary swelling up of expression on a digital interface, a fad dependent on the new generation of users, social media and popular culture and technology and devices. They would become more decorative than substantial, providing amusement and enjoyment but not classifying into a system of order or seriousness.

The post-2015 period witnessed a massive rise in the frequency, extent, and domain of emoji use. It was almost thrice more than in previous years. Several new emojis had flooded with such a pace that it felt like modern society urgently incorporated emojis within the communicating spaces. We even celebrate world emoji day to honour these pictograms on 17th July. The human picture writing instinct is largely responsible for popularising the comfort that emojis have rendered to modern-day communication. Pictographic writing precedes all other forms of writing; hence the affinity toward pictures, images and visuals are instilled within the human DNA (Dutton, 2010). A child begins their journey of learning to write a language through scribbling images or roughly doodling.

In the internet age, writing has gained mass popularity. The construct of technology and social media platforms has invariably made writing the most sought-after means of communication. Both synchronous and asynchronous interactions take place in a digital space. In an asynchronous form of communication, the receiver may or may not be aware of the messages they receive. Hence, they may or may not immediately reply to these emails, blogs, texts or comments. In the synchronous digital communication mode, the receiver is aware and active during the message exchange. It could be a social media chat, ongoing texting, chain emails, etc. The synchronous form of digital communication requires rapid writing. A pace between the two sides needs to be maintained; hence, a new type of literacy and communicative model must be implemented according to modern-day inertia and technological demands.

There is no single language on the Internet. There is no single homogeneous community over the Internet. The language and users on the Internet constantly keep evolving and changing. While reasons and contexts for the emergence, evolution and popularity of emojis continue to be the topic of discussion amongst linguists, one can easily assert that their identity lies beyond the realms of millennial façade. Emojis are the first language born over the Internet. They have added a tone of positivity and colour to the otherwise flat textual exchanges on social media. Emojis are for everyone, and one cannot restrict their consumption to a particular generation or age group of its users. The emoji lexicon keeps evolving across culture, digital space, screen and time. They spring from the early emoticons, a combination of punctuation marks and other symbols. One could make combinations of alphanumeric and symbolic characters to express emotions that might paint a lighter tone. The journey has been long, from characters that combined to make some sense, - **;) to** images and faces that shaped a better semantics 😊 **.** Colours, animation and motion have been further added to bring more life, vigour and meaning into these emojis. The vocabulary for the emojis keeps expanding as

features, activities, faces, and several other components are constantly added. The Unicode Consortium adds a new emoji with every software or application update on iOS and Android. This update can include a range of additions, both new and existing modifications. For example, some of the recent updates on emojis include- adding skin tones, adding cultural symbols like an amulet or a moonstone, adding personas like women clad in hijab or a woman rocking the cradle, several gender-neutral roles, and cultural food and vegetation have recently made it to the emoji lexicon. Most recently, these emojis include signs used by deaf people. These updates are fundamental to progress, and emojis have considered cultural, racial, and gender leverage to represent almost all the plausible sections of our society. The Unicode adds emojis through considerations and suggestions. Anyone is free to propose an emoji, just stating its proper meaning, context, and use. The direction in which emojis continue to accelerate is satisfactory. One can counter the blame on the younger generation regarding how they ran the language using emoticons. Research conducted at Coventry University, UK (Waldron et al., 2016) concluded a positive association between heavy usage of emoticons and acronyms and school literacy.

The notion of the visually rich language is nothing new for humankind. Pictographic hieroglyphs and Akkadian cuneiform inscriptions are the earliest forms of writing we have cherished as the origin of our language. Our origins smother the desire and the instinct for an image-based language again.

Vladimir Nabokov once stated, in one of his interviews with the New York Times in 1969 said: "I often think there should exist a special typographical sign for a smile [...] a supine round bracket" (2019). Years later, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is a growing stream of linguistics, infused with acronyms, emoticons and emojis at the forefront. Tyler Schnoebelen (2012), who wrote his doctoral thesis on emoji, claims: "It's not a story of simplicity. It's a story of enrichment."

Emoticons are not simply representations of internal emotional states. They are more interactive, positioning authors and audiences around propositions. The meaning of a given emoticon goes beyond its effective stance. Linguist Gretchen Mc Culloch (2020), the author of *Because Internet: Understanding the New Rules of Language* and co-host of the podcast *Lingthusiasm*, says:

> "Language is humanity's most spectacular open-source project... "Just as we find things online by following links from one place to another, language spreads and disseminates through our conversations and interactions."

The Effect of the Internet on English Language Skills

Examining their interview transcripts gave me a wide understanding of the lived experiences of students and instructors in English medium schools. The previous sections discuss some topics and sub-themes that developed from the process. Following the mix-method approach, I sought to triangulate these experiences with another data set, namely about the pupils' English language ability. It was a restricted exercise as an iterative procedure to educate and assist my subsequent phenomenological interviews. I continued with a qualitative approach and did a descriptive study, concentrating on the flaws in sentences written by English medium school children.

I especially investigated the problems and inaccuracies I discovered in the written English of postgraduate students enrolled in a professional programme. I can access 459 response scripts from students enrolled in my institute's Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme (IIM Kashipur). Some of the 'top' pupils were chosen through an all-India entrance test called the Common Admission Test (CAT), which includes verbal and reading comprehension components (VARC). The students have at least 15 years of writing experience in English because they all attended English medium schools throughout their education, and their minimum eligibility to appear in CAT was graduation (10+2+3 years system) with at least 50% marks or equivalent Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in at the graduation level.

I made a list of all the 'English medium' students in the first and second years of the MBA and then chose 50 at random (out of 112). I obtained the end-of-term test answer scripts of these 50 Business Communication students, who were instructed to 'write' responses to a communication issue in response to two descriptive questions. According to study ethics, the names, roll numbers, and other identifying indicators were redacted in photocopies of the answer scripts and handed to five Business Communication regular faculty members affiliated with IIM Kashipur. A five-hour focused group discussion was held, with each faculty member getting one hour to analyse the sorts of faults they saw in the scripts and debate the likely causes of these issues. I adopted Cordar's (1967, 1973) theoretical difference between mistakes that are "accidental" ("slip of the pen") and errors that are "systematic" and diagnostic of second language learning. He summarises this distinction as follows:

> "Mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning. However, the problem of determining what a learner's mistake is and what a learner's error is one of

some difficulty and involves a much more sophisticated study and analysis of errors than is usually accorded them.

A learner's errors, then, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e. has learned) at a particular point in the course (and it must be repeated that he is using some system, although it is not yet the right system)." (Cordar,1967:167)

To exclude "mistakes" from my analysis, I handed the answer scripts to the students during the post-evaluation consultation process. I requested them to check their work and correct any errors. The 'corrections' that were made were documented, and I classified them as mistakes,' while the other mistakes (unidentified by the students) were classified as 'errors.' Many scholars have followed this technique effectively in the past (Selinker & Gass, 1994; Mohammed, 2015; Younes & Albalawi, 2015; Hoque, Alam, & Ahmed, 2020). Now I'll give the results of this activity.

I discovered that the kids could only detect a few errors using numbers, connectors, spellings, vocabulary, articles, and punctuation marks. However, numerous comparable faults were left uncorrected, and in many cases, the student committed similar mistakes in many places. These were mistakes, in my opinion. I compared the students' reviews to the problems mentioned by the faculty. I discovered a pattern where these errors may be classified into seven broad groups, as shown in Table 1 below:

Sl	Type of Error	No of Participants Making the Error	Percentage of Participants
1	Verb Tense inconsistency	43	86%
2	Improper use of abbreviations	34	68%
3	Wrong connectors	21	42%
4	Subject-verb disagreement	18	36%
5	Wrong spellings	17	34%
6	Use of informal Internet lingo	14	28%
7	Wrong punctuation	6	12%

Table 1. Errors in Written English of MBA Students

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The table shows that the most faults (86 per cent) were detected in the non-alignment of verbs and tense within a sentence. When writing about what happened in the past and their reactions to the past 'event,' the students frequently lost the word temporality since executives frequently need to handle an issue coming from company operations. Following that was improper use of abbreviations (68 per cent), in which students used terms such as BTW (by the way), IMO (in my opinion), 'whn' (for when), or any other management jargon such as 'ops' (for operations), and 'ad' (for advertisement) in their writing and did not even notice them during the review.

Then there were three areas of mistake that stood out in pupils' writing. They frequently lost sight of narrative by repeating connectors such as "and," "because," "in addition," "moreover," "further," "although," "nevertheless," and "another" inside the same sentence or paragraphs. These mistakes (42 per cent) often happened when students attempted to extend a point in their writing or hurriedly added another argument within a paragraph at the last minute without any logical relation to the topic phrase. Then there were subject-verb agreement (SVA) errors (36%) in students' writing, showing a succession of faults in notional agreement and proximity, number, person, subject, and coordinated subject (see Cordar, 1967). One-third of the pupils (34%) had significant spelling problems, owing to transliteration or shortening of terms on social networking platforms. Another concern was the usage of internet jargon in the answer scripts (28 per cent). Another form of inaccuracy in student writing was connected to punctuation (12%), where they utilised capitalisation and commas interchangeably. Aside from this, I disregarded several small inaccuracies (less than 10% of the total) since I needed to discover only important problems that would guide my next round of interviews with the students.

In the second round, I focused on the detected flaws when interviewing student and instructor participants from English medium schools. Even though they had all attended English medium schools and studied English for more than 12 years, most of them could not identify the faults when I showed them the faculty-marked answer scripts. Most believe this is how they 'speak,' 'use,' or 'communicate' in English. Many of them thought they had 'seen' comparable statements in some written form elsewhere and that such sentences were 'OK' with them. Surprisingly, many used words like "meaning," "clear," and "understandable" to excuse the type of phrases they employed in their responses. It suggests a significant link to their years of 'using' comparable phrase structures in school and college. Though they remembered their professors 'correcting' similar faults during their school days, they attributed the 'deterioration' in their writing to 'lack of practice' and 'forgetting the grammar norms.' They stressed that it was 'better' in school when professors 'corrected' their

writing, but in college (five years), they 'lost track' of the language 'rules.' In the words of a student (identified with anonymous code SP):

> "Because of our constant engagement with social media, we have developed a way of communicating in English that often did not follow the grammatical rules. As we carry on our daily interactions rather smoothly without any problem in understanding each other, this kind of writing seems to be fine with me." (SP01)

Teachers appeared to endorse a similar rationale for the numerous faults in the pupils' written English samples. They also believed that pupils had developed an apparent indifference towards the English language and its use because of their constant exposure to social media and other social interaction platforms via the Internet. They are occasionally annoyed by the situation, but they are unable to change it due to the limitations of teaching grammar at the college level. The emphasis seems to shift away from strict adherence to grammatical rules and toward domain expertise, with students more concerned about getting the 'subject basics' accurate than using acceptable English. Students appeared to have developed a practice of 'communicating' the content of their subject answers in test scripts. The teachers suspected this was a 'side effect' of the English medium school focusing on 'speaking' or 'communicating' in English 'anyway' to provide 'client satisfaction' to parents who wanted to see their children speak English well. According to a teacher ((identified with anonymous code TP):

> "I believe that the overemphasis on having students talk and communicate their thoughts by putting words together in a phrase and leaving it up to the listener to comprehend them in a certain context has resulted in this predicament." Students appear to have lost sight of the distinction between casual discussions in everyday interactions, the fast messages they send on social media, and the need for grammatically sound and acceptable English in their academic work." (TP05)

> "I think the excessive focus on making the student speak and convey their thoughts by putting words together in a sentence and leaving it to the listener to decipher in a particular context has led to this situation. Students seem to have forgotten the difference between informal chats in daily conversations, the quick messages they exchange on social media and the importance of grammatically correct and acceptable English in their academic writing. (TP05)." (TP05)

Students from English medium schools with communicative English practise, along with the increased use of social media and Internet platforms, appear to have acquired a callous attitude toward traditional academic writing that adheres to the basic conventions of the language. The vast number of faults that students did not recognise (or ignored) and their comments during the interviews only show a casual attitude toward writing perfect English at the college level (that too in a postgraduate programme like MBA). The fact that their vocabulary and comprehension abilities were rigorously tested on the admission test (CAT), but they still reflect a pattern of errors, as discovered in my study, only strengthens the assumption that English medium schools did not provide them with a holistic language learning environment and only justified their 'brand' that promised to make the children' speak' in English. Our data analysis of the interview transcripts strongly confirmed this hypothesis. The following is a direct quote from a teacher:

> Over the decades, the English medium schools in our country have introduced a new cultural dimension in which the medium of instruction has become a cultural marker. The culture of speaking various English languages mixed with local words and forming even unacceptable sentences in English while speaking has long been part of that new culture. Unfortunately, we must suffer now to read their painfully contrived sentences in assignments, group work and examinations. I can only say, although Biblically - forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. (TP09)

I have not discovered anyone who openly denies the contribution of English medium schools or the benefits of the Internet. Most participants talked positively of their alma mater and credited their institutions for any English they learned. They took responsibility for their mistakes in writing and, in some cases, turned the attention to their excessive use of social media and the Internet. It is believed that the pupils were more concerned with the laws of Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, or Instagram than with the English language norms. They now believe that the language of casual talks, word constructions, abbreviations, and sentence reduction without prepositions, connectors, articles, and so on is the 'new normal.' The distinction between informal or casual discourse and rigorous academic writing appears to be blurring fast. In my research, I discovered that the precipitants - students and instructors - believed that the exceptional rise of English medium schools was partly to blame for this impression among students.

Conclusion

India generally acknowledges English as a pathway to higher education and better job possibilities. Since English has become a global language and an indicator of economic prosperity, its total importance has grown. On the other hand, English teachers at schools and colleges are dissatisfied. According to this study, "value for money" is not the same for everyone. The credentials and salary of a school's instructors determine its reputation. The level of English education delivered in so-called "English medium" schools is one of the most serious problems.

Because of their desire for English-medium schools, many pre-schoolers from government schools in rural India transferred to neighbouring English-medium schools.

It appears that private English-medium schools have established an exaggerated 'image.' Most poll respondents considered English-medium schools a step toward their goals of upward social mobility. The development of franchisees in English language instruction in the United States is "democratising" an elite commodity.

The 'professional' ambitions of Indians and their emphasis on their ability to speak successfully in English produce a culturally-based brand image centred on English competence. Consumers of English-medium schools are the ones who create and sustain these institutions' brand perceptions. I could access 459 student answer scripts for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme at IIM Kashipur. These are the "best" students chosen through a challenging all-India admission test known as the Common Admission Test (CAT). Errors may be inadvertent or symptomatic of the learning process of a second language. However, such blunders show learners' comprehension of the language's grammatical structure.

This class made seven serious errors: inconsistent verb tense, inappropriate abbreviations, wrong connectors, subject-verb conflict, and erroneous punctuation. The pupils' failure to recognise or ignore many flaws in their writing demonstrates a lack of care for proper English use. Even though the entrance exam (CAT) measured their language and comprehension abilities, they exhibited a pattern of errors. Their instructors had 'fixed' similar errors during their school years, but the loss in writing was due to 'lack of practice and forgetting grammatical norms. The students' apparent disdain for the English language and its usage was also linked to their continual exposure to social media and other internet-based communication platforms. With communicative English practises and the rising usage

of social media and Internet platforms, students from English-medium schools have surely developed a callous attitude toward traditional academic writing that adheres to the language's essential norms.

Even though their vocabulary and comprehension were extensively tested on the CAT, they still show a pattern of errors, proving that English medium schools did not provide them with a holistic language learning environment and merely justified their 'brand' that promised to make the children 'speak in English,' as I discovered in my research. My findings demonstrated that both students and instructors believed that the fast expansion of English-medium schools was a role in this shift in student opinions.

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