

ISSN: 0976-8165

IMPACT FACTOR 7.86

THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN
ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Peer-Reviewed eJournal

VOL.14 ISSUE 5 OCTOBER 2023

14 Years of Open Access

Editor-in-Chief
Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Managing Editor
Dr. Madhuri Bite

www.the-criterion.com

AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Decolonization of Language and Mind: The Legacy of 'Toasted English' and the Emergence of "Minglish"

Imran Ahmad Sheikh

Post-Graduate Scholar,
Department of English,
Central University of Jammu, India.

Khushi

Post-Graduate Scholar,
Department of English,
Central University of Jammu, India.

&

Koudinna Kumar Karki

Post-Graduate Scholar,
Department of English,
Central University of Jammu, India.

Article History: Submitted-03/10/2023, Revised-14/10/2023, Accepted-25/10/2023, Published-31/10/2023.

Abstract:

The paper probes into the R.K. Narayan's essay "Toasted English" that delves into the intricate web of linguistic evolution, adaptation, and cognitive colonization within the realms of American and British English. It scrutinizes the subtle nuances and connotations of language choices, weaving them into a narrative that explores the enduring impact of colonial legacies on the psyche of both colonizers and the colonized. At its core, "Toasted English" confronts the idea of cognitive colonization, deftly illustrating how language can serve as a potent tool in perpetuating hierarchies of power and privilege. The title itself, with its implicit comparison between British and American English, sets the stage for a deeper exploration of linguistic and cultural dynamics. Through the metaphor of "toasting," the essay unveils a transformative process, where language, like bread in the oven, undergoes subtle alterations while retaining its essential identity. This linguistic metamorphosis, from the formality of British English to the pragmatism of American English, mirrors a broader narrative of cultural and cognitive decolonization. The essay underscores how American English liberates itself from the constraints of British linguistic traditions, embracing a direct and efficient communication style. This linguistic divergence reflects a shift from colonial subjugation to independence. The meticulous analysis of words like "Check" and "Fabulous" reveals the adaptability and expansiveness of American English, mirroring the multifaceted nature of American society. In

contrast, the persistence of colonial-era linguistic conventions in Indian English serves as a reminder of the enduring influence of colonialism on the Indian mind. R.K. Narayan also champions the idea of a "Bharat brand of English," advocating for a linguistic adaptation that respects global standards while embracing India's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. This endeavour represents a significant step in the decolonization of the Indian mind, as it seeks to redefine the role of English in shaping India's identity and expression. The essay concludes by introducing the term "Minglish," symbolizing the dynamic fusion of languages and cultures in India and around the world. Minglish celebrates the resilience of languages and their capacity to evolve, challenging notions of linguistic hierarchy. It stands as a testament to the vibrancy of linguistic diversity within the global English family.

Keywords: Keywords: Cognitive Colonisation, Toasted English, Linguistic Decolonisation, American English, Cultural Identity, And Minglish.

Introduction

The essay titled "Toasted English" delves into the complex interplay of language, culture, and colonization, offering profound insights into how linguistic evolution and adaptation are intrinsically linked to cognitive colonization. The premise of the essay revolves around the subtle manipulation of language to perpetuate hierarchies and perceptions, particularly between British and American English. It underscores the enduring legacy of colonialism in shaping linguistic identities and the ongoing process of decolonization, both within and beyond the realm of language. Methodologically, the essay employs a multi-dimensional approach to explore these themes. It begins by dissecting the title "Toasted English" as a metaphorical microcosm of cognitive colonization, highlighting the use of language to reinforce power dynamics. The analysis then extends to various facets of American English, such as linguistic adaptation and expansion, cultural assertiveness, and the evolution of linguistic nuances. Each aspect serves as a lens through which the broader theme of cognitive colonization is examined.

R.K. Narayan, the Indian writer at the heart of the essay's analysis, provides a unique perspective on colonization by exploring its manifestations in both India and America. His ambivalence towards the English language and his quest for a distinct "Bharat brand of English" underscore the multifaceted nature of linguistic decolonization. Furthermore, the term "Minglish" is introduced to encapsulate the global phenomenon of linguistic blending and adaptation. Minglish signifies the dynamic and harmonious coexistence of languages and

cultures, challenging traditional notions of linguistic hierarchy. This methodological innovation invites readers to consider the resilience and adaptability of languages in the face of colonization and the intricate interplay of linguistic diversity within the global English family.

Discussion

The essay titled "Toasted English" introduces a captivating premise that warrants closer examination. It serves as a prime exemplar of cognitive colonisation, as it artfully shapes the perception of the relationship between British and American English, subtly relegating the latter to an unfavourable status while exalting the former. Central to this title is the term "toasted," a word choice that conspicuously conveys the notion that American English occupies a subaltern position compared to its British counterpart. This portrayal, emblematic of a recurring theme in colonial discourse, insinuates that the language of the colonised is intrinsically lacking or deficient.

Moreover, the title insinuates a derivative connection between American and British English, implying that the former is a mere replica of the latter. However, this contention oversimplifies the historical and linguistic realities of American English, which has evolved independently, mirroring the unique cultural and historical tapestry of the United States and absorbing linguistic influences from various sources, including Spanish and French.

Importantly, the titular narrative perpetuates the myth that American English carries less legitimacy and prestige compared to British English. By framing the relationship in hierarchical terms, with British English at the zenith and American English at the nadir, also reinforces a sense of linguistic subordination.

It is crucial to acknowledge the context in which the R K Narayan of this essay, R.K. Narayan, an Indian writer, operates. Narayan explores the colonisation of English in both India and America, offering an intricate perspective. His ambivalence towards the English language is palpable; he is both drawn to and repelled by it, a sentiment that resonates with the broader theme of cognitive colonisation explored in his work.

In the inaugural passage of the essay, the phrase 'Toasted English' emerges as a metaphorical microcosm encapsulating the broader theme of cognitive colonisation. The term is employed within the context of American restaurants, denoting a reference to English muffins—a culinary embodiment that, despite its American production, persists in bearing the label 'English' as a semblance of deference to its origins. This culinary analogy deftly parallels the linguistic domain, illuminating the manner in which Americans underwent a phase of

rejecting British dominion while electing to preserve their language, allowing it to flourish on the fertile soil of American culture. In this linguistic transmutation, one discerns an incisive process of 'toasting' transpiring—a nuanced transformation wherein the language undergoes subtle alterations akin to the metamorphosis of bread when subjected to heat.

This process of linguistic 'toasting' precipitates a discernible shift from the formality characterising British English. Herein lies the kernel of the 'Colonisation of mind,' wherein linguistic and cultural colonisation are inextricably intertwined. The implicit connotation is that the American experience, akin to the English muffin, endures a pervasive colonial vestige, acknowledging its linguistic roots. The notion of retaining the 'English' label, despite diverging linguistic trajectories, bespeaks a cognitive colonisation—an acknowledgment that the original English identity exerts a hegemonic influence even when ostensibly diverging. This cognitive colonisation, evident in the perpetuation of linguistic elements reflective of British English, underscores an underlying cognitive assimilation—an ongoing colonisation of the mind, wherein the language, while evolving, retains vestiges of its colonial origins.

The opening passage poignantly underscores the concept of cognitive colonisation through the emblematic 'Toasted English.' It elucidates how the persistence of the 'English' label within a transformed linguistic context serves as a metaphor for the enduring imprint of colonialism on the American psyche—a testament to the intricate interplay of linguistic identity, cultural evolution, and cognitive colonisation.

The passage implicitly suggests that American English represents a form of linguistic decolonisation. The characterisation of American English as liberating itself from the "stifling tyranny of the Passive Voice" signifies a conscious effort to break free from the linguistic traditions imposed by British English. This linguistic divergence reflects a shift in mindset from colonial subjugation to independence.

The choice of American English to employ succinct and direct language, particularly in signage, such as "Go" or "Wait," serves as a cultural assertion. It reflects the desire to communicate efficiently, contrasting with the ornate verbosity associated with British English. This reflects not only linguistic but also cultural decolonisation, as Americans assert their own unique identity distinct from their colonial past.

The reference to "a twenty-line inscription on the landscape" in the context of American signage subtly underscores the theme of continued colonisation of Indian minds. This lengthy, legalistic inscription contrasts with the brevity of American signs. It implies that Indian R K

Narayan continue to adopt colonial-era linguistic conventions, indirectly suggesting that Indian minds may still be colonised by these deeply ingrained practices.

The passage highlights the connection between cultural identity and linguistic choices. American English, with its straightforwardness, aligns with American cultural values of pragmatism and independence. Conversely, the British penchant for formality and verbosity is emblematic of their colonial legacy. This linguistic and cultural divergence signifies a conscious effort to shape a distinct national identity, reflecting the decolonisation of the American mind.

R K Narayan forms a scholarly perspective that reveals how the theme of the colonisation of the mind is embedded within the linguistic and cultural nuances of American and British English. Additionally, it subtly suggests that Indian minds may still bear the influence of colonial-era practices, exemplified by the continued use of verbose inscriptions. These linguistic and cultural aspects serve as a lens through which we can perceive the ongoing process of decolonisation and the complexities surrounding the colonisation of the mind.

R K Narayan continues with the theme of the colonization of the mind is subtly conveyed through the examination of linguistic evolution and adaptation in American English. The process of 'toasting' English, or adapting it to American cultural and communicative needs, signifies a form of linguistic decolonization that is emblematic of the American mindset.

R K Narayan demonstrates how American English has strategically adapted and repurposed certain words, such as 'Check' and 'Fabulous,' to serve a multitude of functions. This linguistic adaptability reflects a mindset unburdened by colonial linguistic conventions, wherein words can evolve to suit various contexts. The American propensity for repurposing language reflects a decolonized perspective, one that views language as a flexible tool for communication rather than a rigid construct.

R K Narayan portrays the expansiveness of American English, where a single word like 'Check' can encompass a wide range of meanings and applications. This linguistic adaptability mirrors the expansive nature of American culture and society, which has evolved independently from its British origins. The freedom to imbue words with diverse meanings reflects a mindset that is open to innovation and unencumbered by the linguistic rigidity often associated with colonial languages.

The use of 'Fabulous' as an example of linguistic expansion carries cultural implications. The word 'Fabulous' in American English has taken on a broader spectrum of

meanings, signifying a culture that is comfortable with linguistic experimentation and embraces a diversity of expressions. This linguistic flexibility reflects the multifaceted nature of American society, where eccentricity and individualism are not only tolerated but also celebrated.

While the R K Narayan does not explicitly address the colonization of the mind, it indirectly highlights how American English, through linguistic adaptation and expansion, signifies a colonization of language itself. The American mindset is depicted as unburdened by the strictures of British linguistic traditions, aligning with a broader theme of cultural independence and identity formation.

R K Narayan subtly portrays the theme of the colonization of the mind by illustrating how American English has undergone linguistic adaptation and expansion. This linguistic evolution signifies a mindset unencumbered by colonial linguistic conventions and underscores the notion that language is a malleable tool that can be shaped to suit the unique cultural and communicative needs of a society. A subtle yet insightful portrayal of the colonization of the mind is discernible through an examination of linguistic nuances, specifically regarding the words "Okay" and "Yeah," as well as through the exploration of refined usage in countries where English holds a diverse status. This linguistic analysis reveals how cultural and colonial influences have left their imprint on the way language is used and understood.

R K Narayan underscores how the word "Okay" is self-sufficient and requires no suffix to indicate respect for the listener. This linguistic simplicity is indicative of a mindset unburdened by hierarchical colonial conventions. In contrast, the need for "Sir" or "darling" in British English to convey respect highlights a linguistic tradition rooted in hierarchical colonial relationships.

The analysis of "Yeah" further exemplifies linguistic divergence. It is described as a succinct, base-of-the-tongue grunt that efficiently concludes a sentence. This linguistic brevity reflects a cultural shift toward directness and efficiency, diverging from the more elaborative and formal conventions often associated with colonial linguistic traditions.

R K Narayan also delves into the nuances of language usage in different countries where English holds a distinct status. For instance, the polite expression "Can I help you?" is dissected to reveal its true, sometimes indirect, meaning. This analysis underscores how language can be used to convey subtle social cues and expectations, reflecting cultural nuances that have evolved over time.

While not explicitly stated, the passage indirectly alludes to the influence of colonial hierarchies on language and behaviour. The use of formal expressions and gestures, such as "Thank you, sir," and the unspoken social rules governing interactions reflect the remnants of a colonial legacy. The politeness and deference in language usage can be seen as vestiges of colonial etiquette.

R K Narayan subtly encapsulates the theme of the colonization of the mind through an examination of linguistic nuances and cultural practices. It hints at the impact of colonial history on the evolution of language and behaviour, highlighting how linguistic conventions and social interactions are shaped by historical and cultural influences.

R K Narayan resonates with the theme of linguistic decolonization, particularly in the context of India. It emphasizes the need for a distinct "Bharat brand of English" that is not a mere mimicry of British English but rather an adaptation that reflects the unique cultural and linguistic landscape of India. In focusing on India, we can discern how the colonization of the mind is being addressed.

R K Narayan acknowledges that English in India has traditionally been confined to specific domains like education, justice, and administration, reflecting its colonial legacy. However, it underscores the importance of English permeating everyday life, from dusty streets to marketplaces. This shift in language usage signifies a decolonization of the mind, as it broadens the scope of English to accommodate a wider range of expressions and experiences.

The call to "assimilate its idiom" signifies a move away from rigid colonial language norms and an embrace of Indian linguistic and cultural nuances. This process of assimilation acknowledges that language should reflect the realities of the people who use it, thereby challenging colonial linguistic conventions that may have stifled local expressions.

The passage makes a distinction between linguistic adaptation and "mongrelisation of the language." This indicates a conscious effort to retain the dignity and integrity of English while infusing it with Indian characteristics. This approach reflects a balanced form of decolonization that respects the value of English as a global language while asserting India's unique linguistic identity.

The mention of a "Swadeshi stamp" alludes to the Swadeshi movement during India's struggle for independence. This movement encouraged the use of indigenous products and self-reliance. By associating English with a "Swadeshi stamp," the passage suggests a desire to indigenize the language, infusing it with Indian essence while maintaining its global utility.

R K Narayan concludes by highlighting that the practical aspects of achieving this "Bharat brand of English" need to be addressed by those in the field. This acknowledgment emphasizes that the decolonization of language is not merely a theoretical endeavour but a practical one, involving the active participation of those who use and shape the language.

R K Narayan underscores the need for India to develop its own form of English that respects the rule of law, maintains grammatical standards, and yet embraces the country's cultural and linguistic diversity. This endeavour to create a "Bharat brand of English" represents a significant step in the decolonization of the Indian mind, as it seeks to redefine the role of English in reflecting and shaping the country's identity and expression.

Moreover, in the wake of R.K. Narayan's insightful exploration of linguistic evolution, adaptation, and the subtle currents of cognitive colonisation in the context of American and British English, a new term emerges: "Minglish." Minglish aptly encapsulates the phenomenon of linguistic blending and adaptation witnessed not only in India but also in various corners of the world. Minglish symbolizes the dynamic interplay of languages and cultures, where English, as a global lingua franca, undergoes a transformative journey, absorbing the nuances and flavours of the regions it touches. Just as American English evolved independently, carrying influences from Spanish and French, Minglish reflects the rich tapestry of linguistic diversity in India, where English coexists harmoniously with a multitude of languages, giving birth to a linguistic fusion that is uniquely Indian. It acknowledges the intricate process of toasting, adaptation, and indigenization, challenging the notions of linguistic hierarchy and celebrating the vibrancy of linguistic diversity within the global English family. Minglish stands as a testament to the resilience of languages, their ability to evolve, and their capacity to shape and be shaped by the minds and cultures they encounter.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the essay "Toasted English" by R.K. Narayan offers a profound exploration of linguistic evolution, adaptation, and the underlying theme of cognitive colonisation within the contexts of American and British English. It highlights the subtle ways in which language reflects and shapes cultural identities, shedding light on the enduring influence of colonialism on the American and Indian minds. Through an examination of linguistic nuances and cultural practices, the essay underscores the ongoing process of decolonisation and the complexities surrounding the colonisation of the mind.

Furthermore, the concept of "Minglish," a term that encapsulates the phenomenon of linguistic blending and adaptation observed not only in India but also in various global regions. Minglish celebrates the vibrant tapestry of linguistic diversity within the global English family, challenging notions of linguistic hierarchy and emphasizing the resilience of languages in shaping and being shaped by the minds and cultures they encounter.

"Toasted English" invites readers to reflect on the intricate interplay between language, culture, and identity, urging us to embrace linguistic diversity as a testament to the richness of human expression.

Works Cited:

"English". IANA language subtag registry. October 16, 2005. Retrieved January 11, 2019.

"Fears of British English's disappearance are overblown". *The Economist*. July 20, 2017. ISSN 0013-0613. Retrieved April 18, 2019.

"Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: A Profile of a Literary and Social Activist". Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Archived from the original on 29 March 2009. Retrieved 10 May 2014.

"Ngugi wa Thiong'o: Biography". Post-colonial Studies at Emory. Retrieved 10 May 2014.

"Unified English Braille (UEB)". Braille Authority of North America (BANA). November 2, 2016. Archived from the original on November 23, 2016. Retrieved January 2, 2017.

"United States". IANA language subtag registry. October 16, 2005. Retrieved January 11, 2019.

Anderson, Warwick; Jenson, Deborah; Keller, Richard Charles) (2011). *Unconscious dominions : psychoanalysis, colonial trauma, and global sovereignties*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. ISBN 9780822393986. OCLC 757835774.

Bell, Vikki (4 January 2011). "Introduction: Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* 50 Years On". *Theory, Culture & Society*. 27 (7–8): 7–14. doi:10.1177/0263276410383721. S2CID 143492378.

Crystal, David (1997). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-53032-3.

David, E. J. R. (2010). "Testing the validity of the colonial mentality implicit association test and the interactive effects of covert and overt colonial mentality on Filipino American

mental health". *Asian American Journal of Psychology*. 1 (1): 31–45. doi:10.1037/a0018820.

David, E. J. R.; Okazaki, Sumie (1 April 2010). "Activation and Automaticity of Colonial Mentality". *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 40 (4): 850. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2010.00601.x. ISSN 1559-1816.

Engel, Matthew (2017). *That's the Way It Crumbles: the American Conquest of English*. London: Profile Books. ISBN 9781782832621. OCLC 989790918.

Falser, Michael (2015). *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission*. *Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context*. Cham: Springer. pp. 8–9. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-13638-7. ISBN 978-3-319-13637-0.

Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1905-1980, Farrington, Constance. New York: Grove Press, Inc. pp. 250. ISBN 978-0802150837. OCLC 1316464.

Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1905-1980, Farrington, Constance. New York: Grove Press, Inc. pp. 194. ISBN 978-0802150837. OCLC 1316464.

Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1905-1980, Farrington, Constance. New York: Grove Press, Inc. pp. 162. ISBN 978-0802150837. OCLC 1316464.

Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1905-1980, Farrington, Constance. New York: Grove Press, Inc. pp. 161. ISBN 978-0802150837. OCLC 1316464.

Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1905-1980, Farrington, Constance. New York: Grove Press, Inc. pp. 194–195. ISBN 978-0802150837. OCLC 1316464.

Fanon, Frantz (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London, United Kingdom: Pluto Press. pp. xxiii. ISBN 978-0-7453-2849-2.

Felipe, Lou Collette S. (2016). "The relationship of colonial mentality with Filipina American experiences with racism and sexism". *Asian American Journal of Psychology*. 7 (1): 25–30. doi:10.1037/aap0000033.

Gikandi, Simon (2000). *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 272–4. ISBN 0-521-48006-X.

Goss, Andrew (2009). "Decent colonialism? Pure science and colonial ideology in the Netherlands East Indies, 1910–1929". *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. 40 (1): 187–214. doi:10.1017/s002246340900006x. ISSN 1474-0680. S2CID 143041214.

Harbeck, James (July 15, 2015). "Why isn't 'American' a language?". BBC. Retrieved April 18, 2019.

Lovesey, Oliver (2012). *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. p. 11. ISBN 978-1-60329-112-5.

Margulis, Jennifer. "Language". *Postcolonial Studies at Emory*. Retrieved 10 May 2014.

Mufwene, Salikoko S. (1999). "North American Varieties of English as Byproducts of Population Contacts." *The Workings of Language: From Prescriptions to Perspectives*. Ed. Rebecca Wheeler Westport, CT: Praeger, 15–37.

Narayan, R. K. "Toasted English," *The Writerly Life: Selected Non-Fiction*, ed. S. Krishnan, Viking, 2001, pp. 267-270.

Nunning, Vera. (06/01/2015). *Fictions of Empire and the (un-making of imperialist mentalities: Colonial discourse and post-colonial criticism revisited*. *Forum for world literature studies*. (7)2. p.171-198.

Paranjpe, Anand C. (11 August 2016). "Indigenous Psychology in the Post- Colonial Context: An Historical Perspective". *Psychology and Developing Societies*. 14 (1): 27–43. doi:10.1177/097133360201400103. S2CID 145154030.

Paulsen I (2022). *The emergence of American English as a discursive variety Tracing enregisterment processes in nineteenth-century U.S. newspapers (pdf)*. Berlin: Language Science Press. doi:10.5281/zenodo.6207627. ISBN 9783961103386.

Rabaka, Reiland (2010). *Forms of Fanonism : Frantz Fanon's critical theory and the dialectics of decolonization*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books. ISBN 9780739140338. OCLC 461323889.

Robertson, Michael; Walter, Garry (2009). "Frantz Fanon and the confluence of psychiatry, politics, ethics and culture". *Acta Neuropsychiatrica*. 21 (6): 308–309. doi:10.1111/j.1601-5215.2009.00428.x. ISSN 0924-2708. S2CID 143798499.

Sicherman, Carol (1990). *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: The Making a Rebel*. London: Hans Zell Publishers. p. 23. ISBN 0-90545-066-3.

Srivastava, Neelam Francesca Rashmi; Bhattacharya, Baidik (2012). *The postcolonial Gramsci*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 9780415874816. OCLC 749115630.

Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa (1986). *Decolonising the Mind*. ISBN 0-435-08016-4.