6
English Studies in Indian Higher Education

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Introduction

India is the first Asian country, and amongst the first in the world, where English Studies was established as an academic discipline in higher education (HE). Developments therein from the mid-nineteenth century onwards have often been significant for disciplinary pursuits elsewhere, especially as the study of English language and literature tried to accommodate diverse cultural contexts, and insofar as the post-colonial condition came to be regarded as a fulcrum for understanding past and current political dimensions of such study. Equally, debates about English Studies in HE provide a useful index of social developments in India after independence. This chapter registers some of these developments and debates with a view to assessing the current condition of English Studies in India and considers its future prospects.

Here, instead of delineating the discipline (perhaps more appropriately, the *disciplines*) of English Studies in terms of its contents or objects of study, I largely assume an institutionally circumscribed view: the discipline consists in whatever is regarded as the professional concern of HE English teachers and English departments. That could include any variety of English language teaching, linguistics insofar as addressed to English users, the study of literatures in English (or in English translation) and of Anglophone cultures and media, creative writing in English—or some permutation or combination of these. Shifts of emphases in what English teachers and departments should concern themselves with have frequently occurred; below I try to track such shifts in the recent past, indicate where matters stand at present and may drift in the future.

A. Hewings et al. (eds.), *Futures for English Studies*

This chapter largely confines its observations to English Studies in publicly funded universities and university-affiliated/validated colleges. The situation for the discipline in distance-learning and correspondence programmes, in vocational and professional institutes and private institutions, and at post-graduate levels are gestured towards in citing some of the broader indicators. The remarks below are heavily dependent on these broader indicators and seek to convey a sense of the general situation for the territories of the Indian state at large; the significant variations that obtain in state provinces and within specific institutional sectors, not to mention specific institutions, are not accounted for. The only specific institution mentioned, for reasons which will become clear, is the University of Delhi—an institution which is typical of the Indian situation in some ways and atypical in other important ways.

Five sections follow. The first attempts to place English Studies amidst the current contours of the Indian HE sector as a whole. The second offers a brief historicist perspective of English Studies in India, focused on influential narratives and the contexts in which they appeared. The third section outlines some recent developments in social attitudes towards the language and the effects thereof on academic pursuits. The fourth outlines how government education policy and HE institutions are responding to those developments. The final section speculates briefly on possible future moves within the discipline in India.

The present institutional and disciplinary context

In 2010–2011, there were 634 universities and university level institutions in India, with nearly 17 million students enrolled at different levels of study, of which around 14.6 million were undergraduates (see Figure 6.1). By way of comparison, in the UK in 2009/10 there were 2.4 million students enrolled in 165 HE institutions, of which 1.7 million were undergraduates (HESA, 2011). HE institutions in India are divided into several categories by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex government organization for higher education: central universities (funded and administered through central government), state universities (funded and administered through state governments), deemed universities (which are autonomous and receive some government funding and are often predominantly self-funding), private universities (which do not receive government funding but are recognized, and are not allowed to have affiliated colleges), institutes of national importance and other university level institutions (usually devoted to applied academic areas such as engineering, medicine, business, agriculture, which

often receive significant government funding). The distribution of these institutions according to category is represented in Figure 6.1.

To chart take-up of programmes in these institutions, UGC statistics divide subjects of study into broad areas (Faculties). The distribution of numbers of students between these across the country in 2010–2011 is succinctly conveyed in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 gives an immediate visual impression of the dominance of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (all included in Arts) amidst other subjects of study for all HE levels across India.

The business of English teachers and departments—of English Studies—is concerned with almost all these categories of HE institutions in different ways. As far as defined programmes of English go, such as BA (Hons) in English (majoring in English literature and/or linguistics), these are offered in central, state and private universities with Arts faculties; English as a supplementary language and/or literature subject could figure with any undergraduate programme, with or without Honours, in those universities too. Further, English language instruction for special purposes (for business, technology and computing, etc.) and general English language teaching at different proficiency levels may feature across the board, for all sorts of institutions and alongside any subject area (including the vocational/professional). Thus, the all-India spread and variations of undergraduate English

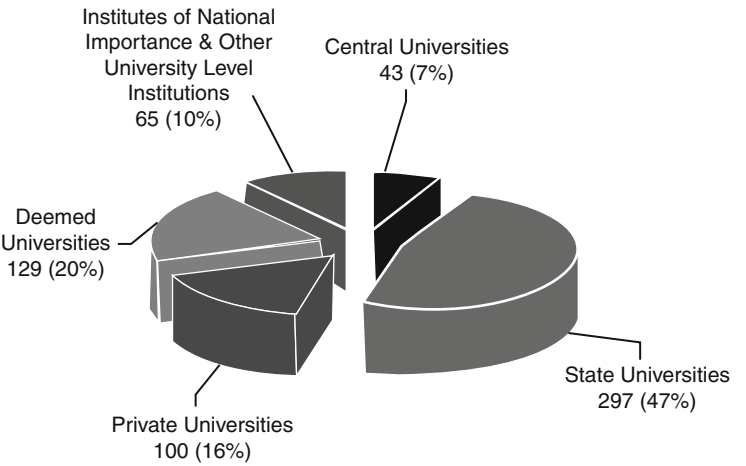

Figure 6.1 Type-wise distribution of degree-awarding universities/university-level institutions, December 2011
Source: UGC, 2012.

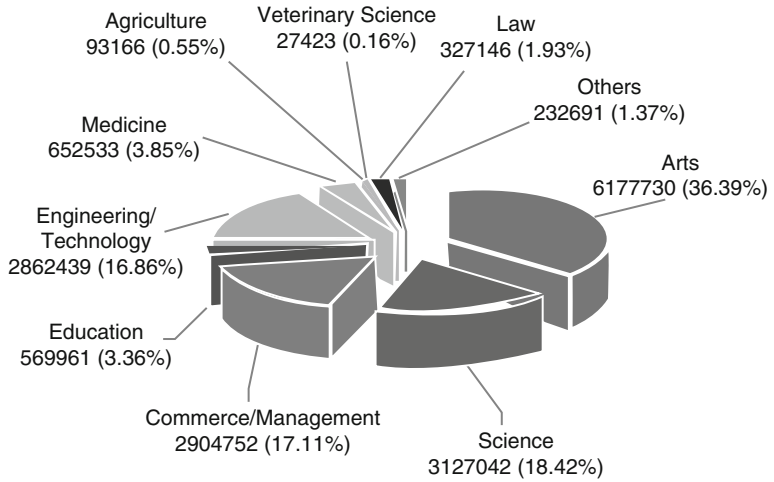

Figure 6.2 Faculty-wise student enrolment in higher education, 2010–11
Source: UGC, 2012.

Studies are of considerable complexity. That English Studies programmes have been popular in higher education and are becoming more so seems to be widely accepted, and any sampling and comparison of applications to Honours programmes in English with other Arts subjects in specific institutions generally bear that out. This is also confirmed by figures for postgraduate study across the country, where firmer evidence is at hand. In 2010–11 the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) gathered figures for Indian postgraduate programmes for foreign languages and Indian languages—Table 6.1 gives the figures for the top two foreign languages (English and French) and the top three Indian languages (Hindi, Telugu and Bengali). These figures speak for themselves.

To put the above observations into perspective, it should be noted that English has been and continues to be the dominant medium of instruction in HE. Indian languages are media of instruction for Arts and Humanities subjects in a significant number of HE institutions, depending on which state region these institutions are located in and the education policies pursued in that region (state territories were largely formally demarcated according to the dominant language groups therein, such as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Malayali etc.). Programmes in science and technology, business and commerce, and in other applied areas are predominantly delivered in English. In this

Table 6.1 Enrolment at PhD, MPhil and postgraduate level in major disciplines/subjects (based on actual response), 2010–11

Discipline	PhD			MPhil			Other postgraduate programmes		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
English	833	804	1637	403	565	968	40738	53793	94531
French	45	75	120	20	18	38	159	168	327
Hindi	726	709	1435	307	254	561	17265	22472	39737
Telugu	257	105	362	56	23	79	10618	11621	22239
Bengali	55	59	114	57	49	106	10243	17587	27830

Source: MHRD.

regard, the choices and experiences of students are naturally mediated by their schooling. The levels at which English and the state language and national language Hindi (if different from the state language) are taught in schools vary widely according to state policy and kind of institution: English generally features as a compulsory second or third language, and not infrequently as the medium of instruction. In a useful paper, Meganathan (2011) uses two School Education Surveys (in 1993 and 2002) by the National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT) to give state-by-state and aggregated comparative figures in this regard.

Histories and historicizing

The current complexities of the situation of English Studies in Indian HE derive from a correspondingly complex history which can be fathomed only to a very limited extent. For much of the discipline's career in Indian HE, English major programmes and even English as a minor subject has focused predominantly on literary study. Institutional histories of English Studies in India have accordingly centred literary pedagogy and scholarship. There is, however, no single story that emerges unambiguously from such institutional histories, one which can be speedily summarized. The facts have generally been selected for and subjected to varying interpretations in such histories, depending on the ideological climate in which historicizing was undertaken. The following remarks on the institutional history of English Studies in Indian HE are therefore more about different phases of historicizing the discipline than a straight historical narrative of the discipline's career; the phases of historicizing are, it appears to me, more indicative of recent developments than a straight historical narrative could be.

Institutional histories of English Studies in India generally begin their narratives at the same juncture: the early nineteenth-century debate about the East India Company's colonial education policy, between Orientalists (who favoured a traditional Sanskritic education for the natives) and Anglicists (who championed a Westernized education in the English language). The debate was decided in favour of the Anglicists, notably by Thomas Babington Macaulay's assertions in the much-discussed Minute on Education (1835). The manner in which these debates and subsequent developments are accounted differentiates various institutional histories of English, and it turns out that accounting is grounded significantly on the contemporary preoccupations that historians have in mind and seek to understand from

a historical perspective. Shifts in historical perspective mark shifts according to current developments at the time of historicizing.

Thus, a relatively early account of this history in Kalyan Chatterjee's *English Education in India* (1976) made out that the defeat of Orientalist arguments by the Anglicists led by Macaulay—which effectively opened up the introduction of English education and English Studies around the mid-nineteenth century—had been the defeat of a progressive and culturally sensitive possibility within the colonial fold. Chatterjee's history went on to describe the various ways in which English Studies came to be assimilated in Indian cultural and intellectual life, through colonialism and towards decolonization. This was written at a time when secular post-independence nationalism was the dominant political discourse, and allowed for a schismatic reckoning with the colonial past—taking in both the productive and repressive drives of colonialism in articulating the contemporary national formation. A decade along the line, though, dominant discourses were under more searching scrutiny and a 'crisis' in the Humanities was being felt widely: markedly in North American academia, where it was associated with the rise of politically engaged 'Theory' and social constructionist identity politics. In particular, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) had persuaded many critics of the need for close attention to underpinning ideological assumptions in colonial and postcolonial cultural productions (postcolonial criticism). Gayatri Spivak (especially in her 1985 paper) had sought to bridge such criticism with the methods of the Indian collective of subaltern historians. In various academic circles these moves were regarded as effectively interrogating some of the fundamental assumptions of academic work itself—hence the sense of a 'crisis'. Gauri Viswanathan's influential history of the institutionalization of English Studies in India during the colonial period, *Masks of Conquest* (1989), drew upon these developments—it was written as a doctoral dissertation at Columbia University, acknowledging the guidance of, among others, Said and Spivak. Viswanathan's understanding of the colonial education project was more *of a piece* than Chatterjee's; therein the apparently contrary impulses of Orientalists and Anglicists actually worked jointly towards a common imperialist end: 'it would be more accurate to describe Orientalism and Anglicism not as polar opposites but as points along a continuum of attitudes toward the manner and form of native governance, the necessity and justification for which remained by and large an issue of remarkably little disagreement' (p. 30). Viswanathan's history proceeded to show how every step within the institutionalization and pursuit of English Studies ensured that the discipline itself became

deeply engrained with imperialist attitudes towards and the domination of colonial subjects—and putatively remains so (though her observations were carefully confined to the colonial period).

In the 1990s, the broader sense of a 'crisis' in the Humanities (woven around Theory) was wedded to a distinctive and localized sense of 'crisis' in Indian English Studies, and historicizing the discipline became part of an effort to engage with it. To some degree this distinctively Indian crisis derived from the anxiogenic relationship of English, as an imperial inheritance and middle-class stronghold, with Indian languages, especially the vernaculars in everyday use. That the English language has worked to the detriment of disadvantaged constituencies appeared to be increasingly obvious. Further, since the higher pursuit of the discipline in India had been centred on literary studies, its curriculum—focused preponderantly on British and North American texts—was regarded as alienating. English Studies appeared to offer little scope for addressing immediate social concerns and experiences. A series of edited volumes (Joshi (ed.), 1991, Marathe et al., 1993, Part I, Rajan, 1986, and, a bit later, Tharu (ed.), 1997) drew upon disciplinary history and current political concerns to find a path through this crisis, and, in a way, the very attempt to articulate the crisis thus was also a kind of resolution—effectively contemporary social concerns were brought within the purview of English Studies pedagogy and scholarship. It entailed broadening the reach of scholarly interest to social schisms and conflicts within India (along the lines of caste, class, gender criticism), taking account of debates within Indian languages and literatures (especially through translations), and bringing in literatures from beyond the dominant Anglophone centres (under the guise of comparative and world literature). Specific attention to English language learning was more or less inserted by R. K. Agnihotri and A. L. Khanna, *Problematizing English in India* (1997) into the narrative provided by Viswanathan. In the domain of pedagogy, curricular reform was undertaken to reduce the emphasis on British and American literature in English Studies, and to include Indian literature in English and in English translations (with particular attention to underprivileged constituencies in India), literature from other contexts (especially other postcolonial contexts), English language and linguistics, media studies, popular cultural studies, and so on. The changes of the BA and MA English syllabi of Delhi University in the late 1990s appeared symptomatic of a wider phenomenon, and received international notice in higher education circles (Suroor, 1997, 'University of Delhi …' 1999). The University had stayed with a conventional and unresponsive English syllabus through

much of its post-Independence career, and syllabus changes there were regarded as a necessary, indeed inevitable, sign of reform within a particularly conservative and influential bastion of the discipline.

A further shift in narrating the history of English Studies in India appeared in the late noughties, in Santosh Dash's *English Education and the Question of Indian Nationalism* (2009) and Alok Mukherjee's *The Gift of English* (2009). These re-examinations of that history were paved through, as before, the Orientalist-Anglicist debate. But the readings of that debate here were significantly different from Chatterjee's or Viswanathan's. Viswanathan's account of the joined-up imperialist interests on both sides was accepted, but the notion that the Orientalist agenda simply fed into and merged with (or was overtaken by) the imperialist thrust of the Anglicist agenda wasn't. It was maintained instead that though the policy of Anglicization in HE was instituted, the Orientalists' agenda was assimilated alongside that, at the behest of *both* the British colonial establishment and the Indian elites. Some sections of the Indian elites (by class and caste) had supported the Anglicist programme in accordance with their own interests; as importantly, the Orientalist agenda was opportunistically picked up and accommodated in educational policy and practice thereafter in keeping with Indian elite interests. Thus, the inculcation of English into Indian academia worked through a gradual concordance of both imperialist and elite Indian interests. The vernacularization debates that followed later in the nineteenth century were examined closely here (from the 1860s and 1870s onwards), debates which were apparently against the dominance of English. Elite Indian interests were embedded in the education system by adopting Sanskritized versions of the vernaculars as standard (especially as medium of instruction in schooling), backed by the strong interest that Orientalists had in Sanskrit. At the same time, compulsory English in schools and, especially, as medium of instruction in HE meant that mainly the elites could access education and align themselves with establishment interests. In India all this meant that an idea of nationhood came to be articulated in predominantly elite terms, and the numerous oppressed social strata were systematically disadvantaged during the colonial and the post-colonial periods.

Dash's and Mukherjee's 2009 accounts of the history of English Studies in India were obviously offered not merely as scholarly interventions in postcolonial history or academic crisis debates; these were interventions in current political debates in India via English Studies, and accordingly a re-articulation of the place of English Studies in contemporary Indian society. The result was that English couldn't be regarded simply as a

colonial importation or as the concern of elite academic ivory towers; the history of English and the currency of English Studies also draws in the past and present of pressing political divides and social conflicts in India. To grasp the contextual implications of these historicist interventions for the pursuit of English Studies, it is necessary to register some of the broader developments related to the place of the English language in India at present.

Social developments

By way of framing the following account of social developments related to English in India, some figures on English language usage might be useful—figures for both the population generally and especially the constituency of young persons who dominate HE student populations.

By the returns on language usage for Census 2001, English was claimed as a first subsidiary language by 86,125,221 persons and as a second subsidiary language by 38,993,066—a total of a bit over 125.12 million (12.16% of the total population). Figures for bilingualism and trilingualism in general across the country were also tracked according to age and urban and rural divide—these are shown in Table 6.2, with particular attention to the age group of interest here (15–24 years).

In the rural sector, the numbers speaking a second language as percentage of the total rural population (742.5 million) was 18.4%, and speaking a third language was 5.44%. In the urban sector, the equivalent proportions of the total urban population (286.12 million) for second language speakers was 41.37% and for third language speakers was 16.45%. Of the total number of people using a second language, the proportion that claims English as a second language is 33.77%. Briefly, the total population of India has moved from 1.029 billion to 1.210 billion between 2001 and 2011; urbanization has increased from 27.81% in the 2001 Census to 31.16% in the 2011 Census.

A fairly nuanced sense of the extent to which English is read by the age group this chapter is concerned with can be obtained from a NBT-NCAER survey (Shukla, 2010) covering 311,431 literate youth (within a broad age group of 13–35 year olds), across 207 rural districts and 199 towns in India. Of this sample, the survey found, about 25% read books for pleasure, relaxation and knowledge enhancement; and English is the preferred language for leisure reading of 5.3% of those (Hindi is for 33.4%, Marathi 13.2%, Bengali 7.7%). University-level students are likely to figure significantly among these. Traced amidst those figures is the obvious observation that, as a result of colonial and postcolonial

Table 6.2 Numbers speaking second and third languages by age group, sex and rural/urban region

Total/ Rural/ Urban	Age-group	Number speaking second language			Number speaking third language		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total	**Total**	**255026463**	**151488952**	**103537511**	**87499882**	**54630649**	**32869233**
Total	15–19	38357575	21529833	16827742	14769247	8305140	6464107
Total	20–24	34482232	19994255	14487977	13792079	8177126	5614953
Rural	**Total**	**136669344**	**83877845**	**52791499**	**40426853**	**26786428**	**13640425**
Rural	15–19	22091245	12815654	9275591	7981442	4717434	3264008
Rural	20–24	18598695	11170397	7428298	6877277	4335306	2541971
Urban	**Total**	**118357119**	**67611107**	**50746012**	**47073029**	**27844221**	**19228808**
Urban	15–19	16266330	8714179	7552151	6787805	3587706	3200099
Urban	20–24	15883537	8823858	7059679	6914802	3841820	3072982

Source: Census 2001.

education provision and social arrangements, it is a relatively small number of Indians who use English comfortably, and this small number has enjoyed inordinate public visibility and social advantages. The English language has been and continues to be complicit with the political and cultural domination of an elite professional and bureaucratic class, a minority of the Indian population. Social inequalities exercised through English proficiency have continued to be embedded in the education system since independence (trenchantly outlined in Faust and Nagar, 2001; Ramanathan, 1999).

At the same time, it is evident that, at least over the last two decades, there is a growing top-down and bottom-up demand for greater and more widespread English proficiency. On the one hand, English seems ever more necessary for the workforce of the future amidst globalized processes; on the other hand, traditionally disadvantaged and dispossessed communities feel that becoming proficient in English encourages higher earnings and superior social status. The push from both directions has created a sort of *social pressure of English*: both in the growing numbers of people seeking English language skills, and in the demand from government and employers for more persons proficient in English and more depth in proficiency. Several reports on the labour force in India identify proficiency in English as a significant skills deficit (see Aring, 2012 [India report], p. 1). A number of surveys indicate that poorer families are increasingly preferring schools which reputedly offer sound English instruction for their children, even when they can ill afford to (on this see, for instance, Advani, 2009, and Desai *et al.*, 2008 on the growing popularity of private schools, esp. pp. 18–20).

Other developments play alongside the general thrust of this pressure. The success of the Business Process Outsourcing ('outsourcing' in short) industry in India is pertinent here. Of particular interest is the balance that media and political discourses struck between, on the one hand, seeing Indian outsourcing as based on persistent inequality between North and South, and, on the other hand, presenting Indian outsourcing as promising gradual equalization (Gupta, 2009). Relevantly, these discourses about the outsourcing industry re-valued English-proficiency as being not merely an important element of cultural capital but also directly translatable into financial capital in India. No systematic study is available of the impact that such media and political profiling of the industry had in this regard (e.g. on student recruitment, on career choices). Much of the academic discussion on English in this context centred on questions of identity and attitudes to variant language usage in training Indian call-centre workers (e.g. Cowie, 2007; Poster, 2007;

Taylor and Bain, 2005). However, it is generally taken for granted that evidence of the financial value of English proficiency *à la* outsourcing has spurred the growing demand for English in India.

On a note related to the growing demand for English among dispossessed constituencies, it has been significant that prominent Dalit leaders and intellectuals have promoted English as their preferred language of aspiration and opportunity. The powerful Dalit political and cultural movement that gathered force through the 1990s has brought the particularity of Dalit life-experiences and perspectives, at odds with traditionally dominant cultural discourses, into the forefront of the Indian public sphere. In particular, the Dalit movement has posed a salutary challenge to the rise of majoritarian, and tendentiously fascist, Hindu communal alignments. That ideologues of the most oppressed constituencies in India prefer to think of English as the medium of aspiration and opportunity, and moreover there's a significant history of this (as Omvedt, 2006 notes), has undoubtedly interfered with grievances about the hegemony of English and the beleaguered status of Indian vernaculars. Interest in Dalit attitudes to English has ranged from media-fuelled curiosity about political gestures—such as, the construction of a temple to Goddess English and celebrations of Macaulay's birthday (on these see activist Chandra Bhan Prasad's 2010 web-site declaration)—to considered exploration of the language politics in question (Anand, 1999; Dash, 2009; Mukherjee, 2009, esp. Conclusion). Playing alongside that, the production and consumption of texts by and about Dalits, especially memoirs/biographies and literary works, have multiplied significantly since the 1990s. These have appeared in particularly significant numbers in English translations from Marathi, Tamil and other languages, and have provided new fodder for reflection in Translation Studies (e.g. Kandasamy, 2007; Mukherjee *et al.,* 2008; Merrill, 2010; Sivanarayanan, 2004). Dalit literary texts often test the conventional limits of literary expression, and take liberties with linguistic and literary norms, in a manner that is challenging for translators.

Yet other factors have encouraged reconsideration of the position of English in India. The incorporation of English words and phrases into Indian vernaculars is increasingly manifested in public and popular cultural exchanges (advertisements, commercial films, newspapers, popular songs, etc.), and suggests a greater degree of acceptance of such linguistic hybridity than heretofore. With reference to such hybridity in Hindi, commonly called 'Hinglish' now (for varied discussions, see Kothari and Snell eds. 2012), scholarly attention has occasionally considered it as confined to elite metropolitan circles (Trivedi, 2008,

pp. 203–6), and sometimes regarded it as a 're-vernacularization' of Hindi that works against nationalist attempts to promote linguistic purity (Saxena, 2010). From a quite different direction, the very significant growth of Indian commercial fiction in English since the 1990s, targeting an Indian readership (which circulates indifferently, if at all, outside India), also has a bearing on reconsiderations of English in India. Arguably, such commercial fiction attempts to take possession of English as an Indian language (Gupta, 2012): English appears to be used in these texts as if it is familiar in the Indian habitus, whereas Indian literary fiction in English has often been charged with a defamiliarized relationship with Indian contexts, and regarded as 'inauthentic' to or 'exoticizing' such contexts. In a related fashion, also relevant here is simply the fact that since the 1990s there has been a constant increase in the numbers of literary translations from Indian languages into English, targeting Indian readers, being published (examined at length in Kothari, 2003).

These developments naturally have a bearing on ongoing reconsideration of the shape of English Studies and its future prospects in Indian HE. The implications are beginning (as this is written) to be registered, albeit often with uneven rigour, in the government's education policy and in recent HE institutional restructurings.

Education policy and response

Since independence, government policies on the status of English and regarding English education in India have seen several noteworthy reversals. The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, declared Hindi in the Devanagari script the language of the Union and official language and allowed the use of English as an official language, with states being able to appoint official languages within their territories. Initially, the Constitution allowed a 15 year period for the use of English as an official language alongside Hindi with the expectation that Hindi would become the sole official language thereafter. In a diverse linguistic context like India, misgivings about having Hindi as the sole official language were considerable; strong anti-Hindi agitations were undertaken as the 15 year deadline approached (notably in the state of Tamil Nadu); and effectively English was retained as an official language by the Official Languages (Amendment) Act of 1967. A Three-Language Formula for school education was agreed, whereby non-Hindi speaking students would be taught their mother tongue/regional language,

Hindi and English, and Hindi-speaking students would be taught Hindi, English and a regional Indian language. The Formula has generally been unevenly applied. A few decades later, in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, several state governments (such as Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh) reduced the emphasis on English teaching in state schools—mainly by introducing English at a later stage of schooling. After 2000, however, such state policies have largely been rolled back. Throughout, a significant number of private schools, dominated by students from middle class and affluent backgrounds, have delivered English medium instruction, and higher education has been dominated by English medium teaching too. The role of English in exacerbating social disparities in India lies within the interstices of these policies and educational arrangements.

Amidst the social developments outlined in the previous section, the current thrust of government policy at almost all levels is to promote English language teaching and learning. This thrust is addressed to school education and also, interestingly, to HE. Unsurprisingly, the thinking that drives policy at present as regards English is strongly instrumental: English Studies is being redefined or 'reoriented' (to use the favoured bureaucratic term) to consist in English language teaching and learning, the production of purposive English proficiency, as a vocational/professional skill. It has steadily been pressed upon English teachers and departments in HE institutions that it is their responsibility to engage with pedagogy and scholarship in this instrumental spirit. The policy documents which gesture towards or simply issue directives to that end are numerous, especially at the national or federal government level. The most recent 12th Five Year Plan (2012–2017) states the instrumental nature of English in HE more unambiguously than any previous five year plan:

> 21.244. Notwithstanding the growth of technical higher education, over half of students will enrol in general (meaning arts, science and commerce) undergraduate programmes. If properly imparted, general education could be an excellent foundation for successful knowledge-based careers. Therefore, focus should be primarily on improving the quality of general education. […]. Special emphasis on verbal and written communication skills, especially, but not limited to, English would go a long way in improving the employability of the large and growing mass of disempowered youth. (Planning Commission, 2013, Vol. 3, p. 106)

This observation in the midst of the largest-scale policy document that the Government of India produces is the culmination of a constant refrain in other policy documents. The recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission's *Report to the Nation 2006–2009* (2010), for instance, was premised repeatedly on the understanding that 'An understanding and command over the English language is a most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities' (esp. pp. 27–8). The federal government's drive in this regard is strongly supported by various reports from the corporate sector in India (I have mentioned this above), the 'employers' who are seemingly regarded as the principal 'stakeholders' in HE at present. Encouragement for this policy direction also comes from abroad, especially from Anglophone-dominant contexts (UK, USA, Australia). To take the British example: the British Council has set up a number of initiatives with Indian HE institutions addressed to English Language Teaching (ELT). On the surface these are presented as public-spirited and even altruistic; but public-spiritedness in the UK, as in India and elsewhere, is increasingly impossible to distinguish from private-spiritedness and business-orientation. So, the British Council India also organizes events such as the UK-India English Partnership Forum of 30 January 2013 in London, entitled *Opportunities in English Language*. It needs little perspicacity to gather that the 'opportunities' in question were really for a range of British (in partnership with Indian, of course) companies which could, in various ways, sell English language skills training. The forum was usefully bolstered with a report funded by the British High Commission in India and produced by iValue, *ELT Market Report for India* (2013), and by the partnership of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). A more general British Council pamphlet *Understanding India: The Future of Higher Education and Opportunities for International Cooperation* (Feb. 2014) features English as a commodity frequently and throughout.

Thus encouraged, government education policy and directives are now aligned with the interests of corporate sector and external agencies in demanding a 'reorientation' of the work of English Studies—English teachers and departments—in HE institutions. This demand is steadily percolating downwards through the UGC and state-level education ministries into implementation at institutional level, in universities and HE colleges and institutes. Since the top-down pressure in this regard falls upon English departments and teachers, it is the shape of English Studies at HE itself which is under scrutiny. The emphasis on literature

that has prevailed for much of the history of English Studies in India, traced sketchily above, necessarily has to—and does—give way: the quotient of literature has to be proportionally reduced to make way for English literacy in the work of English teachers and departments in universities. The last attempt, fifteen years back, made by the UGC to give guidance on university English Studies programmes and their contents (UGC Curriculum Development Committee Feb. 2001) consequently seems firmly dated now with its strong literary and cultural studies interests. The ongoing moves towards accommodating firmly, if not centring, English language teaching in English departments does not mean that academic linguistics, insofar as addressed to English, has found more of a purchase than heretofore. Insofar as linguistics in India has attended to English, scholarly and pedagogic pursuits have predominantly attached to socio-linguistics and descriptive linguistics: attempts to describe Indian English as a standard or as an 'acrolect' were undertaken, data on regional varieties of English in India collected, and the status of English in India subjected to sociolinguistic analysis—all areas with prolific publications. None of that is particularly relevant to the policy thrust on English proficiency for instrumental purposes. By and large, linguistics is as out of sync with the ongoing re-orientation of English Studies as the conventional Anglophone literary and cultural studies are.

To conclude this section, let me refer back to an institution which I have mentioned before. At the end of the section on histories of English Studies, the curriculum reform for English programmes at Delhi University was noted, to register the broadened scope of the discipline after the crisis debates. In the academic year 2013–14 Delhi University instituted a wider curriculum reform, with effect on programmes in all disciplines, in shifting from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate programme structure. This meant implementing a number of Foundation Courses in the first and second years for all students in the university, designed to deliver the 'general education' mentioned in the 12th Plan quoted above, alongside a number of Applied Courses and a range of Discipline Courses (wherein the previous subject-specific curriculum is confined). This meant that like all other disciplines English Studies programmes found the already expanded literary/linguistic/cultural studies curriculum squeezed. Within the Foundation and Applied Courses there is provision for English language teaching of the instrumental variety, free of both literary and linguistic scholarly engagement, which naturally becomes the responsibility of English teachers and departments—in that sense a part of English Studies.

This specific situation clarifies how the current thrust of policy may be interpreted in a HE institution, and what that might imply for English Studies.

Future?

In considering future possibilities for English Studies in Indian HE, it is not my intention to give a normative cast to the above observations—whether ongoing developments are good or bad is not for me to judge. The future possibilities are simply possible logical outcomes of current trends, which may change as trends change, and in fact consist in little that isn't glaringly obvious in India and indeed elsewhere.

First, Applied Linguistics (focused on ELT as an instrumental programme) seems set to grow within the existing institutional spaces of English Studies—within English departments—in the near future. This would be encouraged by market demand, government and corporate initiative and concentration of investment, as well as by international academic and business entities. It is possible that eventually Applied Linguistics (focused on ELT) will break away from the mainstream of English Studies and assume independent institutional identities, as separate departments and as a separate discipline. Second, correspondingly scholarship and pedagogy in what has conventionally been English Studies (literature, linguistics, cultural studies, etc.) is likely to become more contained: appealing to a smaller intake of students/researchers and justifying smaller departments, regarded as more highbrow—perhaps also perceived as more socially remote, in a way, from what the discipline turned out to be through and after the crisis debates in the 1990s. The elite interests served by English proficiency and cultivation of English Studies thus far will take time to dissipate, if at all; in that process, English may lose its cultural (and financial) capital to some degree. Third, the powerful drive towards vocationalizing/professionalizing HE will be felt increasingly unevenly on all aspects of English Studies. So long as Applied Linguistics (focused on ELT) remains or appears to be a subsection of English Studies—i.e. the business of English departments—that subsection will draw investment, perhaps to the advantage of English Studies generally. If Applied Linguistics subsections broke away from English Studies and became separate institutional entities (departments), and formed independent professional bodies, the remnant English Studies would still have to find ways to survive in an environment where resources are allocated according to vocational/professional measures and market demand. In due course,

this remnant of English Studies may have to reorient itself again to become more market-friendly, perhaps by cultivating firmer application within and alignment with entertainment, mass media, heritage and other industries.

Outlining such future possibilities is, of course, no more than an expression of the present. In a way, any attempt to predict the future is but a strategy for framing the present, and the ambition of this chapter doesn't extend beyond that.

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