

प्रधानमंत्री तथा वैदेशिक-कार्य मंत्री (श्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मुश्किल यह है कि जिन को समझाना चाहते हैं हमारे निम्न, उनके कान तक आवाज न पहुँचे और दिमाग में न आये, तो समझा नहीं सकते हैं।

Shri Viswanatha Reddy (Rajampet): Sir, if the hon. Prime Minister speaks in Hindi, we shall not be able to understand.

श्री प्रकाश चौर शास्त्री (गुड़गांव) : दोनों भाषाओं में बोलिये।

12.09 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, after the minor excitements that we experienced a little while ago, it is a little difficult to come back to the calm atmosphere of a debate on language. Although perhaps this debate on language has not been quite as calm as it might have been and there has been some excitement and some passion introduced into it, yet, even while this debate has been going on and important questions were considered—because the question of language is very important—I have had a vague feeling that the debate was slightly out of date or will soon be out of date. Why do I say so? Because this whole debate, this whole approach is governed by a static conception of India, as if India was not changing and India is not what it is. We carry on in the old way. What is happening in India? Apart from the rest of the world, a new world is growing up. It is coming in upon us with giant strides, even though many of us may not quite realise it. In two ways it is coming in upon us, and both ways are such that they will affect the question of language more than, if I may say so with respect, any decision of this House; or, rather, the decisions of this House will be governed by these forces.

What are those forces? One is the obvious fact of the growth of, call it democracy, education, vast numbers of people coming into the field of political decision. Whether it is by means of elections or otherwise, all these people come in and a vast number of them, a great majority of them have no background of a foreign language in them. That is a fact of life. It is not a question of choice. It is so. And the more they come in, the more they will change the scene—for good or bad is a different matter, opinions may differ. We who sit here, many of us, belong to a generation which was brought up differently, that is, brought up through the medium of English, through English as a medium of education. Obviously, that is not being repeated even now in India, and will still less be repeated in the future, so that the whole context of this argument is changing.

The second point, which I think is important to bear in mind, is that the new world that is growing up in India is going to be a scientific, technological and industrial world. We talk about Five Year Plans and all that. We talk in terms of some project here, some there. But if you look at the whole picture, it is a picture of an entirely and absolutely new world growing up in India. It is the industrialisation of India, it is the industrial revolution coming to India in the middle of the twentieth century, rather belated no doubt, and trying to catch up with the developments of the twentieth century.

Now, may I ask, what has all that got to do with language? I say it has everything to do with language. We seem to think of language as something either writing in government files, may be for the primary or secondary schools, or may be for a *mushaira* or *kavi sammelan*. It is all that, of course, I do not deny it; but it is something vast and something basic which moulds the people, and it has moulded all the activities and

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occupation of the people. If this industrial revolution comes here, as it is coming and it is bound to come, it changes the texture of our thinking and it introduces words without number which you have to use in these new occupations, and all the efforts of Dr. Raghu Vira and Seth Govind Das cannot meet that situation, whatever it may be. They may produce volumes after volumes of artificial words, so-called translations. Nobody will accept them, you can take it from me, because that language of science and technology will not come out of your class-room or translator's room. It will arise from the people who are working there.

These are two major developments that, I say, will affect language, because they affect our entire life, and the decisions that you may make will really be governed far more by these vast developments than by some technical resolution that you may or may not pass. I just wish to say that this is the background with which I should like to approach this question, with which I should like the House to approach this question, because, if I may say so with the utmost respects to this House, we Members of this House are able men, experienced men, but by and large we do not represent the scientific, technological, industrial world; "industrial" not in the sense of ownership of industry, but of the engineering side of it.

This is the world we are entering into, and this revolution is coming on. That revolution, as it has affected other countries, powerfully affects language, thousands and thousands of new words coming every year from technology, science etc., and those people who suggest to set up some translation bureau for it. I respectfully say, have no conception of the meaning of those words. Translations of some scientific words and symbols which have grown out of certain contexts and conditions can-

not be done so easily as if it is an artificial thing coming out from some slot machine; it is important to remember that.

Now, having said that and unburdened myself to that extent, I should like to say that this Committee of which my friend and colleague the Home Minister was the Chairman has done I think quite a remarkable piece of work. I do not pretend to agree with every line that they have written and I do not want anybody here to agree with every line that they have written. It was, after all, a very difficult problem, people thinking quite differently being brought together in a large committee and miraculously agreeing, except for one or two or three or two and a half, whatever it may be. It really is remarkable that this measure of agreement was brought about. Of course, when you seek such a measure of agreement you give up something here, something there, which I may like, which many of the hon. Members may like. I agree. But, broadly speaking, it was rather a remarkable feat and a feat which I doubt if anyone else except my colleague the Home Minister could have brought about. As I say, I do not like some emphasis here or some lack of emphasis there, but broadly speaking, in the way it has come out, I think it is a worthy report.

Now, some days ago or some weeks ago I had occasion to speak in this House on Shri Anthony's resolution on the English language, and it was my good fortune to say something which pleased Shri Anthony as well as some others. I am grateful to him for that. Whatever I said then—of course, I hold by it completely—I was not laying down any statute or law, I was emphasising an approach, a mental approach. I was not considering what words to use in a Bill or something like that, but a mental approach to this problem.

Let us consider the facts. Apart from our wishes, one of the basic facts today is that the medium of instruction has become the language of the region, the great language of India, whether it is Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujerati, Hindi, whatever you may like. That is the basic fact, and the basic change that has come over India is coming over India which will produce a generation utterly unlike the generation to which I belong to is this, that education will be through an Indian medium and not English. Apart from some people who may consider English as their mother tongue, which is a different matter, that is the basic change.

I do not understand the importance, the relevance or the significance of this argument about Hindi—English etc. I am coming to that. But once you grasp this basic fact that the great regional language of India are now progressively the media of instruction, then you will appreciate the revolutionary change that is coming over India—for good or bad is another matter. It is an inevitable change which has to come, and I think it is a right change, although I realise that there are certain risks and dangers in it—I mean to say risks and danger of a certain measure of separatism. I realise that. But you could not put an end to those risks by ignoring a problem, you have to face it.

So the first thing is this major fact and it is that major fact that produces a certain result on the position of English in India. I want you to realise that it is not a question of Hindi—English, it is a question of the 14 languages—or more than 14, if you like, even though they are not in the Constitution—principally, for education being carried on through that media. That creates a situation which is broadly different from the time when many of us who went through schools or colleges got our education through the medium of English. That is the basic truth.

Therefore, English inevitably becomes in India a secondary language. It is no longer the primary language. It does not matter what you may say about it, it becomes that. The House knows very well the importance I attach to English, and I shall come to that presently. The basic fact is that English becomes a secondary language in India. It is not the medium of instruction. It is a language to learn as a secondary language, maybe some learn it as a compulsory secondary language, but it is a language which is a secondary language and it can never quite occupy that place in our mind because it has lost that place in our educational system except for a few. That is the first, basic fact to be remembered.

The second is, obviously we require some kind of common language link and the Constitution has said that Hindi should be that common official language link. Remember it is for official correspondence or whatever it is—official work—between the States. Having found, apart from any decision in the Constitution, that the position of English is bound to go down in that way, it will come up in another way as I would point out. The argument that may be advanced for English to be this kind of official language for India really becomes very weak if you realise the first fact. Today, as somebody has said, there are plenty of arguments in favour of English. In fact, the fact is we do much of our work in English as everyone knows, and by a decree you cannot change it, because we have grown up into that. Tomorrow it may not be the case and the day after tomorrow it will still less be the case. These are the facts. You cannot ignore them, whatever your likes or my likes may be.

Therefore, you have a variety of reasons into which I need not go, but you have to have that common binding link for the language of India. You may again criticise Hindi; it is

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not good enough, it has not developed enough. It is there I will for a moment accept all your criticisms. Still, the fact remains, and it can reasonably be argued that no other Indian language, other than Hindi, would be more suitable. Mind you, I do not say that Hindi is in the slightest degree better than any other Indian language. In fact, I firmly believe that some of the Indian languages are richer in content and have a better literature than Hindi. But that does not take away from the fact that all the languages have to develop and to influence each other.

Now, the real basic opposition, I take it, comes from a fear that Hindi, if it comes in, will mean a disparity for the non-Hindi knowing areas. I say undoubtedly it will be a disparity. Let us face that. Let us not try to get over it and say anybody can learn it in a fortnight or in a month or a year. It will be a disparity for a considerable time. I say a rule must be laid down by which we do absolutely nothing which creates a disparity for non-Hindi-speaking areas, in regard to matters like services and other things. Let that be quite clear. I am quite clear about that.

Shri Mahanty (Dhenkanal) Will you accept the quota system as was recommended by the Commission?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am sorry I do not know what the quota system is, and I cannot accept anything I do not know or understand. Take services. I am perfectly clear in my mind that for any foreseeable time there should be no compulsory bar—compulsory knowledge of Hindi—to the recruitment of people in the services. None at all. If a man does not know one word of Hindi, still, he ought to be able to come in at that stage. But I would certainly have him learn Hindi. Of course, I want him to learn it at an earlier stage

too. Very probably he will. I am merely saying that this feeling of disparity should vanish. Shri Frank Anthony said, "Oh, the Prime Minister said that there will be no imposition of language. Therefore there should be no compulsory test in Hindi after coming in." I do not see how that follows. It is not a question of a compulsory test in Hindi. We may very well have compulsory test in English. Do you object to that? I think every person who comes into the All-India Services ought to pass a compulsory test in English. Will Shri Frank Anthony object to that? Probably not. I want that wider knowledge.

Suppose, an all-India officer is going to Madras. I would insist on his having a compulsory test in Tamil. These are the normal things that are done for convenience of administration and everything. The man for the all-India service ought to know the language of the place he works in. He normally tries to learn it. Whether he knows it well or not I do not know. We send people abroad. To whatever country we send them, people in the Foreign Service are required, as a compulsory thing, to learn certain foreign languages. Each person has to choose one or two or sometimes three foreign languages. So, you must not look upon it as an imposition. When I said that there should be no imposition of Hindi, what I meant was this. Whether it is Madras, Andhra, Kerala or whatever part it may be, I do not wish to impose a language on that State in the sense in which the State will take it. I know if they have a sense of pressure or imposition they react against it. I do not want that. If the State of Madras says, "We do not want compulsory Hindi", let them not have compulsory Hindi in their schools. As a matter of fact, there are more people learning the language voluntarily than perhaps in any other place in any other way. So, I want to remove this sense of ~~compulsion~~.

I want to remove this idea that they will suffer in service or in the work or whatever it is. I want to remove that sense. I want all these things to develop voluntarily and in a spirit of co-operation and, it is for us to adjust ourselves from time to time to these developments.

In this matter, as I said on the last occasion, we have to be flexible in our approach; no rigidity. I do not like dates and all that. We start movements and processes working which lead in certain directions and which we gradually adjust ourselves to.

I come to English. I had said that English should be an associate or additional language. What exactly did I mean by it? Well, I meant exactly what that means. That is to say, English cannot be, in India, anything but a secondary language in future. In the nature of things mass education will be in our own languages. English may be taught as a compulsory language—I hope it will be—to a large number of people; it cannot be to everybody but to a large number. It remains as a secondary language. But I say that Hindi, whenever it is feasible, comes into use progressively more and more for the inter-State official work. But English should have a place there; not a limited place. That is to say, English can be used by any State in writing to the Government or writing to each other. Remember that this internal State work will be done presumably in the State language. English comes in only on the question of dealings on the all-India scale between States. To that, it should be open to anybody and to any State to do that in English. There is no limitation on that. We encourage them to do it in Hindi; if they can they can do. But there is no limitation. I say there is no limitation of time even to that, except when people generally agree,—and I had said that those very people in the non-Hindi-speaking areas who might be expected should agree. I am perfectly agreeable.

I would submit to this House and more especially to our colleagues from the Hindi-speaking areas that if there is one thing—there are many forces at work in favour of the spread of Hindi and they are spreading Hindi and it is becoming richer—that is going to come in their way, it is sometimes their over-enthusiasm and the way they approach this subject which irritates and rightly irritates others. It irritates me. I do not know about the non-Hindi-speaking areas.

Then there is another thing. The type of Hindi they produce is really a most extraordinary one. I am not worried about it; it is only irritating. Because I said that Hindi or any other language that will come up in India will come up from the masses; not from literary coteries.

Yesterday Acharya Kripalani was talking about Madrasi English, Bengali English, Bombay English and all that, which is completely right. But we have, today very much so, a Bengali Hindi, Madrasi Hindi and Bombay Hindi developing. To my ears, it is rather painful to hear. But I put up with it; there it is. But just like there is Bengali Hindi, there is Seth Govind Das Hindi and Dr. Raghu Vira Hindi. What Hindi are we going to have really? This business of some kind of slot machine turning out Hindi words and Hindi phrases, that kind of approach is an artificial, unreal, absurd, fantastic and laughable approach. You cannot do it. If you try to do it, you will put your mind in some kind of steel-frame which cannot understand anything or progress at all. It can only recite perhaps some slogans by rote. That is all. It can understand nothing else.

Coming to another aspect of English, the aspect that English has to be an associate additional secondary language which can be used by anyone who wants to use it in that central sphere, I mean, even though

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Hindi is the official language, English is used too, and I expect that progressively the use of it will become less and less. It does not make any great differences whether it takes a certain period or double that period, a little more or a little less; I do not mind.

Take another aspect of English to which I attach great importance and that is the technical and scientific terminology. There is no very great difference, although there is some difference, between the terms in English, French, German, etc. Broadly speaking, the scientific terms approximate, though their endings may be different. That is, there is something which might be called international scientific and technological terms. I am strongly in favour of not Hindi only, but every language of India trying to have identical scientific and technical terms. I do not say that every word should be absolutely the same and I do not want well-known words to be rejected. Well-known words, whether in Hindi or Tamil, of course, will be used. But it is not a question of well-known words; it is a question of this vast ocean of language that is streaming in, the technical language, which cannot be reproduced. If you could translate it adequately, even if you did it, even then you do the wrong, because you would be separated from the rest of the world in regard to those words.

It is necessary for us in the modern world to find as many common points of knowledge as possible. We cannot change and we need not change the literary part of our language. That has developed and will develop. But so far as this unknown region, which is getting more and more known is concerned—the scientific, industrial and technological region—we should develop to the best of our ability a common language in India, which is also common for international purposes.

Shri Hem Basma (Gauhati): For the European language Greek is the common pool. What is the common pool here?

An Hon. Member: Sanskrit.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: No, no. I do not say Sanskrit or any other. It is true that words like Oxygen originally came from Greek or Latin as a rule. I say you have to adopt them bodily, not every word, but common words you use. Any ordinary man does not ask your opinion as to what he should call a bicycle. He calls it a bicycle and be done with it. But there are those gentlemen living in Lucknow who insist on calling it *बिस्कि*। *बिस्कि* is a very good translation.

Shri Frank Anthony (Nominated—Anglo-Indians): Longer than that.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: You could translate many things like that, but every villager knows what a bicycle is. You go about translating it and say, "No; bicycle comes from some foreign language". That approach is not good enough.

This is a very important matter—your absorbing this vast number of technical words in the form, as far as possible, that they are used internationally. It does not matter if they come from Greek or Latin. It does not matter if they come from English. But the point is, it is a body of language which you are not using for show. You want that knowledge; you want to advance industrially, technically, technologically and scientifically. You want to advance fast and every obstruction in the way will delay your advance or progress in that direction, which is essential for us to make good.

I need not say again about numerals. It is absolutely essential that we should use the international numerals. We might use any flowery way of writing we like, but in business, in

science and technology, generally the international form of numerals should be universal in India in all the languages and should be the common factor for foreign languages too. Not that I object to any other form being used, but one should encourage in every serious work—I do not mind novels having anything—in every statistical work, the use of international numerals which immediately puts us on a line with others. You can take a book in almost any language—Russian, German or Japanese. You do not know the language, but it is a statistical book and you can easily understand it, because all the figures are in that form which you know. You understand the numerals. The headings you can change and you can marginally note it, so that you can use the world's statistical tables. In Japan, they have adopted this; almost everywhere in the world they have adopted this. Immediately the door opens out to the world's numerals, to the world's statistics and everything; if you keep your statistics in that way, the world looks at your statistics. If you insist on keeping it in a particular way confined to you, you are cut off from the rest of the world. So, these things are obvious.

Language, of course, is a very vital thing. But behind it is something much deeper. It is the reaction—action and reaction and counter-action—of two powerful pulls. One is the pull of the past, which is important and which we have to maintain. The other is the pull of the future. The pull of the future means the pull of what might be called the modern world, of science, etc. I do not think that it would be right at all for us to ignore the pull of the past. It is vital to us; we have grown up in it. For all that India is after 3,000 years, we cannot cut it off. Among other things, that is where language comes in.

I have on a previous day expressed my great admiration of Sanskrit. There are many things, of course, but

I do think that there is one thing which can embody the greatness of Indian thought and culture in the past; it is Sanskrit, which has been built up. We do not talk Sanskrit now no doubt, but the Indian languages of today have either directly descended from Sanskrit, or the Southern languages have been closely allied with it. The background of thought, of culture, whether it is Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and what not, is closely allied to the background of thought and culture of the northern languages because of Sanskrit and its effect on the whole of India. I do not say all of it is good; we have to change it; we have to discard something, but there are the roots on which India has grown up. I think if we cut away those roots, it will be very very bad for us; we become superficial human beings. Therefore, with all my admiration of foreign languages or English,—I want English to continue for a variety of reasons, as I have said—I can never ask our people to transplant their roots to English roots. It cannot be done and it would not be done under our democratic adult suffrage. It does not matter what you argue about it, but this would not be done. Therefore, it is important. Language comes in as an important and as a continuing link for ages past, and that link has transferred from Sanskrit to our modern Indian languages. That is one thing, the great events of the past and the heritages that we have. The other is the future to which we look forward, a future which may be called, to a large extent, influenced by modernism and the like, the modernism of the future, the spirit of the age, call it the *Yuga Dharma*, which is science, which is technology and the like. And I say so with all respect that all the languages of India put together cannot produce it in the foreseeable future, unless you have recourse to something else, to some other languages—of course, our language will be growing rapidly and our languages, I hope, will be developed with heavy books and thinking in

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science—because we have to spend millions and millions. Because, the moment you go to higher regions, it cannot be re-produced by artificial translations and text-books. It is something entirely different.

Therefore, the real conflict in the mind of India today is—language is only a part of it—how to bring out a synthesis from this past, from this heritage of the past to what we want in the present. That is the conflict and it is a basic conflict. I do not know what the ultimate result of this will be.

I referred on the last occasion I spoke here to a lecture delivered by a very well known author and scientist about the two cultures. He was talking about England and the two cultures were literary culture and the culture of modern science. He said there was conflict even in England. I imagine, if that is so in England, what about this country where we are just barely entering the age of science. We glibly talk in terms of science. We are out of that age. Our minds are out of it. If I use industrial words, a rich man may buy up a textile mill and may make money out of it—rich people go on becoming richer and richer—but he understands nothing about industry. He can buy an expert and make money out of it, but he is not an industrialist; he knows nothing about science.

So, that is the basic conflict in the soul of India and many other countries too—this past that we value and that must be valued and the future that we ought to have if we want to survive. Because, we cannot survive with all the past that we have got, unless we add to it the future, the future of science, of technology and all that. How far we can bring about that synthesis, the future will show. I hope it will, because there is no other way.

12.43 Hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Now, in our approach to language, broadly speaking, we should be flexible, because the moment rigidity comes in, difficulties come in, opposition comes in. And if we adopt this approach which is given, I think we shall succeed both on the issue of language and on that basic issue, the synthesis between old and the new.

Sardar Hukam Singh (Bhatinda): Mr. Speaker, I, am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to express my views on language. Originally I had no intention, and I have been a silent member of this House since I was elected to this office. But yesterday there were certain observations made by my friend, Shri Prakash Vir Shastri, which provoked me that I should certainly reply to certain aspects that he touched upon. Because, I had been associated with certain things to which he made reference, therefore, I think it is my duty to make certain things clear.

So far as the report of this Committee is concerned, by and large, I agree with it. Whatever may have been my views in the Constituent Assembly and whatever I might have said there, which was quoted also, since it was adopted by the Constituent Assembly certainly I have been an ardent supporter of Hindi and never have I opposed it. That question is settled and we agree that is the *Rashtra Bhasha*. The only question that has been argued here is how soon it should come and with what pace it should come. The different tones that were expressed here shows that there were differences about this. So far as English and Hindi are concerned, the hon. Prime Minister has referred to them and I would not go into those facts just at present. Because, within the time that I have at my disposal I want to take up the case of my own State, as that is a subject that is really in the forefront now.