



## SOCIAL UPLIFTING THROUGH LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF *HALF GIRLFRIEND* AND *ENGLISH VINGLISH*

SHAHZAD MEHAR

Post Graduating Student, Pondicherry Central University



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### ABSTRACT

Language is a central question in the post-colonial discourse. As part of colonization, colonizers usually impose their language onto the colonized to make trade and governance possible. In the Indian context, English is the language we have inherited from the colonizers, which they enforced as a superior culture. In response to this planned and systematic imposition of English, some postcolonial writers advocate returning to the indigenous language. Whereas some others writers see English as a more practical alternative to enhance international communications. Chetan Bhagat, through his novel *Half Girlfriend* shows the importance of the English language English become a new caste system in India. The film *English Vinglish* communicates the same ideas OF the novel *Half Girlfriend*, learning English empowers an ordinary homemaker. The English language is essential in this present global scenario, and it influences the socio-cultural aspects of our life. The English language is an alternative to the disturbing caste system in India. The English language has become the third most spoken native language in the world.

Keywords: Bagath, new caste system, empowerment, English language.

### Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is one of the famous Indian English writers, especially among the youth. He was born on 22- April 1947 in New Delhi, India. He was recognized for his fiction, romance, realistic fiction, and non-fiction. He wrote his first work, five point someone. Many of his works are best sellers. The New York Times called Chetan Bhagat the biggest selling English language novelist in India's history. Gauri Shinde is the film *English vinglish*, one of her short story "oh man," was selected for the Berlin film festival. Women are always somehow relegated to the background. But it's precisely their individualism as a pair that makes them perfect for the interaction of this sort.

English became the language for a person to fall in love at the same time to get a good job. It became part of prestige. English has changed and developed over time. Nonnatives speakers have trouble with English spelling, grammar, etc. English is the most studied language in the world. In the olden days English was just a foreign language. Still, now it became the language of power, personality, it becomes the language of personality, power it became a superior language.

Moreover, English language became a new caste system. Gauri Shinde, in her film *English vinglish* portrays that how English has become the language of life. By learning English, the person can be more self-

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confident. Learning the English language is a lively process. It opens the door to a new culture. It will help to communicate with foreigners easily. Language is another personality; it will change your way of thinking. The English language is going to decide how superior you are. It divides us into a different caste.

Without knowing the English language, we can't fall in love, as Chetan Bath said. English Language decides the happiness of your life. So English plays a significant role in our day-to-day life.

#### **English as a new caste system: A study of *Half Girlfriend*.**

Chetan Bhagat, through his novel *Half Girlfriend*, explores how English becomes a new caste system to our society. English language has great importance in this contemporary society. It has become essential in getting an excellent job in multinational companies, finding work abroad. English is vital for socializing and entertainment. According to Chetan Bhagat English language turns out to be a new caste system with everything from getting a job and entering a new relationship. "would you rather take a sensible student, or someone who would speak a foreign language well" (Bhagat 52). English language inculcates a new English culture. The majority of people do not speak English. Still, it becomes most crucial determines of social status, income, prestige. It has become the language of modernity, mobility, and intelligence.

The English language is not a gift to Indians. They got it through colonization. Macaulay's minute on Indian education aimed at funding education in western subjects with English as the language of instruction. The result was people, Indian by blood and color, and English as their taste. English has always been the language of the elite caste. English language becomes similar to the caste category. It plays a vital role in determining which friends they will have, which book they will read, which school they attend, whom they will marry and what media they will come to consume. People like Kiran Desai and Robinson Iyler support English supremacy. Non-English speakers are frequently ignored by our society. Many small and large English language institutes and private schools are founded across India to spread English learning. Undoubtedly, English should be taught in the globalized economy.

#### **English has become something essential in our day-to-day life.**

*Half Girlfriend* is a young adult romance novel. Settings of the novel are in New York, Bihar, and New Delhi. The story is about a Bihar boy Madhav, who falls in love with Riya. The author points out the struggle of a rural Hindi-speaking boy from Bihar who enrolls in a prestigious English medium, St.

Stephen's college. He says how English is essential in a person's life. At the same time, he points out the struggle faced by Madhav, who was not good at English.

Knowing a foreign language, most probably English language, expands our brainpower. But you can use your knowledge of English to learn more and more things about the world. English language will let you know about the culture, body language, vocabulary, and slang. The great works of literature such as science, history, and social science were written in English. If you are good at English you can travel around the world. English will help you with the details of travel. In many places, people find English important for their business. English language is essential for them to communicate with clients etc. In most of the hotels, there will be at least one employee who speaks English. Even people in small-town markets around the world know how to bargain with English speakers. English will bridge the communication gap on your travels and make traveling a breeze. For the last few centuries, economic power formed by Britain and America has resulted in the widespread of English language. The English language has spread through trade, religious missionaries, war, and slavery.

History is complicated, and it is not always pleasant, but today we can recognize that English is being spoken everywhere globally. We can use English as a positive power. We can use this language to bring the world together, to communicate with people from foreign countries, and to understand each other better. It also makes traveling easier. English allows us to know more about culture and social issues. It will give you a deep understanding of people's different perspectives of life. Understanding English language will let you be a part of a global conversation. It is not able to separate language and culture. Learning English language helps us to know about the people who live in English-speaking countries. Understanding English language gives you more insight

into how people think, live, and work. If you do not know about the culture of English speaking countries, this might lead to misunderstanding what people are saying in English.

Sometimes we will think that English has been crass, rude, and dismissive when they are not! If you understand which words or expressions are acceptable and unacceptable in English-speaking culture, this might save you from misunderstanding?

English is a widespread language that is seen all over the world. As Chetan Bhagat told English is necessary for a person to fall in love. Likewise English will increase the number of people you could date. English speakers have plenty of patience. English is integral for communication between states, Central government, foreign companies, etc. Only about 30 percent people can speak the English language. Most damning is that because of this favoritism afforded to the English language the culture of India are dying as they lose out on generations of authors, activist, actors, etc. So as Chetan Bhagat told, the English language became a new caste system in India.

### **Empowerment through language, a study of *English vinglish***

The film *English vinglish* communicates a similar idea as that of the novel *Half Girlfriend*. It shows how learning English empowers an ordinary homemaker. It is a film directed and written by Gauri Shinde. The protagonist in this Film is Shashi, an entrepreneur who makes snacks. She enrolls in an English-speaking course to stop her husband and daughter from mocking her Lack of English skills. English is the language that enhances your confidence and participation in the community. Here Shashi, the protagonist, is married to an urban, witty English-speaking man. Her children study in an English medium school, and they are fluent in English. Her inability to speak English downgrades her status in her family. Her daughter doesn't want her to attend the PTA meeting, and she hesitates to introduce her to her friends and their English-speaking parents. The initial part of the story focuses on how modern Indian society judges her because of her lack of English skills.

The second part of the story is her journey to learn the English language. The movie depicts her challenges from ordering food to communicating with immigration officers. These all depict how the English language has become necessary in the modern world. A person illiterate in English is a bird without wings. . Lack of ability in English is shown to be a hindrance in her life. This indicates that this language is vital in our life. Shashi felt insecure when she traveled to America because of her inability to speak English. Many persons mocked her because of her inadequate English. A man asked her, "How will you manage without knowing English?". She is not able to survive in a society without knowing English. Like oxygen and water, English language has also become a part of human beings. This film allowed the audience to consider the power and influence of the English language. The movie portrayed the evolution of language skills. It illustrates the art of the English language. Learning English language empowers Shashi and boosts her confidence. The film gives a clear picture of the idea that if anyone wants to master a language, only one thing is passion. Before you begin to build a skill, you should explore the conviction for doing it. So, the film *English vinglish* by Gauri Shinde tells the importance of the English language.

A person without knowing English is a second-class citizen. Society will ignore us if we do not learn English. The English language is something valuable. Everyone's life began when they move out of their comfort zone; here, Shashi, in the movie, was a typical homemaker. She couldn't even get any appreciation from her family members for not delicious Ludo's. But when she moved out of her comfort zone and learned English, she found a new self, and the family started valuing her as an individual. If we are not good in English society or our own family is not ready to accept us as an individual.

The film is about Indian women's moral and family values. Shashi is just an English-speaking comma sacrificial Indian woman, not a woman who has awakened to her rights or her own need. She got confidence, and she was denied gender discrimination only after learning the English language. This is a classic example of patriarchal and Linguistic Supremacy. The film *English vinglish* plays an essential role in highlighting differences in gender norms between Indian and American cultures. By presenting Shashi as an uneducated housewife, the movie efficiently buys into traditional gender roles and relegates the role of women in Indian culture. Her husband's belief that she should not make ladoos for anyone besides him reveals the male-dominated hierarchy

inherent in the Indian family structure. According to your husband, Shashi must make food. This is highlighted in the Scene Where Shashi explains to the French cook that his cooking is viewed as art because he is the man. But her cooking is considered to be a duty because she is female. She was exposed to the idea that she is more than a housewife when the teacher of her English class introduces her to the world entrepreneur. By delegitimizing her action, her husband propagates gender stereotypes that marginalize Shashi's role in society by confining her to the unique position of a domestic housewife. The ladoos play a significant role towards the end of the movie. When Shashi is forced to choose between attending her English final and cooking more ladoos, she ultimately decided to cook ladoos, which illustrate the idea that the gendered culture her husband has propagated has influence her priorities and decisions making by choosing to make the ladoos. She reinforces her role as a "domestic housewife" Institute of challenging traditional gender roles and taking the English final. Indian culture heavily buys into the gender binary, which can lead to the marginalization of women like Shashi.

### Conclusion

During the post-colonial period, English was considered the language of superior culture. The English language is a central question in the post-colonial stage. During colonization, colonizers try to impose or encourage the dominance of their native language onto the people they colonized. They forbid the natives to speak their mother tongues. Many students were demoted, humiliated, or even beaten up for speaking their native language in colonial schools. The English language has been the linear tongue of colonial discoveries, racial cruelties, etc. The hegemonic superiority of the Colonial language developed hatred in its colonized subjects towards the language of the colonizer. No wonder learning and speaking the English language became a matter of shame in the postcolonial scenario. According to the Census of India of 2001, there are 122 major languages and 1599 other languages in India.

. Though not an Indian language, English is one among the two languages other than Hindi, permitted in the Constitution of India for business in parliament. People of India maintain an ambiguous attitude towards the English language. On the one hand, there are people who admit its universality and global status. On the other hand, some people turn aside English as a hegemonic colonial discourse. When Amitav Ghosh received the 54th Jnanpith award, there were controversies regarding an Indian English Writer getting honored with this award.

The caste system plays a significant role in India. There are always differences between rich and poor, illiterate and literate people, etc. Through his novel *Half Girlfriend*, Chetan Bhagat gives a clear picture of how the English language can destroy the caste system and make two people fall in love. In the initial part of the novel Riya, the story's protagonist, rejects Madhav because he was not good at English. Riya was a rich girl, but Madhav was not. But later, when Madhav became good in English, and Riya fell in love with him. This shows that how much the English language has a vital role in this present scenario. Chetan Bhagat pictured English as a new caste system. Later he leads the capacity of the English language to give less importance to caste, religion, etc. It showcases how the English language erases the barriers of differences. It shows how a mastery of the English language earns one social acceptance irrespective of their caste, religion, class, etc. The English language also empowers people, and it will help to create self-confidence. People who are not good at English are ignored by society; they are always considered second-class citizens.

Through the film *English Vinglish*, Gauri Shinde clarifies how the English language helps a person build up self-confidence. It shows how a woman's life changes with English education. It shows how a woman gets empowered with her mastery of the English language. So the English language plays a significant role in challenging the difference based on caste and gender in this present scenario.

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