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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Not Indigenous, But Indian: The Hindu's Case That English Has Earned Its Place

 THE HINDU

11 August 2026 ·

HISTORY & CULTURE

POLITY

GS1

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INTERVIEW ANGLE

"Srinivas argues the "English versus Indian languages" framing is a false binary and that the real answer is multilingualism. But Tamil Nadu's resistance to the NEP three-language formula shows language policy is being fought precisely as a binary, one slot, one winner, in practice. If the theoretical case for multilingualism is sound but the political reality keeps producing zero-sum fights over that third slot, whose account of the situation is wrong, the theorist's or the politician's?"

Source: [Original editorial](#)

The Hindu

 Every fact web-verified against primary sources

THE LIFT LINE

A seed carried across the sea does not stay a foreign object once it has rooted, flowered and been replanted by hand, generation after generation, in soil it was never native to. That is Srinivas's case for English, made in the metaphor of another Indian poet writing in it.

WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

This editorial is unusual among Ujjayanti's daily analyses in one respect worth flagging explicitly: it is built from the actual, verified text of Y.L. Srinivas's Hindu op-ed rather than a secondary summary, and every claim below is marked by where it comes from, so you can see precisely which parts are his argument and which parts are Ujjayanti's independent addition. Language, society and colonial legacy is a recurring GS1 theme, and this piece gives you a genuinely fresh angle: not "is English good or bad for India" but "is asking whether English is indigenous even the right question."

It is also a live GS2 [federalism](#) hook. Srinivas's prescription, multilingualism over either/or, sits in direct tension with the 2026 Tamil Nadu-Centre standoff over the NEP three-language formula, where language policy is currently being negotiated as exactly the zero-sum contest he says it should not be. That gap between an editorial's argument and the news cycle it sits inside is itself testable analytical territory.

GS Paper 1: Modern Indian history, effects of colonialism on Indian society; the freedom movement's use of English as a medium of nationalist expression; role of language in social identity.

GS Paper 2: Indian Constitution, Part XVII (Articles 343-351), the Munshi-Ayyangar formula; linguistic federalism and Centre-State relations; NEP 2020 and the three-language formula dispute.

CONCEPT	MEANING	SOURCE
The "false binary" framing	Srinivas's core move: treating "English vs. Indian languages" as the wrong question, since promoting one need not deny the other	From the editorial
Munshi-Ayyangar formula	The Constituent Assembly compromise (K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar) making Hindi the Official Language while retaining English for official use	Editorial names the movers; the formula's name and Article 343 mechanics are Ujijari's addition
Sahitya Akademi recognition of English	The Akademi treats English as one of the languages of Indian literature and gives it annual awards	From the editorial
Eighth Schedule	Constitutional list of 22 officially recognised languages; English is not among them	Ujijari's addition, not raised in the editorial
Three-language formula (NEP 2020)	Mother tongue/regional language, a second Indian language, and English or a foreign language	Ujijari's addition, connecting the editorial to the live TN-Centre dispute
Indian English (Kachru's Outer Circle)	Braj Kachru's sociolinguistic classification of English as institutionalised-but-non-native in societies like India	Ujijari's addition; the editorial argues indigenisation through literary example, not this framework

WHAT THE EDITORIAL ARGUES

(This section reports Y.L. Srinivas's argument as written. Every claim here is his, not independently generated by Ujijari; verified facts he cites are checked against primary data where noted.)

The hook. Srinivas opens with a recent Supreme Court observation that revived the question of whether English can be considered an indigenous Indian language, and frames the resulting public debate, English versus Hindi/Tamil/Telugu/Odia/Kannada/Marathi, as a false binary that is "both historically misleading and politically unhelpful." His central claim: English is not indigenous in the historical sense that Sanskrit or Tamil are, but over two centuries it has "acquired a legitimate claim to belong to India."

A language transformed. He concedes the strongest objection up front: English arrived with British colonialism, to serve administration, commerce, missionary activity and what colonial rulers called their “civilising mission.” His rebuttal is that languages are not permanently defined by the circumstances of their arrival. He traces Indian appropriation of English from the early 19th century: **Raja Ram Mohan Roy** and associates submitted an 1823 petition in English defending the freedom of the Indian-language press in Calcutta (independently confirmed: this was Roy’s petition against the March 1823 Press Ordinance, co-signed with Dwarkanath Tagore and others, later called the “Areopagitica of Indian History”); **Dadabhai Naoroji** used English to develop his “Drain Theory” exposing colonial economic exploitation; **Swami Vivekananda** addressed educated India in English through his 1897 Madras lecture “My Plan of Campaign” (independently confirmed: delivered at Victoria Hall, Madras, during his 1897 visit); and **Mahatma Gandhi** himself translated *Hind Swaraj* into English to carry it to a wider audience.

Constitutional and creative accommodation. Srinivas argues independent India “found a place” for English rather than eliminating it: the Constituent Assembly’s language debates, moved by **K.M. Munshi** and **N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar**, “adopted a balanced resolution” recognising Hindi as the Union’s Official Language while retaining English for official purposes (this is the arrangement independently verifiable as the **Munshi-Ayyangar formula**, though the editorial does not use that name). He extends the argument to literature: the **Sahitya Akademi** treats English as one of the languages of Indian literature and confers annual awards on it, and “Indian Writing in English” has produced, in his list, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth as writers who “demonstrate that English can express Indian experiences with authenticity, subtlety, and artistic distinction.”

Reach and scale. Against the claim that “only a small section of Indians speak English,” Srinivas cites the 2011 Census: roughly **129 million** Indians reported English as a first, second or third language (independently confirmed against Census 2011 language data: approximately 128.5 million total, of which roughly 2.6 lakh as mother tongue, about 83 million as second language, and about 46 million as third language, so his figures hold up closely). He cites scholarly estimates that functional English proficiency may now extend to **180-250 million** Indians given the expansion of English-medium education, and notes nearly 31,000 CBSE-affiliated schools and roughly 3,000 ICSE-affiliated schools teaching primarily in English (independent verification found more current figures somewhat lower, closer to 28,000-29,000 CBSE-affiliated schools and roughly 2,400 CISCE-affiliated schools as of 2024-2026, a modest but real gap from his stated counts, see Data Vault).

Taking root. Srinivas closes his literary case with **Raja Rao’s** 1938 foreword to *Kanthapura*, in which Rao predicted India would fashion its own distinctive English “just as Canada and Australia had” (Rao’s actual foreword text, independently checked, in fact reaches for “Irish and American” English as his comparators rather than Canada and Australia, a minor imprecision in Srinivas’s own paraphrase, not something Ujjiyari has altered). He quotes **V.K. Gokak’s** poem “English Words” (“O winged seeds! You crossed the furrowed seas / To nestle in the warm and silent earth...”) as a metaphor for English naturalising in Indian soil, and cites **A.K. Ramanujan’s** “Prayers to Lord Murugan” as English carrying Indian mythology and devotion as a

natural vehicle rather than a borrowed one. He notes, as a further irony, that Gokak, a Kannada scholar and Jnanpith awardee, himself argued for the unity of Indian literature through English in *The Concept of Indian Literature* and *Pathways to the Unity of Indian Literature*.

The verdict, in his words. “It is not an important question, therefore, whether English is an indigenous language. It is not. More important is the realisation that through history and literature, constitutional practice and governance, and through everyday usage, English has earned the right to be regarded as one of modern India’s own languages.” His closing line: “Indian English belongs to India.”

Ujjyari’s addition begins below. Nothing past this point should be read as Srinivas’s argument.

BACKGROUND THE EDITORIAL ASSUMES

The following is Ujjyari’s addition, not part of the source editorial. Srinivas does not discuss Macaulay, the Eighth Schedule, the three-language formula, or Kachru’s linguistic framework; these are the standard exam scaffolding that sits behind his argument and that a complete Mains answer needs.

English’s colonial entry point predates everything Srinivas discusses. The **Charter Act of 1813** allocated **Rs 1 lakh annually** for Indian education without resolving the “Orientalist-Anglicist controversy,” and **Thomas Babington Macaulay’s “Minute on Indian Education,” presented on 2 February 1835**, settled it in favour of English-medium education, aiming to create, in his words, “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.” This is the starting point Srinivas’s “language transformed” argument implicitly answers: English began as a narrow administrative tool imposed from above, which is precisely what makes its later appropriation from below significant.

Constitutionally, **Part XVII (Articles 343-351)** governs the official language of the Union. **Article 343** designated Hindi in Devanagari script as the Official Language, with English continuing for official purposes only for a transitional **15 years**. The **Munshi-Ayyangar formula**, the compromise Srinivas describes without naming, resolved the resulting standoff between Hindi protagonists and non-Hindi-speaking delegates. When the 15-year clause approached expiry, the **Official Languages Act, 1963** (effective 26 January 1965) made English a **permanent “associate official language.”** English has never been added to the **Eighth Schedule**, which today lists **22 languages**, meaning it occupies a status Srinivas’s editorial does not mention: administratively indispensable, constitutionally unscheduled.

Education policy layered a further structure on top of this settlement. The **Kothari Commission (1964-66)** recommended the **three-language formula**, adopted in the **National Policy on Education, 1968** and revised under **NEP 2020**: mother tongue or regional language, a second Indian language, and English or a foreign language. Its implementation from the 2026-27 academic session has reignited exactly the tension Srinivas argues is unnecessary, Tamil Nadu’s government has called the formula a “covert mechanism” for Hindi imposition and has had **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** funds (reported near **Rs 2,152 crore**) withheld amid the standoff.

Separately, **Braj Kachru's** sociolinguistic scholarship, most influentially his 1976 profile of Indian English as a “transplanted language” and his later “Three Circles” model placing India in the **Outer Circle**, gives Srinivas's literary indigenisation argument (Gokak, Ramanujan, Raja Rao) a formal linguistic framework. Srinivas makes the case through poets; Kachru makes the equivalent case through phonology, syntax and lexis (India's own established “prepone,” “out of station,” “cousin-brother”).

THE ANALYSIS

- 1. Srinivas's strongest move is reframing the question, not answering the old one.** Most commentary on English in India tries to settle “is English foreign or Indian” as a yes/no question. Srinivas instead separates two different tests, historical origin and earned belonging through use, and shows English can fail the first while passing the second. This is a genuinely useful analytical distinction: it explains why English can simultaneously be absent from the Eighth Schedule and be the language millions of Indians dream, argue and legislate in.
- 2. His examples are chosen to make one specific point: appropriation, not imposition, drives the modern story.** Roy, Naoroji, Vivekananda and Gandhi did not use English because they were told to; they chose it to reach audiences colonial administrators never intended English to reach. This is the load-bearing evidence for his claim that English's **trajectory** reversed direction after its colonial introduction, and it is a stronger argument than simply asserting “English is widely spoken now.”
- 3. The editorial's silence on the Eighth Schedule is a real gap, not a minor omission.** Srinivas argues English has “earned” Indian-language status through use and ownership, but he never engages the one place India has a formal legal mechanism for recognising exactly that, Eighth Schedule inclusion, which requires nothing about historical indigeneity, only political and administrative decision. If earned belonging through use were the operative test in practice, English's continued Eighth Schedule exclusion would need explaining. The editorial does not attempt this.
- 4. “Multilingualism, not competition” is normatively appealing and empirically contested.** Srinivas's wayforward, that English and Indian languages need not compete, describes an ideal, not the current state of Indian language policy. The NEP three-language formula, which is meant to institutionalise exactly this multilingual ideal, is instead being fought over as a single contested slot in Tamil Nadu, precisely the zero-sum framing Srinivas argues against. A serious Mains answer has to name this gap between the editorial's prescription and the live policy fight, not simply repeat the prescription.
- 5. The reach-and-scale argument is real but should be read carefully.** 129 million Census-recorded English speakers, and Srinivas's own cited estimate of 180-250 million functional speakers by 2026, is a large number by any measure, but it also means a majority of India's roughly 1.4 billion people do not speak English at all. Scale supports “English is significant in India” more strongly than it supports “concerns about English's dominance are overstated,” a distinction the editorial's framing tends to blur.

BEYOND THE EDITORIAL

This section is Ujiyari's addition: verified counterpoints, live current-affairs hooks, and independent linguistic scholarship the editorial does not raise.

The class-access dimension Srinivas does not address. Nowhere in the piece does Srinivas engage the argument that English fluency in India correlates strongly with private-schooling and urban upbringing, meaning its dominance in the higher judiciary, elite higher education and competitive examinations can reproduce class advantage regardless of how “Indianised” its vocabulary has become. “Earned belonging” and “equitable access” are separate claims; the editorial establishes the first persuasively and does not attempt the second.

The NEP three-language dispute as a live test of his own thesis. Tamil Nadu is not objecting to multilingualism itself, the state already runs a functioning Tamil-English two-language policy, but to the suspicion that a third, centrally-influenced language slot will function as Hindi by default given limited practical alternatives. This is exactly the scenario Srinivas’s “multilingualism, not competition” framing is supposed to prevent, and it is happening anyway, which suggests the barrier to his prescription is political, not conceptual.

Independent linguistic scholarship reinforces his literary examples with a formal framework. Braj Kachru’s “Outer Circle” classification and decades of subsequent scholarship document Indian English as a stable, rule-governed variety with its own phonology, syntax and lexical innovations, corroborating Srinivas’s Gokak/Ramanujan/Raja Rao examples from a different angle, linguistics rather than literary criticism, without him citing it.

A modest fact-check on his statistics. Srinivas’s Census 2011 figures (roughly 129 million total English speakers) check out closely against primary data. His institutional figures run somewhat high: independently, CBSE currently lists closer to **28,000-29,000** affiliated schools (not “nearly 31,000”), and CISCE (which administers ICSE) lists closer to **2,400** affiliated schools (not “roughly 3,000”). These are not large distortions, but a Data Vault entry should use the more current, independently verified figures rather than repeat the editorial’s numbers uncritically.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

PRELIMS-GRADE FACTS, FROM THE EDITORIAL (VERIFIED):

Census 2011: approximately 129 million Indians reported English as first, second or third language (roughly 2.6 lakh as mother tongue, about 83 million as second language, about 46 million as third language)

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's 1823 petition: against the March 1823 Press Ordinance, co-signed with Dwarkanath Tagore and others; later called the "Areopagitica of Indian History"

Swami Vivekananda's "My Plan of Campaign": delivered at Victoria Hall, Madras, 1897

Raja Rao's foreword to *Kanthapura*, 1938: earliest prediction of a distinctive Indian English variety

V.K. Gokak: Kannada scholar, Jnanpith awardee, author of *The Concept of Indian Literature* and *Pathways to the Unity of Indian Literature*

PRELIMS-GRADE FACTS, UJIYARI'S ADDITION (NOT IN THE EDITORIAL):

Charter Act, 1813: Rs 1 lakh annually for education; Macaulay's Minute, 2 February 1835

Eighth Schedule: 22 languages; English not included

Articles 343-351 (Part XVII); the Munshi-Ayyangar formula (K.M. Munshi, N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar); Official Languages Act, 1963 (effective 26 January 1965), permanent "associate official language" status

Three-language formula: Kothari Commission (1964-66) to NEP 1968 to NEP 2020, mandatory from Class VI under CBSE from 2026-27

Braj Kachru: "Three Circles" model; India in the Outer Circle; 1976 profile of Indian English as a "transplanted language"

Corrected school counts (2024-2026): approximately 28,000-29,000 CBSE-affiliated schools; approximately 2,400 CISCE-affiliated schools (editorial states nearly 31,000 and roughly 3,000 respectively)

WATCH THE TRAP: DO NOT ATTRIBUTE THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE, MACAULAY'S MINUTE, THE MUNSHI-AYYANGAR FORMULA'S NAME, OR KACHRU'S LINGUISTIC THEORY TO THIS EDITORIAL IN AN ANSWER, SRINIVAS NEVER MENTIONS ANY OF THEM. IF A QUESTION ASKS SPECIFICALLY "ACCORDING TO THE EDITORIAL," ONLY THE CENSUS FIGURES, THE NAMED HISTORICAL FIGURES (ROY, NAOROJI, VIVEKANANDA, GANDHI, MUNSHI, AYYANGAR, GOKAK, RAMANUJAN, RAJA RAO) AND THE SAHITYA AKADEMI POINT ARE FAIR GAME.

THE DEBATE

Argument FOR Srinivas's "earned belonging, not a binary" thesis. Two centuries of Indians choosing English for nationalist petitions, economic critique, constitutional debate and literary creation is a substantively different phenomenon from a language merely persisting because it was imposed. Insisting a

language remains permanently “foreign” because of how it arrived, while ignoring how it has since been used and remade, is a static view of language that neither linguistics nor history supports.

Argument AGAINST treating this as the settled last word. The editorial’s own prescription, multilingualism instead of competition, is being tested in real time by the NEP three-language dispute and is currently losing that test in at least one major state. And “earned belonging” through elite historical usage (Roy, Naoroji, Gandhi were all English-educated elites) says nothing about whether ordinary Indians today experience English as a bridge or as a gatekeeper, a question the editorial does not ask.

Balanced verdict. Srinivas’s reframing is the correct starting point for this debate; treating “is English Indian” as a yes/no origin question has always been analytically weak. But a complete answer to “what is English’s place in India” needs his historical case for earned belonging plus an honest account of two things his piece leaves out, the constitutional non-recognition his own logic would seem to challenge, and the class-access and live political dimensions that determine whether “multilingualism, not competition” is achievable policy or aspirational rhetoric.

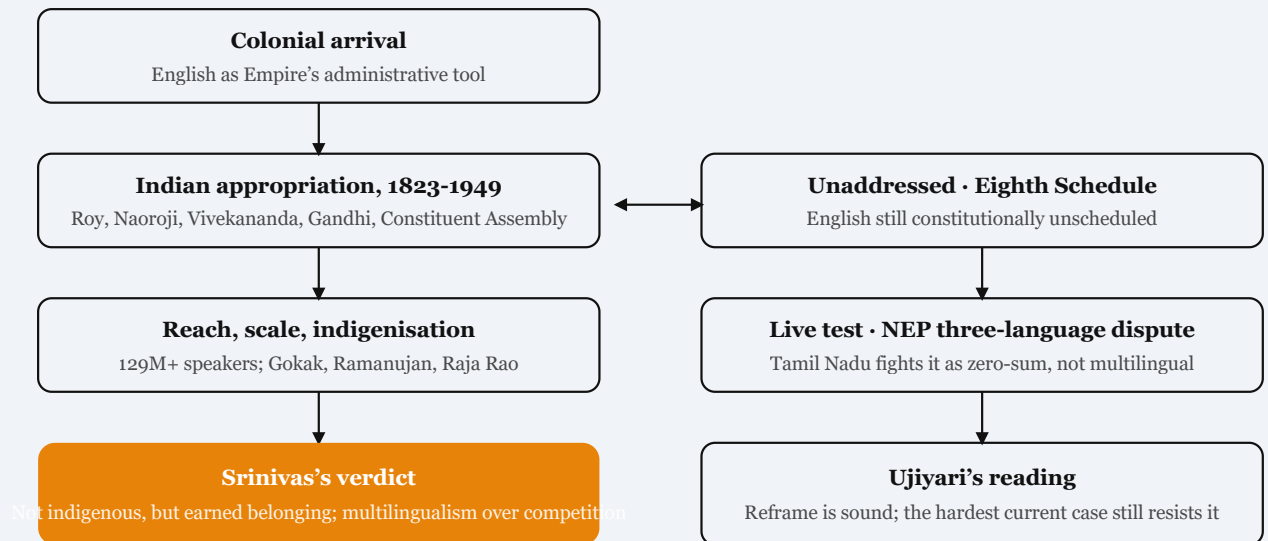
HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS

The transferable pattern: when an argument reframes a stuck debate by separating “origin” from “earned status,” check whether the earning claim has actually been tested against the hardest current case, not just the easiest historical ones. Srinivas’s historical examples (Roy, Naoroji, Vivekananda, Gandhi) are the strongest possible cases for his thesis, elite, English-educated nationalists who chose the language deliberately. The weakest current case for the same thesis is the NEP three-language dispute, where the state-level answer to “does multilingualism beat competition” is currently no. A reframing argument earns its conclusion only if it survives contact with its hardest case, not just its best examples.

This pattern recurs constantly in policy argument. Claims that **digital India has closed the access gap** rest on the best-connected urban cases and rarely survive contact with rural last-mile connectivity data. Claims that **a reservation category has “served its purpose”** rest on aggregate mobility statistics and rarely survive contact with sub-group data showing uneven benefit capture. The discipline is the same each time: find the author’s hardest case, not their best one, before accepting the reframe.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

Srinivas's argument arc, and what Ujiyari adds beyond it



Srinivas builds a strong historical case that English earned Indian belonging through two centuries of appropriation, but the piece does not engage English's continued exclusion from the Eighth Schedule or the live NEP three-language dispute, where his own "multilingualism, not competition" prescription is currently losing to zero-sum politics.

TAKEAWAY BOX

English did not become Indian by being declared so. It became Indian the way a seed becomes a tree, one generation of use at a time, and the harder question is not whether the tree has roots, but who gets to sit in its shade.

*Census 2011 (~129 million English speakers); Raja Ram Mohan Roy's 1823 press-freedom petition; Vivekananda's "My Plan of Campaign," Madras, 1897; Raja Rao's foreword to **Kanthapura**, 1938; V.K. Gokak (Jnanpith awardee, poem "English Words"); A.K. Ramanujan ("Prayers to Lord Murugan").*

*Macaulay's Minute, 2 February 1835; Eighth Schedule (22 languages, English excluded); **Munshi-Ayyangar formula**; Official Languages Act, 1963; three-language formula (Kothari Commission to NEP 2020); Braj Kachru's **Outer Circle**.*

Y.L. Srinivas writes as a Professor of English and Vice-Chancellor of a Central Tribal University, an institution serving communities for whom English fluency is often least accessible. Does that institutional position strengthen his authority to argue English belongs to everyone, or does it risk universalising an elite linguistic experience? As a civil servant weighing a similar language-access question, how would you test whether your own position gives you a skewed vantage point before generalising from it?

UPSC has repeatedly tested the freedom movement's use of English-language platforms, the Munshi-Ayyangar compromise and Article 343, and linguistic federalism; this editorial adds a fresh angle, testing whether students can distinguish a source's actual argument from the standard exam scaffolding around it, an increasingly common Mains skill as answers are expected to cite specific editorials accurately.

"The debate over English's place in India is often framed as a contest between English and Indian languages. Critically examine this framing, and assess whether India's language policy in practice, particularly the NEP three-language formula's implementation, reflects the multilingual ideal or a continuing zero-sum contest."

Sources: *The Hindu*, "English in India, a language that has earned its place," Y.L. Srinivas, *Census of India 2011*, PRS Legislative Research

Source: Not Indigenous, But Indian: The Hindu's Case That English Has Earned Its Place — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

● KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

English is not indigenous to India in the historical sense that Sanskrit or Tamil are, but over two centuries Indians have appropriated, transformed and repeatedly chosen it for their own political, intellectual and creative purposes, earning it a legitimate claim to belong to India without requiring that claim to come at the expense of Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Kannada or Marathi.



SUPPORTING

- Indians turned English into an instrument of their own political and intellectual expression from early in the 19th century: Raja Ram Mohan Roy's 1823 petition defending press freedom, Dadabhai Naoroji's "Drain Theory" exposing colonial economic exploitation, Swami Vivekananda's 1897 Madras lecture "My Plan of Campaign", and Gandhi's own English translation of Hind Swaraj to carry Indian ideas to a wider audience.
- Independent India formally accommodated English rather than eliminating it: the Constituent Assembly, moved by K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, adopted a balanced resolution recognising Hindi as the Union's Official Language while retaining English for official purposes, and the Sahitya Akademi has since treated English as one of the languages of Indian literature, conferring annual awards on a tradition running from R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand to Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth.
- The scale is not marginal: the 2011 Census recorded roughly 129 million Indians reporting English as a first, second or third language, a number scholars believe has since grown toward 180-250 million functional speakers as English-medium education has expanded, making India one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world.
- English has Indianised into its own variety rather than remaining a borrowed shell: Raja Rao predicted in his 1938 foreword to Kanthapura that India would fashion a distinctive English of its own, and V.K. Gokak's poem "English Words" and A.K. Ramanujan's "Prayers to Lord Murugan" show English carrying Indian mythology, devotion and idiom as a natural vehicle, not a foreign import.



COUNTER

The strongest objection Srinivas himself names is that English arrived to serve the British Empire, administration, commerce, missionary activity, and what colonial rulers called their "civilising mission", so treating it as Indian risks legitimising the very apparatus of colonial rule that introduced it.

**WAY FORWARD**

Srinivas's own prescription is to stop treating this as a choice at all: nurture multilingualism rather than adjudicate a contest between English and Indian languages, since English already functions as a historically familiar bridge connecting Indians to each other and to the world, alongside, not instead of, the languages they speak at home.


MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK
QUESTION

A recent Supreme Court observation revived the debate on whether English can be considered an Indian language. Critically examine the argument that the "English versus Indian languages" framing is a false binary, with reference to English's constitutional status, its history of Indian appropriation, and the concept of multilingualism as an alternative policy compass. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

A recent Supreme Court observation revived a long-running debate: can English be considered an Indian language? Y.L. Srinivas, writing in The Hindu, argues that framing the question as English versus Indian languages is both historically misleading and politically unhelpful, and that the honest answer has two parts held together, English is not indigenous in the way Sanskrit or Tamil are, yet it has earned a legitimate claim to belong to India through two centuries of Indian use.

BODY

Srinivas builds this case on four grounds: Indians converted English into an instrument of their own politics and thought from Raja Ram Mohan Roy's 1823 press-freedom petition through Naoroji, Vivekananda and Gandhi, rather than remaining passive recipients of a colonial import; independent India accommodated rather than expelled it, with the Constituent Assembly's Munshi-Ayyangar formula retaining English for official use even as Hindi became the Official Language, and the Sahitya Akademi later recognising English as a language of Indian literature; the scale of adoption is substantial, roughly 129 million Census-recorded speakers trending toward 180-250 million functional users; and English has Indianised linguistically, producing a distinct variety Raja Rao anticipated as early as 1938 and that poets like Gokak and Ramanujan have used as a natural vehicle for Indian sensibility, not a foreign overlay. What Srinivas's piece does not engage is India's formal constitutional architecture around language, English sits outside the Eighth Schedule entirely, its official status resting on the Official Languages Act, 1963 rather than any Eighth Schedule recognition, nor does it confront the live political reality that language policy is currently being fought as exactly the zero-sum contest he argues it need not be: Tamil Nadu's resistance to the NEP 2020 three-language formula treats the third language slot as a single, contested seat, not a multilingual bridge.

CONCLUSION

Srinivas's reframing, that origin and belonging are different tests, and English can fail the first while passing the second, is a genuinely useful analytical move, one that deflates a debate that usually goes nowhere because both sides argue past each other. But "multilingualism, not competition" is a normative prescription, not a description of the current policy fight, and any Mains answer that stops at endorsing his conclusion without naming the NEP three-language dispute as the place where that prescription is currently being tested, and contested, would miss half the marks available.

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