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Macauley urged colonial authorities to invest in the teaching of the language of the metropole in the colonies at the expense of local learned languages. Do you agree or disagree with Macauley's recommendation? Why?

Key debates were made in early nineteenth century Britain that led to popularization of English in their colonies, particularly India. In order to manage the Indian colony better, the British parliament passed an act in 1813 to encourage Arabic and Sanskrit education to educated Indians in order to promote their intellectual pursuits. In 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay overturned this act, claiming that English is more useful to teach to them (Macaulay 1835, 1). I disagree with his recommendation as although promotion of English education itself was beneficial to India, Macauley reasoned erroneously and neglected preservation of local identities that may otherwise have been replaced by that of the metropole. His reasoning that English, as the language of a civilization superior to others, should replace Arabic and Sanskrit is centered around British interest, ignoring the significance of them in defining the local society's identity. English should have been promoted to local Indians rather as it would have gave them both economical and political benefits that could have facilitated them to eventually gain their independence from the British Empire. While most of the allotted budget for language education under the act may have went into English teaching, to preserve their local identity, some of the budget should have remained in place for promoting local learned languages.

Macauley's argument on English as a superior language is not grounded on comprehensive understanding of other languages particularly Arabic and Sanskrit. For instance, Macauley argued that it is more important to advance public understanding in sciences than local literature (2). Granted, there may have been more scientific publications written in English at that time, and that it was convenient for the British Empire to operate colonizers in English. Nevertheless, his logic is corrupted, as science can be taught through any language and enough translation of scientific work will enhance scientific vocabularies of that language. Moreover, Conrad portrays Congo and English language, and more generally their society, to be morally similar in the *Heart of Darkness*. The novel described Congolese language as "strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language [...] like the responses of some satanic litany" and English with "[...] the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light [...]" (Conrad 1995, 58, 83). Furthermore, regarding Macauley's argument that local languages tell "false history, astronomy, etc", these works are in fact true in their own non-Eurocentric respect (6). Thus, although Macauley finds English teaching to be the most effective method for "intellectual improvement of people in this country", the same can be done through Arabic and Sanskrit teaching (2).

Some other factors that prompted Macauley's recommendation may have been beneficial only for the British Empire instead of the local colony. For example, popularization of English helped the metropole spread Christianity and exercise control as noted by Ranger (253). This helped the metropole unify the empire under common language and consequently culture, cut costs for communicating to locals, and satisfied local demands for securing government jobs and (Macauley 5). Consequently however, communities similar to Makuyu and Kameno became divided between those who follow indigenous religion and those who follow Christianity

(Thiong'o 2015). As another example, Macauley argued that English can be learned easily. Granted, he points out Indians who have attained native fluency in English, refuting his opponents' argument that "[...] no native of this country can possibly attain more than a mere smattering of English" (7). However, Sanskrit and Arabic is naturally easier for locals to learn, especially for local elites, as they are more in common with Hindu. Also, allowing the educated to learn respected local learned language may have kept locals cooperative toward the British empire (5). Contrary to his argument that Britain should not pay locals to teach local language, the fact that it is colonizing India makes it responsible to manage their welfare, as suggested by Furnivall (2014).

Despite Macauley's judgement over Arabic and Sanskrit, it is true that English education benefited locals Both economically and politically. In economic terms, investing in the metropole's language helped locals communicate with those from other British countries, benefiting not only the empires' economy (Macaulay, 3) but also India's economy. Managing English teaching may have been be more cost effective than managing local languages, as newly printed English books may have been used not only by locals, but also by other English speakers (6). For colonized countries that did not have a standard language, having English would have been beneficial both domestically and internationally (2). English language, as a language of commerce, facilitated western-led economic development, and Furnivall argued that western-led economic development would bring welfare to the locals. Furnivall also noted that "tropical [(Indian and Burmese)] peoples, when brought into contact with the modern world, must come to terms with western civilization in order to achieve harmony with their environment" (Furnivall 2014, 409). Although he does not perceive the locals as equals to the British, teaching English will certainly put the two parties in better terms.

The political benefits come from English being the language spoken by the ruling class (Macaulay, 3). Once English is spread as language of the ruling class language through the educated, there will be more opportunities for what Furnivall terms as “indirect rule”, as more rulers would be educated in English (Furnivall, 427). This also means that places that were under direct rule may be replaced by indirect rule as a result of locals English speakers. This, according to Furnivall, provides better welfare for the locals as “[...] some native authority, assumed to represent the people, can exercise personal influence among them and is more or less permanent [(as opposed to the system of direct rule where officers do not stay in the same region for long)]” (427). Furnivall ultimately suggests that providing welfare leads to “colonial autonomy”. Indeed, promoting English to local elites facilitates them to learn in Western education system and thus gain the knowledge and skills to achieve independence from the metropole (409). This idea has been suggested in *The River Between*, where Chege sends his son Waiyaki to the local Christian school in order to have him “...[l]earn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man ... [to] save the people”. However, in this case, the promotion of English should be done without the elites losing their local identity. As Chege further notes, he wants Waiyaki to “[...b]e true to your people [(in Makuyu and Kameno)] and the ancient rites. ”

As Thiong’o expresses through Chege, investing in a local language helps preserve their local culture, tradition, identities, values, wisdom, and religion, among others, as they help locals get insight about how their society functioned before colonization. For instance, Ranger describes the consequences of when only invented tradition is left through the Tanganyikan tribes. They artificially created their tribes in order to “ [...] function within the colonial framework”, based on “mythical history” inaccurately conceived by the British, although tribalism traditionally allowed people to move between tribes (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012,

252-253). As a result of the British authority imposing rigid social hierarchy to them, a conservative, patriarchal society replaced local tradition, and local religions were reinterpreted as prefigure of Christianity (253-257). This system was then perpetuated by colonial officials, men, elders, chiefs, African missionaries, and progressive traditionalists (266).

Furthermore, investing in local learned language helps preserve local literature. Macauley argued that Western literature is superior to non-Western counterparts and that local “languages may become useless” (2). However, without language preservation, local people’s view about colonialism such as those recorded in *The Broken Spears* would have never been passed on (Portilla 2006). The local account shows how the conquistadors seemed to be motivated by gold for their endeavors, rather than what Cortes claims as a duty to spread Christianity (Elliot 1986). Accounts such as this is crucial in giving alternatives views to Eurocentric colonial history, and an insight to the way of life of locals before they were colonized. In addition, preservation leads to creation of new native literary works such as *The River Between*, which is by no means inferior to British literary works (Thiong'o). Additionally, preservation of literature includes Hindi laws. Macauley does state that the local elites do not need to learn local Indian laws through Arabic and Sanskrit, and that they can study them through English translations instead (6). Contrary to what he argued, translations may change the meaning of laws from original, and without an Arabic or Sanskrit scholar to verify original meaning, the British may manipulate laws on their will. Preserving local literature thus leads to contributing local culture and systems.

Based on the benefits of both English and local learned languages, given a budget for language education, Macauley should have recommended the parliament to keep at least a couple percent of funding for continuing Arabic and Sanskrit education, instead of closing schools that taught them (7). The budget is only a couple of percent as Macauley does make a strong

argument in citing that “several ex-students of the Sanscrit College [...] stated that [...] ‘we have but little prospect of bettering our condition without the kind of assistance from your honorable committee, the indifference with which we are generally looked upon by our countrymen leaving no hope of encouragement and assistance for them’”. Macauley may further argue that there is no demand in the two languages, citing that “[...] Arabic and Sanskrit books [...] finds no purchasers [...the Committee of Public Instruction] cannot give [away vast stock of oriental literature] so fast as they print”. This argument, unlike the previous, is weak as lack of demand may have been due to non-elite locals not being able to afford the books. Moreover, keeping these schools open would have helped preserve local learned language while promoting English at the same time. For the remaining mass of population that were not familiar with Arabic nor Sanskrit, English may have naturally spread. Furthermore, although most of the learned locals can focus on English education, they should have gained some knowledge of Arabic and Sanskrit, leaving some to be further specialized with them for preservation.

In conclusion, this essay does not argue that promotion of English education should have been rejected. Instead, it sets fourth that Macauley’s recommendation is based on assumptions that the British language and power were superior to the local counterparts, and therefore cannot be accepted entirely. As Macauley argued, English education does provide benefits for the locals. Fundamentally, what matters is not solely the benefit of the British empire and the metropole, but also the benefit of the local colony. Nonetheless, the importance of preserving local identities have both short and long term implications. In the short term, the British parliament should have promoted mostly English, but also Arabic and Sanskrit to educated locals. In the long term, the British Empire would have needed to fully appreciate the right of its colonial subjects to maintain their identity, and as Furnivall noted, to grant autonomy, which the British mostly did

by the mid-twentieth century. Ultimately, what was at stake here was that those who were colonized not only benefited from English, but also preserved or gained their independency.

Word count: 1812

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