English Language Invasion of Covid-Terms: How the Pandemic Affects other Languages and Cultures.

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Abstract: The pandemic of Pandemics COVID-19 has encroached the world civilizations and has affected the basic human necessities through all the evil imagined. The invasiveness of the virus though will not last forever and people will forget the panic and the devastations it has caused over time but it's effects on English language and culture and Other Non-English languages and cultures will remain forever. The regular habits, expressions, common phrases ,slangs ,greetings, eating, meeting, dressing, shopping, learning each and every human necessities and recreations are more or less altered or have found other channels to meet up the need. Naturally, hundreds of new English words have been coined or old words have found new meanings to cope up with the need to express the COVID situations and circumstances. These are rightly called as COVID-terms. These terms have enriched the English vocabulary undoubtedly. But the other languages are affected as all these English words willingly or unwillingly have entered into their vocabulary permanently having given no chance to create and use their translated or transliterated counterparts in native languages. It resulted sometimes in problem of expression and chaos in cultural identity to some extent as language and culture are intertwined. The present paper deals with this language invasion, the problem it has created to the native speakers in some Asian countries like Japan, Indonesia and India, European countries like Turkey and countries like South Africa; and it's general discussion as the assessment of this effect in the long term is yet to be done by prominent linguists and philologists in times to come.

Keywords: COVID English Language Invasion; Non-English Language ; Coronaspeak; Culture And Language; Japan; Indonesia; North-East India; Medical Terms; Social Terms; Technical Terms; Corona Portmanteau;Corona Coinages; New Meaning of English Words; Cross-Cultural Communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Unesco in it's special issue on 'Culture and COVID' dated the 3rd July,2020 states that "The Covid-19 pandemic that continues to circulate around the globe is affecting almost every

aspect of daily life, including the very human need to connect to culture....The fundamental right to access to culture has been curtailed."(unesco.org) In the multicultural and multilingual cosmopolitan countries like India or South Africa, other than the primary English-speaking countries like the U.K or U.S.A, the problems are worse than one can even imagine.The real assessment of how COVID has affected global culture and habits are yet to be done fully and also how the two year long 'panic-demic' has changed the global language and phrases is yet to be recorded properly. But no one will disagree that in the twentieth century as the world war-I had divided the time with pre-war and post-war human civilization, the COVID pandemic also has created a rift over time, earth and the civilization in the twenty first century that seems to be permanent or at least not to be forgotten for years to come. The pandemic has also affected other Non-English speaking cultures and their languages permanently, resulting in the intrusion or may be the invasion of English terms and phrases into them with mixed effect and situations in cross cultural and cross-linguistic scenario.

How the Pandemic affects Languages and Cultures

The changing and the changed culture, norms, behaviours and values of COVID times are obvious to create an impact over the official language of the world, the English language. A Culture is always influenced by experiences, environment and history shared by the people it represents and is expressed mostly through language. The shared panic and psychological tension of the COVID time is more or less same for almost every human being, from every cultural and linguistic background and even more poignant for those who closely experienced death in one form or the other."Language is created and shaped by the needs of a culture as it changes. This means that language and culture are fluid, shifting to reflect one another and the changing landscape of the world"(study.com) The changed landscape of our earth after COVID creates a different language and culture altogether. People have started office works from home, students are joining in online classes, screen time has increased creating eye strains, migraines and mood problems, depressive disorders are on rise, people are celebrating festivals through virtual meet ups. Eating outs, long drives, vacation on hills seemed distant dreams. Families are spending more than usual time together resulting in quarrels and misunderstanding of opinions expressed in tensed atmosphere of the pandemic. Career options are being compromised along with economical compromisation. Shopping other than essentials are curtailed. Marriages, child bearing and social and religious programmes are reconsidered. In this changed scenario, change of emotion and feeling as well as change of language is a very probable effect of the change. According to Fatiha Guessabi, "Language communicates through culture and culture also communicates through language. Michael Silverstein proposed that the communicative force of culture works not only in representing aspects of reality ,but also in connecting one context with another. That is ,communication is not only the use of symbols that "stand for" beliefs, feelings, identities, or events, it is also a way of bringing beliefs, feelings and identities into the present context"(www.languagemagazine.com) The Post-Covid English language has also naturally evolved as influenced by newly acquired habits and culture because of the context of Covid-19.As soon as the outbreak of the pandemic over the globe ,the need of every society to figure out suitable language and expressions also grew and that bore the COVID vocabulary. New words from English, new meanings to old words and expressions, acronyms ,portmanteau words, new phrases, slangs and such other terms overflowed into all the

languages of the world from English. Surprisingly English language and English terms not only gained acknowledgement only because of it's global reach but because of it's foreignness to most other cultures as they looked upon the origin of COVID as a foreign disease, having their language either not ready to accept the changing scenario or because using words from other culture might be able to convey " a sense of crisis". But in some cases it affected inversely providing a confusion to grasp the new scenario with the new terms in absence of identical alternative terms of other languages just in time of crisis. Tony Thorne, who is presently working as a language consultant in the Modern Language Centre at The King's College, London , says: "'Coronaspeak',or the COVID terms; the new language of the pandemic, can help the public make sense of the unfolding crisis, but it may also increase levels of stress and confusion if people can't keep up." There is a great need , of course to cope up this language crisis both in the English speaking countries and in others where English is used as a second language or as the official language or in any form, as a language of communication. In China, hence, as reported that just after the outbreak of COVID worldwide, a whole new specialisation is devoted for making language services as a part of the emergency response to disasters."This research, labelled 'Emergency Linguistics', underlines the need for linguists to participate in fighting COVID-19 to prevent and control miscommunication during public emergencies."(www.kcl.ac.uk)

English Language invasion
There are three main aspects of this so called language invasion of English into other languages of the world in COVID times.

Firstly, the rapid outbreak of COVID all over the world and it's severity left all the cultures awestruck. Other languages soon started relying on WHO guidelines and common terms easily understandable all over the world , so that important information may not get lost in translation, so that the real meaning to convey the terms remain the same to understand easily.

Secondly
the global reach of COVID that didn't leave a culture untouched. As English is spoken by the most number of people in the world in workplace and public places and as it is regarded as the official language of the world without any doubt; it may not be the inability of the other languages to seek alternative terms but it may be called the belief on shared fate and the need for the hour was to consent on a globally acclaimed language, so terms and phrases were taken like Proper Nouns.

Thirdly
COVID, the term and the disease was primarily handled by the doctors and the scientists first; though suffered by almost each and every human being actively or passively. They mostly relied on medical and technical jargon of Latinised English like "virus " (from virus meaning poisonous fluid),"immune"(from immunis meaning exempted)to express this new phenomenon worldwide. It made the communication faster and easier.

Global Acceptance and Problems of English Terms

In a country like Japan, where people give utmost priority to their native language, Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike had started to use Foreign English loan terms in visual aids and scripts during COVID time, which seemed surprising. In an essay appeared on 26th March issue of Newsweek Japan, writer Akihiko Reizi, analysed the possible reasons for this expanded use of katakana (from foreign origin)terms in relation to the crisis of COVID."By using foreign words, Reizi theorized,Koike was able to convey " a sense of crisis". Because Japanese has such a "rich vocabulary",consisting of native words, words of Chinese origin and terms from other languages, there are many synonyms that offer a wide range of nuance for a single concept."(www.japantimes.co.jp) In case of Indonesian culture and language, they found their vocabulary flooded with four kinds of words to express COVID and after COVID situations ; Indonesian words, English words, Loan words and Abbreviations. A survey was conducted in Indonesia regarding this. The survey results implied that English words are more familiar than Indonesian and loan words. This is in line with a perspective mentioning that globalization and prestige have made people lost their sense of pride to use their national language. This 'language crisis' does not only occur among common people but also in governmental staffs, which then leads to the term of 'Indoglish' standing for 'Indonesian English'; a language phenomenon attacking the Indonesian language."(Rosidin Rosidin, Masyithah Mardhatillah, Rahmat Rahmat, Handoko Ja'far) "Turkey continues to host the world's largest number of refugees, around 3.6 million from Syria, and over 400,000 refugees and migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries."(www.hrw.org), including Palestine, Myanmar, Maldova, Georgia etc. Hence the problem of right communication regarding to the disease must be in a high priority level in a country like this. Though there is the availability of COVID related information in multiple languages by the government, people are still facing problems to access reliable and appropriate information about the disease and the available health services regarding it. According to a report it " may affect the level of awareness about potential COVID-19 symptoms, proper symptom screening, access to available testing, treatment and isolation/quarantine measures." (Situational Brief: Report on Forced Migrants And Covid-19 Pandemic Response In Turkey)
In South Africa, which is regarded as having one of the most unequally balanced societies of the world among the predominant English speaking population holding the power, wealth and authority of the land and the other Non-English speaking majority of masses, the problem of language during COVID times came up to the surface. In spite of receiving much public praise for his managing of the pandemic situation , the country's president Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa has also been greatly criticized because his government has delivered most of the official communications and proceedings about the pandemic in English. Being a multilingual and multi cultural country (south Africa has 11 official languages), the real meaning of an English term like "lockdown" generated in heavy confusion. Among the 'Xhosa-speaking' South Africans, the term 'lockdown' has been transmuted into the homophone' lokhwendala', which roughly means 'an old dress'. Recurrent memes of these language problems in social media had generated large criticism against the government policies regarding the failure to deal language issues in the country. However , some solutions were also developed out recently. 'AwezaMed,' a voice-enabled communication app, that was used earlier in clinics to help healthcare workers cross language barriers with maternity patients in South Africa is redeveloped in collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), to include a 'coronavirus-specific language algorithm' to offer grammar-based machine translation in all the official languages of South

Africa .It is a free downloadable app in Google Play that is hoped to solve earlier language problems in specific areas of usage.

But the Anglicisation of all the COVID terms also have some negative effect on different communities and regions. Particularly in a country like India where thousands of communities and hundreds of languages exist together, the problem is more severe than in Japan or Indonesia, especially for those people who have limited access to English language and English global terms and phrases. According to the head of language services at the non profit organisation "Translators without Borders" ,Stella Paris "People need information in a language and format they understand to keep themselves and their communities safe from COVID-19.Without this information, they are left to fill in the gaps, often with dangerous misinformation........Reliable communication and resources ,provided in the right language and format, can help people stay healthy and save lives".To cite one among many examples, a man in some part of Assam, who was asked to buy mask to protect himself returned from the market buying a fish, since the Assamese word "mass" which means fishes in general sounds similar; according to a media report Again according to Biplab Ghosh,a worker of Bharat Gyan Bignan Samity,that creates scientific awareness regarding COVID in the remote areas of India's treasured North-Eastern states, especially Manipur and Nagaland "If the resources are in English and Hindi, it feels like a distant danger; something that is not relevant.......Once we brought out materials in the local dialects, people understood the threat of COVID more clearly......if it's in Your own mother tongue, You can relate better"(www.thenewhumanitarian.org) One of the India's leading media house The Hindu has published e-books in different Indian languages on essential information about COVID and it's prevention. Apart from English the e- book is downloadable in Assamese,Bengali,Gujrati,Haryanvi,Hindi, Kannada, Konkani,Malyalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Tulu and Urdu. It has been called in English "The Pandemic Notebook" which was subtitled as "a handy guide on Understanding the coronavirus pandemic and staying protected against COVID-19"(www.thehindu.com).The translation of the content provided by 'The Hindu', into various Indian languages has been conducted by 'Confluence'(a web forum of Indian Academy of Sciences). In spite of trying to translate various terms like 'sequencing', they retained the original English word 'genome' and 'spike protein' and 'virus' in all the languages translated which is very interesting . Perhaps it is almost impossible to avoid or translate Latinised-English terms related to medical terms; or electronics and telecommunication technical terms. But it is also true that invasive English usage of different COVID related terms can never be replaced due to it's rapid popularity and mass usage after the outbreak, just like proper names. The publication of WHO 'first Disease outbreak News ' on the new virus on 5th January2020, the technical guidance shared by WHO on the 10th January, the formation of WHO emergency Committee on 22nd January,2020 and the situation report on 30th January 2020 and the releasing of Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan on 3rd February 2020, the convening of 'Global Research and Innovation Forum' on COVID-19 with more than 400 experts around the world on 11-12th February; (who.org) all these efforts and actions perhaps needed a commonly shared language through which working on the new pandemic be smoothly maintained in the same pace throughout the world in more than 150 countries.

Universal English Terms: Following in this paper are some lists related to terms which gained so much popularity at COVID times that it seems, even translating these into any local language might mar the effects, emotions and ideas related to these terms.
Acronyms: COVID (Corona Virus Disease) ;SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome); MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome); PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) ; WFH (Work from home) ; PUI(Person under Investigation),RTPCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase chain Reaction)

Medical Terms: Covid Positive or Negative; Herd immunity; Incubation; Intubation ; Co-morbidity, N-95 ; Respirator ; Ventilator ; immunity; immune system ; Immuno-compromised; Immuno-supressed ;Antibody; Contact tracing ; False positive or Negative ; Surgical mask;Viral load ; Asymptomatic ; Pulse oximeter; Proning ; Rapid-Antigen test

Social-Terms: Social distancing; Lock down; Flatten the curve; Super spreader; Self-isolation ;Masks, Sanitiser; Novel Coronavirus; online class; community spread; Containment zone ; Panic shopping ; Frontliners ;

Technical Terms: Doomscrolling; Zoom bombing; Zoom fatigue; Zoom dating;; Zoom university ; Virtual meeting;

New English Coinages: Coronials; Coronababy; Zoom mom; Zoom town; Blursday; Zoomschooling; Pandemic pods.

English Portmanteau words: Covidiot (COVID and Idiot) ; Covidient (COVID and Obedient; Maskne (Mask and acne) ; Coronasomnia (Corona and Insomnia) ; Coronacut (Corona and haircut) ; Quarantini (Quarantine and Martini or any hard drink) ; Quaranteam (Quarantine and team) ; Quarantimes ; Coronacation (Corona and Vacation); Morona (Morose and Corona)

New meaning of English words: Some English words found in 'youtube' are also there that have found their new meanings in the pandemic driven world and the effects are to last. There are three examples among many other(youtube,simpleEnglishVideos)
(a)   Self-isolation: The word previously meant the act of some countries or islands who separated themselves from the outside world and discouraged foreign trades or mingling. After COVID the word has gained positive response having meant the act of a responsible person who stays physically separate from others suspecting COVID so that the outbreak of Coronavirus can be checked.
(b)   Self-quarantine: The word quarantine earlier was used to mean the length of time pets or people with contagious disease are separated, Now the word meaning has changed when the prefix Self is added. Self-quarantine has become a verb meaning the voluntary act of people separating themselves from others so that they may not spread COVID.
(c)   Social-distancing : The word earlier implied people not engaging in social activities due to their negative attitudes or the act of unsocial people but now the word meaning has changed and found a meaning that has less implication on feelings and emotions but more implication on discipline and distance that can save one from Coronavirus infections.

Why and How English Language Lacks

George Dvorsky in his article "English is Surprisingly Devoid of Emotionally Positive Words" refers the work of Tim Lomas published in 'The journal of Positive Psychology' and Taylor and Francis online, where Lomas has managed to list "216 psychologically positive untranslatable words" in English. Among these words Spanish, German, Greek, Japanese, Philipine, Korean, Arabic, Hindi, Potugese, Italian and several others. Lomas,as he calls himself,'the lecturer of wellbeing'is quite sure that the list is far from being conclusive as there are thousands of words, that can be found in different cultures and dialects that can not be translated into English language. In another essay "How Other Languages Express Emotions and English Lacks the Words", by Zosia Bielski states about the argument of another psychology professor Mr. Phoebe Ellsworth, who concludes about one's feeling regarding one's attitudes and dependence of serving favour to one's close friends "" Westerners don't have the concept or the correlating emotion, Ellsworth argued, because of our cultural attitudes toward dependence – the Japanese like it, but we don't. "We would be much more reluctant to ask a big favour of somebody, "According to the author and philosopher Prof. Daniel Dennett in his book 'Consciousness Explained' tells about the ease of the process we think in our mother tongue "Language infects and inflects our thought at every level. The words in our vocabularies are catalysts that can precipitate fixations of content as one part of the brain tries to communicate with another. The structures of grammar enforce a discipline on our habits of thought, shaping the ways in which we probe our own "data bases," trying, like Plato's bird-fancier, to get the right birds to come when we call. The structures of the stories we learn provide guidance at a different level, prompting us to ask ourselves the questions that are most likely to be relevant to our current circumstances."

He also quotes linguist Mr. Justin Fritz Leiber who says about the contribution of natural language to programme our thoughts at the very early stage of our existence "Looking at ourselves from the computer viewpoint, we cannot avoid seeing that natural language is our most important 'programming language.' This means that a vast portion of our knowledge and activity is, for us, best communicated and understood in our natural language…. One could say that natural language was our first great original artifact and, since, as we increasingly realize, languages are machines, so natural language, with our brains to run it, was our primal invention of the universal computer. One could say this except for the sneaking suspicion that language isn't something we invented but something we became, not something we constructed but something in which we created, and recreated, ourselves."There is always the fear of losing the real sense while translating or transliterating. But during COVID times another fear also rises, the fear of getting undue advantage and unprecedented popularity or gaining a false sense inevitability in case of English language which can strangle the growth of thousands of Non-English languages as insignificant during crisis-times. Even further research in those languages may not be continued due to the reasons that they are not needed in applied sectors. This could have been dangerous.

The Changing Status of English language

 English language is rapidly changing it's status from EFL(English as a Foreign language) to ESL (English as a Second language) all over the world. The inevitability of the language has been already seen in offices, business, cross-cultural communication and diplomacies among nations.This language invasion is raising some inevitable questions regarding the ELT (English language training) in the non-English speaking countries. There are two types of

non-English speaking countries or states i) ESL(English as Second language) like, in a country like Bangladesh, English is spoken as a second language. ii) ETL(English as a Third language where the use of second language or the first language is not official and might be limited to mere speaking limited) In a country like Nepal, English is spoken as a third language, Maithili and Hindi being the second language after Nepali. Only some of the countries like China and Japan have been able to resist the invasion but that too, in a limited sense. To keep oneself updated automatically in a global scenario, there is no other alternative than to know English language properly. Hence proper language training is also very necessary. As language acquisition and language training are two different perspectives, Teaching English as a second or third language in Non-English speaking countries might be a lucrative career options for the English language Trainers all over the world.

2.   CONCLUSION

COVID times are tough times for an individual and for the societies, for Cultures and for languages all around the world. Millions of people have lost their jobs, thousands attempted suicide; More than hundred million school students may not go to school again due to poverty and engagement in wage earning works for their families. To think about the sudden change of languages and cultural habits are even luxury to them at this moment. Yet it is also true that COVID phrases and coinages have proved again the inevitability of learning English language to remain updated and on the track and also that how inefficient human languages are to rightly bear and express our true feelings. At the same time new terms and phrases will continuing to be coming onto the surface as the more recent 'Omicron'and other waves . New coinages related with newly acquired habits of working from home or losing jobs will also shoot up words garnished with domestic violence, new business strategies, family belief systems, food habits etc which will be popularised by the internet and social media sites more than ever. As English language is used in more than 63 percent (Web Technology Surveys) of websites across the globe as a content language and this percentage is growing, the tendency to use common and generalised terms in English will also grow more and more. This has also proved how easily the royal language is becoming the layman's language across the globe. The advantages of learning and speaking English properly in any kind of work in any part of the world are unquestionable. With it's mere 26 alphabets the English language is creating, actually coining miracles on the stage of time and civilization and it's welcomed by other languages; whether by choice or by compulsion; will be a long debate not to end sooner than ever.

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