

THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON YOUTH IN SHILLONG: A SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The rapid development of communication and mass media has broadened the scope of interconnectedness and globalization among the world's nations and cultures. These interconnections have ushered a network of intercultural and linguistic contact among users of different lifestyles, as featured in the media. As media is often cited in the literature as a powerful tool that shapes and influences public opinion and behavior, the cultures of advanced and developed nations tend to be the model that influences underdeveloped and developing nations to converge into a mass culture. However, this is not without its consequences. This study explores the consequences of media influence on the youth in the local setting of Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, India. In particular, as a preliminary investigation, it attempts to survey the impact of popular culture on the Khasi youths in Shillong and to evaluate the influence of media broadcasts on the socio-psychological aspect of language choice appropriated by the Khasi youths. A total of 100 Khasi youth participants aged 16-30 years, both male and female, were included in the study. Our findings demonstrate that Khasi youths in Shillong tend to associate themselves with trending forms and ideologies indoctrinated through media stereotypes. This has resulted in a departure from traditional conservatism as they integrate into an identity of 'sub-cultural' construction. Furthermore, English among the many alternative languages in media broadcast was found to be positively favoured by the Khasis youths in Shillong due to its relative scope, extensive communicative value, and utility compared to other languages.*

Keywords: *media, popular culture, socio-linguistic, impact of media, Shillong*

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Introduction

In the contemporary epoch of heightened global interconnectivity, various media modalities – ranging from traditional print media such as newspapers and magazines to the emergent digital realms of websites and social media platforms – have assumed a position of paramount significance as conduits for mass communication. These diverse media channels function as powerful sources of information and entertainment, transcending international borders, national divides, and local communities alike. The enhanced accessibility to media content has engendered possibilities for information retrieval and dissemination through these media platforms. As media technologies have evolved progressively, the way people relate to the media from sociocultural, linguistic, economic, and political vantages has exerted a transformative influence across all aspects of our lives. This is due to the enormous popularity and pervasiveness of print media, popular films, music, radio broadcasts and social media applications which have become a part of our everyday lives. A plethora of the existing scholarly literature has consistently portrayed media as the most persuasive and powerful tools in shaping public opinion, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., Perse, 1986). Consequently, the intersection between media and the socio-cultural and linguistic realities of the audience within a given society cannot be overlooked. Reports on the study of media effects have been published since the late 19th century (Werder, 2009). Scholars investigating the influence of the media on society have employed various theoretical frameworks, including Cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1969), Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1971), and Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Rosengren, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). These models illuminate how media exposure shapes our attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions (e.g., Perse, 1986; Cohen & Weimann, 2000). Within this broad academic context, the present study aims to evaluate the influence of the media on Khasi youth in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, India.

The state of Meghalaya, situated in the Northeastern region of India, is a linguistically and culturally diverse region. Meghalaya, which translates in Sanskrit and other Indic languages as “the abode of clouds”, measures approximately 300 kilometers in length from east to west and 100 kilometers in width, encompassing a total area of around 22,429 square kilometers (Devi, 2010). According to the Census of India, conducted in 2011, Meghalaya had a total population of 2,966,889, with the Khasis and Jaintias constituting more than half of the total Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, while the Garos account for the second-largest group with 34.6 percent (War & Singh, 2013). Meghalaya is predominantly a tribal state. Linguistically, Khasi, Pnar and Garo are the principal languages spoken there. Pnar is a dialect of Khasi, while Khasi and Garo are the two associate official languages of the state (Dkhar & Singh, 2018).

English along with Khasi or Hindi are the link languages for inter-communication and English is used predominantly in the domain of mass communication and social media (Dkhar, 2023-2024).

The state of Meghalaya features a diverse media landscape, including a variety of newspapers and radio broadcasts for the dissemination of news items of state, national, and international importance. According to the Meghalaya Media (n.d.), The “Times of India, The Hindu, and The Indian Express are the most important national-level newspapers of the state. The Shillong Times, The Meghalaya Guardian, and The Northeast Today are three of the many local newspapers of Meghalaya”. All the mentioned newspapers are in English, except for some local newspapers such as “U Mawphor”, “U Nongsain Hima”, and “U Rupang” (among the most popular ones) which are Khasi-language newspapers. Ri Khasi Channel, U PCN (Peitngor Cable News), Ka Batesi, and T7 are among the popular local Khasi news channels in Khasi language, live broadcasted on television and on-demand through You-Tube platforms. Despite the proliferation of other media, radio remains a popular medium in Meghalaya because of its inexpensive and portable character and the fact that it provides an easy access to local news items, entertainment and advertisement for people of all socio-economic strata. Radio stations in Meghalaya, both government-owned and privately operated, offer a wide range of programs, including news, information, and entertainment (Meghalaya Media, n.d.). Television programs in Meghalaya feature national as well as international channels via IPTV services and live broadcast for local channels is also rampant. Apart from print and broadcast media, social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter, You-tube, Instagram, and WhatsApp have gained unparalleled impulse and popularity in Northeast India in general and Meghalaya in particular. The popularity of these social networking sites allows rapid retrieval and dissemination of information, entertainment and interconnectivity in Meghalaya, alongside the rise of computer-mediated communication (CMC) applications. The global access via internet, electronic media, and social media, in general, has accelerated connections between different cultures, facilitating the development of a global society across boundaries and the introduction of elements of inter-cultural change. This is evident in the Northeast states, including Meghalaya. Marak (2018, pp. 23-24) points out that:

Technology and media have facilitated the introduction of new ideas and cultures into the Northeast”. This is particularly true in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, which has gained popularity as ‘The Rock Capital of India’ where the influence of pop culture has taken a toll on the youths discerning from ‘a number of hip-hop rappers in Shillong today, the popular ones being Resemblance, Khasi Bloodz, Symphonic Movement, Cryptographic

1. Meghalaya Media. (n.d.). <https://www.mapsofindia.com/meghalaya/media/>

Street Poets, Kingdom Culture and Mawlai Emcees. According to the music songwriter K. Mark Swer, from Shillong, technology has enabled these artists to rise to this level of popularity today (ibid. p. 24).

Theoretical Underpinning

Culture denotes “all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things and people that we learn when we become members of the social group. It can be defined as socially acquired knowledge” (Yule, 2010, p. 267). Mulholland (1991) describes culture as a shared meanings, values, and beliefs that guide a group’s identity and behavior. Culture has undergone a varied range of meanings in contemporary discourse. Citing Williams (1983), Zhen (2016, p. 24) mentions that the term culture is used in three relatively distinct senses to refer to: “the arts and artistic activity; the learned, primarily symbolic features of a particular way of life; and a process of development”. Baldwin (1998, p. 4) treats culture as the “works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity”. As an artistic activity, the meaning of culture was extended to refer to music, literature, painting, sculpture, and theatre, which, as explained by Zhen (2016, p. 24), are “closely related to the idea of becoming cultured, or of cultivating good taste and discriminating judgement”. Dakroury (2014) points out that “media and culture are interconnected; levels of understanding various cultures influence media contents, meanwhile, media platforms and contents impact cultural and day-to-day practices”. The development of democracy and mass literacy makes mass production and consumption of these cultural products, i.e., folk and high culture (which seemed to lose their distinction by the end of the eighteenth century with the onset of popular culture, a term replaced for folk culture), accessible to the general public via mass media, which gives rise to mass culture.

The nineteenth century saw the beginning of the era of popular culture, which is popularized by mass media for mass consumption. Culture thus becomes what Bourdieu (1984) contends – capital. Storey (1993) defines popular culture as that which is ‘leftover’ after the canon of high culture has been decided upon, or it may pertain to the mass-produced culture of the ‘culture industry’. In Moody’s (2010) analysis of prevalent characteristics found in many definitions of popular culture, it was noted that popular culture is commonly linked to mass media, particularly ‘free’ media such as radio or television. Furthermore, popular culture tends to have a consumer-oriented nature, often promoting the development of ‘fans’ for performers, products, or genres. Lastly, popular culture, much like other forms of consumer culture, is increasingly influenced by globalization. The exposure of popular culture through mass media is ubiquitous and has a bearing on every aspect of life. Thus, a broader definition of popular culture finds expression in Browne (1978, p. 12), who defines it as:

the cultural world around us, that is our attitudes, habits, and actions: how we act and why we act; what we eat and wear; our buildings, roads, and means of travel; our entertainment and sports; our politics, religion, and medical practice; our beliefs and activities, and what shapes and controls them. In other words, it is to us what water is to fish: it is the world we live in.

As a symbol of identity, Acharya (2015, pp. 23–24) opines that popular culture is an identity marker with the production and representation of the various registers and styles, and group memberships that it seeks to embody within itself. Certain linguistic representations in the popular media also propagate particular ways of thinking about social variables such as gender, class, caste, etc. In addition, media rhetoric, with its wide reach and appeal, also influences to a great extent both the social and linguistic behavior of consumers.

Media types like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet are indispensable sources of information for virtually everything from the modern to the post-modern era, and they are easily accessible due to their association with the internet, which is distributed globally. According to Dakroury (2014), “media screens have become essential elements in public and private daily-life practices in societies and cultures”. As an innocent tool that purports to facilitate the dissemination of information, the media is not without its effect on the audience.

Werder (2009) mentioned that the study of media effects has been traced back to the late 19th century. As early as the 1960s, scholars recognized the effect of media, which manifests in the words of McLuhan (1964), who coined the phrase “the medium is the message”. Since then, there has been a plethora of theoretical issues that focus on propaganda and persuasion within media effects. This includes the Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1969), Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), Uses and Gratifications Theory (Rubin, 2002), Third Person Effect (Perloff, 2002), Effects of Media Violence (Sparks & Sparks, 2002) amongst others, which provided some insight into how exposure to media has a tremendous effect on a person’s perceptions of themselves, others, and society in all aspects of life, whether socio-culturally, socio-linguistically, or in practice.

Today, the use of media is immensely popular among youth across nations. In general, it has traversed “diverse individuals versus socially stratified culture and nationally versus global identities and communities” (Livingstone & Bober, 2005). Willis (2003) makes an astute observation about adolescents and identity formation, stating that traditional social, economic, and racial-cultural identities dimly define the youth’s identity more than their interests in commodity and electronic cultures, such as listening to R&B and rap music on MTV, DVDs, cell phones, or iPods. According to Guy (2007), pop culture is something that most of us appreciate. As pop culture consumers, people expect excitement,

amusement, and stimulation. The most popular and prolifically developed and disseminated cultural texts are TV, radio, cinema, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, art, music, etc. Dolby (2003) points out that it is the media business that produces the majority of these texts, such as soap operas, movies, ads, comics, sports teams, song lyrics, video games, superheroes, websites, and so on, and that popular culture is a location where the youth learn about the world. Learning means the interpretation of media's contents and production depending on the context of how recipients accommodate it in their daily lives. This is because ideology is propagated by the media, as Fuchs (2020) argues "traditional media often produce and disseminate ideology" (p. 347). The consequence of such mediation has consequently produced a generation of mass-audience consumers with a centripetal outlook on cultural and behavioral practice in society, closely aligned with popular culture, which, as Adorno and Horkheimer (1972, p. 48) put it, "mass-produced cultural products of low quality replaced high culture and traditional folk culture".

Linguistically, Dalha (2005) and Bashorun (2011) (as cited in Owolabi & Nnaji, 2013, p. 125) observed that "language remains an indispensable tool as a means of development and social cohesion, and in the current era of global information technology, it plays a major role, because no technological innovation is conceived in abstraction, that is, without the input of one language or the other". English is presently spoken by more people than any other language (as a first, second, or foreign language) and is regarded as an essential lingua franca by many nations (Graddol, 1997). According to Acharya (2015, p. 39), the media's stimulation of global diffusion of the English language "is directly proportional to the economic value it holds in the market". According to Ukoyen (2005, p. 34), "One look at the map of the world reveals that English now exists in every strategic corner of the globe, either as a mother tongue or as an official or second language". Tickoo (2006) claims that the educated middle class perceives English as the sole path to limitless prospects that have come to represent power, economic prosperity, and more recently, information-technology-driven modernity. Acharya (2015), in her studies on "Popular Culture and English Language Learning: A Study among Youth in India" found an emerging pattern of popular culture forms impacting young people. As per the sequential order of popular products divided in her study, her findings show that 'Mass Media' products are seen to be impacting the English language environment of the youth the most, followed by 'Other Media' and lastly, the 'Social Media'. Hjarvard, (2004, p. 77) argues that:

Globalization and the predominance of English at the expense of other languages is nothing new. It is rather a question of radicalization and acceleration of a centuries-long trend, in which local varieties of language die out, and more universal varieties survive.

Drawing on media effects theories, the proposed study aims to examine how media, as a central purveyor of popular culture, shapes the socio-cultural behavior and ideological practices of youth consumers in the local setting of Shillong. The study investigates the extent to which mass-mediated content and its widespread accessibility, facilitated by the global diffusion of languages like English, lead to the cultivation of dominant cultural sensibilities and the potential marginalization of indigenous linguistic and cultural expressions. By situating the inquiry within the local context, the research will provide nuanced insights into the interplay of cultural globalization, the tension between dominant and local cultural forms, and the linguistic implications of media-driven cultural shifts. This theoretically grounded and contextually embedded examination will contribute to a deeper understanding of the impacts of media on the socio-cultural and linguistic landscape of Shillong.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was mainly confined in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, India, for research convenience and accessibility of data. Subjects were randomly drawn from schools and college-going students in Shillong. Subjects are all Khasi native speakers drawn purposefully from different schools and colleges covering various regional zones in Shillong.

Demography

A total of 100 subjects were considered for our study. Subjects include both males and females. Since the study focuses on the impact of media on the socio-cultural and linguistic behavior of youths, subjects were carefully selected to include younger age groups (i.e., 16–30 years), as stipulated in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. *Demographic profile of the subjects by age groups and gender*

Total Nos. of Subjects	Age-Group	Gender	
		Male	Female
100	16-30	50	50

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of popular culture on Khasi media consumers, particularly the youth in Shillong.
2. To assess the influence of media broadcasts on the socio-psychological factors affecting language choice among Khasi media viewers in Shillong.

Data Analysis

For our study, a quantitative method was employed. Close structured questionnaires were used as tools for data elicitation. The data was analyzed using SPSS software. The data was analyzed and quantified based on the frequencies and averages. Schematic representations in the form of a tableau were generated to present the findings.

Results and Findings

Socio-Cultural Impact of Media

Table 2 presents the data with regards to the impact of media pop culture(s) on Khasi media consumers in Shillong. The assertions postulated in each parameter of the table below measure the influence of media popular culture(s) on variables pertaining to social, ideological, and cultural practices at the receiving end of Khasi youths in Shillong. The table below illustrates that the majority of the participants (Mean \bar{X} =72.8%) agreed to most of the propositions stipulated in various parameters, though few negative (Mean \bar{X} =16.3%) and neutral (Mean \bar{X} =10.9%) responses were also elicited. This suggests that the majority of the participants agreed on the impact of media popular cultures and ideologies conveyed through media platforms, which have an influential role in inter-cultural transmission and an assimilative effect on the youths in a local paradigm of the Khasis in Shillong.

Table 2. *Socio-Cultural Impact of Media Popular Culture (PC) on the Youths in Shillong*

Items	Parameters	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	Media is the main window to gain insights into popular culture.	95.0%	5.00%	0.0%
2	You tend to have a positive attitude towards media PC worldview.	68.0%	18.0%	14.0%
3	PC enticed you to voluntarily partake in their cultural practices.	65.0%	25.0%	10.0%
4	PC has increased knowledge of foreign languages.	82.0%	18.0%	0.0%
5	PC has in some way influenced your personality development.	53.0%	23.0%	24.0%
6	PC has influenced your choice of dressing.	72.0%	10.0%	18.0%
7	PC has influenced your choice of grooming and styling.	78.0%	12.0%	10.0%
8	PC has influenced your choice of food.	71.0%	11.0%	18.0%
9	PC has influenced your choice of drinks.	78.0%	13.0%	9.0%

Items	Parameters	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
10	PC has influenced your language preference.	62.0%	25.0%	13.0%
11	PC has influenced your choice of how to spend your money?.	82.0%	18.0%	0.0%
12	PC has directly or indirectly influenced your lifestyle.	67.0%	18.0%	15.0%
Total Mean Score		72.8%	16.3%	10.9%

A close examination of each variable in each parameter (i.e., *Items 1–12*) resulted in the following responses:

The frequency score in *Item-1* elicits 95.0% positive response where participants ‘agree’ with the proposition that media is the main source to gain insights about modern, contemporary, and popular culture(s), in contrast to a frequency of 5.0% who ‘disagree’ with the assertion. *Item-2* shows that the majority of the participants (f = 68.0%) conceded a positive evaluation of popular culture’s worldview as broadcasted by the media, in contrast to f = 18.0% who displayed a ‘negative’ attitude and f = 14.0% who remained ‘neutral’ with the assertion. It is not surprising then that the majority of these participants (f = 65.0%) held the idea that media have positively enticed them to actively cultivate and integrate popular culture’s ideologies and practices (*Item-3*) in their day-to-day lives, apart from f = 25.0% who display a strong ‘negative’ reaction and f = 10.0% of the remaining participants who remain ‘neutral’ to the given proposition. Given media consumption, it is not surprising that the majority of the participants (f = 82.0%) ‘agree’ that popular culture and language perspectives have educated them in the knowledge of foreign languages, as opposed to the few participants (f = 18.0%) who ‘disagree’ with the proposition. Building on this positive evaluation appraised by the participants, which is statistically significant, it is then logical to statistically evaluate how popular culture’s ideologies are practically oriented in influencing participant’s real-life undertakings, as statistically computed in *Item-5-12*. The majority (f = 72.0%) of the participants reported affirmatively to the idea that media have stimulated an integrative convergent attitude closely akin to popular cultural ideology and practices in the following perspectives: personality development (53.0%, see *Item-5*), sense of dressing (72.0%, see *Item-6*), styling and grooming (f = 78.0%, see *Item-7*), food and cutlery (f = 71%, see *Item-8*), choice of drinks (78.0%, see *Item-9*), linguistic preferences (62.0%, see *Item-10*), aspect of spending money (82.0%, see *Item 11*), and life-style (f = 67%, see *Item-12*).

Socio-Psychology of Language Choice in Media:

Figure 1 below presents the data for the preferred choice of language which participants (n=100) mostly consume across different programs broadcast in Media channels.

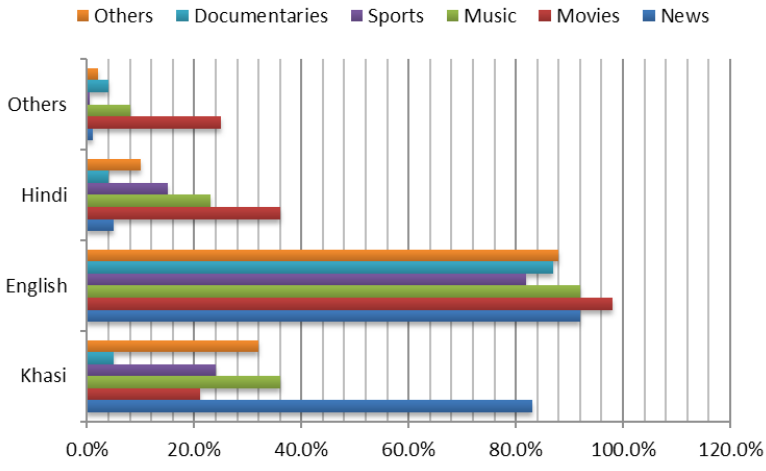


Figure 1. Preferred Language Choice across different media Programs

Table 3 provides the statistics on the socio-psychology of language choice and behavior employed by the Khasis in Shillong. The assertions made in each parameter of the table below, by extension, measure the factors that entail the choice of language claimed by the participants.

Table 3. Socio-psychology of Language Choice in the Media

Items	Parameters	English	Hindi	Khasi
13.	You find this language dominant in the Media	70.0%	21.0%	09.0%
14.	You find his language is mandatory to avail the range of Mass media	62.0%	20.0%	18.0%
15.	You find that learning this language is motivated by necessity than interest	62.0%	33.0%	05.0%
16.	You find that this language is more contended than all available alternatives	61.0%	05.0%	34.0%
17.	You find that this language is mostly used as subtitles in many films/documentaries etc.	95.0%	03.0%	02.0%
18.	You find that this language has slowly developed into a choice of the masses among media viewers	75.0%	15.0%	10.0%
19.	You find this language comfortable for sharing media contents and feedbacks	58.0%	10.0%	32.0%

20.	You find this language has wider audience's reception	66.0%	21.0%	13.0%
Total Mean Score		68.63%	16.00%	15.38%

Item-13 reveals that a statistically significant proportion of participants believe that English (f = 70.0%) is the most dominant language in the media, followed by Hindi (f = 21.0%) and Khasi (f = 09.0%). In *Item-14*, a sizable proportion of participants (f = 62.0%) believe that knowledge of the English language is required for all forms of media access, with only a few reporting Hindi (f = 20.0%) or Khasi (f = 18.0%). *Item-15* indicates that the majority of participants (f = 62.0%) believe that learning English is motivated by need rather than desire. This suggests that other languages like Hindi (f = 33.0%) and Khasi (f = 0.05%), which received insignificant scores on utilitarian grounds in the media, are ineffective. In response to the question given in *Item-16*, a significant proportion of participants contends English (f = 61.0%) above other accessible alternative languages like Hindi (f = 05.0%) or Khasi (f = 34.0), which scored insignificantly. *Item 17* shows that an overwhelming proportion of participants perceive English (f = 95.0%) as the language that is most frequently used as the target language for providing source language subtitles, as opposed to Hindi (f = 03.0%) or Khasi (f = 02.0%). In *Item-18*, the majority of participants believe that English (f = 75.0%) is the language that has gradually become the language of choice among media consumers. Here, only a fraction of participants voted for Hindi (f = 15.0%) and Khasi (f = 10.0%), respectively. *Item-19* relates more to electronic media. Here, participants almost always share interactive social media content such as feedback in English (f = 58.0%), followed by Khasi (f = 32.0%), and Hindi (f = 10). Finally, *Item-20* shows that about 66.0% of participants rated English as the language that has the broadest appeal for a larger audience and better media reception while 21.0% and 13.0 % rated Hindi and Khasi, respectively.

Discussion

Consumers today find a considerable appeal in the media business and culture producers. The transmission of popular culture's contents, form, and ideology (whether entertainment, fashion, trends, linguistic conventions, or aesthetics) is almost indispensable in mainstream media. Media exposure has enabled consumers to accumulate sets of ideologies and beliefs that were trending in popular culture, as implied in the theoretical discussion above. Concomitantly, the impact of popular culture is analyzed by the end product of individual or collective consumerism and the resulting cultural influences on the consumer's assimilative behavior in real-life situations.

Our empirical findings from Shillong align with the theoretical discussion and support the notion of media effects. The data shows that the media played a significant role in shaping the cultural worldviews and practices of the Khasi community. This is evidenced from the participant's tendency to associate themselves with the popular forms, ideologies, and sociocultural practices propagated through media stereotypes. Our findings indicate that the majority of the Khasi audience (youths), in Shillong, endorsed a positive attitude towards popular culture's worldview (see *Item-2* of **Table 2**) and tended to associate themselves with the trending forms and ideologies indoctrinated through media stereotypes (compare **Table 2**). This reveals that most of the relevant aspect of pop culture, ideologies, and stereotypes, which the Khasi youths in Shillong tend to reproduce in their social practices are cultivated through media exposure. This encompasses all aspects of their socio-cultural fabrics, such as, one's sense of dressing or grooming, fashion, food and cutlery, drinks, and lifestyle, as well as one's choice of how they spend their money, language preference, and personality development (statistical information shown in *Items 4–12* of **Table 2**). Apparently, this growing impetus to practically assimilate cultural traits, behaviors, and ideologies consistent with the dominant pop culture (whether for reasons of emotional energy, interconnectedness, or group cohesion) has clearly resulted in a departure from their socio-cultural traditional conservatism as they gradually integrate into an identity of 'sub-cultural' construction.

The media landscape in Meghalaya encompasses a wide range of programs, from news to entertainment such as movies and music, as well as sports, educational programming, cultural programs, and documentaries. Our analysis, which is based on participant's statistical report on language preference (see **Figure 1**), reveals that local media channel broadcast in the Khasi language is meagre and consists primarily of news programs and to some extent, Khasi music video program which is occasionally available on live-broadcast but most likely accessible via IPTV or YouTube platform by the youths. Other program genres such as sports, documentaries, movie, and educational channels are still in their infancy in terms of Khasi-language offerings. Consequently, our findings indicate that participants consistently choose English as their language of preference when watching a variety of programs on media channels. Khasi, however, emerges as the second most frequently consumed language, particularly for news broadcasts, music, and other programs that primarily relate to cultural programs like short films, folklore, and folktales. In contrast, Hindi is the least preferred choice of language across different programs broadcast on media channels among the Khasi audience. Hindi is mainly preferred for its prominence in Bollywood movies, where Hindi entertainment channels like Star Plus, Zee TV, and Sony Entertainment etc., feature an array of TV shows and films. These findings suggest that the Khasi community's media consumption patterns are largely dominated by English-language programs,

with Khasi-language content being limited to certain program. The preference for English reflects the community's socio-cultural and educational orientation, while the secondary role of Khasi-language media may indicate a need for further development and promotion of local language content in the regional media landscape.

The analysis based on the statistics on the socio-psychology of language choice and behavior (*see Table 3*) reveals three key propositional conditions that determine one's attitude towards language preference in the media consumption context. These are:

1. *The relative scope of the language*: This refers to the extent to which a language enables access to the full range of media content and the ease with which participants can share or disseminate media content and feedback.
2. *Extensive communicative value*: This relates to the utility of a language, such as its suitability as a target language for subtitles, which enhances its communicative reach and value.
3. *Wider transmission*: As a language of wider communication, this condition reflects the ability of a language to ensure extensive comprehension and reception by a broader audience.

Since our data suggests that English is positively favored among the Khasis youths in Shillong, it also implies that English meets all three of these aforementioned conditions and evidence from our data necessarily validates these logical conditions. Thus, following these conditions, the choice of English among Khasi youths in Shillong include the following (*see Table 3* for a detailed statistical comparison):

- (i) *Scope*: English enables the Khasi youth to access the full range of media contents, as it is a language that is widely used and preferred over other available language choices. Participants also find English comfortable for sharing and disseminating media content and feedback.
- (ii) *Utility*: English is a suitable target language for subtitles, enhancing its communicative value and reach.
- (iii) *Wider transmission*: As a language of wider communication, English serves well to ensure extensive comprehension for a wider audience reception.

The cause-effect pattern of the choice of English, driven by its relative scope, utility, and wider transmission, demonstrates that language preference in the media can be deduced by the pre-conditions outlined above. Since English is coextensive with all these conditions, it becomes a viable and preferred choice among the Khasi youths in Shillong.

On an ideological level, this phenomenon reflects the emergence of English linguistic hegemony. As English has broader coverage in the context of mainstream media, particularly in showcasing popular culture, it has effectively supplanted other alternative languages available for media broadcast. The data (see *Item-15* of **Table 3**) shows that the Khasi youths do not retract but agrees with the proposition that the motor which drove the choice of English is not motivated by interests but rather by necessity. Along with its cultural attributes, English, therefore, purports to influence the socio-cultural, ideological, and linguistic behavior of Khasi youths. It also exerts a homogenizing agent at the consumer's receiving end in the name of globalization, with a tendency to control the choice of language (and hence, culture) to a mass norm among media users and consumers (see *Item-18* of **Table 3**) as seen from the case of Khasi youths in Shillong.

Conclusion

The media landscape in Shillong is marked by a pronounced inclination towards English-language content among the youth population, with Khasi emerging as a secondary preference, particularly in the context of news broadcasts, music, and cultural programs. Conversely, Hindi is relegated to the periphery, with its consumption largely restricted to Bollywood movies and entertainment channels. This paradigm is underpinned by a complex interplay of propositional conditions i.e. scope, utility and wider transmission that have elevated English to a position of linguistic dominance, thereby perpetuating a homogenizing influence on the cultural and linguistic practices of the youths in Shillong. This phenomenon is reflective of the pervasive power dynamics that underlie the dissemination of cultural ideologies, sociocultural norms, and popular forms through media stereotypes, thereby underscoring the profound impact of linguistic hegemony on the cultural and social fabric of Shillong.

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