

In the eighteenth century, the Moghul Empire in India gradually declined, resulting in a century-long struggle for mastery over India, fought between the British, the French, the Hindu Marathas and the Muslim leaders in the north and south of India. While the Orientalists suggested that education for Indians should focus on Indian languages, literature and culture, the Anglicists viewed the English language as the more appropriate medium of instruction for two reasons: (1) English language and culture were regarded as more valuable than Indian languages (including Sanskrit); (2) the establishment of a bilingual elite among the Indians would help the British to stabilize their position as the supreme power over the subcontinent. Both the STL strand and the IDG strand were now fully aware that British presence in India was not to be a transient phenomenon and that, accordingly, the language of the new power would stay and become increasingly important: in the early nineteenth century, Britain controlled almost the entirety of India, either by direct rule or by setting up protectorates over Indian vassal states that were ruled by Indian princes. Britain became more and more engaged in the rivalries and conflicts on the subcontinent and established footholds in various coastal areas, especially on the west coast (the Bombay area) and the east coast (in Bengal). English became the sole language of instruction in secondary schools and also in the first universities in India, which were founded in Bombay (today: Mumbai), Calcutta (today: Kolkata) and Madras (today: Chennai). The victory of the British forces in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 marks the beginning of the British Empire in India as it established British administrative and political power over the provinces of Bengal and Bihar, the starting point for the colonization of the entire subcontinent over the next decades. Despite the influx of Indianisms in the English language in India, the standards and norms of the English language in general – as it was used in the STL strand and taught to the IDG strand – remained British and, thus, exonymatively set. Naturally, in this phase a range of local Indian words were absorbed by the English language that referred to items unique to the Indian context (e.g. curry, bamboo, mango, veranda). This was complemented by a growing interest among British linguists, philosophers and scientists in Indian traditions and expertise in their respective fields of research. Against this background, the colonial administration had to decide on what kind of language-educational policy to follow in India: should Indians be taught primarily in their local languages, or should there be an education system with English as the medium of instruction? In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a relatively small but influential group among Indians became interested in Western and English education, culture and sciences. Macaulay's ideas were officially accepted by the colonial administration so that soon afterwards an English-medium school system, especially designed for the education of the growing class of Indians to be appointed as members of the Indian civil service, was established. The growth of British power made more and more British people come to India.