

# LANGUAGE PREFERENCES WITHIN PRINT MEDIUM - AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIA PLANNING

**Praveen Tripathi, MARG Marketing and Research Group Pvt. Ltd., India**

## I. Background

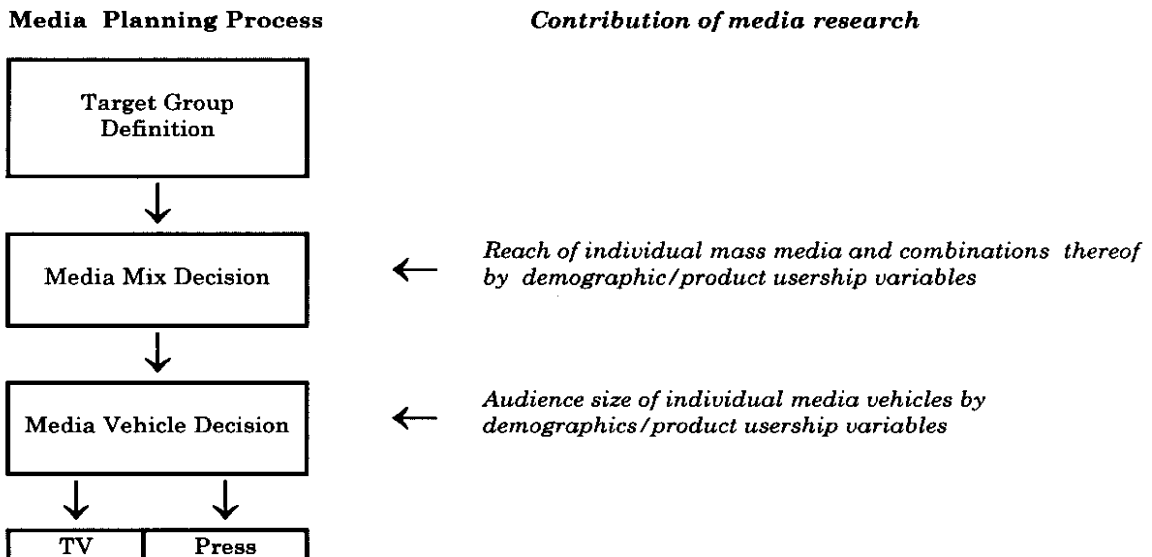
India is a multilingual country. A large proportion of urban adult population understands at least two languages and many understand even three or more languages. This is also reflected in a multilingual reading behaviour. The phenomenon of multilingual readership is more pronounced in the affluent upmarket segment of the urban adult population.

Let us examine the typical media planning process against this backdrop. Given a target group definition, the media planning process can be broken into two broad steps :

Step I : Media mix decision

Step II : Media vehicle decision in each medium eg. Press, TV etc.

The role that media research can play at each stage has been detailed below :



This process implies treating press in its entirety and then directly determining which individual titles to be selected. In light of the multilingual reading behaviour in India, it would perhaps make sense to precede press title selection by identification of the most appropriate language/language mix.

This paper is based on an analysis of Second Upmarket Media Survey (UMS - II) data. UMS - II is a study of media habits of upmarket Indians - defined as adults from Rs.4,000+ monthly income households living in the 25 largest cities of India. [According to Fourth National Readership Survey, 10% of households in these 25 cities belong to Rs.4,000+ monthly income.] The study has been based on 11,087 personal interviews and has been conducted by MediaSearch, the specialist media research division of MARG. The fieldwork for the study was conducted during November '92 - March '93 period.

The respondent for the survey was a 15 years+ person selected randomly from amongst all such household members using the Kish grid. UMS - II covers 235 titles in 12 major Indian languages. UMS - II uses the Recent Reading Model with Grouped Titles method. In addition to Average Issue Readership measurement, UMS - II has also collected data on intensity of reading measures : time spent for both dailies and magazines; and proportion read, number of issue pick-ups and Magazine Page Exposure (MPX) Index, specifically for magazines.

UMS -II has also collected data on household ownership of high value consumer durables and individual usership of some upmarket products and services.

## II. Definition and categorisation of language preference

Before we embark upon the definition of language preference, it may be worth our while to look at multilingualism as manifested in reading behaviour of upmarket Indians.

The table below gives the incidence of multilinguality.

**Table 1 : Incidence of Unilingual and Multilingual reading behaviour**

(All figures in %)		
	Unilingual	Multilingual
<b>All readers</b>	35	65
<b>SEX</b>		
Male	29	71
Female	43	57
<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS</b>		
A1	28	72
A2	33	67
B1	35	65
B2	46	54
C	47	53
D/E	56	44
<b>MONTHLY INCOME</b>		
Rs.4,001 - 5,000	38	62
Rs.5,001 - 6,000	35	65
Rs.6,001 - 10,000	32	68
Rs.10,000+	34	66
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Upto school - 9 years		
SSC/HSC	75	25
Some college but not graduate	45	55
graduate	32	68
Graduate/Post graduate :		
- general	26	74
- professional	19	81

(Base : All readers)

As can be seen, 65% of press readers read titles from more than one language. Incidence of multilingual title consumption is higher among men, and it increases with socio-economic class, education level, though it does not vary much by monthly income.

In urban India, and particularly in the upmarket segment of urban India, most people are exposed to two to three languages, namely :

- English
- Mother tongue of the individual
- Language of the state of domicile

The table below amply illustrates this.

**Table 2 : Proportion of all press readers who are readers of titles in different languages**

% of press readers who read at least one publication in .....	%
English	73.6
Mother tongue	70.6
State language	15.7
Other language	19.3

(Base : All readers)

Propensity to read publications in any one of these languages over other languages could form a basis of consumer classification. It is our hypotheses that those inclined towards English titles may be very different from those inclined towards titles in their mother tongue. This difference may not just be in terms of demographics but even in terms of usership of certain product categories.

#### Language preference

As seen earlier, most people read publications in more than one language and can thus be reached through more than one language. Thus mere incidence of reading titles (as measured by Average Issue Readership) would not enable us to distinguish in terms of language of preference. Time spent on title consumption in different languages would be a more sensitive measure for determining language preference.

One way of identifying language preference is to ascertain the language which commands the highest share of respondent's reading time. However, as it happens, in the affluent upmarket universe for 42% of all readers, English commands a higher share of reading time than does their Mother tongue, State language or Other languages. Therefore, it may be more meaningful to look at the relative language preference which is arrived at by looking at the degree of skew of share of reading time for a language at a respondent level viv-a-vis that at an all respondent level (i.e. for the universe).

Across all respondents and all titles, the proportion of time spent on titles in different languages is :

**Table 3 : Share of total reading time commanded by different languages**

Language	% of reading time spent
English	48.4
Mother tongue	44.1
State language	5.4
Other language	2.1

(Base : All readers)

#### Language of relative preference

In order to classify a respondent in terms of language preference as compared to the universe of all readers, we have determined language of relative preference as following :

Step I :

For each respondent, the proportion of total time spent on reading titles from different languages namely : English, Mother tongue, State language and Other languages has been calculated. While doing so, a weight of 7, 1, 0.5 and 0.25 has been given to dailies, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies respectively in order to account for different periodicities of different publications. These weights would produce total reading time per week.

Step II :

For all respondents, and for all titles taken together, share of total time spent on reading titles in English, Mother tongue, State language and Other languages has then been calculated in table 3.

**Step III :**

For each of the languages, (English, Mother tongue, State language and Other language) the respondent time share for that language is then divided by the universe share for that language.

Four ratios are thus obtained pertaining to the four languages. These ratios represent indices of skew for that language of that respondent vis-a-vis the universe share for that language.

**Step IV :**

The language for which this index of skew is the highest is then ascertained and this respondent is classified as one with relative preference for this language.

This method yields the following pattern of respondents preferring different languages.

**Table 4 : Distribution of readers by language of relative preference**

Language of relative preference	% of all readers
English	34.5
State language	10.2
Mother tongue	46.8
Other language	8.5

(Base : All readers)

It is quite clear that 81% of all readers prefer either English or their Mother tongue. It is our hypotheses that differences are likely to be sharpest for these two groups.

We therefore propose to merge the other two groups - State language preferring and Other language preferring readers into one, accounting for 19% of all readers. This group will hereafter be referred to as Other language preferring readers. Thus from now on we would look at differences across the following three groups :

- English preferring readers
- Mother tongue preferring readers
- Other language preferring readers

### III. Demographic differences by language preferred

Tables 5 summarises demographic differences across the three groups :

- English preferring readers
- Mother tongue preferring readers
- Other language preferring readers

As can be seen, a significantly larger proportion of Mother tongue preferring readers are women. Mother tongue preferring readers are also somewhat older than English preferring and Other language preferring readers.

English preferring readers are significantly more affluent, belong to significantly higher social class and have attained higher levels of education than either Mother tongue or Other language preferring readers.

**Table 5 : Demographic differences by language of relative preference**

	English preferring readers (%) (A)	Mother Tongue preferring readers (%) (B)	Other language preferring readers (%) (C)
<b>Unweighted sample</b>	2684	5640	2147
<b>Estimated adults (000's)</b>	1449	1961	787
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	57.7 B	49.6	57.8 B
Female	42.3	50.4 AC	42.2
<b>Age</b>			
Upto 24 years	28.3 B	22.4	26.4 B
25-34 years	22.5	25.1	25.5
35-44 years	19.8	20.7	19.2
45-54 years	14.9	15.5	17.4
55+ years	14.4	16.2 C	11.5
<b>Average (years)</b>	36.3	37.7 AC	35.6
<b>Income</b>			
Rs.4,001-5,000	34.2	52.5	49.4 A
Rs.5,001-6,000	22.8	22.6	23.8
Rs.6,001-10,000	28.3 BC	18.6	18.7
Rs.10,001+	14.7 BC	6.3	8.0
<b>Average (Rs.)</b>	7056 BC	5861	6069
<b>Socio-economic class</b>			
A1 (= 8)	44.7 BC	25.7	26.3
A2 (= 7)	29.9 BC	25.0	22.0
B1 (= 6)	13.1	20.1A	19.5 A
B2 (= 5)	5.6	12.4 A	13.4 A
C (= 4)	6.0	13.0 A	14.0 A
Rest (= 3/2/1)	0.8	3.7 A	4.9 A
<b>Average</b>	7.0 BC	6.3	6.2
<b>Education</b>			
Upto school 9 years (= 1/2/3)	2.8	14.6 A	12.1 A
SSC/HSC (= 4/5)	16.2	28.0 A	27.3 A
Some college not graduate (= 6)	12.1	14.4	14.3
G/P graduate - general (= 7)	48.3 BC	33.9	36.8
G/P graduate - profession (= 8)	20.5 BC	9.1	9.6
<b>Average</b>	6.7 BC	5.9	6.0 B

Column tested (5% level) - A/B/C

(Base : All readers)

The alphabet next to the number, represents the column, with which this number differs significantly from.

Chi Square test on occupation profile of the three groups of readers reveals that these groups do differ significantly from each other.

A smaller proportion of English preferring readers belong to the two lowest occupation categories of Unskilled/ Skilled workers and Petty traders/Shop owners. Surprisingly the three groups do not differ in terms of proportion who are Businessmen/Industrialists.

Somewhat smaller proportion of English preferring readers are Clerks/Salesmen or at Supervisory level than Mother tongue preferring and Other language preferring readers.

A clearly greater proportion of English preferring readers are Self employed professionals and Officers/executives as compared to readers with a relative preference for Mother tongue or Other languages.

**Table 6 : Occupation/Working status by relative preference**

	English preferring readers (%) (A)	Mother Tongue preferring readers (%) (B)	Other language preferring readers (%) (C)
Unweighted sample	2684	5640	2147
Estimated adults (000's)	1449	1961	787
<b>Occupation</b>			
Unskilled/Skilled workers	2.5	4.1	5.3
Petty traders/Shop owners	3.6	7.5	9.2
Businessmen/Industrialists	6.5	7.0	7.6
S E Ps	5.9	3.2	2.8
Clerks/Salesmen	8.6	11.3	10.8
Supervisory level	3.5	4.6	4.8
Officers/Executives - junior	11.9	6.4	8.1
Officers/Executives - senior	11.8	3.2	5.9
Non working - housewives	20.4	30.8	22.8
Non working - students	18.8	14.4	16.3
Non working - others	6.4	7.4	6.5
CHI SQUARE VALUE =			
436.518			
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL =			
0.000			

(Base : All readers)

Thus, on the whole, English preferring readers are more affluent, belong to higher socio-economic classes, are better educated and a greater proportion of them are self employed professionals or officers/ executives.

Mother tongue preferring readers tend to be women, somewhat older and housewives.

These demographic differences are quite sharp and significant. In order to check for differences between the three groups on Sex, Age, Income, Soci-economic class and Education, the student's T-test was used. For checking differences on Occupation, the Chi-Square test was made use of.

Media planning implications of these findings are obvious. There are some demographic groups which not only can be reached through English press, but the reach through English press is likely to get converted into more effective exposures; since English publications are not just patronised but clearly preferred by these demographic segments of the population.

#### IV. Product consumption differences by language of relative preference

UMS - II has not collected data for most individual consumption product categories. However, it has collected data on :

- incidence of consumption of alcoholic beverages and type of alcoholic beverages consumed
- ownership of credit cards and brand of credit card owned
- membership of clubs
- incidence and consumption of cigarettes/other smoking products and brand of cigarette smoked
- incidence of ownership of jeans and number of jeans owned

We would, therefore examine differences among the three groups of English, Mother tongue and Other language preferring readers for these product categories.

##### IV.1 Consumption of alcoholic beverages

It is obvious from the table below, that incidence of consumption of alcoholic beverages as well as the type of alcoholic beverage consumed, do differ across the three groups of readers - English preferring readers, Mother Tongue preferring readers and Other Language preferring readers. Two-way Chi Square test confirms that these three groups of readers do differ significantly from each other.

More specifically, incidence of alcoholic beverage consumption is highest among English preferring readers and it is lowest among Mother Tongue preferring readers. Incidence of Gin/Vodka consumption brings out sharpest difference between English preferring and the other two groups of readers.

**Table 7 : Consumption of alcoholic beverages by language of relative preference**

	English preferring readers (%) (A)	Mother Tongue preferring readers (%) (B)	Other language preferring readers (%) (C)
Unweighted sample	2684	5640	2147
Estimated adults (000's)	1449	1961	787
Beer	11.2	6.5	8.9
Brandy/Wine	4.8	2.4	3.7
Gin/Vodka	4.2	2.5	2.6
Rum	4.8	2.1	3.6
Whisky	10.2	4.7	7.3
Do not consume	82.5	89.1	85.7
CHI SQUARED VALUE = 326.643			
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL = 0.000			

(Base : All readers)

#### IV.2 Credit card ownership

Two -way Chi Square test brings out that English preferring, Mother tongue preferring and Other language preferring respondents do differ on credit card ownership.

Credit card ownership is highest among English preferring readers and lowest among Mother tongue preferring readers.

There are certain brands of credit cards - Citibank Visa/Mastercard and BOBcard Exclusive- which have substantially greater patronage among English preferring readers than among Mother Tongue and Other Language preferring readers.

**Table 8 : Credit card owned by languages of relative preference**

	English preferring readers (%) (A)	Mother Tongue preferring readers (%) (B)	Other language preferring readers (%) (C)
Unweighted sample	2684	5640	2147
Estimated adults (000's)	1449	1961	787
Andra Bank Visa/BOI/ BOI/ Visa/Vijaya	0.8	0.5	1.0
BOBcard Exclusive	1.3	0.8	0.6
Cancard	1.2	0.2	1.1
Central card	1.8	0.3	0.4
Citi bank Visa/Master	1.4	0.2	0.9
Diner's Club	0.8	0.1	1.1
Grindley's Visa/HongKong/ /Mercard	0.8	0.4	0.2
Do not possess a credit card	93.7	97.8	95.1
CHI SQUARED VALUE = 268.164			
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL = 0.000			

(Base : All readers)



**Table 10 : Brand of Cigarette smoked by language of relative preference**

	English preferring readers (%) (A)	Mother Tongue preferring readers (%) (B)	Other language preferring readers (%) (C)
Unweighted sample	2684	5640	2147
Estimated adults (000's)	1449	1961	787
Foreign Filter King	1.0	0.5	1.3
Indian Filter King	0.9	0.5	0.6
Popular Indian Filter King	4.3	3.0	3.7
Longs	3.9	3.7	3.6
RSFT	1.3	2.6	1.8
Other	0.3	0.7	0.9
Bidi/ Cigar	0.2	1.3	1.6
CHI SQUARED VALUE = 35.439			
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL = 0.000			

(Base : All readers)

**IV.5 Number of pairs of jeans owned**

Since number of pairs of jeans owned is a ratio scaled variable, it lends itself to a t - test.

Both incidence of ownership of pairs of jeans, and the average number of such pairs in their possession, are highest among English preferring readers and lowest among Mother tongue preferring readers. T - tests at 95% confidence level confirm that these three groups of readers do differ significantly on number of pairs of jeans owned by them.

**Table 11 : Number of pairs of jeans owned by language of relative preference**

	English preferring readers (%) (A)	Mother Tongue preferring readers (%) (B)	Other language preferring readers (%) (C)
Unweighted sample	2684	5640	2147
Estimated adults (000's)	1449	1961	787
1	7.7	7.1	8.4
2	9.5 B	5.7	7.6
3	6.0 BC	2.5	2.7
4	2.4 B	1.1	2.4 B
5 or more	4.1 BC	0.9	1.1
None	70.4	82.8 AC	77.7 A
Average	2.7 BC	2.1	2.2

(Base : All readers)

Columns tested (5% risk level) - A/B/C

Thus, for all the product categories studied - alcoholic beverages, credit cards, membership of clubs, cigarette and pairs of jeans - English preferring, Mother tongue preferring and Other language preferring readers do exhibit significant differences.

This implies that a media planner, while drawing up a media plan for, say, cigarettes can choose a language mix depending upon the type of cigarette he is planning a campaign for. Thus, if he is drawing up a media plan for a Regular Size Filter brand, he should concentrate on titles in the Mother tongue of his target group rather than on English titles. However, while drawing up a media plan for a King Size Filter brand, it is titles in the English language that are likely to be more appropriate.

**V. Conclusions**

The UMS - II data analysed here suggests that the respondents with different languages of relative preference (English versus Mother tongue versus Other languages) do differ significantly both on demographic description and product consumption.

This has a direct bearing on press media planning for specific demographic target groups and specific product categories. The evidence based on the UMS - II data clearly suggests that certain demographic segments of population and users of certain products share a clear preference for either English or Mother tongue, as displayed in greater than proportionate (compared to the universe) share of reading time being allocated to titles in English versus those in the reader's Mother tongue.

This helps a media planner to identify the language that is not just patronised by his target audience (this could have been discovered by just looking at reach of press by language of titles) but clearly preferred by his target audience.

However, the measure of relative language of preference classifies each respondent uniquely into one language category. All the readers who are say English preferring, may also have different levels of preference for English titles. The measure used in this paper does not capture these shades of difference. Analysis done in this paper does not take note of another important issue - the distance between language of preference and the next language. Thus, our measure does not attempt to distinguish between two English preferring readers - one who prefers English and spends very little time on titles in his Mother tongue (say, English heavy - Mother tongue light) and another one who does prefer English but also spends a moderate amount of time on titles in his Mother tongue (say, English heavy - Mother tongue medium).

It may be meaningful to construct a measure which can classify respondents on heavy/medium/light spectrum of consumption of titles from different languages. Such a categorisation of respondents may be best illustrated as :

*Preference for Mother Tongue*

		<b>High</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low</b>
<i>Preference for English</i>	<b>High</b>			
	<b>Moderate</b>			
	<b>Low</b>			

If we compare readers from these nine cells on demographic and product consumption characteristics, we may well discover relationships between relative preference levels for different languages and incidence of consumption of different product categories. Such an analysis may yield to media planners indicators for the language mix to be used for a given demographic/product user segment (as apposed to merely identifying one language of preference).

