

ENGLISH: SIGNIFICANT IN THE GLOBAL INDIA

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Abstract:

A language is a systematic means of communication by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. It is the code we all use to express ourselves and communicate to others. It is a communication by word of mouth. It is the mental faculty or power of vocal communication. It is a system for communicating ideas and feelings using sounds, gestures, signs or marks. Any means of communicating ideas, specifically, human speech, the expression of ideas by the voice and sounds articulated by the organs of the throat and mouth is a language. This is a system for communication. In the era of competitive world, where the majority of the students are attempting GRE & TOEFL, good listening and speaking skills become an absolute necessity. Communicative approach has been totally neglected by teachers and learners which has become a global demand where students are supposed to communicate across the globe. Teachers should act as facilitators, and should observe how well students organize their thoughts while speaking with their fellow members. As language changes geographically due to dialectical variations, the teacher should take adequate steps to teach their student about neutral accent and their importance while communication. Clear pronunciation, not perfect pronunciation, is the goal. Students are also now facilitated by software to practice pronunciation through phonetics. In addition to these, our faculty too should update their knowledge, skills and should acquire thoroughness over their syllabus to meet the demands of globalization since English is seen as a key educational investment in this world. If provided with the latest language teaching tools and with the support of technology, one can teach the language effectively and motivate the students towards language learning.

Keywords: conventional, articulated, globalization.

A language is a systematic means of communication by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. It is the code we all use to express ourselves and communicate to others. It is a communication by word of mouth. It is the mental faculty or power of vocal

communication. It is a system for communicating ideas and feelings using sounds, gestures, signs or marks. Any means of communicating ideas, specifically, human speech, the expression of ideas by the voice and sounds articulated by the organs of the throat and mouth is a language. This is a system for communication.

A language is the written and spoken methods of combining words to create meaning used by a particular group of people. Language, so far as we know, is something specific to humans, that is to say it is the basic capacity that distinguishes humans from all other living beings. Language therefore remains potentially a communicative medium capable of expressing ideas and concepts as well as moods, feelings and attitudes. A set of linguists who based their assumptions of language on psychology made claims that language is nothing but 'habit formation'.

According to them, language is learnt through use, through practice. In their view, 'the more one is exposed to the use of language, the better one learns'. Written languages use symbols (characters) to build words. The entire set of words is the language's vocabulary. The ways in which the words can be meaningfully combined is defined by the language's syntax and grammar. The actual meaning of words and combinations of words is defined by the language's semantics. The latest and the most advanced discoveries and inventions in science and technology are being made in the universities located in the United States of America where English language is the means of scientific discourse.

English has its unique importance in our country. It has played a crucial role in building modern India. At present, it is one of the major languages used for communication in the world. In our country we have people living in different states speaking different languages. But here English plays a vital role of a bridge. It helps different natives of different regional dialects to communicate with each other. English is a language which links us with the outside world. The prospects of employment for a person having knowledge of English are bright in every country.

In India, people going from North to South for education or business mostly communicate in English language, and it is one of the reasons that it has become a link language. Keeping this in mind, the Parliament has also recognized English as an official language in addition to Hindi. All the facts of history and developments in present day India underline the continued importance of learning English in addition to vernaculars. We must make the best use of English to develop ourselves culturally and socially so that we can compete with the best in the world of mind and matter.

English language is our shortcut window to the world. The world is developing in the field of science and technology. Scientific inventions in Germany, France and Russia can reach India only through the help of language "English" and India must keep up with the progress of the world in field of science. Therefore, English is inevitable for our country. In India, the official language in corporate world is English. A person can make rapid strides in the management ladder only if he can speak English fluently. If your English is poor, you will find yourself languishing at the bottom of the management ladder, even though you may have a brilliant brain and can come up with brilliant business ideas. Your productivity will drop over a period of time since you will find difficulty in expressing your brilliant ideas. People who can speak good English will probably seize your ideas and get the credit for all the hard work you did to get the idea working.

The historical circumstances of India (having been ruled by the British for over two centuries) have given the Indians an easy access to mastering English language, and innumerable opportunities for advancement in the field of science and technology. Many Indians have become so skilled in English language and have won many international awards for creative and comparative literatures during the last few years. Over the years, English language has become one of our principal assets in getting a global leadership for books written by Indian authors and for films made by Indians in English language. A famous Indian movie maker Shekhar Kapoor's film "Elizabeth" has got several nominations for Oscar Awards. It does not require any further argument to establish the advantage English language has brought to us at the international level.

English language comes to our aid in our commercial transactions throughout the globe. English is the language of the latest business management in the world and Indian proficiency in English has brought laurels to many Indian business managers. English is a means not only for international commerce; it has become increasingly essential for inter-state commerce and communication. In India, people going from North to South for education or business mostly communicate in English, which has become a link language. Keeping this in mind, the Parliament has also recognized English as an official language in addition to Hindi.

A language attracts people because of the wealth of literature and knowledge enshrined in it. English poses no danger to Indian languages. The Indian languages are vibrant and are developing by the contributions of great minds using them as their vehicle of expression. English is available to us as a historical heritage in addition to our own language. We must make the best use of English to develop ourselves culturally and materially so that we can compete with the best in the world of mind and matter. English language is our window to the world.

English language is one tool to establish our viewpoint. We can learn from others experience. Generally, Standard English today does not depend on accent but rather on

shared educational experience, mainly of the printed language. Present-day English is an immensely varied language, having absorbed material from many other tongues. It is spoken by more than 300 million native speakers, and between 400 and 800 million foreign users. It is the official language of air transport and shipping; the leading language of science, technology, computers, and commerce; and a major medium of education, publishing, and international negotiation. For this reason, scholars frequently refer to its latest phase as World English.

In our country English is important for a number of reasons. India is a land of diversity. Different people speak different languages. A person of Tamil Nadu does not speak Hindi. So he can't understand Hindi of a person from North India. However he can understand in English. So English is a link language. Different people can communicate with one another with the help of English. Secondly, all advanced knowledge in science, technology and medicine is available in English. The results of the latest researches come to India through the medium of English. If we give up English, we will lag behind in the higher fields of study. Today the world has become one family.

It is all due to English. English is an international language. English is the language of the Constitution, the Supreme Court, the High Courts and official departments. English is now firmly rooted in the soil of India. It has become a part of Indian life. Thus English has great importance for the integrity of India. It has to be second language in our country for the better development of the country.

The English language has shaped modern India's development in many ways, here are a few... First, it helped establish a link with the West in the post colonial era whereby ideas and information could be exchanged easily, especially in the realm of higher education . Subsequently this enabled members of successive generations to emigrate to developed English speaking nations as professionals thereby helping India establish a people to people link with the West which has come in very handy after the economic liberalization. Despite the inward and myopic outlook of less than stellar post- independence governments for decades on end and the political barriers of the cold war, India's fortunes changed radically in a very short period of time after it liberalized. This would not have been possible without the English language skills (as minimal as they might be) and the people to people link I mentioned. The fact of the matter is that possessing English skills as a young Indian today opens up a greater number of opportunities.

Being proficient in one language doesn't necessarily mean that the other is any less important. The fact is that multi lingualism is very much possible as we see in Europe. In India however this problem exists because of a complicated inferiority complex (which I'm sure is heavily influenced by the colonial past) and the fact that the Indian society itself is extremely hierarchical in nature, where people constantly want to promote their social

standing on the basis of caste, skin color, language, Western lifestyle or whatever else comes handy. This however has nothing to do with the English language itself. The advantages of knowing the English language far outweigh the disadvantages. There is no reason why Indian children cannot grow up to be multi lingual, provided they're confident about their identity. English is important as a national language, because there is no other language common to all the Indians. Hindi may be second most spoken language, but it doesn't apply to all Indians, especially the South of India. Though this doesn't mean that regional languages should be ignored. They should be given the same status as English and they should be widely used on the state/regional level (more so since the states were divided along linguistic lines). Though when it comes to national level, English is and should be an all inclusive language for the country.

I truly believe that India owes a lot to English for development. Development of the nation is proportional to the development of the thoughts of the community along with individuals. These thoughts need to flow across minds of the other individuals benefitting the community as a whole. I am really proud of the cultural diversity of India. In the language front, English is what unites us in midst of the diversity. In the process of dividing us, the British transferred this one great thing to us which unites us all.

Also, in this process uniting us with the rest of the world. Of course English is undermining the importance of local languages. It is true that if English would not have been so important then the local languages would have flourished to a much greater extent. But, it would surely be at the cost of development. I would like to term it as a 'necessary-evil'.

The anatomy of a language, on its close scrutiny reveals that it is integral to the culture of which and for which it acted as medium, so long as the alien language does not ingratiate itself to the culture of the population group, its future as a medium of mass will be limited by its own inherent-limitations. English in India, is well and truly the language of the section of the people who bread and butter revolves around the economic opportunities, access to which is provided by the erudition in the language, that exist as result of India's economic interaction with the western world. It is not surprising this segment of the population is most conspicuous in the metropolitan cities with a long history of close ties with British Raj.

Hence it is wrong to hail a language, which is merely an instrument of availing economic opportunity, as a national language or even conflate it with the notion of being a link language or a *lingua franca*. As India's economic dynamics undergo change, as the country become a major center of global economic interaction, our preference to communication medium which avails the new economic opportunities, will also undergo paradigm shift. Any of the many vernacular languages of India might supplant as the medium of popular communication, or we could adopt an Indian language like Sanskrit, with a long

history of close relation with India's linguistic evolution, as the language for official communication. When people make a great fuss over the merits and demerits of a language they overlook an important point that a language is not merely a means of communicating thoughts but also a way of getting civilized. Since, the date of India's independence, there has been running many claims and counter-claims regarding the use and importance of English in India. Some speak in favor while some others oppose the idea of retaining English as a subject, in our school or college curriculum.

The British rules introduced English in Indian schools with a hope that the troubles in administration due to linguistic barrier would disappear. So some Indian nationalists claim that English should be removed from this country when the British rule in India has come to the end. For them, English language carries a disgraceful memory of India's subjugation. In their opinion, Hindi should replace English for all purposes. But the rival section of people judge English from academic point of view. They argue that English is a window language. It is the most widely spoken language in the world. Through this language, India can establish her contacts with the developed nations of the world.

Although Hindi has been pronounced as the national language in India, some non-Hindi speaking states have not yet accepted it in practice. Thus it is practically impossible to achieve inter-provincial communication through Hindi. The world is developing in the field of science and technology. Scientific inventions in Germany, France and Russia cannot reach India through any language other than English India must keep up with the progress of the world in field of science. Therefore, English is inevitable for our country.

Some people argue that importance scientific inventions by the German or the Russian or the French Scientists may be translated into any Indian language and thus the necessity of learning English can be avoided. But it is a tough task. It involves multiple translations for example from German or Russian to English and then from English to an Indian language. Scientific inventions get out-dated very quickly. A scientific invention in Germany or Russia will have become out-dated and old by the time the same invention reaches the Indian scientists through translation.

India is a vast country with different languages in different parts of the country. These regional languages differ from each other so much that it is not possible to communicate with people of other regions without a common language. Further, India is growing on all fronts whether it is social or economic angle. India is on the road to become a strong and prosperous nation in the world. India is trying to maintain a good foreign policy. For all this, there is need of a common language i.e., English. It is this language which is understood almost all over the region in addition to national language of Hindi, all schools and colleges teach English and mostly have it as a medium of instruction.

In today's world, we have to get knowledge of advanced technologies and all kinds of branches of Science. There is an urgent need of such a common language which can be understood by youth all over India and the language in which all data and information is available. It is English only which can be rightly selected as the language to be studied by all of us from the very primary level. This language is a store house of social and political knowledge. Hence, study of English language is of great importance for a developing country like India. Without knowledge of this language, our technicians, mechanics and engineers cannot progress.

India is a peace-loving country and wants to spread the same message to all countries of the world. The other countries also take interest to understand and know this policy of India. We have to explain and convince friendly nations our point of view. All this is possible only through a common medium of exchange of ideas and views. English is such a language having an international status and can provide the best medium to interact with outside world. In all international seminars or summits, all speeches or course material is in English. If India is to utilize these opportunities, and expand its universal view point, then English is the only language which should be learnt by all of us.

Further, a nation can remain intact only when its leaders can understand the people living in different regions and can communicate with them in effective and cordial manner. All leaders cannot understand more than ten to fifteen languages of various regions, however, they can easily understand the common language English. This language is important to inspire unity not only at the national level but at the international level. To curb the separatist tendencies of our varied communities, we must continue to teach English. Without learning and communicating in this language, we will perish one day. To survive in modern society, English knowledge is as essential as water.

Every nation must develop and encourage its own language. However, in India we have diversity in languages and it is not possible for many years ahead to have a common language like Hindi. Under such circumstances, we cannot wait for long, otherwise we will be left far behind. As such, till such time one language is developed, we must learn and teach English from the beginning itself. Some subject like Science, Mathematics and technology books must be taught in English only. This fact is being realized now by those who had opposed teaching in English few years ago. They now know that we have not been able to prosper like other countries of the world due to keeping ourselves away from English. It is this language which can uplift us not only within our own country but throughout the world. We will be no less than anybody in the world with knowledge of English.

Grammar Translation Method

Grammar translation method was used by the teacher to teach young children, where teacher explained every word to students in the native language to make him understand and

learn English. But in this method there was at least one disadvantage. Both the teacher and the student concentrated more on L1 rather than L2. In this method English language class seemed to be L1 class rather than L2 class. Students got only limited benefit through this method. Unfortunately, this method is still in use in many rural schools throughout India. This method is also supported by the methods used to teach mother tongue in our schools.

2. Bilingual Method

Maybe we should declare this as the method, our own favorite method in our schools. Most teachers follow the bilingual method to teach the students in Indian schools, where the teacher first of all explains the entire English sentence in L1 and then asks the students to perform activities in English. Here, it used to be a main assumption that only the teachers have the freedom to take the help of L1 and students are not supposed to use it. However, this constraint is found mostly on paper, not in the classroom. When a student is in the process of composing his or her English sentences, abundant help through the use of mother tongue sentences is provided. This method does not help fluency and naturalness in language expression. Thus, this method became beneficial to students in learning the second language only up to some extent.

3. Direct Method

Earlier, teachers used to follow the direct method to teach Indian students mostly in private schools, which usually charge a higher tuition fee, etc. These teachers will stick to the practice of using only English, without depending on L1. Here, teacher is not supposed or authorized to use any single word from L1. This forced seclusion made students from many families with no past history of learning or using English face great difficulty in understanding certain words and their meanings. But this method turned to be more useful for the students to learn language than any other method as this method creates more encouraging language environment for students in the class room.

English for Specific Purposes

As English has emerged as a global language, it also plays a vital part in every profession with respect to its importance and demand. Every profession has its own professional terminology which is used frequently in that particular profession. For example, certain terms used by the doctors, lawyers, et al. are quite different from those of other professionals. So, to benefit these professionals, English for specific purposes is introduced so that specific English words related to that particular profession can be taught by those professionals. Jargon related to one profession is different from the other. Hence every professional is taught in a particular manner that fits in well with his professional demands.

Teaching Language through Visual Aids

One of the innovative methods used by the teacher to teach language in class room is visual aids. The teacher distributes visual aids to students by dividing them into various groups. The students are then given stipulated time to extract relevant information on the

given aids. After that, those learners are supposed to speak about the visual aids given to them. This method expands the analyzing capacity of the students. By looking at the picture, the learner should think and come out with innovative thoughts which also help in learning language by creating fun-filled environment around them. The teacher acts as facilitator who motivates the students to talk freely. As each person gets their own unique thinking it helps to sharpen their thinking process.

Conclusion

To meet the present day challenges in teaching English, first of all, English should not be treated as a subject as it is to be used actively in interacting with one another throughout the world. By using conventional methods, maximum portion of class time will be wasted in exercises and drilling, dealing with grammar and pronunciation which takes away a large portion of class time. These methods were mostly used to develop basic skills of language learning such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, but by following these methods listening and speaking skills were neglected as students cannot put their language in practice.

In the era of competitive world, where the majority of the students are attempting GRE & TOEFL, good listening and speaking skills become an absolute necessity. Communicative approach has been totally neglected by teachers and learners which has become a global demand where students are supposed to communicate across the globe. Teachers should act as facilitators, and should observe how well students organize their thoughts while speaking with their fellow members. As language changes geographically due to dialectical variations, the teacher should take adequate steps to teach their student about neutral accent and their importance while communication. Clear pronunciation, not perfect pronunciation, is the goal. Students are also now facilitated by software to practice pronunciation through phonetics. To achieve the goals of language learning today every college should be provided with language lab, sophisticated equipment like computers, LCD Projectors.

In addition to these, our faculty too should update their knowledge, skills and should acquire thoroughness over their syllabus to meet the demands of globalization since English is seen as a key educational investment in this world. If provided with the latest language teaching tools and with the support of technology, one can teach the language effectively and motivate the students towards language learning.

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