

ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Nitin Antil
Assistant Professor (SOL)
English Department
S.S.N. College, Alipur Delhi University

Nisha Sharma, Assistant Professor
English Department
C.C.A.S. Jain Girls College, Ganaur

Abstract:-

In India English language was introduced with the arrival of British in India. The seeds of English language in India were laid in the Indian soil in the last decade of the 18th century. Charles Grant was perhaps the first person to plead for English language in India. The British needed clerks trained in English language for their administrative works. So they established English schools and colleges all over India and made English language, as the medium of instruction in 1835. Since then, there was mushrooming of English institutions in India. English language proved to be a blessing in disguise for the Indians as it helped in cementing the ties between the people of various states in India. It helped to create nationalism in India. Apart from this, the Indians also became aware of happenings in the West.

The study of English language in this age of globalization has become very important. It is the most important language of communication between different countries. In India, people of different states have their own language. English Language has come us as a connecting link among various states of India. People living in the Northern part of India are able to communicate well with their Southern counterparts. States like Tamil Nadu threatened to break away from India, if Hindi is enforced on them. In Tamil Nadu people feel that English is very important and should be mandatory.

English serves as a window to the world. The United Nations has recognized five languages as its official languages and of them English takes the first position because of its background, international acclaim of easy access to the people. If we go back to historical facts, we see that half of the globe was under the British imperialism. Those countries coming directly under British rule had by necessity or under compulsion to learn English and the rest either being influenced by the English culture or to keep pace with modern trend had but to opt for learning it.¹

A large number of people around the world are desperately trying to learn English—not simply for self-improvement, but as an economic necessity. It's easy to take for granted being born in a country where people speak the *lingua franca* of global business, but for people in rising economies such as

¹ <http://www.importantindia.com/2398/essay-on-importance-of-english-language-in-india/>

China, Russia, and Brazil, where English is not the official language, good English is a decisive tool, which people rightly believe will help them tap into new opportunities at home and abroad.²

Various studies indicate a direct correlation between the English skills of a population and the economic performance of the country. Indicators like GNI (Gross National Income) and GDP (Gross Domestic Product) go up. In our latest edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), the largest ranking of English skills by country, we found that in almost every one of the 60 countries and territories surveyed, a rise in English proficiency was connected with a rise in per capita income. At individual level, recruiters and HR managers around the world report that job seekers with exceptional English compared to their country's level earned 30-50% percent higher salaries.

English language is the one of the most popular language which is employed all over the world for international trade transactions. In addition to this, we have sufficient ground for supporting the use of English for commercial and economic purposes in our country. A common language lowers the transactional costs of international trade, and English is increasingly the language of international business. Consequently, proficiency with English is often associated with higher incomes as well as increased employment, trade and other economic opportunities and is promoted as a policy to improve the well-being of people in developed nations and developing countries like India.³

The benefits from better English skills are currently not well understood. While micro studies find individuals with better language skills earn more, macro level studies are limited. The benefits of learning English to an individual are readily identified- higher paying employment- the costs may prove to be too high as one is forced to choose between language skills and other forms of human capital.⁴

Indians have now associated themselves in globalization process heavily with the help of English Language. English is necessary for morality, career advancement opportunities and social and economic purposes. As an international language, English has a lot of 'surrender value' throughout the world and learners of English can cash in on that. Today there is great demand for courses on spoken English, written English, business English, management English, English for information and technology, technical writing, medical transcription, communication skills in English and so on. That is why it is necessary for English department in universities to change their content and style to suit market conditions, otherwise they will be marginalized or left behind the competition.

The learners of English have realized that it is a 'window to the world' an access to the growing fund of knowledge in science and technology with our long tradition in English usage we should be able to exploit the richness of this language to the advantage of major Indian language. The English language has the necessary information in every branch of knowledge – agriculture economics, commerce, business, engineering space technology, bio-technology, information technology, consumer product etc. English is an exploding language to reveal potential of technology. In the world of 'information explosion' we need to profit from the stock of knowledge and information in English. Indians know that

² <https://hbr.org/2013/11/countries-with-better-english-have-better-economies>

³ https://www.fdic.gov/bank/analytical/cfr/bios/Ufier_English_wp.pdf

⁴ Ibid

English is needed for technological purposes and for modernization. That is why English is retained as a medium of instruction in agricultural universities, engineering colleges, management institutes like IIM's and IIT's. Now days English has become day to day language for business transactions or workplaces. English has acquired a very strong position in these fields and it has become a powerful market language or a street language, the language of transactions and symbol of modernization.

The changing role of English, the liberalization of the economy, the opening up of the market and increasing employment opportunities for English knowing educated Indians have made the English language acceptable to a vast majority of Indians in contemporary India. Familiarity and competence with English has become the selling point of India in the World market. It definitely enjoys the 'English advantage'. Today the whole of India is at peace with English because it has become the Global Language. The change in attitude towards English does not mean that Indians have become less patriotic and more pragmatic. Indians very soon realized that English has become a goldmine, being the legacy of colonial rule. Indians in due course of time also realized that English is no longer a symbol of colonialism but it has a tool for international communication and key to employment in the global market.

Now a day's English language is perceived not as one with its cultural baggage but as a culturally neutral tool of communication since this language is used all over the world. People in different countries have made it a medium to express their own cultures. The culture is considered as a free concept of language that has freed English from the narrow and limiting view of language- culture connection. In a way, this concept has made the English language more acceptable to the majority of people who are learning of people who are able to understand people using English throughout the world.⁵

English literature does not have any hold on English as a technology oriented communication tool. Unfortunately the university system in India is not sensitive to the changing needs of society. Departments of English have also not cashed on the changes that are taking place in the world. A bigger contribution from Department of English is needed to change and accept the modern English by introducing Communication Skills and Business English as a part of the syllabus to generate teachers with adequate knowledge on communicative language, business English and technical English. During the struggle for India's independence, Departments of English in universities and colleges continued to be treated as 'colonial islands'; while the rest of India was using English differently for business purpose. The outside world is using English for international, intra national and intercultural communication and technological purpose. Colleges and Universities in India still follow the Macaulay syllabus and teach texts, texts that neither the teachers nor the students understand.

The situation in the world outside is very different; English for communication is the mantra everywhere. Outsourcing centers, call centers, medical transcription centers, book keeping for various multinational companies in different parts of the world, software development etcetera. Thousands of jobs are created all over India, in these sectors. Outsourcing arena is going to create millions of jobs in the near future for English knowing educated Indians.

⁵ shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/36596/10/10_chapter1.pdf