

ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE: A REAPPRAISAL

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Language as Samuel Johnson said is the dress and thought; it is only the instrument of science and words are but the signs of ideas. Machmillan: English Dictionary for advanced learners defines language as, "the particular form of words and speech used by the people of a country, area, or social group". It also defines language skills as, "the ability to use a language, specially a foreign language, well". "Language is the species" and "species – uniform, possession of man. It is God's gift to mankind. Without language human civilization as we know it would have remained impossible. Language is ubiquitous. It is present everywhere – in our thoughts and dreams, prayers and meditations, relations and communications". Besides being a means of communication, and a store house of knowledge, it is an instrument of thinking, as well as source of delight.

According to an ancient linguist of India, Patanjali, "Language is that human expression which is uttered out by speech organs".

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.13, language is defined as "a system of conventional, spoken and written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, communicate".

So language that describes what we want to say in our terms may present barriers to others who are not familiar with our expressions, buzz-words and jargon. When we couch our communication in such language, it is a way of excluding others. In a global market the greatest compliment we can extend to another person is to talk in their language. One, who knows to give proper attire to his idea with a proper language, can be successful in today's global scenario. Keeping in mind all these we can say that English is the only language which act as a link language on global scenario.

Whereas "language" in the abstract is our facility to talk; "the faculty of speech, which all human beings hold in – common"; a language' is "a particular code, a set of conventions which we operate through the possession of faculty of speech; and a language is not held in common by all human beings but only by those who belong to specific – community."

Opinion about the role and future of English language in India has varied with the years. Before the attainment of independence both English and Englishmen were condemned as foreign and hence hostile to the national interests. Mahatma Gandhi,

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though admittedly a good, effective writer in English, expressed the view that, "English education has emasculated us, constrained our intellect, and the manner of imparting his education has rendered us effeminate". He felt that English education puts a severe strain upon Indian student's nervous energy and has made us imitators. Many others also held the view that among the many evils of foreign rules, the "blighting imposition" of a foreign medium of instruction upon the youth of country will be counted by history as one of the greatest.

Noble prize winner Rabindranath Tagore whose writing in English and Bengali won him international fame, however, paid a deserving tribute to the contribution which English literature made. Besides this, global language helped us to win Booker's award in fiction. It nourished our mind, Tagore said, and even now conveys its deep resonance to the recesses of our heart. The days and nights of educated people of those times were eloquent with the stately declamations of Burke and Macaulay's long rolling sentences. Jawaharlal Nehru himself a master of English language, while admitting that we cannot educate millions of people, in a totally foreign language, contented that English will inevitably remain an important language for us because of our past associations and also because of its present importance in the world because of demand in trade, science and the development of favorable infrastructure etc. English cannot become a common all India medium of communication but it is, and will continue to be, the principal medium for us to communicate with the outside world. It is to English education, that the country owes a debt for the emergence of a new class of liberal-minded people in the professions and services. It widened the Indian outlook and developed an admiration for the unique English literature and institutions. Moreover, Indian Economic stability on globe is only because of this link language. English is among one of the world's greatest and richest languages. It is estimated that next to Chinese, which is spoken by nearly 800 million people, English is the most popular language in the world. Although there are at least 360 million native speakers of English world-wide. Sir Randolph Quirk, writing in the Sunday Times on 17 April, 1994, estimates that on a global basis non-native Speakers of English now out number native speakers. The fact that so many people are using English all over the world inevitably means that the language is changing, as individuals communicate with each other in the way that they find the easiest. For people of India, English is perhaps the easiest foreign language to learn. There are other important languages too, but because of the educational set-up already established in India by the British, English has some foundations which would be difficult to establish for any other language.

Article 343 (1) of India's Constitution lays down that the country's official language will be Hindi in the Devanagari script. The second clause of that article provides for the simultaneous use of English, initially for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the constitution in 1950. In conformity with the demand of the southern states the provision for the use of English for official purpose of the union

has been extended several times. All indication points to continuation of the status quo for an indefinite period even though the founding fathers of the constitution and millions of other people, especially in north and central India, regarded the provision for the use of English language as essentially a transitional measure for official work have succeeded only partially. As a result, work in central government offices is done in English which continues to be the only acceptable link language for communication between the central and the states and among the states themselves. Not only in India, English is now the dominant official language in over 60 countries and is represented in every continent. From this fact it can be understood that English language is a vital means of communication for millions of people around the world. During the 20th century, numerous technological inventions and developments, such as the telephone, fax electronic mail, internet, etc have facilitated communication between and among people from all walks of life and English is used as a link language.

"Most of the scientific, technological and academic information in the world is expressed in English and over 80% of all the information stored in electronic retrieval system is in English. English is the most common language to communicate scientific, technological, academic, and international trade information. English, like so many other aspects of western culture, has the potential to bring people together, or the power to divide people into classified groups. As the debate goes on, English will continue to grow and with the same force that has always driven the patch working of language: the natural desire to exchange goods and ideas. When the ideas are good and constructive, language promotes unity and cohesion, but when the ideas are basically faulty, ill – conceived, deceitful and subversive, language has the contrary effect. The English language has unmistakably achieved status as the world's lingua franca through globalization. English is now the official or dominant language for two billions in at least 75 countries. According to British council, Speakers of English as a second language probably outnumber those who speak it as a first language and around 750 million people are believed to speak English as a foreign language. Thus, English has become a second language for people. There are somewhere between 380 million & 400 million native speakers of English and at least as many others who speak it as a second language. Within a decade, according to a 2004 report of the British Council, 2 billion people will speak it.

English has become, "Lingua Franca" of universal language or link language, for reasons that speak to the influence of western culture, economics & politics. As already stated that the rise of the British Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries spread English beyond the mother islands, and the dominance of the United States since World War II, has continued the spread of the language. Today, only Chinese and Hindi are spoken by more people as their native tongue. English is already the worlds most widely learned second language, and millions more are clamoring to learn. English is the best suited language for professional and technical purposes. The core competence of professionals is judged on the basis of their expertise with regard to

writing and speaking skills. With the proliferation of English medium institutions over the years, our pupils seem to be more at ease in using English as a medium of spoken communication. This language aims at equipping the young and budding professionals with good communication skills and preparing them for a golden future. Today more importance is given to the way the contents are presented. A professional's communicative ability is judged on his/her preparedness and promptness in drafting technical documents. This text tries to prepare the readers to meeting the challenges of the professional world and only link language can help them in being able to successfully communicate their evaluation analysis, conclusions and recommendation. So in an age of globalization, the professionals cannot keep themselves confined to the territories of the nation to which they belong. They have to interact with people living far and wide. The fast means of communication have bridged the gap between the sender and receiver. So in the present scenario, it has become essential for the professionals to be proficient in communicating his ideas to others effectively and also to comprehend others either by reading their message or listening to them. To meet out this growing demand of the business world, professionals focus on link language as a tool of communication. Moreover, there is wide spread recognition of the fact that scientific and technical knowledge can be acquired only through books and journals published in English. Moreover, about two third of the Scientific and Technical books in the world are published in English.

To conclude, we can say that English is already the world's most widely learned link language and millions more are clamoring to learn. English is the language of the Internet, Motion pictures, Science and Sports. It is the "cash" language spoken in the corridors of trade, and the diplomatic language spoken in the corridors of power. People want to adopt and learn link language because they need it. It's necessary for them to function in today's world. Thus, English has several advantages, precision of expression, world wide popularity and rich literature. These ensure for it a bright future despite the loud protest by language fanatics and the anti – English pleadings in the name of patriotism. It is key to success and a proof of intellectual, status symbol in contemporary India.

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