



THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: OPPORTUNITIES IN INDIA

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Abstract

Today English language is a common lingua franca across the globe. A lingua franca is a language of way of communication of ideas which is used between people who do not speak one another's native language. English is the most powerful language for this purpose. English is rapidly becoming the bridge language of Asia. The international business community sees English as a suitable medium of expression. It is also the dominant language of three G7 natives (USA, UK and Canada).The British legacy also played a very important role to make English popular in our country as well as in the whole world. Moreover, English is allowed to be used as an official language in our country. It is in practice of parliamentary proceedings, judiciary and communications between central government and state government. Certainly, it is through language that we communicate with the world, define our identity, express our history and culture, learn and participate in all aspects of society. We know that language is so natural and familiar to all human being. It is a means to letting other people know what we have in our mind .In other words language enables us to convey to others what we are thinking of or feeling or desire. In India, English language continues to be an important language used by commercial establishments, computers and researchers in almost every walk of life. Although people are speaking more than four hundred languages and dialects. But only twenty two of them are implemented as official language. Due to rapid urbanization and increasing rate of literacy, English language has its own importance in India. Now there is increasing demand for English medium schools, widening and rapid access to higher education and English training in vocational education enhance the shore need of English language in our country.

Keywords: Lingua franca, powerful, rapidly, international, medium, expression, familiar, urbanization, literacy, communication, importance, enhance, increasing, rapid

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"Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom". -Roger Bacon

INTRODUCTION

Background of the English language

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru says

"Hindi progressively develops, I try for that but I love English to come into the picture to be used as long as people required it..."

As we already know that Thomas Babington (Lord Macaulay) brought the English language in India. Now English is the world's lingua franca for cross-culture communications.

Moreover, all the advanced technology, science, medicine, space, research, engineering etcetera all are available in English language. So for our development and prosperity English is essential for us. It is a door way of progress and prosperity for all. English is the window of western knowledge in India. It is also not essay to translate all the latest knowledge into national or regional languages. So not only India but countries like china and Japan have started giving more attention to the study of English language. To get latest knowledge even our freedom fighter like M.K. Gandhi and Pt. J.L.Nehru were deeply influenced by western political thought on freedom through a study of English philosophers, thinkers and poets. So English language is a great link between different Indian languages and a strong bond for national integration.

Edward Sapir says-

"Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of system of voluntarily produced symbol."

. - (An introduction to the study of speech)

So, it is assumed that man alone has developed language because he alone has developed mind and personality. There are four theories which have long been holding the field as under-

1- Bow-wow theory: This theory is based on the assumption that the earliest speech marked the effect of man's imitating some characteristic sound of creature.

2-Ding-dong theory: According to this theory language has originated in the sense of rhythm innate in man and relating him to the rest of the universe which is initially rhythmical.

3-pooh-pooh theory: This theory depicts that the origin of language is to be traced to the involuntary exclamation of pain, surprise, pleasure or wonder which human being make.

4-Gesture theory: According to the gesture-theory the most primitive means of communication between human beings was by means of gestures made with the hand. This sign language is still employed by us when we have to communicate with a deaf person or with a person whose language is unknown to us.

English language is historically developed, socially learned and orally transmitted system of spoken communication in comparison of all three thousand natural languages. English language is either closely or distantly related to all other languages of Europe and most of the languages of western Asia.

As for vocabulary we find a great deal in common among the Indo-European languages. This common basis of vocabulary serves to distinguish them from languages belongs to other families. The words expressing closest family relationships and the names of elementary domestic materials and the most familiar animals are seen to the same for all Indo- European languages, when the existing forms of these are traced back to their origin. It is interesting to compare for instance the following words in English, Latin and Sanskrit.

English Latin Sanskrit

Father Pater pita

Mother Mater Mata

Brother Frater Bhrata

Thus English which woees its origin to its immediate ancestor Germanic, has for its first ancestor the present Indio- European, of which

Germanic is one of the eight main branches as Indian, Iranian, American, Albanian, Balto- Slavonic, Hellenic, Italic, Celtic and Germanic. As such the English language shares its Indo- Europeaness in the structure and vocabulary with all other languages of Europe and most of the languages of western Asia including the Northern part of India.

Owing to the continual expansion of the British Empire the English language has migrated from its home land to the distant corners of the world. Now English is spoken not only in the British Isles but also in a large number of British colonies. English has already become something of a cosmopolitan language.

The Effect of Renaissance on English Language-

The full flood of the Renaissance or the intellectual awakening took place in the later half of the fifteenth century reached England only by the beginning of sixteenth century. But it is true that many of the changes which are discernible in the language and literature of the time would probably have taken place even before or without Renaissance. So the new learning and all that it implied produced new forces and added new words to the vocabulary besides accelerating those tendencies which were already noticeable in the language during the middle English period. In this way the Renaissance may be considered as heralding the modern period in the history of the English Language. Till the Renaissance Latin was considered as a sacred and not a secular medium of expression. Because Latin was mostly used by the clergy in church services and religious treatises. But after renaissance new words were imported into the English vocabulary directly from Latin. In addition to this Italy became the centre of much of the new learning. Many Italian words were also borrowed into the English language during this period.

Another effects of the renaissance upon the English language is that it has lead the habit of using the adjective of classical origin to correspond to a native noun. We find that the adjectives, manual, urban, feminine and nasal corresponding to hand, town, woman and nose respectively. The adjective of native, origin like handy, tawny, womanly and nose are seen to be different in meaning to these.

Perhaps it is only English language which has the most heterogeneous and the most varied vocabulary. The vast vocabulary includes a large proportion of foreign words borrowed from different languages both ancient and modern. The languages which enriched the English vocabulary are Latin, French and Scandinavian. It has continued without interruption ever since with the result that about one fourth of the Latin vocabulary has already been translated into English, either directly or indirectly by the way of French.

But the practice of coining new words from Latin elements for expressing technical or scientific ideas has been continued into modern times. Even the writings of John Milton and Sir Thomas Browne seem to us quite profuse in their use of English Latin terms. Among the Latin words which have been borrowed during the modern English period, we find that exit, genius, area, fungus, miser, circus, vacuum, medium, ignoramus and vagary belong to sixteenth century. Similarly, specimen, arena, apparatus, focus, album, complex, minimum, status, lens and pendulum belong to seventeenth century. Likewise, nucleus, inertia, alibi, ultimatum, extra, insomnia, bonus, via and deficit were borrowed in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century was marked by Latin loans, like opus, ego, moratorium, referendum and bacillus. Though Latin is no longer a subject of study in English schools but the latest grammar books will convince us about the whole set up and terminology of English.

The Opportunities of English language in India -

In the present scenario and in this fast changing world there is an urgent need for an international language. Because age of today is known as the age of globalization. So for this purpose if we compare the English language with other widely spoken languages of the world, only English language can be considered the world language in the future. As the people speaking English can enjoy the blessings of political, cultural, commercial and material progress. As well as they can attained in every field of human activity. English

language has the great advantage which is not very difficult for foreigners to master. Now several countries including America and China are seeing India with a sigh of hope because India is a promising market for them. Today, India is one of the most developing countries of the world .So it essential for India to have proper communication with other countries. And for this purpose only English language is most suitable.

Although we have to consider the chances which other major languages of the world today have of competing with English. One of them is chines, which at present is spoken by the largest number of people in the world. We can be sure that a united industrialized china will not try to impose her language on the rest of the world, if she can manage to do so. Just as a British –American combination may have a chance of imposing the English language on the other people of the world. It is equally possible that anyone of the half of a dozen other major languages in the world may have a chance of being elevated to be position of the world language. So considering all these facts we can say that there is any certainty of English becoming a language international significance than it has at present. Only English language is the single communicating tongue in the world today. H.G. Wells has imagined English becoming the language of his Utopia after being shorn of its grammatical peculiarities and having had its spelling systematized and improved.

Before independence of our country English was the official language of India. But in the year 1950 our constituent assembly decided that Hindi would make national language of our country. Further it was resolved that Hindi would replace English for all practical purposes by the end of the year 1965. Many great men and educationist like K. M. Munsii Dr. C.V. Raman, DR. K.S.Krishan and C. Rajgopalachari are supporters of the English language In India.

Now several scholars believe that we learnt the use of the marks of punctuation from English. We started writing novels, one act plays and many other forms of literature due to the impact of English

on our Indian languages. The gift of English to our languages are enormous.

K. M.Munsi says-

“If we neglect English in India, we shall be neglecting the fate of our country. So we must to learn English”.

Even today the slandered books of science-subjects in particular and also of some arts-subjects in general are not available in Hindi. Really our country needs such scholars as are well versed in English as well as in Hindi also.

English language is doubtlessly serving our country as a medium of exchange of thoughts among the people of different parts of India .We have to depend only on English for the communication of our thoughts to the people of other lands.

The constituent assembly decided in September 1949 that Hindi would be the national language of India replacing English by January 26, 1965. But the people of south think that Hindi is being imposed on them. So our first prime minister, Pt. J. L.Nehru gave certain assurances to the non-Hindi speaking people.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru says-

“English can be used by any state in writing to the government or writing to the each other. There is no limitation of time fixed for it , except when people generally agree- and I had said that these very people in non- Hindi speaking areas who might be effected should agree”.

Further he says-

“I believe also two things.... These must be no imposition. Secondly for an indefinite period I do not know how long I should have, I would have, English as an associate language. Because I do not wish the people of non- Hindi areas to feel that certain doors of advance are closed to them ...So I would have it as an alternative language as long as people require and the decision for that , I would leave not to the Hindi

knowing people but to non – Hindi knowing people.”

Our prime minister shri Lal Bahadur Sastri during his broadcast on February 11, 1965, stated that English will continue to be used. M.K. Gandhi was always in favor of English education in India. He himself was a learned lawyer. He used to speak English fluently. He believed that education of English Language is essential for the students of India. Gandhi ji felt that India needs the English language.

Although Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and Dr. Sampurnanand and some other extremists wanted to pack English stock, lock and barrel from our country. But they have forgotten the essential fact that English is the most popular language on this globe. If we neglect English we shall be intellectually isolated from the main current of the world thought. We can explain our foreign policy to the people of the other countries only through the medium of English. Our technological and scientific advancement is not possible without knowing English. We can send only some of our young men to foreign countries for advance studies who have sound knowledge in English.

This is why English language has got to be studied as an important foreign language in our schools, colleges and universities. We must give all facilities for study of English language in our country throughout the futurity. Almost all private schools are running in English medium in our country. English language enables us to communicate easily with our fellow global citizens. To speak in English is a matter of prestige. The person who can speak English fluently is considered more civilized, knowledgeable, efficient and skillful. So, doubtlessly English language has evergreen bright future in India.

It is said that-

“He who knows no foreign languages knows nothing of his own.”

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