



English – The Common Communicative Language across the Globe

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Abstract

In the course of advancing globalization a common communicative language is required for the smooth functioning of all kind of human affairs across the world. All the countries have their own mother language/first language and many of them are linguistically great; but they don't fulfill the global need of communication. In the world of today every country, big or small, depends for something on other countries for several reasons. If they don't share a common communicative language, it is almost impossible for them to execute their dealings with one another. In such a situation, a communicative language is essentially required. A proper examination of the issue brings the fact to our cognizance that due to some historical reasons and modern education development, the English language is used as a communicative or associate language in most of the countries.

Today, the international trade, civil aviation, transfer of technology, the pursuit of modern knowledge, every kind of discourse and other such modern life affairs find expression through English language. Actually, during the mid of the twentieth century almost all colonies of British Empire became free. Along with political freedom, the people of these countries started boycotting the English language considering it to be the language of their exploiters. But very soon, within a decade or so, they realized the use of English language and readopted this language either as a second or an associate language. Till recent years countries like China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and some others used to use their first

language in all human affairs; however, they had to face inconvenience in dealings particularly in the international affairs. Consequently, they also started introducing English learning courses in their education curricula. Now, British Council and many other organizations are working globally for the expansion of English language. It is believed that the English language will remain the common communicative language across the globe for a long time to come.

Key words: globalization, common communicative language, global, cognizance, historical reasons, trade, technology, civil aviation, diplomacy, international affairs, modern education, industries, socio-economic condition etc.



1. Introduction:

Globalization is the base factor for the need of a common communicative language across the globe. All the countries of the world, big or small and rich or poor, are important in some ways or the other; for some specific reasons every country contributes to the development of the world. A common communicative language is the essential requirement for the proper growth of international relations, international trade, international diplomacy, international law, civil aviation, exchange of modern education and other such occupations. No doubt, there are many linguistically rich and great languages in the world and they are very important for their countries from cultural, religious and national point of view. Languages like Sanskrit, Greek, French, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Chinese etc are linguistically very rich and they are the pride of their nations; the literature written in these languages is found of very high quality and their translated versions are read across the world.

Since men of today live in a globalized world, people of every land have some occupations with peoples of different lands; this way the distance is decreasing and peoples develop a state of togetherness, but common men can't be multilingual. In such a situation, if they don't have a common communicative language, interaction is almost impossible. The question arises which language can be the common communicative language which can be used all over the world.

English language can play this role effectively. English is the first language (mother language) in many of the developed nations which has been the leading carriers of modern education. Though everything in a language is arbitrary, but linguistically there are many greater languages; phonologically English language is unscientific in many a situation. Apart from all such lapses of English language, in most of the countries, where English language does not bear the first language (L1) status, peoples' choice is English language after their mother language (L1). Till a little less than a century ago people from all over the world had to go to England, America and other some western countries to study Engineering, medicine, law, management etc because the remaining countries did not have the facilities of imparting education of such areas. Because the medium of instruction at these education centres has thoroughly been English language, students/professionals from non-native countries have been essentially required to know this language.

With the passage of time people came back to their native lands and many of them opted to work for the spreading of these modern educational courses. They had a say in the foundation of modern educational centres like schools, colleges, educational institutes and universities. These people had their education through English medium so that this medium was opted at educational centres in their native countries. In addition, a large number of nations had been the colonies of British Empire; for the smooth functioning of governance, the rulers were in need of English knowing employees at lower level, consequently, English medium schools, colleges and finally universities were opened which paved the path of the apposite spreading of English language. In most of the Asian and African countries this language got deeply rooted in their social spectrum and became an expressive medium to their culture and rituals that give them an explorative identity to the world which is known as "Common Wealth Literature". An examination of the issue brings out the facts that historical and social reasons are the main basis of the global spread and acceptance of English as the common communicative language across the globe.

Historical Reasons: Around the 13th – 14th centuries the English Language emerges as an important medium of communication. During this period there appear two great writers, William Langland and Geoffrey Chaucer, whose literary work **Piers the Ploughman and Canterbury Tales** give English Language the identity of an impressive language, and from this juncture of time the English Language starts getting upper edge on Greek and French which lays the foundation stone for the English Language to be the most important and influential language in the later course of time till today. Earlier it was believed to be an inferior language. The sixteenth century, which is also known as Elizabethan age, emerges as the first peak of the prosperous England; queen Elizabeth secured the identity of the most successful ruler on account of her governance; in agriculture the land becomes self dependent; navigation starts exploring new doors of trade; militarily England becomes a sovereign country in real sense of the term; and above all great writers like Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon and many others appear on the horizon of English Literature who bring the glory of the land on the seventh sky.



The tempo of development continues in all sectors. Advanced exploration of navigation opens the door of international trade in the following centuries. The legacy of the great literary laureates of preceding age is carried on by Alexander Pope, John Dryden, Jonathan Swift, Dr Johnson, William Blake and many other contemporary writers in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This period witness the diverse growth of English literature; all the genres of literature flourish in this period. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution leave varying impact on literature; the cultural transmission starts giving a new look to the society; the English trade companies going to different countries for trading become the important source for the economic development of the nation. The East India Company, the most prominent among the trading companies of the land, becomes the main vehicle for establishing colonies and protectorates, and spreading the British Empire in greater parts of the world.

The nineteenth century, also known as Victorian age, is the other peak of British rule in which the Queen Victoria successfully establishes colonies and protectorates in many parts of Asia and Africa. Now, they need the English language knowing people for the smooth functioning of the governance at lower level and they start founding English medium schools followed by colleges and universities which are initially meant to produce people for clerical jobs. The people of the then society across these colonies find this language as the guaranty card for finding jobs; and this way English language strengthens its root in these places. There appear chunks of English language knowing people in these areas who are recruited in different government agencies that immensely help in the execution of governance.

In addition, a good number of people find this language as a more fruitful carrier for literary pursuits and they move ahead for higher education in this language. As a result, many of them who have literary bent start writing literature in this language bearing their own cultural religious, social and ethical contents. Some of them go with translating original scripts of English Literature/Language into their first language (mother/national languages) or the original scripts of their own language/s into English language which open the door for knowing the culture, literature, society, customs etc of different peoples living from corner to corner of the world. The literature produced in the areas is nowadays known as common wealth literature.

From nineteenth century onwards the setting up of industries in all sectors e.g engineering, medicine, international trade, civil aviation, textile and all other such areas find pace for the materially advanced life; in England and America institutions for technical education covering these areas are established to meet the requirements of industries. Aspirants of technical education from all over the world, particularly people from the English colonies have to go to England or America for the modern education where English language is the only medium of education. When they return home after the completion of their education, many of them get occupied with imparting this education in their respective countries and some of them contribute in the establishment of manufacturing industries. In both the cases English language is the only medium of instruction.

Though in course of the British rule, an adverse feeling grows in all the colonies against the ruler. The common men find the rule anti native and they are there only for their exploitation; their only programme is to exploit all the native resources to enrich the British treasury. Consequently, the native people start protest and agitation against the British rule demanding freedom from the rule. Around the mid of twentieth century all the colonies get freedom from the rule. Their resentment and protest are not only against the rule, but they take English language as anti native because it is originally the language of the ruler. In these parts of the world there breaks intense resentment against English language considering it the language of their exploiters. Prof. D. Thakur observes:

Nearly all the British colonies in Asia and Africa gained political independence around the middle of the (twentieth) century, and so the people in African countries like Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and, similarly, people in countries like India and Pakistan in the Indian subcontinent were no longer obliged to study English as the language imposed on them by their British rulers. For years and years the British colonies had angrily endured the economic exploitation by their rulers and in the minds of a large number of people in these countries English was emotionally linked with this economic exploitation. They hated their rulers for ages and so after their countries became politically independent, part of their hatred was directed against English. The spirit of nationalism manifested itself in outbursts of support for indigenous languages and hatred for the English language. P. 186



It is all true that all along the British rule in the colonies, the primary interest of the ruler is how to make arrangements to exploit the native resources in the possible best ways. In this connection they establish railways, power (electricity) generation industries, mining industries and many other supportive small industries. But, all these are meant to increase productivity in their own interest. To a good extent these infrastructural establishments produce employment for the native people and greater number of these people go up with their regular income. On the other hand, the mass of the people are not satisfied at all with this development and they joined movements against the British rule under the local leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, Md Jinah in Indian subcontinent, Mr Nelson Mandela in Africa and many other leaders in the colonies.

The rejection of English language in all these countries is more on emotional ground than the reality of its academic necessity and global pursuit of modern life. In the intense wave of the movements against the British rule, they miss to realize that the English language is no more the language of Britishers and Americans alone; now it is the language of all kinds of modern education across the globe and it has made its deep root into the system of modern life. Prof. D. Thakur's observation justifies this credence:

It is no longer the language of the hated British rulers: it has occupied now the status of the language of scientific and technological research and the language of international trade and diplomacy. As the world has now entered a new millennium, one would hope that instead of being an instrument of economic exploitation in the hands of one or more super powers, this language will turn out to be a means of mutual understanding in such a way that this trouble-ridden earth can gradually shape into a paradise of peace, plenty and prosperity. P. 204-205

It is all evident that after getting political independence, the elected leaders of all these countries, only after a decade or so, come to understand that the development of international trade, international relations, cultural transmission, civil aviation etc are some of the crucial and unavoidable areas for any country for their development. It has also been evident that new technologies are being explored in the west which is writing the narratives of their incredible development. In such emerging situations it becomes natural to cope with the developed nations. Prof. D. Thakur observes:

English successfully survived all the hostility and setbacks, however. Very soon it was realized by the people in the erstwhile British colonies that in their own interest they should dissociate English from their former English speaking rulers. English was no longer the language of the United Kingdom alone. It had by that time acquired the status of an international language. By the beginning of the twentieth century, English had firmly established itself as the language mostly used in international diplomacy, international trade, and scientific research, particularly in research in nuclear science, space technology, medicine and computer science. Because of this importance of English, the initial mood of anger gave way to a strong desire to acquire a high degree of proficiency in its use. Teaching English turned out to be a highly lucrative profession. There was a mushroom growth of English teaching schools all over Asia and Africa and even those nationalists who wanted English to be replaced by regional languages or by the national language started queuing up for the admission of their children in good English medium schools. During the twentieth century, particularly during the second half of the century, English was recognized all over the world as the language of opportunities. P. 189

2. Discussion

The immense growth of English language in the preceding more than ten centuries, English language grows as the most influential language across the world on the basis of its adaptability quality. A huge number of words and syntactical elements of many classical and contemporary languages made their way into English language. Words, phrases and other grammatical elements have been borrowed from Greek, French, Scandinavian, Sanskrit, Arabic and other such languages, and they really enrich English language. This adaptability of this language gives global acceptance to the language. This language assimilated all the borrowed elements so naturally that a common user hardly identifies the difference between the original elements and the borrowed elements in the language.



Consequently, this language corresponds more to the feeling of every individual than any other language after their first language. It gives to this language a cosmopolitan character. A. C. Baugh and Thomas Cable support this conviction:

English is classified as a Germanic language; that is to say, it belongs to the group of languages to which German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian also belong. It shares with these languages similar grammatical structure and many common words. On the other hand, more than half of its vocabulary is derived from Latin. Some of these borrowings have been direct, a great many through French, some through the other Romance languages. As a result, English also shares a great number of words with those languages of Europe that are derived from Latin, notably French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. All of this means that English presents a somewhat familiar appearance to anyone who speaks either a Germanic or Romance language. There are parts of the language that one feels one does not have to learn, or learns with little effort. To a lesser extent, the English vocabulary contains borrowings from many other languages. Instead of making new words chiefly by the combination of existing elements, as German does, English has shown a marked tendency to go outside its own linguistic resources and borrow from other languages. In the course of centuries of this practice, English has built up an unusual capacity for assimilating outside elements. P. 9

All the resources of influences from the stated languages don't enrich the English language only, but the English language undergoes the influences of thematic literary contents of the source literature, and the literary bent of these classical languages/literature widely shapes the literature written in English language. Actually, the ancient Greek literature, particularly the dramas written by Sophocles and Aeschylus whose tragedies like **Oedipus the King** and **Agamemnon** leave a great impact on the common readers of literature in the English peninsula which starts reflecting in English literature, particularly in the plays of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and others which set a new trend of writing plays. Since the medieval period or even before plays were shown in the public places, the common audience was attracted towards it which paved the path of founding well organized show in theatres. In the later course of time when screen display is invented, film making gets started and common viewers become enchantingly under its influence. The series of these happenings make English language very popular.

With the advent of America by Christopher Columbus in 15th century, English language reaches America and many Caribbean countries. The English trade goes on prospering and historically culminates in Victorian age led by Queen Victoria. By means of its trade the regime makes a large number of colonies in Asia and Africa and English language finds its promotion in these areas. A large number of writers from Asia and Africa start writing literature of their own culture, social setup, ideology, their system of the pursuit of knowledge etc. in English language. Later it is named 'commonwealth literature'; this term includes literary works of a diverse range. V. S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie are some of the prominent names who make tremendous contribution to this literature. In many of the pieces of this literature depicts the historical relationship between the United Kingdom and its former colonies. The writers intend to explore the impact of colonialism on the native culture and social life, the effect of migration, displacement and the complexities of different cultural backgrounds.

A large number of writers in India start writing Indian literature in English. These writers cover almost all aspects of Indian life; Sri Aurobindo, a great poet and religious thinker writes 'Savitri' which earns a global recognition on the basis of its theme and presentation; Rabindranath Tagore, also popularly known as 'Gurudev', gets Nobel prize on his noted collection of devotional poems, 'Gitanjali'; its originality and intense devotional feeling is acknowledged by the famous English poet and critic W. B. Yeats and he writes the foreword of this anthology. On the other hand, writers writing in English like Sarojini Naidu, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, K. A. Abbas, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh and many others write on diverse subjects including social, political and cultural issues. Some of them very impressively write on the 'freedom struggle movement of India'. All the literary documentations of Indian life covering its glorious ancient history, adversities of common men, ugliness of political and social behavior, industrial growth, extraordinary jump towards academic and research achievements all get full expression through English language.



Due to the intermixing of peoples from different ethnic background they wanted to know others' religious, cultural and social belief in order to become familiar with their ways of life. This starts exchanging their habits, dishes, clothes, rituals and many other components of their life. Till nineteenth century, the common men of all religious communities were almost unaware of the theme of the religious scripts of other religious communities. The making of English language as the globally used language also encourages a large number of writers to translate the religious scripts of their religion into English and others' religious scripts into their own language/s. This is the reason that from last two centuries, a good number of people develop outstanding knowledge of culture, religion, rituals etc of other communities. Consequently, the translated version of all religious scripts can be found in English and this spreads the philosophy of every land from the one corner of the world to the other.

Nowadays, peoples across the world prefer to learn this language because they realise this language to be the main vehicle for the development of all kinds of knowledge. Even those countries which were not interested in it lately like Japan, North Korea, China, Thailand etc realise its importance and they let English language be introduced in their curricula. British Council has throughly been working for its expansion throught the world. David Crystal may be quoted from his *Encyclopedia of English* which depicts the story of its present status:

English is used as an official or semi-official language in over 60 countries and has a prominent place in a further 20. It is either dominant or well established in all six continents. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, and advertising. Over two-thirds of the scientists write in English. Three quarters of the world's mail is written in English. Of all the information in the world's electronic retrieval system, 80% is stored in English. English radio programmes are received by over 150 million in 120 countries. Over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level; over 80 million study it at secondary level (these figures exclude China). In any one year the British council helps a quarter of a million foreign students to learn English in various parts of the world. P. 191

The present scenario of the world is immensely different from what it was few decades ago. Till few years ago only counted numbers of developed nations were working in the area of space technology, rocket science, mission to the Moon/the Mars, nuclear energy etc. In addition to all these the revolution in the area of Information Technology gave some extra mileage to English language in comparison with other languages. A. C. Baugh and Thomas Cable observe:

During the 1990s, the explosive growth of the internet was extending English as a world language in ways that could not have been foreseen only a few years earlier. The development of the technology and software to run the Internet took place in the United States, originally as ARPANET (the Advanced Research Project Agency Network), a communication system begun in 1969 by the U. S. Department of Defense in conjunction with military contractors and universities. In 2000, English was the dominant language of the Internet, with more than half of the Internet hosts located in the United States and as many as three fourths in the United States and other English-speaking countries. P. 7

The socio-economic condition of all the countries is changing in the recent course of time. All the countries are trying hard to evolve all possible new resources for their economic growth. They all are trying to evolve and redesign the traditional industries with innovative ideas. Agriculture, hand made products, painting, fashion designing, textile and many other such sectors of every country are under the priority of every country in order to compete with other countries and to a far extent they are being accomplished. We can take for example the Bangladeshi textile products which are welcomed throughout the world; it immensely contribute the economy of the country. In the similar ways all the countries are working. They need world market for these products. Today, the English language is the only medium for global marketing.

Nowadays, tourism is emerging as an important industry in every country as a fruitful resource of economy. Many small countries which don't have any rich source of economy, but they have the rich natural beautiful locations that can attract people across the world are developing these spots; they prove to be very beneficial for their economic



growth. The bigger and advanced countries also put focus on the tourism sector, for it adequately contributes their economy. Because people from all over the world whose language/s vary from place to place and people to people come to these tourist spots, they obviously use English language.

The future of English: The standard form of a language is supposed to be used in academics, administration, judicature, civil aviation, international trade and other such affairs. But the standard form of a language undergoes changes; the English language used in public schools, largely spread over nineteenth century London, was believed to be standard particularly in the spoken form which was altered a little later with some phonetic and syntactical change what native linguists call RP (Received Pronunciation) English. With the global spreading of English language it is accepted as the standard language which is phonetically a little different from RP English. In course of time such changes occur in every language and the speakers naturally adopt it.

This is an age of globalization and the whole world is like a big village; the inhabitants of the globe essentially need a common communicative language for interaction and discourse. A large number of countries like China, Japan, Korea, India, France, Germany, Spain and the Islamic countries are exerting worthy efforts for the spreading of their languages throughout the world in order to retain their usefulness in the future perspective. At a time, the government of all these lands are making their people learn English language with open heart because they know that this is the need of the hour.

But there can be some different kind of uncongenial situation for native speakers of English Language in future. UK, USA, and most of the English speaking countries are monolingual and the citizens of these countries do not prefer to learn any other language/s. On the other hand, a good number of people in most of the economically powerful countries are learning English. If it continues the non-native speakers will have two language acquisitions unlike the native speakers of English who will remain helpless with one. A C Baugh and Thomas Cable in their book *A History of the English Language* draw our attention towards this futuristic idea regarding the possible role of English Language:

If it is clear that English has “triumphed” in the world, it is less clear what part of this triumph native speakers of English will enjoy in decades to come. To be sure, travel and commerce are easier. However, it has been observed that when a large portion of the educated global population know both English and another language, or several languages, monolingual English speakers in Britain and United States may be at a disadvantage in several ways, not least in the economics of the job market. The very supremacy of English that makes certain aspects of life easier tends to buffer speakers of English from the need to learn other languages. Europeans, South Asians, and Chinese are busily learning English, but in Britain and the United States, monolingualism tends to be the norm - except, of course, in households where Spanish, or Chinese, or Arabic is the “heritage” language. P. 405

In order to make the discourse more logical for better understanding, a glance over the human civilization and its history can make us recognise the human development in some different ways. There was a time when western countries were not the epicenters of knowledge. Many eastern countries in ancient age like India, China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Iran, Anatolia etc were the lands of rich civilization and scholarship. In course of time these civilizations became overshadowed by the emergence of western countries making tremendous development with science, technology and other offshoots of modern education. There can be possibilities in late future of the emergence of lands beyond western countries where the English language does not have the first language status as the prime centres of education and research. That situation would not help the monolingual speaking people. This can be alarming for the native speakers of English but not for the English Language.



Conclusion:

The focus of the discourse is on the English language being used across the world as the common communicative language. It is natural that people love to use their mother/national language in their everyday life. But it is not always feasible in professional affairs. The non-native users of English, contrary to the native users, are multilingual. They learn English language in a little later course of academic development. Obviously they are more fluent in their mother language; they feel natural association with their first language. They use their language in social life which covers their culture, rituals, habits, religious performances and all that that makes them the natural part of their society.

The globalization of the world creates a different and new mode of life; the globalized world brings peoples of the world closer to one another, more often for professional reasons and sometimes for academic reasons. The discourse amply focuses over how and why English language proves to be the first choice to be used as the common communicative language. The story of the development and expansion of English language starts from around the birth of Christ and it still continues. English language is the treasure of narratives that narrate the story of struggle, ups and downs, flexibility, assimilating nature, acceptance of all changes etc. Its stories narrate how the literary heroes of this language used their pen to record the literary and linguistic growth which made the English Language the tongue of the world. All the major courses of modern education and their application in professional fields are carried out using this language. The peoples of all the countries have every right to work for the development of their own native language/s. But the making of this globalized world more accomplished, we need English language. Without opposing the growth of any other language, our efforts should be put on the learning and spreading of English language, because this language appears to be the only vehicle for promoting every kind of produces of a country to the other countries. Its worldwide use in the presentation of every facet of human and non-human life, nature and the whole cosmos assures that its future is safe and formidable for centuries.

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