

**A PERSPECTIVE STUDY AND CONTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN OUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

The given paper presents an overview of the factors, changes and trends that may have an impact on **The Perspective Study and Contribution of English Language in Our Intercultural Communication**. Actually the status of intercultural communication plays a role of English language as lingua franca nowadays and in the near future. It presents the new phenomena and concepts of 'functional native' and 'Global English' communication together with the change they bring about in the practice of language using, and gives an account of those areas where English continues to play a leading role of intercultural communication (e.g. international business as dominated by multinational companies, the Internet, the international market of higher education).The present study aims to investigate the effects/efforts of intercultural communication of English language during the conversation/teaching learning process. English language plays a major role in every person's life whoever wants to achieve in their professional life. It is a challenge to master this language to any nonnative speaker. Globally, a lot of innovative methodologies are bringing adapted to enrich this language learning. Intercultural communication can be linked with identity, which means the competent communicator is the person who can affirm others' avowed identities.

As well as goal attainment is also a focus within intercultural competence and it involves the communicator to convey a sense of communication appropriateness and effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts. Ethnocentrism plays a role in intercultural communication. The capacity to avoid ethnocentrism is the foundation of intercultural communication competence. Ethnocentrism is the inclination to view one's own group as natural and correct, and all others as aberrant. People must be aware that to engage and fix intercultural communication there is no easy solution and there is not only one way to do so. Listed below are some of the components of intercultural competence.

**Key Words:** *Intercultural Communication, Current Perspective of English, Transactions in English Language, English as a Global Language, Geographical Phenomenon, Learning, Communication Skills, Proficiency, English Language Teacher, Globalization, Performance of English Language Teaching, Advancement, Reforms, Awareness and Insight, Challenges and Technology and Professionals.*

## **Introduction**

According to the contemporary point of view intercultural communication is a discipline that studies communication across different cultures and social groups, or how culture affects communication. It is used to describe the wide range of communication processes and problems that naturally appear within an organization or social context made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Intercultural communication is sometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communication. In this sense it seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate and perceive the world around them. Many people in intercultural business communication argue that culture determines how individuals encode messages, what medium they choose for transmitting them, and the way messages are interpreted.

My native language Hindi is a compilation of many dialects and is spoken by more than 41 percent of the Indian Population. The constitution of India states Hindi as one of the two official languages of communication, English being the second substantial complement. Despite being widely based in North and Central India, a person who can speak Hindi fluently can usually strike up a conversation anywhere in India. Despite many different dialects, the language is said to bridge regional gaps and bring people together. Whether it is Bollywood, the Hindi Cinema or popular international news channels such as BBC being broadcasted in Hindi, the language is substantially spread wide even across the country, not forgetting the whole world. Despite Hindi being used popularly in the country, there are areas where majority of the population are familiar with the local dialect or language. Talking to a relative back in India who can just communicate in Hindi and is monolingual, I realized that it could get difficult to travel around the country at

times. When travelling to other states where Hindi is not the spoken language, asking for directions felt like the hardest task.

My paper focuses on the English language using through the modern, traditional and visual media. The techniques that are being used for ages to develop the new skills in our life. Actually language is the set of sounds and symbols by which two or more individuals communicate each other. With the emergence of new technology, a new trend has been developed by the name of the intercultural/multicultural communication in our daily life. English has become a global language, and proficiency in English communication skills is considered highly essential for a person's personal and professional growth.

### **English language as a systematic means of communication-**

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.

## **Commercial transactions in English language**

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. Some of the states of India are witnessing popular increase in public demand for teaching of English language from the primary classes. Realizing the importance, recently, the Ex.Minister of Indian Railways, Laloo Prasad Yadav, demands teaching of English language in schools. The great demand for admission in English medium schools throughout the country is a testimony to the attraction of English to the people of India. Many of the leaders, who denounce English, send their own children to English medium schools. Many of the schools in the country have English as the sole or additional medium of instruction.

## **English language is one tool to establish our viewpoint**

We can learn from others experience. We can check the theories of foreigners against our experience. We can reject the untenable and accept the tenable. We can also propagate our theories among the international audience and readers. We can make use of English to promote our worldview and spiritual heritage throughout the globe. Swami Vivekananda established the greatness of Indian view of religion at the world conference of religions in Chicago in 1893. He addressed the gathering in impressive English. Many spiritual gurus have since converted thousands of English people to our spirituality by expressing their thought and ideas in masterful English. English has thus become an effective means of promoting Indian view of life, and strengthening our cultural identity in the world. When William Caxton set up his printing press in London (1476) the new hybrid language (vernacular English mixed with courtly French and scholarly Latin) became increasingly standardized, and by 1611, when the Authorized (King

James) Version of the Bible was published, the educated English of London had become the core of what is now called Standard English. By the time of Johnson's dictionary (1755) and the American Declaration of Independence (1776), English was international and recognizable as the language we use today. The Orthography of English was more or less established by 1650 and, in England in particular, a form of standard educated speech, known as Received Pronunciation (RP) spread from the major public schools in the 19th century. This accent was adopted in the early 20th century by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for its announcers and readers, and is variously known as RP, BBC English, Oxford English, and the King's or Queen's English. 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.

## **English as a Lingua Franca**

Any number of other statistics may be quoted, none of them definitive, but all shining some light on the situation. However, absolute numbers aside, it is incontrovertible that English has become the lingua franca of the world in the fields of business, science, aviation, computing, education, politics and entertainment (and arguably many others). Over 90% of international airlines use English as their language of choice (known as "Airspeak"), and an Italian pilot flying an Italian plane into an Italian airport, for example, contacts ground control in English. The same applies in international maritime communications ("Seaspeak"). Two-thirds of all scientific papers are published in English, and the Science Citation Index reports that as many as 95% of its articles were written in English, even though only half of them came from authors in English-speaking countries. Up to half of all business deals throughout the world are conducted in English. Popular music worldwide is overwhelmingly dominated by English (estimates of up to 95% have been suggested), and American television is available almost everywhere. Half of the world

newspapers are in English, and some 75% of the world mail correspondence is in English (the USA alone accounts for 50%). At least 35% of Internet users are English speakers, and estimated 70-80% of the content on the Internet is in English (although reliable figures on this are hard to establish).

### **Who communicates in English language?**

Today, English is the second or third most popular mother tongue in the world, with an estimated 350-400 million native speakers. But, crucially, it is also the common tongue for many non-English speakers the world over, and almost a quarter of the globe's population - maybe 1½-2 billion people - can understand it and have at least some basic competence in its use, whether written or spoken. It should be noted here that statistics on the numbers around the world who speak English are unreliable at best. It is notoriously difficult to define quite what is meant by "English speaker", let alone the definitions of first language, second language, mother tongue, native speaker, etc. What level of competency counts? Does a thick creole (English-based, but completely incomprehensible to a native English speaker) count? Just to add to the confusion, there are at least 40 million people in the nominally English-speaking United States who do NOT speak English. But best recent estimates of first languages suggest that Mandarin Chinese has around 800-850 million native speakers, while English and Spanish both have about 330-350 million each. Following on, Hindi speakers number 180-200 million (around 240 million, or possibly much more, when combined with Urdu), Bengali 170-180 million, Arabic 150-220 million, Portuguese 150-180 million, Russian 140-160 million and Japanese roughly 120 million. If second-language speakers are included, Mandarin increases to around 1 billion, English to over 500 million, Spanish to 420-500 million, Hindi/Urdu to around 480 million, and so on, although some estimates for English as a first or second language rise to over a billion.

### **Culture. What culture? Which culture?**

The majority of EIL interactions world-wide take place between speakers for none of whom English is the mother tongue and for none of whom English is a cultural symbol. On these grounds it may be questioned whether the teaching of culture is at all necessary to the teaching of EIL. For example, if a Dutch person conducts business in China, EIL is likely to be used. If the business is conducted in writing any reference to culture will be to the international conventions of doing business, or to local, regional, or national conditions. This is the kind of extra-lingual information that needs to be taught in ESP courses. If in face-to-face interactions any cultural elements enter the conversation (which is unlikely though; see House 1999:84) they are likely to be part of the socio-cultural make-up of the Dutch and the Chinese interactants. The kind of traditional cultural knowledge that we teach or used to teach our students at school (and which we touched on above) will not do here either. What will rather be needed in such situations is an awareness of potential pitfalls resulting from cultural contrasts. We need to prepare our students for such situations. An effective way to do this is to raise their cross-cultural awareness by making them reflect on the differences between their own culture and the target culture, given a particular situation. This will sharpen their understanding of both cultures (McKay 2002: 94/5). A reflective learner is an effective learner.

### **An English family of languages-**

The future of world English is likely to be one of increasing multidialectism; but could this become multilingualism? Is English going to fragment into mutually unintelligible varieties, just as Vulgar Latin did a millennium ago? The forces of the past fifty years, which have led to so many New Englishes, suggest this outcome. If such significant change can be noticed within a relatively short period of time, must not these varieties become even more differentiated over the next century, so that we end up, as McArthur argues, with an English ‘family of languages’? Prophets have been predicting such an outcome for some time. In 1877, the British philologist Henry Sweet (the probable model for Shaw’s Henry Higgins in *Pygmalion/My Fair Lady*) thought that a century later ‘England, America, and Australia will be speaking mutually unintelligible languages, owing to their



independent changes of pronunciation'. The same point had been made nearly a century before by Noah Webster, in his Dissertations (1789). Webster thought that such a development would be 'necessary and unavoidable', and would result in 'a language in North America, as different from the future language of England, McArthur (1998). Sweet (1877: 196).177.

### **English as a global language-**

People all over the world are trying to learn English so that they may compete globally. This is especially true of international businesses. There are many big international corporations, such as Master card, Visa, Kodak, Sony, and Coca-Cola, that you would expect to have a choice of what language in which to view their sites. But these examples do not have an international home page. If they do offer an alternative language, the choice usually appears three or four pages into the presentation. McDonalds is an example of an international site that offers more than the English language. They offer a McDonalds Japan page right from their main home page. But they do have restaurants in other countries, so they should offer pages in other languages as well. This would not put those who do not speak English at a disadvantage. It would make using the Internet and the WWW a little more fairly for everyone. This inequality in language usage also builds walls within cultures, those who can and those who cannot use the Internet. That wall is built by those who can and those who cannot speak and write English. It is becoming more and more prevalent that "English is necessary for living on the Internet." (Korpela) This is only one view, however. It is also possible to make the Internet and the WWW a little more accessible for everyone. Others believe that "the addition of other languages to the Internet will enable it to truly become a global network." (Mandel) There are many alternatives to making the WWW a little more global and World Wide. In most countries around the globe the English language can be found in some form or another, whether it is an international news broadcast, such as CNN, BBC and many other English Language Media Channels all over the world, which are very important for intercultural communication in our day to day life. English dominates international business, politics, and culture more than any other language in human history. It is estimated that



"the number of native English speakers is 300 million to 450 million." (Stevenson) More than one billion people are believed to speak some form of English. (Rohde, Campbell, Guardian, Economist, Rezendes) Although the numbers vary, it is widely accepted that hundreds of millions of people around the world speak English, whether as a native, second or a foreign language. English, in some form, has become the native or unofficial language of a majority of the countries around the world today. "In 20 to 30 countries around the world, English is merging with native languages to create hybrid Englishes" (Rohde) . It is widely believed that "English is truly the world language." (Stevenson) English seems to be emerging, if it has not already arrived, as a global language. If this were to become official it would reduce the number of mistranslations. It would make communication across cultures much easier.

### **Capabilities and skills-**

The most far-reaching goal of intercultural education is to give people the **capabilities and skills** to live in other cultures and to exercise other communication patterns. For this type of education, training in the language of the new culture is clearly of the greatest importance. Education in foreign language is education in intercultural communication.

After all, we will be speaking the language we learn with people from another culture background than our own. To serve as an effective instrument for the purpose of intercultural communication, language instruction must place greater importance on the way in which a language is tied to a cultural pattern. Beyond traditional written language instruction, much greater consideration must be given to the conditions for understanding, i.e. what sort of Pre understanding is normally required among large groups of people in a culture.

Greater consideration should also be given to factors that are decisive in the spoken language, such as body communication, intonation, feedback and turn-taking.

Language instruction that contains more of these components would have the possibility much more so than is the case today to be a support for the individual who gradually with the help of the learned language will begin some type of intercultural communication.

## **Awareness and insight about differences between cultures and communication structures-**

Since the basic difficulty in intercultural communication is the differences that exist between the sender's and receiver's cultural backgrounds and way of communicating, a first action to reduce the risks of misunderstanding would be to gather good insight into the differences and similarities that exist. Although differences between cultural and communication patterns are in focus, similarities should not be ignored as they can form a general human base that can be used to solve some of the difficulties in intercultural communication.

As the road to insight for many people goes through education, a first goal for education in intercultural communication is to give insight about:

1. Overall information about the ways in which cultural patterns can be similar and different. This type of information is meant to give a general preparation for what can happen in intercultural communication and should include as many as possible of the points named above.
2. Specific information about the characteristics of a particular culture. This type of information is necessary as a complement to the first type for a person who will have contact with people from the culture in question.

## **Language as a social, cultural and geographical phenomenon-**

English being used in the world for international trade, education and research has acquired the status of universal language. A person all around the world learns and teaches English for various purposes. Language and culture are inseparable, therefore, language cannot be taught without its culture. The question of transformation of 'culture' along with English language teaching and learning has been discussed by various researchers for the last few decades. Language is the link between people. English is the international language of business which opens up many opportunities to non-native speakers. This English Language Teaching skill provides valuable service to immigrants in English speaking countries and many more. This

paper helps the learner to enhance the intercultural communication in the classroom or any place. It is an opportunity to enable the learners to relish the English language. It mainly concentrates on the beginners to Intermediate who wants to create an interest in learning this language. Majority of the English books published in the early days focus on British culture norms and values. However, the present day textbooks provide readers the awareness of the large number of English varieties, such as US English, New Zealand English, Indian English and Australian English. The present study aims to investigate the cultural effects of English language during the teaching learning process. Language is the set of sounds and symbols by which two or more individuals communicate each other.

### **English language as the world of knowledge-**

Language is a medium of communication. Ability to speak different languages always helps people to communicate better. When a communication takes place in a language that both the parties understand; the communication is more effective and the understanding better. With globalization gaining ground in India, particularly from the last decade, knowledge of English language has become all the more essential to communicate better with the outside world as it is the language for trade and commerce. In terms of books or the internet is available in English, much more than any other language. With technology providing the competitive edge, knowledge of English language has become even more critical as the language of technology and the development of science. Nowadays, the language courses also look at the cultural aspects of a given country while teaching their language. If one teaches language without explaining the culture in which it operates, the student may absorb incorrect meaning to some words in certain usages. In such instances the students may use the language inappropriately or within the wrong cultural context, thus makes the purpose of learning that language meaningless. Therefore, while framing policies for language teaching one must encompass and include the cultural values of the societies from which the languages are derived, as well as the culture in which the target language is being taught. Combining the teaching of culture into the language curriculum may

enhance understanding and acceptance of differences between people, cultures and ideologies. Societies may include a number of cultures and languages.

### **English language is used by both native and non-native speakers-**

Actually nowadays English language is used by both native and non-native speakers-for communication purpose. Even among the English speakers, accents and vocabularies differ from country to country and even from region to region. Among non-native speakers of English, the language has a status of associate language, and it is most often used in official communications, research, education, legal aspects and trade. English in such nations will be used not only for communicating with the foreign countries, but also for internal communication to a certain extent. English often mingle with the local languages in their conversation and most often people abruptly move to speak English in the middle of their conversations. This is a multilingual situation which further leads to inter language variations namely “pidgin” and “creole”. A “pidgin” is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language which is characterized by limited vocabulary, reduced grammatical structures and narrow range of functions.

### **Performance of English language teaching:**

The first and foremost important thing that English language teacher has to do is to help the students in overcoming their fears about communication and motivate them to develop more positive perceptions of communication skills. He/she is expected to play the roles such as - motivator, counselor, diagnostician and above all, communication and soft skills trainer. He/she need to be friendly with the students so that they can freely interact and express their problems in learning and improving English communication skills. The students should be involved in various sessions such as Debates; JAM Sessions; Group Discussions; Role Play; etc. in order to strengthen their confidence level. They need to be encouraged to cultivate the habit of reading English newspapers, magazines, fictions, novels, etc. at regular intervals. The English language teacher ought to encourage them to gain command over the essentials of English grammar.

In most of the nation's English act as the second language and hence non-native English users outnumber the first language users, and hence it is logical to assume that in this era of globalization the future of English will be determined by non-native English speakers (Graddol, Therefore it is a trend even in the illiterate society to expose the children to English language right from childhood. In some cases, parents speak even non- standard variety of the language to the children in the name of English. The impact of the English language on the culture appears somewhat threatening to the existence of some indigenous languages generally, since young generation are now less proficient in their mother tongue than in English. The massive influence of English language on international culture, through internet and television, typified by globalization is accountable for the apparent surrender of some languages and their culture to the dominance of English. The chances of cultural influence of English on other societies have led to the opinion that an ideologically, politically, socially and culturally neutral form of English should be promoted in the teaching learning process.

### **Conclusion-**

The world is packed with diversity, in places, people, their cultures, their languages and much more. Language is the passport of human interaction that enables a smooth flow of knowledge, understanding and sharing of beliefs and explanation of behavior. The world is now a 'Global Village', with borders that separate countries becoming as insignificant as mere lines on a map. More and more people are travelling to different parts of the world, to study, work or explore. It is essential to overcome the barriers of language, in order to ensure the smooth flow of knowledge. As Karl Albrecht once said "Change your language and you change your thoughts. The contribution of English language in our intercultural communication adds the challenge of overcoming the communication barriers of different cultures, ethnic heritage, values, traditions, language, history, sense of self, and racial attitudes. These barriers must be conquered in order for the collaboration to succeed. Participants in an effective multicultural collaboration must have inclusive leadership that understands and strives for diversity, while dealing with problems and conflict along the way. If the focus remains on the common goal and equal power for

everyone involved, the collaboration will have a great chance of success. An intercultural communication entails changing the way people think, perceive, and communicate. There is a difference between recognizing cultural differences and consciously incorporating inclusive and anti-discriminatory attitudes in all aspects of the organization. Embracing cultural differences is not something separate from your issue-oriented work. It is at the core of the group's perspective on issues, possible solutions, and membership and operating procedures. The organization's structure, leadership, and activities must reflect multiple perspectives, styles, and priorities. Changing how the organization looks and acts is just the first step in the ongoing process of creating a reality that maximizes and celebrates diversity.

On the basis of the above mentioned points, it can be said that despite the challenges it faces, the role of English as a world language will not be endangered in the near future as its hegemony cannot be questioned in the fields dealt with although it will have to fulfill its role in a multilingual and multicultural environment. To conclude, English language plays a significant role in the development of peoples' personality and equips them for growth at professional level. This in turn helps in the progress of the country as English is the language of business and trade. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the family, teachers, government and the society to contribute towards improving spoken English skills throughout the country.

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