

English as *Lingua Franca* in the Indian Context

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India is a fast emerging Nation in the world and one of the top most contestants to become the next World Super Power. Time and again, it makes its presence felt to the Third World Nations through its multifaceted culture, indigenous languages and the multi-talented ubiquitous youth. Besides these, there are many other factors such as science and technology, music, books, architecture, medicine, natural resources and the like that make the world countries throng India. When India is one of the hubs for many things, it goes without saying that the Nation is filled with tourists and traders from different countries. It is here the need of a common language gets its prominence. Though there are many languages in India, the lacuna for a common language is filled successfully by none other than English, the *Lingua Franca* of the world.

India stands, by and large, high in the world economy now. English is, one of the most prominent reasons, among other things/factors that the economy reaches its height every now and then. One of the other reasons is Indians speak English fairly. English is a vehicle in which, by and large, the success of the Nation travels. The ethnic qualities of India are witnessed and liked throughout the world with the help of English language, without which the world will move at a snail's pace. For example, India's traditional forms of medicines are gaining momentum throughout the world for its unique qualities and effectiveness. One cannot witness or imagine this without the active role of the Queen's language. It is not a denying fact that English language made happen globalization. People move freely around the world with the passport called English language. Indian literature in English takes the lion's share in popularizing the Nation's culture, ethnicity and custom. There is a great emergence of Indian writers such as Karnad, Basheer and others writing in English. These writers help the Nation in one way or the other through their writings in English. There are a great many numbers of languages in India that produce literature on its own way. However, they are not popularised until they are translated into English. Had not *Gitanjali* been translated into English, Tagore would not have received the prestigious Nobel Prize. Tagore, the first non-European, got the Nobel Prize largely for the English version of *Gitanjali*.

English is an International Language:

The phrase 'English is an international language' has almost become a cliché that it is used quite often in the language parlance. Twenty percent of the world's population has English as their mother tongue. Besides this, there is many a country that uses English as its official language. In fact, the non-native speakers of English supersede that of the native speakers in using English which is ubiquitous.

English as a Link Language or Lingua Franca:

A *lingua franca*, also known as a bridge language, common language, trade language or vehicular language, is a language or dialect systematically used to make communication possible between people who do not share a native language or dialect.

English is used for diplomatic purposes. When foreign delegates meet, they usually use English as their language. English is significant in the sense that it helps to maintain a stronger and better relationship among the nations. Science and technology is developing dynamically every day and inventions are brought to the world time and again. All these are learned and understood only in English, for, it is the library language. English hence helps us to keep abreast of the inventions and its uses. English, today, is the language of communication. It is the language of the air travel or the language of the skies. Pilots, whichever country they may belong to, have to use English when they are flying.

Flight controllers at Heathrow help 85 airlines and 1,350 flights fly safely in a day using English on air. If this is the case with aviation, can one imagine higher education without English? People/Students move to different parts of the world in search of education keeping English in mind. Higher education is possible only when the student knows English however good his/her subject knowledge may be. In fact English has intruded into many languages in India and outside India. Out of ten words one speaks from one's native language, one uses at least three or four English words.

The modern day world is technology bound and the entire world depends on internet without which the world, it is assumed, will be stunned. English is the internet language with the help of which the world moves at a great pace. English acts as the link-language, because it is easier to find people in every part of country with the knowledge of English. Therefore, a north Indian traveling to the south can communicate with them if he knows English. The case is not the same for Hindi. The regional languages are not fully developed. Moreover, books in different

subjects are not available in regional languages. This makes the task of teaching in the regional language very difficult.

Almost 60% of the world's advanced research is done in English and the rest is quickly translated into English. So it becomes necessary for an Indian to know English otherwise he will become like a frog in the well. The history of English literature and language shows that English has not become what it is today by a sudden leap. It is a steady and gradual but rapid growth.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF):

The status of English is such that that it has been adopted as the world's lingua franca for communication in Olympic sport, and international trade. Unlike any other languages, past or present, English has spread to all five continents and has become a truly global language.

The term lingua franca is usually taken to mean 'any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for whom it is a second language. In this definition, then, a lingua franca has no native speakers, and this notion is carried over into definitions of English as a lingua franca, such as in the following example: '[ELF] is a [contact language](#)' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication. Clearly, the role of English as the chosen foreign language of communication in Europe is an extremely important one, and one that is on the increase.

Generally, English is used among Indians as a 'link' language and it is the first language for many well-educated Indians. It is also the second language for many who speak more than one language in India. The English language is a tie that helps bind the many segments of the society together. Also, it is a linguistic bridge between the major countries of the world and India. English has special national status in India.

It has a special place in the parliament, judiciary, broadcasting, journalism, and in the education system. One can see a Hindi-speaking teacher giving their students instructions during an educational tour about where to meet and when their bus would leave, but all in English. It means that the language permeates daily life.

The important ability to speak, read or write English has recently increased significantly because English has become the de facto standard. Learning English language has become popular for business, commerce and cultural reasons and especially for internet communications throughout the world. English is a language that has become a standard not because it has been

approved by any 'standard' organization but because it is widely used by many information and technology industries and recognized as being standard. The call centre phenomenon has stimulated a huge expansion of internet-related activity, establishing the future of India as a cyber-technological super-power. Modern communications, videos, journals and newspapers on the internet use English and have made 'knowing English' indispensable.

All developments begin with education, and education, of course, in turn, stems from language. Yet, language is much more than one of the means of communication; it determines the book one reads, the television programmes one watches, the ideas one is exposed to, the values one holds, one's personal interests, and one's career opportunities. In essence, it defines our identities.

Conclusion:

English is the *raison d'être* for a successful, easier and effective understanding of communication. This Queen's language is ever growing at a great pace with one new word is added every two hours. This sheds light on the fact that English is indispensable for communication across communities and nations. Using English as a link language, people become the citizens of the world as it goes without saying, English plays a dominant role in the media. It has been used as a medium for inter-state communication and broadcasting both before and since India's independence. India is, without a doubt, committed to English as a national and link language. The impact of English is not only continuing but increasing ever more.

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