

8.

English as Universal Language**Sameer Ahmad Dar**Ph. D Research Scholar English
Jiwaji University, Gwalior (M.P.) India

Communication is the life blood of social as well as corporate world. We exist because we communicate. The importance of the ability to speak or write English has recently increased significantly because English has become popular for business, commerce and culture reasons and especially for internet communication throughout the world.

Man has been using English language as a tool of communication for centuries. It has enabled him to interact with the environment and to regulate his social behavior. English language is the most widely used instrument. Today, English language is one of the most prized possessions of man. It acts as a repository of wisdom, a propeller for the advancement of knowledge and telescope to view the vision of the future. Language is essentially a social affair, it enables human beings to acquire, store, retrieve and process information.

Of all the languages in the world today English deserves to be regarded as a world language. It is the first language of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and Australia. In addition it is spoken and read by many millions of Europeans, Africans, Chinese, Indians, Japanese, and South Americans as a second language. It is widely known in India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon, almost every country of the world and is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations. One person out of every four on earth can be reached through English.

The 300 million native speakers of English are to be found in every continent, and an equally widely distributed body of second language speakers, who use English for their day today needs, totals over 250 millions. Finally, if we add those areas where decisions affecting life and welfare are made and announced in English, we cover one-sixth of world's population.

If we look at the media we find that over 50% of world's newspapers, over 50% of world's scientific and technical periodicals and indeed more than 60% of the world's radio program are broadcast in English and it is also the language of 70% of the world's mail.

It was, however, the introduction of English to the indigenous peoples of British colonies which led to the existence today of numerous independent states where English continues in daily use. The instrument of colonial power, the medium for commerce and education, English became the common means of communication. The language policy in British India and other territories was largely the fruit of Lord Macaulay's Education Minute of 1835, wherein he sought to; form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern-a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in morals and in intellect.

From the above facts it can be easily concluded that English is an international link language. English is the most widely spoken and understood language in the world. This great usage of English language becomes the reason for its great popularity and worldwide distribution. English language gives the person global recognition.

The growth of nationalism ultimately freed the country from the British rule. Our national leaders drew their inspiration from the writings of great thinkers like Ruskin, Carlyle, Abraham Lincoln and others who wrote in English. It is only through the knowledge of English language that they could understand their writings.

In our country, we have different states with different regional languages. English as a common language brought the leaders from different states on one platform and share the views of one another. It served as a great unifying force in our country struggle for independence. It is through this language that in spite of the fact that our great leaders belonging to different regions of knowing their regional languages,

could communicate and chalk out their common plans of action.

English played a predominate role in the past and is equally needed at present mainly in higher education in science, medicine, engineering, technology, are as good books in these subjects are available in English only. Also, the students from all over the country can sit in competitive exams together where the language used is mostly English.

English is one of the major languages of the world. The U.N.O has given English the status of being an official language. The great usage of English language becomes the reason for its great popularity and worldwide distribution. If a person knows and understands English, he is sure to be understood anywhere in the world. English language gives the person global recognition.

In the words of F.G. French, 'no language ancient or modern can be compared with English in number of geographical distribution of the homes, factories and offices in which the language is spoken, written or read' (French 1997: 6)

At present ever country needs other countries help in political, social, economical and cultural matters. There comes English as a rescue. In this connection Gatak says 'it would be rash to cut ourselves from the English language which keeps us in continuous contact with the latest thought in Europe, in every field of life and culture' (Gatak 1995: 2).

English no longer is the language of Great Britain only, it is the language required by the world for greater understanding, and it is the most of international languages.

English is a key to the store house of knowledge all over the world became most of the knowledge available is in English only as compared to the other languages. Almost in all the branches of knowledge latest discoveries, scientific investigations etc books are available in English and those who want to pursue higher studies in any branch have to have a working knowledge of correct English. In fact English as an important library language plays a vital role in higher education. Thus we find that English as a library language is very important.

Man is able to exploit a range of techniques of communications. Many are in essence the same as those used by other creatures. Man is vocal, he used his body for gestures of many kinds, he conveys information by facial expression, but he has extended these three basic techniques by adding the dimension of representation. Thus both speech and gesture can be represented in

picture form or symbolically and conveyed beyond the immediate context.

Man alone uses language for communication. In the words of Dwight Bollinger, 'Language is species specific. It is uniquely human trait, shared by the cultures so diverse and by individuals physically and mentally so unlike one another' (Bollinger 1968: 3).

Language has always had a place in human affairs. One of the greatest achievements of the man is his ability to use language. Language in fact is a great tool which has made human civilization possible.

India is a multilingual country and more than 15 languages have been recognized by Indian constitution. According to 2011 census of India more than 380 languages or dialects are spoken in India. People living in different states use their own state languages for conversation. English is the only language that is understood by the educated people all over the country. Thus, English acts as a link between different states and people of India. The language link is a greater link, than any other factor without such a common languages both official and private communication between many parts of the country will be completely cut off.

English serves the purpose of a window on the whole world. By knowing this language we can see whatever is happening all over the world. As Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru quoted, 'English is our major window on modern world.'

F.G. French observes that it is only through this language that we have 'distilled essence of modern knowledge in all fields of human activity. Anyone who can read English can keep in focus with the whole world without leaving his own house' (French 6).

We can say that English is a language that helps us keep in touch with the worlds ever growing and increasing knowledge in all areas like science, technology, information science, space, law, literature etc.

If we will to have access to these vast areas of knowledge, we will not be able to bring about the revolutionary positive changes in areas of education Agriculture, science, technology, industry, transport, communication etc which is very necessary for a country like India. It is only through the medium of English that all this is possible.

In India English was able to take over the position of associate official language. It continues to be the medium of instruction in colleges and universities. It is also the language of the administration. English has

now become an element in the colorful Indian spectacle. It plays an important role in various fields.

- 1) English attained the status of an Associate Official language of the union for an indefinite period as put forth by an act of parliament in 1963. It is an official language of administration.
- 2) English is court language.
- 3) English has entered every sphere of National and International trade commerce.
- 4) It has even entered into our social spheres. Highly educated sections of our society find it more convenient to converse in English.
- 5) English has been recognized as a library language.
- 6) English is National and International Language.
- 7) English provides us ample opportunities for the study of English literature which is so vast and rich.

From the above it may be easily concluded that English plays an important and inseparable role in India. It was of great importance till the pre-independence period and is of greater importance and significance in India today.

References

1. Bollinger, Dwight. Aspect of Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World. 1968.
2. French, F.G. Teaching of English. Mehra Offset Press, Delhi. 1997.
3. Gatak. Teaching of English. Mehra Offset Press. Delhi. 1995.

