



THE INFLUENCE OF MNCS ON ENGLISH AND INDIAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The importance of English language as universal language is evident at present. It is clear that English language has become more dominant around the world. In some countries it is used as the mother tongue and, in other countries people learn it as second language in their schools and colleges. This has made English widespread.

INTRODUCTION

In addition, a few reasons which contributed to the prevalence of English are:

1. Its use as the international link language,
2. Its relevance as the mark of sophistication,
3. Its importance as the language of science and technology.

In addition, there is no doubt that, English is a language of communication among the people with diverse cultures. Users of computer, internet and e-mail exploit English in their transaction. People who know English can deal with the internet, which is regarded as information and communication revolution.

Apart from these, one of the causes that contributed to the spread of English is that, it is the language of the modern era, where the people exploit it in various fields such as, economy, e-commerce, medicine, aviation, etc.,. In addition, English is the language which is used in the tourism and travel.

These are the reasons, which require people to learn English. One of the main reasons why English is dominant in the present time is that it can be used in any field and on any occasion.



Likewise English is an important requirement for most of the jobs. It is quite clear that English has become a necessity today. We need it in all walks of life. Now-a-days with the availability of many sources, such as the Internet, books and educational institutes which are spread around the world has made learning of English an easier task.

Historical Background of English in India:

It is said that Macaulay's *Minutes* (1835) paved the way for the development of English in India by making its study compulsory, in reality, the elite section of the Indians too contributed towards forming a 'favourable' atmosphere for English education. The introduction of English created an atmosphere of political consciousness and an awareness of our own rights and privileges. Only because of this unifying factor the wave of independence spread from North to South and from East to West. Gradually English occupied the top most position in India.

Meanwhile people began to feel that English was a foreign plant transplanted in the Indian soil and English was doing immense harm to the growth of our nation. As a result, in 1904 a government resolution suggested that the medium of instruction in the middle classes should be the mother tongue and English should not be taught before the age of thirteen. However, the children had the provision to pick up a working vocabulary of English to be able to follow their lessons in higher classes. Nevertheless the Calcutta University Commission (1917) supported 'Bilingualism'. Thus English continued to dominate the curriculum of Indian Schools, Colleges and Universities.

English as an International Language:

English is an international language, spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. It is taught in the schools and colleges in almost all countries. It is a living and vibrant language spoken by over 300 million people as their native language. Millions more speak it as a second language.

English is learnt everywhere because people have found out that knowledge of English is a passport for better career, better pay, advanced knowledge, and for communication with the entire world. English is also learned for the literature it possesses, and for the variety and rich experience it provides. English has replaced French as the language of diplomacy. In this computer age, English is bound to expand its domains of use everywhere.

In the Indian subcontinent, English has become the principal language of communication among the educated classes after the famous *Minutes* of Lord Macaulay in 1833.

Present Status of English in India:



There are arguments for and against the teaching of English in India. Sharma rightly pointed out:

Our present problem may be summed up as follows: having got rid of the English of whom we had little use, we have not been equally successful in driving out their language, because as things stand, we can neither really live with it nor, indeed do without it. National self-respect demands that we dethrone it from its eminent place in our country but its extraordinary utility has made it so indispensable to us, that we are prevented from banishing it (Teaching and Development of English. 1993:2).

One can find the same trend in the report of the Kothari Commission (1964) which states that English is quite essential to keep pace with advances in science and technology. The former Chairman of the UGC, Dr. Satish Chandra, after careful study of the problems facing the constitutional provisions relating to official language, recommended that a certain standard was required of officers entering the higher services, in English (in Abdul Manna's "Kothari Commission" 2004:105). Regional languages are used more in the field of administration in various states but this does not help these languages to attain the status of English in the academic field.

The liberalization and globalization of the Indian economy ushered in all kinds of reasons to learn the language. While earlier in the century, students who had specialized in English joined either teaching or the civil services, now a whole new spectrum of job opportunities has opened up. There are now call centres that need trainers to equip their employees with communication skills, there are multinationals who have been recruiting marketing staff who needed to be taught spoken English, there are medical transcription centres which need efficient translators and reporters. Those desirous of migrate to the West needed professional help for clearing tests like the IELTS and TOEFL. Therefore, today the avenues for ELT in India are unlimited.

The change was first observed at the social, political and economic levels. Suddenly, English ceased to be the badge of status for the upper crust. In earlier times, just the upper classes and quite a few limited groups were seen using English in everyday life. The middle class reserved it for official purposes or those social occasions where they wished to leave an impression. The lower classes thought the use of English was beyond their reach and the government schools of India made no effort to teach any kind of spoken English and hence, this category of people had no exposure to it. However, around the year 1995, the whole concept began to change. The liberalization of the economy led to the advent of multinationals resulting in numerous developments like varied job opportunities that demand a good command of English. The growing number of English channels on the television, an

increase in the number of English publications and international lifestyles happen to be an appealing option. Any changes in the life style of people are best exhibited in language and in attire. In India English has made

The term “Culture” and its meaning:

Culture (from the Latin *cultura* stemming from *colere*, meaning "to cultivate") generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activity significance. Different definitions of "culture" reflect different theoretical bases for understanding, or criteria for evaluating human activity.

Most general, the term *culture* denotes whole product of an individual, group or society of intelligent beings. It includes technology, art, science, as well as moral systems and characteristic behaviours and habits of the selected intelligent entities. In particular, it has specific more detailed meanings in different domains of human activities.

A word that means several different things...

When you are talking about "organizational culture", remember to check that you are all conversing about the same thing. People may use the word culture to mean any of these:

1. National / ethnic culture:

The group assumed to be site of child's primary socialization -- "THE Latvian culture," "THE African-American culture." In the U.S. this is usually the assumed meaning of culture, and people revert to this narrow view of culture out of habit, even when you may have been quite explicit about defining culture more broadly than this.

2. Secondary or subgroup culture:

Cultural groups we've been socialized into: Organizational culture, professional culture, manager culture, Muslim culture, peer culture, prison culture, and nerd culture and so on.

3. Culture in the anthropological sense

The meanings and behaviour groups of people develop and share over time.

4. Capital C Culture:



The high arts of theatre, painting, music, etc., or a superior upbringing. Also the term “culture” refers to a state of intellectual development or manners. The social and political forces that influence the growth of a human being is defined as culture.

In the present context, the term “Culture” means not only the poojas, rituals done by Indians as also the environmental forces that govern its meaning. We need to give or attribute an additional meaning to culture which is comprehensive of the much discussed “Globalisation”. Globalisation has been taking place mainly in two areas, at present: (1) Economy and (2) Education. The following definition may help us to understand the term better:

“Firstly, the meaning of this 'globalisation' that they are often said to be pushing us towards. The term is often used in a general way to refer collectively to a set of economic trends. One aspect of 'globalisation' is the greater manoeuvrability of capital around the world. Another related element is the removal of restrictions to global trade. 'Globalisation' is also about the diminishing importance of national frontiers as far as the operations of companies are concerned. In short, globalisation means that the economic activity of companies is to be increasingly understood as taking place on an international, rather than a national stage.”

The Indian panorama of trade till 1990s was a closed one or with Limited opening, i.e., the so called Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was not allowed. The Multinational Companies can offer ‘Technical Collaboration’ only. Though there was significant economical growth in the country, still employment with a decent salary for youths was a dream only. In the beginning of the year 1991, the then Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao’s regime opened the doors of India for Foreign Direct Investment. From then onwards numerous multinational companies started establishing their branches at various cities in India. The number of jobless youths has been decreasing equally whenever the MNCs established their companies. Globalization has brought a great impact on industries. Till the inception of MNCs, no Indian companies required communication skill or any other related skills (likes soft-skills, personality etc.). But to work in an MNC, a candidate requires to improve himself / herself on the whole. More particularly, communicative skill in general; interpersonal communication and mass communicative skill are very much necessary.

It is universally acclaimed that Indian Software Engineers are given a red-carpet welcome throughout the world. This is because of

- 1) Their knowledge in English
- 2) The professional skill or expertise they have
- 3) The same has happened at famous R&D centres in Bangalore, where the recent development in softwares was by Indians, who are fluent in English.



The increasing number of BPOs or Call Centres has also multiplied the employment opportunities. A Call Centre assistant must be fluent in English, or one who has a working knowledge in English can join Out Sourcing Companies. Thus, the first phase of globalization ends with industries and employment.

The second phase of globalization reflects in education field. Once foreign education was limited to high-class people and middle class people cannot afford Foreign Education. But after this globalization, Indian universities have started signing MoU with foreign universities. By virtue of this MoU, foreign University Teachers come to work in India. Foreign education is now at the arm's length for Indian students.

Taking into account, the importance of English, Tamil Nadu government has incidentally made English as a compulsory subject in the Primary School Education.

Another important point we must observe is that the freedom fighters of India were well known for their grip over the foreign tongue. Even the native speakers were afraid of certain Indian leaders who used to converse in English in such a way that the Britishers were convinced.

It is our opinion that Foreign Language learning is a Global necessity and mastery of the English language is a must. It is evident that Indians have the capacity to master the language and once again put India on top of the Global map. But this does mean that Indian tradition and cultural aspects be neglected or forgotten. To conclude mastering the language is to conquer the world, not at the expense of Indian tradition.

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