

## **Language: The Flesh And Blood of Our Culture**

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### **Abstract**

This study reveals the importance of learning English for flesh and blood. It is observed that we need English not only for operational purposes but also for identifying ourselves with those who use the language in India and abroad. Two main kinds of motivation are at work in our approach to English learning: Instrumental and Integrative. But the increasing awareness of the importance of English in the world should compel us to learn it for special or specific purposes and for widening our intellectual horizon.

### **Introduction:**

Language occupies a significant position in human life. Everyone makes use of it, be he a beggar or a king. From birth to death, we are surrounded by it. Language is a means of communication. It is the medium by which thoughts are conveyed from one person to another. It is a means of social control. No society can function without it. Because where is a life, there is a society. Basically, it is impossible to think without language. When we think of anything, we give shape to our thinking with the help of language.

While talking of language, it is highly indispensable to hear certain concepts. Just imagine a world without language, there will be little commendation among people except by signs and gestures. Most of the activities will cease and all teaching and learning will come to an end. The progress and upliftment of mankind will be blocked. We shall be deprived of what was the best in human civilization in the past. A person's speech gives us some idea of his age, his education, his culture and his social background.

In the words of Ben Johnson (1572-1637), English Poet, dramatist and a conscious and deliberate artist is right when he says, "Language most shows a man: speak that I may see thee". So, a person's voice serves at least two functions in communication. One is linguistic, in that it serves as the vehicle of the expression system of Language. The other is non-linguistic, in that it carries information of a quite different sort about the speaker.

### **English for Communication:**

As we know all that Language is a means of communicating thoughts and feelings though not the only means. Cries, signs, gestures, pictorial representations etc. Also serve as a means. Animals other than human beings too communicate with one another. They employ a variety of methods including vocal signals and body movements as well as facial expressions like the baring of teeth. They stimulate one another to action by means of cries. Many birds utter warning calls at the approach of danger, some animals make mating call. Most of the animals utter cries that are expressive of anger, fear, pleasure etc. But these modes of communication differ from human language. The sounds or cries made by animals are not structure that enables us to divide a human utterance into words; a human language is a signalling system which uses vocal sounds and is based on man's ability to speak. The written language is derivative and secondary; it is derived from the spoken language. The basis of language is speech which in turn means the production of meaning sounds according to a system.

Man alone uses language for communication, as Dwight Bolinger says: "Language is species-specific. It is a uniquely human trait shared by the cultures so unlike one another..." language is one of the most important characteristic of communication that distinguishes him from other animals. Accordingly, it has always had a place in human affairs.

The aims of this study are as follows:

- To investigate how well our learners are enable them to use English with ease and comfort, that is to use it both instrumentally and integratively. That is to say, they should be able to speak and write English effectively and develop an ability to understand the basic patterns of the culture of the English-speaking peoples. It is possible for us to realize the aims if we successfully cope with the problems of teaching English as a second language. Learning English as a foreign language, that is, learning it instrumentally only, will not serve us adequately in our communication within India and with those outside India.
- To identify how far today three categories of people in India want to use English. The first group consists of those who want to use it as an instrument of communication. To the second group belong those who use English as a medium through which they can derive sustenance from the literatures of the west, especially those of England and the U.S.A; a great deal of Western literature other than that of Great Britain and North American is available to Indians only in English. There is yet a third group of

Persons, a small minority but perhaps much more important than the other group that use the English language as a medium of creative exploration and expression of their experience of life.

- To examine to what extent English has a special place. This is not merely because English is a world language but because it has historical associations and has made an impact on our cultural life. For this reason English is not a foreign language to us; it is a second language. It is unlike Russian or French or German to us. So, in the teaching of English in India, we should treat it as a second language and not as a foreign language.

### **Concepts of Acceptability and Intelligibility:**

The concept of “Indish” or “Indian” English based on the legalisation of the common mistakes made by us using English goes against notions of acceptability and intelligibility. It is true that the kind of English spoken by Indians bears the stamp of their mother tongue, though in some cases an approximation to an acceptable standard exists. But this does not mean that we should have a kind of nationalized, ‘Socialised’, ‘vernacularized’ English. Such an English is sub-standard and not even remotely connected with the creative use of English by some Indian writers.

### **Conclusion:**

From the above study, it is obvious that of all the languages in the today, English deserves to be regarded as a world language. It is the world’s most widely spoken language. It is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations. One person out every four on earth can be reached through English. It is true that English is the mother tongue of the people of Great Britain. But they are not the only native speakers of the language. Americans, Canadians and Australians too are native speakers of English. So, English is not the mother tongue of the people of Great Britain only. That is to say, the native speakers of English are not confined to Great Britain, but are spread over three continents of the world, namely Australia, Europe and America. English has been taught and used as a medium of communication there. In India, for instance, English continues to be the medium of instruction in colleges and universities, and is also the language of administration. The actual human existence has been fully realised by the writers, administration and educationists of India those who are the real users of English. A very important reason for regarding English as the real human existence of our culture is that the world’s knowledge is

enshrined in English language. It is knowledge of English that helps many countries maintain the high level of their intellectual and scientific training and achievement.

For over a century and a half Indian intellectuals have been studying English. Today English has entered the fabric of India's culture. The 1<sup>st</sup> three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of English education in India, but it was a period of incubation. However, the study of English language strengthened in the years that followed Macaulay's Minute on Education in India and with the implementation of the educational policy of Macaulay, a social, cultural and literary renaissance swept over the whole of India. But Macaulay's dream of completely anglicising India mentally and intellectually was not fulfilled; nor did his expectations that Indians would renounce their past history, traditions and culture come true. This was because he had completely ignored the fact that India had an ancient culture and her own heritage besides her having her own languages with their literatures for their existence in the world. But the scheme resulted in the adoption of English language as the official language of India and helped to revivify the regional languages.

Another and far more important consequence of the use of English was that it stimulated a new consciousness among the people of political and cultural nationalism and encouraged the quest for the true meaning of the Indian experience of history in relation to the west. Equally important was the diffusion of western thought and European liberalism which attracted the great minds of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in India. The encounter between oriental and occidental thought left a permanent impress on India's cultural history.

The net result of the new system of education thus was that Indian culture without losing its roots received the quick graft of western ideas, there was a synthesis of Eastern and western thought in India's leaders and intellectuals right from the days of Ram Mohan Ray to the present. The prose writings of R.N. Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, J. Nehru and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan amply illustrate this synthesis. These great sons of modern India not only imbibed western thoughts and ideas but also upheld Indian culture and heritage and were able to mould and the human existence through English language and define the pattern of India's thought and action.

## Reference

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