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## **Changing Role of English**

### **Abstract**

English language is widely used in India as a second language. It is taught in schools as well as universities as a compulsory or optional subject. The language came to India with the British as a medium to carry on official work. The foreign masters trained Indians in English to create a workforce of babus. Later it was used by educated Indians to express their literary sensibilities and even for instilling a spirit of nationalism. Since then the language is being used for fulfilling various aims. Now-a-days it is a means of global communication as well as a language of education, information technology, trade and commerce. Its role in India has

been changing constantly. Therefore, syllabus designers and teachers have to keep in mind this fact while pursuing their activities.

**Keywords:** Communication Skills, Global Language, Medium Of Communication, Language Domains

It is a worldwide accepted view that how effectively a person uses any language, does affect his personality and determines the way he expresses. Strong effective language, as well as powerful ways of expression and communication play a very significant role in honing ones personality. Language helps individuals to express themselves in the most convincing way. If one is good with language, his ideas, thoughts, feelings and knowledge will be passed on to others in the most desirable manner and one feels contented delivering across if words match the emotions. One should speak really well, even if one hasn't learnt new languages, one should be confident enough to deliver ones thoughts in the same emotion as the way one would have done in his native language. The way you express needs to be very convincing else you will lose being taken up seriously in meetings. A person with good and strong communication skills will not hesitate and may deliver his thoughts anywhere and anytime. It enhances the level of confidence in the person and prepares him for future challenges. Strong and effective communication skills also help in forming a strong relation and better interpersonal relations amongst individuals. It is very significant to have the right choice of words when you are on the giving end. Also one should never hurt the sentiments of others by wrong selection of words. It is not an accepted behaviour and one cannot shift the blame on the language mentioning that the person is still learning the language and may be unintentionally had used wrong words. One must speak convincingly that the person on the receiving end is very clear of what was to be communicated. One should focus and stress on significant words and through voice modulation take proper halts and pauses so that the

message is clearly delivered. Therefore the role of proper and effective use of language in communication is very crucial.

In many educational institutions English is introduced as second language. The child is not at ease speaking the new language the way the child speaks mother tongue. The confidence and expression is totally different when the same child speaks the second or third language. It results in changed actions and perception of the child. At times the students are not very confident when they learn a new language, may be second or third language; as a result when they are expressing their thoughts and delivering what is in their mind through words learnt in a new language, they may lose the right emotion and may become less confident. There is also a possibility of being a different person totally i.e. being more polite and less forthcoming or totally being more hyper and outgoing. Looking at the new role of English language, it should no more be treated as a mere Second Language and should be introduced from the very first opening class in all educational institutions. It is also observed that the parents view this language as a means to get their child into a little higher society. It has become a kind of benchmark to mingle with higher socio- economic group. Therefore, the role of English has changed from a means to communicate ideas, thoughts and emotions etc. to that of something which secures social prestige.

It is a very well known fact that now English is a global language spoken across the world. By saying so we mean that most of the countries in the world have residents who speak and comprehend English. Modern English as we perceive today, has grown and evolved from Old to Middle English and undergone simplification and assimilation; but its popularity, usage and understanding, was spread all over the world due to colonialism.

The period from 1833 to 1853 is replete with the efforts to popularise English, both by the rulers and the Indians themselves. English became the *sine qua non* for the scholar, the job seeker and the affluent in the society. (Sood, 24)

It is now no more confined only to Britain. The role of the language has been changing with the change of territory and each continent has adapted it as per their requirement. The role of English language in the contemporary times has totally changed. Now it is more in voluntary demand since it has become the language of writers, computers, technology, sports, scientists, media and many more. Many countries across the world have identified English as an official language or they have selected it as chief foreign language in schools, the reason in the broader sense is only educational. Rather it has exceeded Chinese in its popularity and usage.

English language, as a common medium of communication, has united all countries in a way and given a unifying chord. "English is the language of the new global world. Wherever you go, you can manage with English. There is no point in wishing away the importance of English." (Agnihotri and Khanna, 117) People feel connected on common platform and can share ideas. The U.N.O. has given English the status of being an official language universally. Since the countries seek continuous support from each other on different platforms i.e. business, politics, technology and sports etc. so the language now has worldwide demand. It has now spread all over and is not required to be just taught as a subject or a language in different boards but one must widen ones vision of accepting it as the connecting language for the people in these times.

The changed role of English in India, can be understood in relation to the concept of 'domains' of language behaviour given by Hughes. He opined that in many bilingual speech communities several 'domains' such as the church, the school, career and employment, and also government, have 'been verified and found to be associated with a language or variety.' (Hughes, 103) He calls this phenomenon "linguistic division of labour" and says that in any society where two languages are in use, they may not be used for exactly the same purposes. One language may be used more in certain contexts and for certain purposes as compared to

the other. The two languages create a more or less complete system of communication within that community. In the case of English in India, the “domains” have already spelt out earlier.

From the foregoing it is amply clear that English Language has a diverse and different role as we almost complete two decades of the twenty first century. The entire world presently is in a stage of transition socially, economically and even demographically. The new economy which has been set up is very competitive and interdependent. In most of the fast growing economies of the world, English plays the role of a vital communicator. English is the world language and we do not see any threat to the language on its global popularity. One basic reason for the vast spread of the English Language in the field of commerce and business is the ability and ease to incorporate vocabulary from other languages and acceptability of the various English dialects. This has made it the preferred language of trade and commerce. These times are the age of information, technology and communication. Due to the huge bank of vocabulary and basic syntax, it has been quite an easy adaptation for English language. The role has changed from being taught as a subject in schools to being a language of cooperation and international communication. It seems that within next few decades, English may overpower or overshadow several native languages of developing nations where economy is still in the process of growing.

Increasing use of English, in day to day lives through social media, official and business interactions, and the internet etc. has led to its immense utility. In future it may play an increasingly dominant role in global communication. Today English continues to be associated with social mobility and status, career advancement, as well as prestige and power. Presently the role of English is not as a supplement language but as one that opens windows to the world, unlocks the doors to opportunities and expands our minds to new ideas.

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