

English for Empowerment, the need of the hour

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Abstract: English for Empowerment. This topic mainly emphasizes on the need to prepare students to empower their careers. It is emerging as a key towards better opportunities for common people and policy makers. The students who are proficient in LSRW, the four major language skills gets an impetus at the time of campus recruitments. English provides a way to survive in this global village. Group discussion, debate has become an integral part of the recruitment process of the MNCs. A gradual shift from the traditional approach is taking place. Critical thinking skills, communication skills and social skills encourage alternative methods of assessments and help students transfer the skills to the real world and promote intrinsic motivation to learn. In the wake of increasing globalisation communication and education across the borders English language is the key towards better opportunities for employment. English as a global language has the highest value to empower people in their educational aspirations. and scope in the employment market. In developing countries like India communication patterns changing rapidly posing challenges to the teachers of English as a second language. Teachers need to better equip themselves to meet these challenges. English has become a tool for Empowerment.

Keywords: English language, Empowerment, Global communication.

1. IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

Language is the dress of thought. It is the expression of life and aspirations. The English language has occupied an important position today because of globalisation. The world has become a global community where people exchange ideas and belief. The importance of English can be due to the fact that it is used in the most prominent and progressive of the two nations, the U.S.A and U.K. During British rule it was used as a medium of instruction. English language was incorporated into various fields because of its growing needs. In today's world the corporate sector employs people who are confident and speak fluent English apart from the basic hard skills required for the job. " It is a language which is rich in language, literature-humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we give up English we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge." - Radhakrishnan university education commission This is very true in, Indian context as we live in an era of modern science and technology where the media or the language of communication is only English which is demand of time and need of everyone who wish to be grown up with the knowledge, skills and information. It is also a tool of securing the dream job which is possible through English language.

Spread of English language

English is a West Germanic language spoken originally in England is now the most widely used language in the world. English has emerged as a world language today. It has not at all remained the language only of a single country, England but used as an official language in almost fifty four countries. Spoken English is extensively used in business, industries, research, government and education for day to day transactions. It is an international language of Diplomacy, Science, technology, banking, medicine, aviation, UN & NATO armed forces engineering, tourism.

Several factors make this language necessary: one of it is that- it is an organised system of language which is easy to learn. Moreover it provides a medium through which people from different parts of the world get interlinked. It is English language which makes a man very powerful to sustain himself in the corporate world. English is enhancing India to become a strong and prosperous nation in the world.

We are living in a digital age where we have to make the software's deal with various technologies and world wide web. English is the language of the language of the latest version applications and programs and new era where, social media networks and all websites, all the software manuals, installation guides and product fact sheets of consumer electronics and entertainment devices usually are available in English first before having made in other languages.

Need for lingua franca

English is used in higher learning. All the students who go abroad for higher education whether it is medical, business schools or advanced studies their medium of instruction is English. All the universities and colleges in Great Britain, The United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore which attracts international students have their medium of instruction as English. The journals, periodicals and reports are all published in English. The United States and Great Britain has ensured the growth and acceptance of English as the primary spoken language in many countries. In countries like Japan, Germany, France, South Korea, Brazil, Italy and Russia a working knowledge of English is important for diplomats and high ranking officials. It helps them better understand the nuance of craft of global affairs and international diplomacy. It has many qualities like flexibilities simple form, and openness of vocabulary making it rich and powerful. When a language is powerful and rich it increases the chances of employability. English is found in all the fields whether Science and technology, media, research and education, press, advertisement and broadcasting, international travel and so on.

2. ENGLISH FOR EMPOWERMENT

The knowledge of English open job opportunities. Though the four United Nation cities of New York, Vienna, The Hague and Geneva recruit professionals with multilingual skills but at the same time expect the candidates to have good English speaking skills as well. In every business whether it is shop or stock market English is required to run it smoothly." In organisations, real power and energy is generated through relationships." Margaret Wheatly (management consultant). And the relationships can be built up through communication skills. Many of the engineering and management students after acquiring the hard skills need to pay attention to the soft skills to acquire a dream. Empowerment begins when we become aware that language is a symbolic tool for the exercise of power and influence.

In this way, language learning and teaching is much more than the mere addition of a code for international communication. It can become a means of social transformation through education. The use of English provides access to learning opportunities.

Two Approaches to the Notion of Empowerment and the Potential of English Education

The Human Capital Approach has been the dominant influence in the economy and development in organisations such as the UN and World Bank for over fifty years. If applied to English language Education, it orientates to empowerment essentially as a means of access to economic development and opportunities for income -generating employment. The Human Capability Development Approach has been developed by the Indian economist Amartya Sen throughout his life. It orientates to empowerment through English as a means of making people aware of their capacity for personal development and potential for learning further and to access new forms of Knowledge which open the mind and benefit society.

English as a Global language

Although estimates vary greatly, fifteen hundred million or more people are today thought to be competent communicators in English. That is a quarter of the world's population. So, is English a global language, where three out of four people yet do not use it. Given the areas of world influence where it has come to have a pivotal role, the answer has to be yes. The evidence suggests that English is now the dominant voice in international politics, banking, the press, the news agencies, advertising, broadcasting, the recording industry, motion pictures, travel, science, technology management and communications. No other language has achieved such a wide spread profile or is likely to in the foreseeable future. The reason for English achieving the global status is due to the increasing ratio of people using English as a second language or foreign language. We can see in the difference in the population growth in countries as UK and the USA on the one hand and Nigeria on the other. The future of the language is evidently out there in ELT world. The growth of different varieties of English in countries like Singapore, India, South Africa are beyond leaps. Some of these ' New Englishes' already as ' Singlish'.

(Singaporean English) and 'Spanglish (for the Hispanic/English mixed language heard in the USA). They exist simply because people want them to- that is, they want a distinctive form of language to express their local or ethnic identity. They therefore develop very different vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation from that found in Standard English; and these differences will only increase over the next generation. One needs to note here that linguistically, the strength of the colonial argument associated with the British English norm legacy is losing ground to that of the unequal distribution of knowledge in society.

As English develops into a truly international language, the notion that domain- specific varieties used in business, the legal or medical professions or academic exchanges can be described satisfactorily. A Special Purpose varieties of a geographically identified norm is increasingly giving way to the recognition that they might be better represented as new networked arenas of discourse. Educators need to retain that attitudes and motivations affect the choices individuals make when envisaging the possible future functioning associated with their learning of English and achieving them. Learning English needs to become an empowering experience of which they are in control, rather than something which is done to them and mediated by invisible forces.

Jawaharlal Nehru said "Someday English would not only be a stop gap language for communication, but it would become the most important language for national and international dealings".

Communication to face Corporate Culture

Communication is the life blood of social as well as well as Corporate world. The ever-growing need for communication skills in English has created a huge demand for teaching and learning quality English around the world. Today's Corporate world is troubled by untrained manpower in soft skills, and there is a rising demand for the teaching of communication and soft skills. An MBA, an Engineer all needs to communicate in English somewhere. But failure in English communication is a drawback which is alarming. The student gets empowered when he/she has acquired the soft skills, the scope of employability also increases. In the present scenario, one has to be proficient, fluent and accurate in English and be a good communicator.

As this leads to be a good listener, speaker, reader and writer which is a demand of high officials such as production, marketing, sales and market place because merely being in possession of employer-employee relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes is not enough for an individual to either 'move self-sufficiently' in the modern labour market or 'realize their potential'. People also need the capability to exploit their assets to market them. The knowledge of English helps an individual to not only become a communicator but a skilled entrepreneur.

Employability with English language, role of soft skills in effective communication

It is true that communication skills tops the list of employability parameter, however other skills such as intrapersonal and interpersonal skills have become increasingly important. Surveys have shown that out of a large number of professionals being produced every year, only ten percent are employable in various industries. The candidates are unsuitable because they lag behind in the soft skills which are essential for employability. Intrapersonal traits are:

- i) Time management
- ii) attitude
- iii) responsibility
- iv) ethics
- v) integrity
- vi) self confidence
- vii) consistency

The interpersonal skills include the following:

- i) self awareness
- ii) teamwork
- iii) communication and networking

- iv) empathy and listening skills
- v) problem solving and trouble shooting
- vi) leadership

Non-verbal communication

- i) eye-contact
- ii) gesture
- iii) posture
- iv) facial expression

Empowerment of women in the light of English Education

Empowerment of women is seen from a different angle by Mirat al Fatima Ahsan, Anita Allama, Yasmeen SherAli. They take a deep insight on how English empowers women, who they believe constitute a disenfranchised population in Pakistan. They argue that if English opens the door to a better future socially, professionally, and academically, especially for those working in the higher education sector, this would imply that English can be seen as a means of empowering the disempowered. Though English has become the language of empowerment in business and education, there is a growing realisation today that language education has failed to live up to its promise of creating an empowered population, who can communicate effectively and confidently in English. English should be taught through a process of understanding rather than remembering.

3. ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINERS

English language trainers thus have an immense responsibility to train people in Communicative English for different purposes like group discussions, interviews, oral presentations, report writing, Letter writing and so on. English language trainers generally handle individuals' abilities to frame grammatically correct sentences or his lack of vocabulary, fear of speaking to groups of people, and ineffective presentation skills. Here are a few skills that an English language trainer need to teach. Language skills which needs to be acquired for business purpose. In the global scenario the language proficiency is the ability to listen, speak, read and write Standard English in a business like way.

Listening is often a neglected skill. In our daily lives, active listening is very important.

Studies have revealed that business people spend forty five percent of their working time listening. In everyday business world numerous texts ranging from journals, emails, reports, and books have to be read and comprehended. The meaning of what is read needs to be grasped and analysed in details. In official work written communication serves as an important documentation which is permanent and can be retrieved. Business letters, memos, proposals, brochures, manuals, notices, bulletins and so on are time again required to be drafted in an organisation.

Possessing good command over English language in terms of speaking is found wanting in corporate houses. Nowadays companies look up for people who can interact successfully and make significant contributions during group discussions, presentations and seminars. So the English language trainer has an enormous responsibility to develop these four basic skills to make the students proficient in English and make them ready for the world of business.

4. SOFT SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

In the last few years, thanks to jobs becoming global, the importance of English has increased manifold. English happens to be the language of the corporate world. An individual can make strides in the corporate ladder if he/she has a good command over English. So a person who is less proficient in English suffers inspite of having the hard skills. The person good in Communicative English and soft skills may usurp the ideas of the person less proficient in English and get the credit for all his hard work.

The following is the list of the skills/quality that the corporate sector looks for:

- i) Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organisation.
- ii) Ability to work in a team structure.

- iii) Ability to make decisions and solve problems.
- iv) Ability to plan, organize and prioritise work.
- v) Ability to obtain and process information.
- vi) Ability to analyse quantitative data
- vii) Technical knowledge related to the job.
- viii) Proficiency with computer software programs.
- ix) Ability to create and or edit written reports.
- x) Ability to sell or influence others.
- xi) Personal branding.
- xii) Flexibility.
- xiii) Productivity improvement

5. CONCLUSION

English, a link language, business language is a tool of communication with the whole world. English language plays a vital role in shaping one's personality. Starting from academia to industry the necessity of English is inevitable. The need of the hour is to have certain modifications in the education system which will address the needs of the changing economy and take suitable measures at providing mandatory training in Communicative English with a view to have the young generation gainfully employed. This will ultimately benefit all the stakeholders, industry, government and economy by increasing the productivity and resulting in higher GDP of the nation. "Effort and courage are not enough without purpose and direction" - John F Kennedy. This implies that it is upon the students to make use of knowledge in an effective manner.

" Nothing in this milieu is impossible", only practice is needed.

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