

**ENGLISH AND EMPLOYABILITY IN INDIA IN THE GLOBALIZATION**N. Shalini Jayanthi¹, R. Vijay Kumar²¹(Lecturer in English, Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada-500008)²(Lecturer in English, Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada-500008)

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**ABSTRACT**

At the time when entire world is debating globalization as a crucial phenomenon transforming the lives of the people in one way or the other, English language has entered into a new set of contestations like challenging the claim of British English as the standard English with the emergence of World English, emphasis on neutral accent instead of received pronunciation, innovative methods and approaches of English Language Teaching, different new set of purposes for learning English, English shedding off its colonial connotations, and English as a vehicle of growth, prosperity and upward mobility. English language has occupied a predominant place in the third world countries. Keeping in view the importance of English in emerging global context, almost entire world seems to have reached to a consensus regarding considering it as the global lingua franca. This paper is intended to expose the problem of unemployment in India, and how English language has become a means of globalization

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BACKGROUND

Debating the future of global English in the age of vibrant media, press, advertising, broadcasting, cinema, international tourism, communications and cyber space, David Crystal considers English as the language most widely

taught as a foreign language in over 100 countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil (Crystal,5). English now is the preferred language for global communication and has become the dominant language of internet communication, international trade, commerce, outsourcing, hotel



and tourism and what not. From a symbol of colonialism and imperialism, the English language has become a neutral tool of communication in the new millennium a global goldmine (Krishnaswamy, v).

David Graddol, in his *The Future of English* rightly described English as a leading edge phenomenon. In the age of shifting social values, transforming international economy, diverse demography, excessive role of technology, blurring of boundaries and global culture. He observed that the English language would play an ever more important role in world communications, international business, and social and cultural affairs. But at the same time he apprehended that the native-speaking countries might not be the beneficiaries of change (Graddol 2000, 55). In his another book *English Next India*, he sees the propositions in favour of India while discussing the transition we are experiencing in different spheres, including demographic, economic, social, and educational systems. As for the English transition, he asserts:

The official position of English in India remains that of a transitional necessity. But this agenda has been over taken by events. Economic growth means that more jobs require English; the expansion of education means that English is needed by more people for study; and for a growing, globalised, urban middle class English is playing a greater role in both their work and personal lives.

(Graddol 2010, 64)

The English language has become a part of the IT revolution. English, a language that came from nowhere, is set to conquer the world... today, it is used, spoken or written in some form or the other, by perhaps 1.5 billion people around the world; of the English users, three hundred and fifty million use it as the mother tongue, and the rest as a foreign or second language... it is estimated that there are even more users of English than of the Chinese language, a language spoken in eight different varieties but written in the same way by 1.1 billion people. (Krishnaswamy, 150)

In the present context, Indians are speaking English more than any other language, with the sole

exception of Hindi. At the same time, English speakers in India outnumber those in all of Western Europe, not counting the United Kingdom. Indian English-speakers are more than twice the UK's population. In Indian context, entire history of English Language has acquired an altogether new dimension. Besides the constitutional provision of English as an Associate Official Language (for an indefinite period of time), it has been accepted as the passport to worldly success in the present age. Those aspiring to soar high in their chosen careers can hardly afford to ignore the importance of this language.

Those who were earlier arguing that English was the root cause of all the woes of India have now embraced the language as a vehicle of growth. English for communication is the mantra everywhere. Outsourcing centers, call centers, medical transcription centers bookkeeping for various multinational companies indifferent parts of the world, software development, etc. thousands and thousands of jobs are created all over India... in a city like Bangalore alone, it is said there are about 75,000 persons employed in call centers... outsourcing, it is said, is going to create millions of jobs in the near future for English-knowing educated Indians. (Krishnaswamy, 159)

The entire world seems to eye us with envy for our being one of the most robust economies with a sound demographic dividend (with 65% of its population aged under 35) while the erstwhile superpowers are facing the crisis of large scale sovereign debt. IT revolution and globalization and subsequent consumerism have changed the entire socio-economic scenario in India further resulting into the cyber cities, mall and BPO culture, multi-specialty hospital, tremendous rise of real estate, services sector, mobile technology, retail marketing and hence multitude of career opportunities in different fields.

According to N. Krishnaswamy, in the globalised socio-economic and cultural context,

English teaching in India is becoming a big business. Every street corner has institutes for spoken English and grammar; many call centers are appointing English trainers to train



people in the appropriate use of English, style polishing, accent sensitising, accent neutralising, English fluency, and cross-cultural communication... people who are good at spoken and written English are absorbed in the media and journalism. (Krishnaswamy,160)

ENGLISH AND GLOBALIZATION

English language has made globalization possible. Without English we cannot imagine the world how it would have been. The world has become a village. People can go to any country to do jobs. People feel at home even in foreign countries only because of English language. English has made communication possible among of the people of different countries. Today's world considers English as a global language because there has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English. It has a special role to play in the countries where it has been accepted as at the official language and is used as a medium of communication. English now holds a dominant position in every sphere of human activity. It is a very significant input in all the developments in the world. It has reached the present status primarily because of two main factors- the expansion of British Empire in the nineteenth century and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century.

English is used by enormous speech community, probably of six hundred million people, of whom about three hundred million are speakers of English as their mother tongue, while a further three hundred million have learned it in addition to their mother tongue.

It is most surprising that English has become the top language. It has emerged as an important component in industries and in all the spheres of a society's life- the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures transport and communication. It has also become a leading language of political, academic and community meetings. As the development of computers has been entirely an American phenomenon, the first computer operating systems used English vocabulary and syntax for instructions. Even the recent operating systems continue in

English. Thus, growing a glowing influence of English can be anticipated as the sophistication increase in science and society. And definitely English will hold its predominant position in all human activities.

English has become a very important vehicle for education and employment in the third world countries particularly. Referring to third world countries such as Indian sub-continent, the west indies or Africa, Kachru says : " In these countries the English language is not taught as a vehicle to introduce British or American culture. In these countries, English is a link in culturally and linguistically pluralistic societies, and to maintain a continuity and uniformity in educational administrative and legal systems."

For the development of individuals and countries English is playing a crucial role. British Council believes that ' English is critical for countries' successful participation in the global economy, that it provides individuals with access to crucial knowledge, skills and employment opportunities and enables organizations to create and sustain international links." English plays a role in national economic development whereas community languages are more likely to play a role in human needs development. An educated workforce is necessary though not sufficient for rapid economic development. In other words , a work force possessing English language skills is attractive feature for multinationals seeking new manufacturing locations. Thus English is not only providing facilities to individuals but also to the countries to develop and to withstand the competition of the other countries. Nowadays without English any country in the world will become isolated.

ENGLISH AND EMPLOYABILITY IN INDIA

Unemployment has become a worldwide burning problem in the twenty first century. In India it one of the biggest problems as the educated youth more in number compared to other countries. But Dr. APJ kalam , the former president of India, said "India does not have the problem of unemployment but unemployability. India is the only country that consists of the highest percentage of youth population in the world. Five million graduates are



produced annually in India. Only half of them are employable in any sector. The key factors that are holding back the students from employability are inadequacy in English skills and computer skills.

ENGLISH AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

The movement of students from their mother country to other foreign universities is also a well recognized phenomena. The importance of English in international student mobility has been well recognized for many years, as manifested in the international English language competency tests- IELTS and TOEFL- which most receiving institutions and visa issuing authorities require to pass. Approximately 45% of the world total of international students are studying just in four countries: USA, UK, Australia and Canada. And 27% of the student are studying in France, Germany , China and Japan. But only who studied in English medium schools and those who are financially sound are going abroad to study. But the students who are studying in vernacular schools are not able to compete with English medium students in English qualifying tests. So special care must be taken by the government to develop rural area students.

DIGITAL ILLITERACY

English has become the language of internet. It has become a source accessing information. And it is a means of international communication between researchers and scholars. Today, throughout the world, if we want to have any information from internet it is available only in English. So many students are not able to avail of facility that internet is providing. Today many courses are being offered through online. But if the students want to take any course online again English is mandatory. English is also the language of library. All the books are available in English. Since they lack the communication skills in English it becomes very difficult for them to make use of that material. The National Employability Report by Aspiring Minds, an employability solutions company tested communication skills in English, computer knowledge, analytical and cognitive skills and basic accounting knowledge of sixty thousands Indian

graduates. The report reveals that women show similar or higher employability compared to men. About sixteen percent of the graduates were employable in sales and fourteen percent customer service where communication skills and personality skills like friendliness and negotiation skills are much required. Over one third of the graduates (36%) were suitable for employment in clerical/ secretarial jobs. When it comes to IT services IT operations , only 13% and 16% are employable respectively.

DIFFERENCE OF EMPLOYABILITY BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL STUDENTS

Any job requires competence and cognitive skills along with English. But because of the differences in study atmosphere and facilities, there is a huge gap between education in urban and rural areas. It was found that the higher the skill requirement for a job, the greater the gap between employability in urban and rural students. In rural areas students don't have facilities of computer education at least to do certificate courses in computer education. They have to come to towns and cities. And it involves financial matters. Some of them cannot afford the money. so there are many differences in the ways of education, facilities and cultures .There is a difference in employability chances between urban and rural students. Students from cities are getting jobs compared to rural background students. People coming from villages are found poor at English language skills even at post-graduation level. `Aspiring Minds survey reveals, thorough the test it conducted on topics like grammar and communication other quantitative skills to 32,000 MBA graduates form 220 business schools across India, that only 10% of those tested had skills required for recruiters. And 70% of engineering graduates are unemployed I India. The students coming from villages are not able to get jobs in consulting, banking, marketing and sales. Having all other skills without English communication skills is mere waste. Acquiring real competence in English is a privilege. As Coleman said English has become a passport to development, and it must be strictly available to all who desire it, otherwise it becomes a means of barring to the less privileged.

Thus English definitely individuals'



employability, enables international collaboration and cooperation, provides research information, and facilitates the international mobility of students. The Indian Government is spending crores of rupees on education. They are even planning to give wi-fi connections to the villages. The state governments are planning to establish special skill development universities. . But for whom? But how many people will get jobs is a question. So, English undoubtedly plays a major role in various aspects of development. Nevertheless, it is important that we should not exaggerate the importance of English nor we should undervalue the importance of other languages. We must our enthusiasm for English with a sense of responsibility towards those who do not have easy access to it.

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