

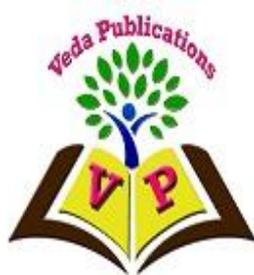
A GLIMPSE ON INTRICACIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION

Dr. Jeyashree G.Iyer

(Associate Professor/Vice Principal, Dr. Ambedkar College, Mumbai.)

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ABSTRACT



English Language is widely spoken language all around the world and it has become an assistant language in many countries. English binds people from different countries and acts as bridge for better communication. It is also *Library Language* as maximum reference books are written in English. World is suffused with myriad of religions and cultures and it creates a great impact on English which has been tuned as per the socio cultural environment. During the last three decades people witness evolution of the language complementing the socio cultural and political environment. One of the major aspects of English is that it has liberally borrowed words from the other languages for enrichment. To study the transmutation of English vocabulary over a period of time is an enticing subject to some of the research scholars today.

Hence the paper deals with the dynamic aspect of communication that constantly undergoes a change owing to socio cultural and political manifestations. The paper highlights the intricacies of communication to drive home the fact that communication is the base of success for both personal and professional growth and being conversant with the metamorphosis of communication is mandatory for the young aspiring professionals. The paper further attempts to illumine the evolution of language today in the age of Globalization and technology. Selected vocabulary is pecked for semantic analysis. Further the paper discusses about Jargons embedded in varied culture. Use of Euphemisms is more common today that lucidly reveals the mindset of the people today. This paper is based on empirical study.

Keywords: *English, language, communication, vocabulary, culture.*



THE ORIGIN OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The origin of English language can be traced to mid 5th to 7th centuries with the arrival of Germanic tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes who invaded the Britain. English Language can be celebrated as the *Language of the Elite and Power* owing to the colonial expansion of the British during 17th and 18th centuries. The British colonies had to learn the language during the colonial rule for exchange of information. Every nation under the British rule absorbed the language pertaining to their culture and practice.

After the independence of India, there was a speculation regarding retaining of English language. The constitution of India designates English as an official language along with Hindi. Books and articles written in Post colonial India lucidly reveal the significant status of the English language in India. The language is widely used by the dominant and elite groups.

English was taught in India so that the British could communicate with the locals with ease. But this language was the important tool to bring people together from the different parts of the country during the freedom struggle. Exposure to English provided the opportunity to the Indians to gain knowledge about the world. This knowledge sowed seeds for freedom struggle.

SOCIOLECT: The hierarchical structure of the Indian society has a strong impact on the language pertaining to socio economic status of the people. The culture of addressing the higher official as *sir* is a common practice in India. *Sir* is the respectable term used to address a person holding high office. There is also another interpretation in India that the Indians addressed the higher official during the colonial rule as *sir* referred to *slave I remain* albeit there is no authentic proof for such interpretation.

When we peruse closely to the origin of the term *sir*, the dictionary of English reveals that the term *sir* is derived from the word *sire* where 'S' is written in capital. The term *sire* is a distinctive title granted to a *knight* or *baronet* but now the term is

archaic. However in India the term refers to a higher authority. But it could be an abbreviation of *senior* or *superior*.

The term *madam* is used to address to a married woman or one holding high position in the society. *Ma'am* is the slang term that refers to *madam*. But Kristen Hansen Brakeman in her article *Don't Call Me Ma'am* duly registers her displeasure in being addressed as *Ma'am*. She thus opines, *Ma'am is a slap in the face. It feels like one day you're young and turning heads and everyone treats you nicely. When they talk to you, they call you, miss*. Thus she thinks that she feels old when someone calls her *madam*. Nevertheless, men do not have any issues over being called *sir*.

There is also another interpretation of *madam* that the said term is the abbreviation of *My Dame* but the word *dame* is slang and not considered as a respectable term. The term *dame* is derived from the Latin term *domina* refers to lady, a former title given to noble ladies who held barony in their own right. These terms are used pertaining to the social status of the people.

Exploring the gendered language in the professional arena is one of the major aspects of language that reflects a culture. It is a challenging task for women to hold leadership status as men strive to accentuate their superior status. Addressing to women bosses as *madam* sometimes used rather in derogation and not in approbation.

Sophia Rahman in her article *Why Men Treat Female Bosses Differently than Their Male Counter Parts* observes that many men in subordinate positions feel threatened by female superiors and behave more assertively towards them than they would to a male manager. Such attitude paves way to gendered language where lady bosses have to face hurdles in discharging their duties smoothly.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NAME

Name is the identity of a person. In downward communication many a time superiors feel that it is rather unimportant to remember the names of the



subordinates, hence they refrain from calling the subordinates by their names. They use slang expression *hey* to call or to attract attention of somebody. The word *Hay* is derived from the Old English word, *heg* that is used to attract the attention of the people. To emphasize the superiority and to subvert the status of the receiver superiors resort to address *hey* or snap their fingers. In Tamil, /ei:/ is used to call someone, implicitly indicating that the names of some people who are placed in the lower level of social hierarchy are not worth remembering. Hence, language is the most effective tool to exercise power politics.

In the rural areas of Tamil Nadu, a simpleton or people who engage in menial jobs are addressed based on their appearance. For example, *Karrupan* (black fellow), *kattiyar* (short fellow) *chappani* (handicapped) are used by their masters. In the past these people were oblivious to their stolen identity and used to run errands to their masters promptly. But over a period of time literacy has brought them the realization of the importance of names that gives dignity to one's personality. Crude expressions are avoided replacing euphemisms

Euphemism: Language evolves along with culture creating impact on the psyche of the people. Earlier religions were the parameters of culture but owing to globalization where science and technology are the dominant forces determining the life styles of the people, language and culture language evolved extensively resulting in communication revolution. Globalization provides an opportunity for people from different nationality and culture to converge in one place to work. This work culture has a remarkable impact on language applications. Hence a jobless person may inform in a euphemistic manner that *he is between jobs*. Such statements are made to safeguard the pride of a person. Similarly the term housewife refers to a lady who takes care of the house and children. But semantically speaking in late 20th and 21st century the term *home maker* emerged to retain the pride of the women. Feminist critics observe that *house wife* is a term that is rather used in derogation and does not acknowledge the efforts and skill of the lady of the house. But the term *home maker* carries dignity and duly endorses the efforts of

the mistress of the house. The Swedish journalist Peter Letmark observes that the term *housewives* are a near-extinct species in Sweden. And the few who still do exist don't really dare to go public with it.

In the neighboring country Norway, the *Housewives' Association* had changed its name to the *Women and Family Association* and the membership had tremendously increased from 5000 to 60,000. The feminist economist Chorlotte Koren opines that the reference to *housewife* was just too embarrassing.

Viewers of the Tamil Nadu can observe the fact that if a housewife is questioned about her profession in a talk show or symposium in Television, they rather answer in a subdued voice, "I am only a housewife", implicitly communicate their embarrassment of being a housewife. These observations reveal the fact that women think alike irrespective of different nationality and culture.

Jargon: Jargon is a technical language pertaining to a profession. In the corporate world, if a staff announces that he/she has got a *pink slip*, it refers to a notice of dismissal or termination from one's job. Such notices are also called as one's *walking papers*. The term "pink slip" dates from the early 20th century, and originally referred to the practice of including a pink-colored slip of paper in an employee's weekly pay envelope notifying the worker of his or her termination. The color pink generally represents something soft and beautiful implicitly associated with women. But a pink slip is a bad news to the staff.

The term *Viral* is the product of Machine language referring to a news item that spreads widely in social medium. This term also refers to propagation. The advent of computer has a strong impact on language and the word *viral* has become *viral* now. Thus the promotion of computer technology has a strong impact on the language and applications.

CONCLUSION

Language is not static, it is an ongoing process and the semantic applications do change complementing the socio cultural and political climate. The term 26th



July in Mumbai now refers to the Mumbai floods that occurred during 2005. The frequent usage of the word *deluge* hit the newspaper headlines during the floods. Even a person with limited knowledge in English has become conversant with the term *deluge*. Hence the components of communication are interrelated. If the message refers to 26/07, people in Mumbai will surmise that the message refers to the floods in Mumbai. There is always a tacit understanding between the social media and the public of a particular region. Such intricacies in communication may puzzle a foreign national. In Tamil, the term *assault* is firmly embedded in the Tamil semantic usage that strongly pertains to *carelessness*, but the real meaning of *to assault someone* refers to *attack someone*. Though the word *assault* is an English word, it is used in different context in Tamil language. Contextualization of English Language and communication pertaining to culture and society is one of significant fields that require a thorough research. Language is a powerful unifying force and English is one of the major languages widely used globally. Scholars and Professionals irrespective of their fields should be aware of the changes that occur in language and communication owing to the socio cultural and political situation as it provides an impetus for the development of both professional and personal fields.

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