

# ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE MODERN CONTEXT IN INDIA

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## Abstract

In this global competitive environment, Language is intimately and essentially tied to man's feeling and activity. There are several factors that make the English language essential to communication in our current time. First of all, it is the most common foreign language. This means that two people who come from different countries (for example, a Mexican and a Swede) usually use English as a common language to communicate. That's why everyone needs to learn the language in order to get in touch on an international level. Speaking it will help you communicate with people from countries all over the world, not just English-speaking ones. It is bound up with nationality, religion and the feelings of self. It is used for work, worship and play by everyone, he be beggar or banker, savage or civilized. Languages are important in the life of any nation and essentially modern context. The members of a social group need language to communicate with each other and for all social purposes, for public administration, for commerce and industry, for education and so on. Ours are a country with multilingual, multicultural, and pluralistic milieu. An individual can function best through the language which he acquires natively, i.e., the mother tongue. The social aspirations can best be fulfilled when they are allowed to function through the mother tongue. Therefore it is natural to think of mother tongue for the purpose of education. But the necessity to have a common language for interaction has lead to the learning of English. The present paper discusses the importance of usage of English language in the modern context

**Keywords:** English Language, Modern context in English, Mother tongue.

## 1. IMPORTANCE OF ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

India's long association with English language has benefited the people in many ways. English language has enriched the Indian language and culture and has broadened our outlook on life. India is a sub-continent inhabited by diverse people. The mother tongue of one state is Greek or Latin to another. Under such circumstances English acts as the 'lingua franca'. Thus, English has directly helped India to achieve unity in diversity in modern achieving in different goals in the country. The role and importance of English language in modern India cannot be denied. India has been moving towards progress in this age of science. Many of the books on higher study on science, technology, engineering, medicine, etc. are either written in or translated into English. The sound knowledge of English helps a student in his studies. Knowledge of English promotes the specialized study of literature and philosophy. The charms of Shakespeare and Milton can alone be appreciated in their original works written in English. The copiousness of English vocabulary stands unrivaled in the world. English is capable of translating into it the exact mood and sentiment of different writers reflected in their respective languages. Thus, with the knowledge of English one can make a sojourn in the different literatures of the world. This is the age of specialization; and one is to visit foreign lands, often, for this purpose. Without the knowledge of English such opportunities can never be reaped.

India is now independent. India is famous in history for her liberal philosophy. She has given to the world what are good in her; and she has generously accepted from others what are good in them. Moreover, English is no longer the language of the English people of England alone. It has been universally recognized as the international language. Hence, India may retain English permanently without any prejudice.

## 2. FUNCTIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN MODERN CONTEXT

The English language has shaped modern India's development in many ways, here are a few... First, it helped establish a link with the West in the post colonial era whereby ideas and information could be exchanged easily, especially in the realm of higher education. Subsequently this enabled members of successive generations to

immigrate to develop an English speaking nation as professionals thereby helping India establish a people to people link with the West which has come in very handy after the economic liberalization.

Despite the inward and myopic outlook of less than stellar post-independence governments for decades on end and the political barriers of the cold war, India's fortunes changed radically in a very short period of time after it liberalized. This would not have been possible without the English language skills (as minimal as they might be) and the people to people link I mentioned. The fact of the matter is that possessing English skills as a young Indian today opens up a greater number of opportunities.

**REGIONAL LANGUAGES:** Being proficient in one language doesn't necessarily mean that the other is any less important. The fact is that multi-lingualism is very much possible as we see in Europe. In India however this problem exists because of a complicated inferiority complex (which I'm sure is heavily influenced by the colonial past) and the fact that the Indian society itself is extremely hierarchical in nature, where people constantly want to promote their social standing on the basis of caste, skin color, language, Western lifestyle or whatever else comes handy. This however has nothing to do with the English language itself. The second thing to remember is that English is the common language for science and technology which makes it inherently progressive thereby attracting the youth from less progressive cultures, but here again, parental guidance comes into play which can help bring about a balance.

**EFFECTS UPON SOCIAL LIFESTYLE:** Despite all the aping, I don't think the Indian society has a good understanding of Western culture, nor has it actually absorbed Western attributes in significant measure. The imitation is limited to superficial and superfluous things fueled primarily by silly stereotyping; the two cultures however even now remain poles apart. It just so happens however that the West has become synonymous with modernity/ progress/ advancement and most of all- a higher standard of living. This is what most Indians seek to emulate (this is true for people from any other underdeveloped nation/society). Again, I don't think that English per se is responsible for this; rather it is the stagnation of the Indian society and the abysmal standard of living which has people running away. But as we see in the case of Japan and South

**ANALYSIS:** From a purely linguistics aspect, I have always felt that the most important factor is language proficiency; what language you speak is almost irrelevant. Mastery of a language is highly correlative with reading and writing, and this in turn has a huge impact upon the intellectual development of a person, which at the end of the day is a ticket to productivity. Even in India, there is a fair share of intellectuals or even professionals graduating from high end universities like IIT, IIM, medical schools etc. who did their primary education in a regional language without suffering any setbacks. However in my experience, most of these individuals are highly proficient with their regional language. I have observed the same thing on a global scale in the USA. There are oodles of intellectuals, scientist's successful professionals etc. who come here from all over the world for whom English isn't the first or the strongest language; but despite that, their intellect or productivity is never really in question. The reason I'm not too fond of casual Hinglish or the filmy lingo is because it seems to have become the primary language of communication, and this I fear may hinder the intellectual maturation process of many young Indians. The advantages of knowing the English language far outweigh the disadvantages. There is no reason why Indian children cannot grow up to be multi-lingual, provided they're confident about their identity.

May be second most spoken language, but it doesn't apply to all Indians, especially the South of India. Though this doesn't mean that regional languages should be ignored. They should be given the same status as English and they should be widely used on the state/regional level (more so since the states were divided along linguistic lines). Though when it comes to national level, English is and should be an all-inclusive language for the country.

### 3. MODERN CONTEXT ERA

In our country English is important for a number of reasons. India is a land of diversity. Different people speak different languages. A person of Tamil Nadu does not speak Hindi. So he can't understand Hindi of a person from North India. However he can understand in English.

So English is a link language. Different people can communicate with one another with the help of English. Secondly, all advanced knowledge in science, technology and medicine is available in English. The results of the latest researches come to India through the medium of English. If we give up English, we will lag behind in the higher fields of study. Today the world has become one family.

It is all due to English. English is an international language. English is the language of the Constitution, the Supreme Court, the High Courts and official departments. English is now firmly rooted in the soil of India. It has become a part of Indian life. Thus English has great importance for the integrity of India. It has to be second language in our country for the better development of the country.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The present paper explores the usage of modern context side of the English language is a common practice all over the world in the modern age is to learn English language to facilitate easy understanding political, social, cultural and religious issues because this language is easier than French, German, Greek and Sanskrit. It is with the help of this language that we are gaining knowledge of modern science and technology and are keeping ourselves in touch with the most progressive ideas and current thoughts.

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