

English as a Tool of Global Change in the Field of Business Communication

Mr. Gaurav Yadav

Lingaya's Lalita Devi Institute of Management & Science, New Delhi, India

ABSTRACT

English has become the ascendant language internationally, being the most widespread. In this age of globalization, a common language is the need of the hour and English has been widely accepted as the most widespread language in the world. There is no exaggeration to say English is the prominent tool of global change in the field of business communication. This is the most vital trend which has changed the whole scenario of the world economy. English is the language, which is used in international industry to make it global. . Business communication cannot exist without this pattern. The English language has become a major medium for communication in business globally; a deficiency in this area may create hindrance in graduates' personal and professional development. English is the trend, which is changing the whole face of the international business, and due to this, English has become the major tool of global change in the field of business communication.

Key Words: English, Business, Communication, Globalization, Language

INTRODUCTION:

English has become the ascendant language internationally, being the most widespread. This will influence the language of communication between professionals internationally. In this age of globalization, the number of international projects is increasing, and cross-cultural communication and collaboration is on the rise; a common language is the need of the hour. In the words of W. B. Yeats:

Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people. (1)

English a West Germanic language, which originated in Anglo-Saxon England. English has '*lingua franca*' status in many parts of the world as a result of the military, economic, scientific, political and cultural influence of the British Empire in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries (2) and that of the United States from the mid twentieth century onwards.

Modern English sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, (3) (4) is the dominant international language in communications, science, business, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy. (5) A working

knowledge of English has become a requirement in the business.

The Globalisation of English

English has been widely accepted as *the most widespread language in the world. (6)* It is the first language for many countries around the planet: from the United Kingdom and Ireland to the USA, from Canada to Australia and New Zealand, from Guyana to Jamaica, plus others. As a second language, it is also very widespread. For instance, now after the fall of communism, it has become the second language in countries in central Asia and Eastern Europe, and English is taught as part of multilingual education in India, South Africa, Singapore and others.

The distinction here lies between the *most widespread* versus the *most widely spoken*. However, the number of people who speak English with at least some degree of proficiency exceeds any other language, and its phenomenal advance around this planet is unparalleled in the history of language. (7) Table 1 gives a clear picture of the countries in order of total speakers of English language.

Table 1: Countries in order of total speakers

Rank	Country	Total	First Language	As an additional language	Sources
1.	United States	251,388,301	215,423,557	35,964,744	US Census 2006: <u>Language Use and English-Speaking Ability: 2006</u> , Table 1. Figure for second language speakers are respondents who reported they do not speak English at home but know it "very well" or "well". Note: figures are for population age 5 and older
2.	India	90,000,000	178,598	65,000,000 <i>second</i> language speakers. 25,000,000 <i>third</i> language speakers	Figures include both those who speak English as a <i>second language</i> and those who speak it as a <i>third language</i> . 1991 figures. ^{[8][9]} The figures include English <i>speakers</i> , but not English <i>users</i> . ^[10]
3.	Nigeria	79,000,000	4,000,000	75,000,000	Figures are for speakers of <u>Nigerian Pidgin</u> , an English-based pidgin. It gives a range of roughly 3 to 5 million native speakers; the midpoint of the range is used in the table. 2006. " <u>A Basic Description and Analytic Treatment of Noun Clauses in Nigerian Pidgin</u> ." <i>Nordic Journal of African Studies</i> 15(3): 296–313.
4.	United Kingdom	59,600,000	58,100,000	1,500,000	Crystal (2005), p. 109.
5.	Philippines	45,900,000	27,000	42,500,000	Total speakers: Census 2000, 63.71% of the 66.7 million people aged 5 years or more could speak English. Native speakers: Census 1995, as quoted by Andrew Gonzalez in <u>The Language Planning Situation in the Philippines</u> , <i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</i> , 19 (5&6), 487-525. (1998)
6.	Canada	25,246,220	17,694,830	7,551,390	2001 Census - <u>Knowledge of Official Languages and Mother Tongue</u> . The native speakers figure comprises 122,660 people with both French and English as a mother tongue, plus 17,572,170 people with English and not French as a mother tongue.
7.	Australia	18,172,989	15,581,329	2,591,660	2006 Census. ^[11] The figure shown in the first language English speakers column is actually the number of Australian residents who speak only English at home. The additional language column shows the number of other residents who claim to speak English "well" or "very well". Another 5% of residents did not state their home language or English proficiency.

English: Major Language of International Business

English is cited as the ... *major language of international business, diplomacy, science and the professions.* (12) English is working language of international organizations and conferences. International banking, economic affairs and trade are possible only through the use of English language. Advertising for global brands, international tourism, technology transfer and industrial communication can't be thinking of without English. English is closely associated with the leading edge of global, scientific, technological, economic and cultural developments.

English: The Prime Means for Communication in the Business

English is the prime means for communication, and can often serve as the global language between two people from different cultures, wherein English is not the native tongue. For instance, collaboration at Airbus industries between English, French, German and Spanish companies utilized English as the communication medium between workers. An unusual example comes from the Swedish transport manufacturer Volvo, which has made English the language for managers as its new plant in South Korea, with English lessons being taken by some employees during production breaks. Some multinational firms with bases in Continental Europe use English as the prime form of communication in the office. In this sense, multinational corporations can be seen to directly influence the

educational policies in foreign lands by their value creation of particular languages through global economic power.

English: a global language, how?

The process of globalization, powered through technology, initially enable English to become the global language. English is a global language because when an Indonesian businessman meets a customer from Finland, they converse in English. Airline pilots flying international routes communicate with their controllers in English. 76% of the content of the Internet is in English. Out of 193 countries of the world, 43 are English speaking. (13) English is the second most spoken language in the world after Chinese. There are 57 million blogs on the Internet. (14) Most people use English language to communicate using SMS.

English: Computer Languages

English and computers have seemed, for decades to go together. Computers and the programs which make them useful were largely the invention of English speaking countries. The hardware and software reflect the needs of English language. English will continue to be spread via software products and digitalized intellectual property.

English: Gaining a Strong Position

In the era of communication, English is gaining a strong position. English is remarkable for its diversity, its propensity to change and be changed. English is still strong, but it is becoming the second choice in an increasingly multilingual international community. The pie chart below gives an apparent picture:

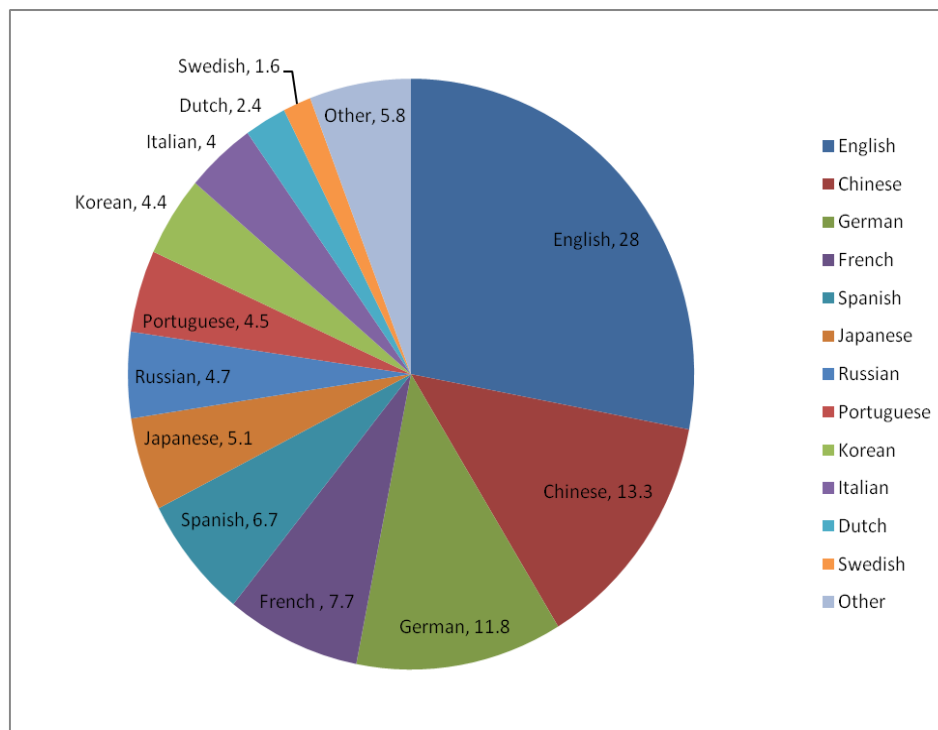


Figure 1:

English and Business Communication

Globalization directly influences industry's needs, and to fulfill these needs a common code for communication is required. While English is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a second language around the world to facilitate business communication. Linguistics professor David Crystal claims that India has the maximum number of English speakers, combining native and non-native speakers. India now has more people who speak or understand English than any other country in the world. (15) Therefore, Indian people are getting more opportunities in foreign countries than people of any other country. Even China has made English language instruction compulsory in Elementary Education as well as for technocrats working in companies to compete with international software industry. Not only China but a developed country like Russia where Russian is the only language for communication, has realized now the importance of English language and introduced it in Primary education to some extent to keep pace with the changing patterns of business communication. There is no exaggeration to say English is the prominent tool of global change in the field of business communication. This is the most vital trend which has changed the whole scenario of the world economy. We cannot neglect this trend at any cost because in the words of Mal Pancoast:

We invent the world through language. The world occurs through language. (16)

The language through which we are inventing the world is English language which is the prime means of communication in the era of globalization.

CONCLUSION:

Language and communication skills are recognized as important elements in business, including English for specific purposes. The data discussed in the paper gives a clear picture of the trend due to which changes in international business are taking place. Business communication cannot exist without this pattern. At present there is a considerable increase in the numbers of people learning and using English. In a study on the future of the English language, it has been found that English,

Spanish and Mandarin would continue to rise as the dominant language blocs. Therefore there is a clear necessity for effective English communication skills in the current globalized environment. The English language has become a major medium for communication in business globally; a deficiency in this area may create hindrance in graduates' personal and professional development. Thus English is the trend, which is changing the whole face of the international business, and due to this English language skills become very important to facilitate business communication. Those institutions that have already implemented multilingual and communication elements will be at the forefront of providing the demands of Industry and society.

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