

## ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Rittika Chaudhuri  
Senior Associate,  
Tata Consultancy Services  
Niloy Chakravorty  
Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering,  
Sovik Sinha Chowdhury  
Department of Electronics and Electrical Engineering,  
Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata

### Abstract:

English as an international language has made people acknowledge it as a fundamental intermediate of communication. In every International congress and gatherings, English is more often used than any other language. Nowadays, due to immense Globalization, countless organizations are being set up in various parts of the world, making every step of life more and more competitive.

In a cutthroat global marketplace, facing massive industry pressures, it is extremely essential to communicate effectively with external and internal audiences. Successful communications are progressively more vital for managing an organization's status and reputation. In the present day to speak and write English proficiently, communication professionals and corporate managers should be well versed in English Language.

English has emerged as the global language of trade and commerce in the past few decades, affecting many key aspects of industries in the modern world. Multinational companies keep English as a basic criterion for selection purpose, thus paving way for people to communicate with people from all around the world.

**Keywords:** Communication, English Language, Global, Corporate Communication

### Introduction:

[1] English is an international medium of communication that has been used either as a native or as a second language by people to form a commonality.

People acknowledged that English is one of the key factors for a better career prospect, which provides them with a huge advantage in terms of knowledge, status in society and better communication in entire world.

The international media, which unites people around the world, is considered as the primary carrier of English Language.

[3] If statistics are to be believed, English is the official language of 54 countries as compared to French, which is the official language of 29 countries. With around 1.4 billion speakers, this language can be said to be widely used around the world.

This research paper focuses mainly on why English is the sole and primary language in all the existing Corporate Sectors.

The aim of this research is to examine the significance of English in Corporate communications. Using qualitative research method, the empirical part of the study is comprised of a two-step research including two interviews and a questionnaire. Participants were selected from 1 multinational and 1 Public Sector Corporation.

### **Importance Of English In The Education System Across The World:**

English as a language has been accepted throughout the globe, its presence is also accommodated into technology.

The British rule and has spread the English Language all over the world. It got its start as a compulsory language and slowly and steadily, it grew into an unavoidable part of the education system.

All the laws and rules meant for governing be it a body, a system or a country as a whole were published in English. Therefore, there was an inevitable need for the inhabitants of the English ruled countries to learn the language.

English proved to be a convenient mode of communication even between nations speaking different languages; it had a great impact in the spread of formal education.

In Indian Schools, Colleges and Universities, knowledge is mainly imparted to students in English.

Currently in most of the countries, the classes are conducted in English, to inculcate the essence of practice among the students.

[2] English as a language has such a vast presence that, it helped in easy exchange of information via newspapers, novels, books of social prominence etc, which has lead to effortless transfer of knowledge, information, thoughts all around the world.

Further, there are scientific, cultural and art related organizations that try to coordinate the knowledge worldwide with use of English language.

### **Importance of English For Corporate Communication:**

The world anything but not round; the economic expeditions of the past decades have become permanent expat communities. Especially Asians, aim to migrate to the North American continent and to Europe for jobs and live there permanently. Even for those involved in business from their native countries, if they want to sell to a larger market, need to understand the needs, the demands and the cultures of those markets. This is often done through the common currency that is English.

Companies realized that the interaction of people from different background which has been a vital issue in the business world, there must be an alternative solution to make everyone speak in a common mode, whereby they communicate. With rapid economic growth, followed by

increasing interconnectivity among the people, the need of being able to speak in English is experiencing a huge rise.

International trading among countries involves people from different culture, values and beliefs to come together in exchanging of goods and services. It decreases the distance between countries and breaks the communication barrier that leads to misunderstanding among them. It also opens the door of opportunities for many aspiring employees who want to work across the globe in search of a better living.

*“As a Filipino living in foreign country for 3 years, I realized how convenient if all of us know how to speak and understand English language. Here’s what we thought after getting out to our own country and try to live outside our comfort vicinity.”*

– Lema Mondrano , Importance of English as International Medium of Communication

For an organization to flourish, the employees need to communicate extensively, they need to collaborate which occurs on a global scale.

English has been and will be an important part of the commune system. Collaborative mindsets of the corporate workers are highly appreciated rather recommended.

With the advancement of globalization, the picture took a different turn altogether. Now business deals and conferences are not confined within a single region but it is spread across the globe. English provides a common platform where all the employees can express themselves. It can be that communication is the building block of any organization.

It has resulted in the knowledge of English being a near-mandatory requirement for critical jobs. Most organizations around the world rely on English as a major means of communication, starting from emails to corporate documentation, meetings, so on and so forth.

In order to be ahead in a chosen field one needs to make themselves completely understood by the people they are working with. There will be emails; there will be telephonic conversations that can make or break the business deal. Knowing good English helps you to make your point recognizable by others who know the same language.

If one had a website that the whole world can see, it is important that the content is meaningful and accurate which the nonprofessional who understands English can easily decode. This is how companies communicate with large mass of people.

A corporation is likely to crumble in a fast pacing world if there is a communication gap between the employees and the clients, resulting in a failure of collaboration.

[2] English being a common language, it was easy to for businesses on the worldwide scale. For instance the healthcare sector, stock markets, advertisements, software, banking, petroleum products, biotechnology have wide presence due to English as common means of communication.

In addition, many world famous authors and scientists gained worldwide fame. Further, since their books like novels, journals were written in English, they had extensive sales. This could have not been possible if written in native language or if sold only in his native country.

To a person with sound knowledge in English it is possible to work from home through a computer for clients from other countries. Some of the jobs include, data entry, medical transcription, freelance writing etc.

In some industries, knowledge of business terminology in English is critical for entry into and the success of a business. Workers need to have an understanding and command of detailed vocabulary dealing with specific concepts in order to be able to communicate effectively with other professionals in the business. Examples of specialized businesses requiring knowledge of English include computing, engineering, science, technology, medicine and law.

### **Corporate Expectations:**

As the ability to speak and write in English is considered very important by the recruiters at the time of recruitment, let us discuss the expectations of corporate world in this regard. Companies want people who can read and understand written words in the form of instructions, reports, letters, memos, notices and other any form of official documents.

The ability to express formal communication in oral as well as in written form is equally considered important by the prospective employers. As one moves higher in the vertical direction in the organizational hierarchy, it becomes naturally necessary for an employee to be good presenter, negotiator, and convener of meetings. The mastery over English will help a person to conduct his duties efficiently.

[4] One of the important deficiencies found by the employers and recruiters in candidates for different jobs is the lack of oral as well as written communication skills.

Many candidates don't know how to answer to the point at the time of the interview and can't phrase a simple formal letter or report. It becomes a handicap for the candidates who have good domain knowledge.

[5] Interviewers will be in dilemma when they encounter such candidates who have technical expertise, but poor communicational skills in English. Left with no other choice they might take some other candidate with less technical knowledge but more proficient in English, making sure that they are groomed and trained properly.

An empirical study comprising of two interviews and a questionnaire has been used to qualitatively determine the importance of English as a language for corporate communication:

- a) In this section, we will state the inference that we could conclude after interviewing our subject who is currently working in a MNC. He begins by saying that communication is the building block of any organization and that if there is no communication, the company is certainly going to fail. He goes onto say that since he is working in a MNC, the employees are from a number of countries that include USA, UK, SPAIN, SWITZERLAND and DUBAI, which makes it quite impossible to converse in different languages, moreover conversing in different languages would lead to chaos and sheer misunderstandings. Since, English language is the official language for the USA and the UK; it is also a major language in the Middle East apart from Arabic and in Europe apart from Spanish or French.

It becomes a lot easier for the people to overcome this communication barrier. He also addresses how important it is to converse using simple words, short and 'to the point'

Statements as it can be easily understood. He proves this using a simple example, a statement "-meeting cancelled because of indisposed of Mr. Ravi". Good communication requires usage of simple words and smart use of vocabulary to clearly address a certain point. The word "indisposed" is certainly not a common word for people not having a good vocabulary, this leads to a misunderstanding where the readers cannot understand the statement and they might start to make assumptions. Just by replacing this word by "unavailability" can ensure proper understanding of the statement by many. He emphasizes on the point that good communication calls for easily understandable statements and words. Working in companies requires attending of meetings, conference calls and presenting an Idea to other people, this calls for communication in English. One might have a great idea that is worth implementing, but until and unless he can communicate his idea, it is of no use. For an idea or a business model to succeed, it is essential that the idea is understood by the other employees to fullest. He says that a BPO sector still has an edge over other countries because Indians speak fairly better English compared to other non-native speakers of English. It applies to our IT as well as other related sectors too.

He believes that India has a large English speaking population, it makes easier for MNCs and foreign universities to do their business here. The knowledge of English is an important employability skill within India and outside to be employed as well as to move higher in one's professional life.

He finishes by giving a beautiful example that clearly defines the importance of communication in life - "a newborn child's communication involves crying and that is how doctors understand that there is no residual amniotic fluid in her nose, mouth, and lungs."

b) In this section, we state the inference that we could conclude after interviewing our subject who is currently working in a Public Sector Firm. He begins by saying that working in a public sector firm requires high communication skills and executive presence. He also states that employees are required to have excellent written and oral communication skills over a wide array of communication platforms, including social media. The employees working in such firms should be well versed with English language and local languages. He says that communication within the company is as important as communication with the customers. A company might have an excellent product, but it is of no use until the people can understand why they should purchase it. In order to address the problem a company has a sales team that specialize in communication, whereby making its customers wary of the advantages of using that product. The fundamental of a business lies in selling commodities for a premium, which accounts to some value addition that has been done by the company. But if the company fails to describe their value addition, their product won't be selling that would result in low revenues and ultimately poor business. Therefore, it is mandatory that employees should have good vocal and written excellent skills in English, as a majority of the people understands it. Interviews and group discussions for job seekers require asks for high skills in communication and English as a whole. This cannot be done without

proficiency in a language that is understood by the fellow participants taking part in the event. He mentions that he has seen scores of presentations made by students who are too stumped or lazy to formulate simple, brief and attractive sentences in English, which are the backbone of any good presentations. Mostly, students simply type into Google, move into relevant or sometimes irrelevant sites, copy a large section of content and simply paste it into their power point slides, without a thought as to how readable or attractive it might be. A little education here (either training through company intranets, or an on-line course, or some self-motivated self-education) can go a long way. The employee will not only use better grammar and vocabulary, but also will also use logical chunking and sizing of the content, so he only puts as much on a slide as is easy to read and understand. Short and to the point statements are always admired in a presentation. He goes into the basics of Oral communication skills that include the ability to speak effectively, listen actively and respond efficiently according to the situation. It helps in oral presentation, video conferencing, telephonic conversation, meeting, interviews etc.

He defines written communication skills as the ability to write effectively and it includes the ability to read and understand the language used for communication. If a person is labeled as good communicator in English, he is supposed to be well versed in English. He completes by saying that Communication means the exchange of information, ideas, feelings and thoughts. The type of communication, which is used in the corporate world, is business communication. It is not mere exchange of ideas. In the world of business, the communication is considered effective, only if there is some positive transaction. If the sender of information is just able to convey the message without any fruitful deal, then the then the communication is not effective.

**Background information**

Please write here the name of your current company, department and position. \*

(This information will not be mentioned in the study.)

Family name, first name \*

(For example: Sato, Kanako. Your name will not be mentioned in the study.)

---

Your e-mail address \*

(this will not be mentioned in the study )

---

Gender \*

Male Female

1. What is your native language? \*

- a) Bengali
- b) Hindi
- c) Oriya
- d) Nepali
- e) Tamil
- f) Telegu
- g) English

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long have you worked in the company where you work now? \*

- a. 0–2 years
- b. 2–5 years
- c. 5–10 years
- d. 10–20 years
- e. more than 20 years

3. In your current job, how often do you usually use English at work?

- a. Always
- b. In a meeting
- c. While speaking to clients/customers
- d. Not Always/sometimes
- e. Never

3. In what kinds of situations do you use English at work?

**(Several answers okay)**

- a. talking face-to-face with foreigners/  
talking on phone with foreigners
- b. sending e-mail to foreigners  
meetings (in Japan)
- c. online meetings with foreigners  
business trips to foreign countries  
writing documents/reports
- d. reading documents written in English

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

6. How many non-Indian speakers are there in your department/everyday workplace?  
(Your own estimation is okay.)

- a. Everybody speaks Indian in my department

- b. 1 or 2 people are non- Indian speakers
- c. less than 10 % are non- Indian speakers
- d. 10–20 % are non- Indian speakers
- e. 20–50 % are non- Indian speakers
- f. 50–80 % are non- Indian speakers
- g. 80–1 00% are non- Indian speakers

7. Do you feel that English is now used more in your company than before?

- a. Much more than before
- b. A little More than before
- c. it has not changed much  
less than before
- d. I haven't worked for the  
company very long so I  
don't know

8. How important for the future of your company is it to use English?

- a. one of the most important things
- b. important but not among the first priorities not very important
- c. not important at all

**Result:**

Many of them were of the notion that people sometimes use English just to show off his or her status. They did agree that English is more often used nowadays at workplace; however there are still few people who fail to do the same.

- a. Growth of English Speaking people in office – Yes 98% - 2% No
- b. One and only language to rely at office – Yes 65% - 35% No
- c. Is one common language to communicate in English the main reason for its existence in a company? – No 89% Yes - 11% No
- d. What is your native language? - Mostly Bengali and Hindi speaking people
- e. How long have you worked in the company where you work now? \* Mostly were 5-6 years
- f. . How many non-Indian speakers are there in your department/everyday workplace? 85%

So Overall we got a hint that currently all Indian MNCs as well as local companies are hiring people who are masters in speaking English.

**Conclusion:**

Companies are gaining ground and becoming more competitive due to changed world economy, the employees are always kept on their toes. It is like either you work hard and show your



performance or perish for not taking care of your professional growth. The ability to use a language efficiently is very much required to remain employable. What is employability?

It is the ability to remain as an employee because of the relevant skills one possesses. Communication skills are very much essential for one's professional growth. The ability to express fluently in both written as well as oral form of language is very much essential for the career growth. English being the most commonly used language in the corporate world; the knowledge of English is one of the most important employability skills. Knowledge of English is much sought after in the corporate world.

Proper English does not mean only the ability to make grammatically correct sentences. It means other related skills for effective communication like presentation skills, convincing and negotiation skills and interpersonal skills using that language.

### **References:**

- [1] Mondrano, Lema "*Importance of English as a language.*"
- [2] "Importance Of English Education", *Studyread Articles*.
- [3] "History Of EnglishLanguage", *Wikipedia*.
- [4] Prakriti, H.N "Importance of English In Communication", *Web Articles*.
- [5] Boni, Aditya "*Is English is important for job interviews?*", *Web Articles*.

