

# ENGLISH THE LINGUA-FRANCA OF GLOBAL BUSINESS

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Angela Christina, <sup>2</sup> Mrs. K. Sangeetha Bharat

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, <sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor

<sup>1</sup> Department of English,

<sup>2</sup> Department of English,

<sup>1</sup> St. Mary's Centenary Degree College, Secunderabad, India

<sup>2</sup> St. Mary's Centenary Degree College, Secunderabad, India

## ABSTRACT:

The paper focuses on the significance of the English language and its elevation to higher grades of acceptance as the prime tool for today's Modern Business Communication. It also speaks of the emphasis of English language in schools and colleges for brighter business prospective. The paper also emphasizes of the colonial influence that has led to the widespread of the English language. English has emerged as the global language of trade and commerce. It has been drastically rising to the peaks of recognition and practical execution. Its dominance has been demonstrated at various social, personal, educational, and commercial realms. English gains its dominance since almost 85% of regional, national, and international organizations almost every discipline uses English as their official language. Regardless of the terminologies, 1.75 billion people speak English at most useful levels. It is also perceived as a language which enables effective and elaborate communication between non-native speakers in the diverse platforms of multi-national systems across the globe. **English has become the Lingua – Franca of modern Business World.** Necessity for a crystal clear communication has made English a world – wide network medium to communicate. A plethora of reasons ladder English to its prime post of recognition -“**The Present Supreme Stance**”. It will continue to grow in its core need of right communication and will definitely maintain and elevate its stance to continue its dominance moving towards higher markers of elite.

**Key words: Significance of English, Colonial influence, Lingua –Franca, Language skills, Teaching Business English, Non-Native Language.**

## INTRODUCTION:

Communication has always been a prime tool of our existence; it has grown to communicate from basic symbol level to effective usage through its various interpretations and ideal up gradation. Communication drives one need to success and satisfaction. It is the basic form that creates clarity and avoids many discrepancies. Language plays a crucial role in communication; it stands as a primary source of communication that enhances a better understanding at large. It builds a channel of interaction and brings us tête-à-tête. Language is a medium that accelerates our dignity, exposes one's culture and showcases diverse dynamics of our personality. Over the time language has become seemingly omni-present at all levels of communication, and at the business arena the “vocal – channel” has eventually become omni-present to deal at diverse business ends.

Language distinctly differentiates us from the animals elevating us and our human knowledge stance. There are thousands of languages around the globe. Countries are in-born to have their own national languages which definitely speaks the pride of its own culture, in addition to a variety of local languages spoken and understood by their people in different regions most of them are either bi-lingual or multi-lingual in nature.

In this raging growth of these diverse languages to gain a primary importance, English booms in with several factors to rise to the lime light and become one of the leading languages around the world, especially in the business arena. English hails originally from England and through its colonial rule it has eventually and strongly spread its influence far and wide gaining its usage as prime importance and has ground its roots to become the ‘primary’ or the ‘secondary’ language of various other countries across the world. English is the principal language not only of the colonized countries which were actively touched by the British imperialism, but also many business and cultural spheres dominated by those countries. It is the language of Hollywood and the language of the international banking and business. A world – wide study educates us that 1.75 billion people speak English for their personal, social, and professional purposes. Global organizations are increasingly choosing English as their common communicating language. English is the dominant language of business and is the native language of more than 60 nations and increasingly the official secondary language elsewhere. English is acknowledged as the fastest spreading language in human history, English is spoken at a useful level by people who determine the language stance to the peak recognition. Amidst unrestricted multi-lingual practice approach English proves its efficiency at business platforms. English has fast-tracked the move of acceptability as the official language of business irrespective of where companies are headquartered.

## FACTORS THAT MAKE ENGLISH THE DOMINION LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS:

English is the dominant language of business due to the following factors:

1. **The influence of British through its colonization periods in many countries like in US and today's Commonwealth countries** - causing these countries' people use more English or make English as official language. The language of English cannot pin its dominance on one single reason as there are several factors that contribute to that. To begin , in 1600's the primary language of the aristocracy was Spanish due to the wide spread of Spanish colonies and the wealth and power after the Spanish bankruptcy ,the French took over funding the routes in the French revolution and the Napoleon wars. English became dominant in the very late 19<sup>th</sup> century till date. The foundation for this is to be found in the British colonization of

large parts of the earth (so most of the world's population at that time was governed by the British, except the USA, which was also speaking English). As the colonies got more and more independent the two world wars happened and after WW II some main economic breakthroughs were also made in the US and GB. The most prominent example is the Hollywood, the computer and information technology. As in the beginning mostly English speaking scientists and engineers were working in that field most of the technical expressions were in English. This is just one example, but the list goes on ... With the wide spread of computer and information technologies also the English language spreads much further and this is how it is today.

## 2. English is relatively easier to learn, speak & words in abundance –

A mere set of 26 alphabets can make many permutations of words that we can use, though it varies in its dialectical differences, it still articulates its prominence at any given realm of execution. English stands at the highest peak of relevance as it is considered the “International language”, making it feasible to all the speakers across. English has become the key medium of access and medium of instruction at all levels. English is the main language of most countries where there is lots of languages spoken like India where 700 and more languages are spoken at local regions. English is the most studied language, it is one of the easiest languages to learn when compared to Chinese, German, French, Spanish etc.,

## 3. English the common medium of instruction at educational level and research:

English is also essential to the field of education. In many countries, children are taught and encouraged to learn English as a second language. Even in countries where it is not an official language, such as the Netherlands, or Sweden, we find many syllabi in Science and engineering are written in English. Because it is the dominant language in the sciences, most of the research and studies in this field is well written in English. At the university level, the students in many countries study almost all their subjects in English in order to make the material more flexible and accessible to learning at all levels.

Many researches **reference books, new scientific discovery or technological development including R&D reports / articles are first available / published in English** - hence forcing researcher / student to learn English to read up the reports / articles at first hand instead of waiting them to be translated into other languages. Many **terms / terminologies in different social science disciplines like accounting, business, economics, laws etc are already available in English** making using it for learning; communication and business transaction are more prevalent. The following shows the grid of the list of the people who speak English

Country	% English Speakers	Total English Speakers
United States	94.2	298,444,149
India	10.35	125,226,449
Pakistan	49	92,316,049
Nigeria	53	82,941,000
United Kingdom	97.74	63,962,000
Philippines	56.63	57,292,884
Germany	64	51,584,000
Bangladesh	18	29,398,158
Canada	85.63	28,360,240
Egypt	35	28,101,325
France	39	25,500,000
Italy	34	20,300,000
Ghana	66.67	18,000,000
Australia	97.03	17,357,833
Thailand	27.16	17,121,187
South Africa	31	16,424,417

#### 4. English in the media and the web world:

English has emerged as one of the major languages for pursuing business on the Internet. A website written in English can attract many customers and enable even small business owners in remote villages to promote and sell their products to people around the world. Well-written product and service descriptions in English is the key for attracting new customers and keeping them up to date on any new product offerings. In last year's "State of Broadband" report by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, only 5% of the world's 7,100 languages are actually present in the Internet. In real life, Chinese surpasses English as the most spoken language, accounting for 1.2 billion people speaking the language. Spanish comes second with 400 million and English accounting for 360 million. On the Internet, however, it's a different scenario. About 55% of the Internet's content is in English, with Spanish accounting for 4.7%. Chinese accounts for just 2.2% of content from the top 10 million websites online. Given that English is the most used language on the Internet, it also encompasses the largest hub of information online. From white papers to essays and the news, most content is primarily in English and may be translated into several languages either by a website's options or simply, one's Internet browser. In order for businesses to reach customers on a global scale via the Internet, they would need to deliver their message in the language that is most prevalent online: English. In the advertising sense, English delivers what other languages can't—the English vocabulary has several words to connote a single idea in various ways. Worldwide we see that most of the communication sources, information and material sold or given to us are in English, for example : films, TV shows, music, Documentaries, popular brands etc., In order to get ahead in your chosen field you need to make yourself completely understood by the people you work with. There will be emails; there will be telephone conversations, and they are costly! Knowing good English helps you to make your point faster. If you have a website that the whole world can see, you had better have content that is meaningful and accurate and does not embarrass you or harm your business.

Everyone knows that Hollywood is in the United States, and that the biggest television and music industries in the world are based there. TV and movies are a great way to practice enhances English skills. It is a hub for entertainment and learning as well.

#### 5. Teaching the Business English

The business world is perennial in development. Businesses are evolving and activating in a diversified environment that doesn't regard physical boundaries anymore. More so, due to [accelerated globalization](#), we now live in a techno-world where every business has the possibility to extend over borders. This made language proficiency a very important business skill to master one's career. However, in English-speaking countries, this essential business skill is quite scarce, and business managers have just started to outline its influence on their business.

Business English is one of the major features of English for specific purposes (ESP) teaching. It is usually related to how people communicate using talk or writing in commercial organization so as to get their work done. In order to optimize business English in classes, various factors have to be determined before organizing the class such as who the learners are, what can the mode of communication be? And how to strategize the teaching set. Furthermore since the language plays important role for effective communication, a much deeper understanding is needed on the language structure and language items that are interrelated in the given setting to deliver the 'interlocutors' purpose and accomplish their objectives the most efficiently and appropriate way.

Since Business English is not confined to native speakers only but has extended between native and non-native speakers, teaching techniques are therefore differentiated according to learners' first language, and according to their social and linguistic approach. This implies that comprehensive consideration based on business context, target learners, relationship with the speakers and the purpose of interactions should be considered during the design of English business classes. However parallels can be drawn to refer English as 'Lingua Franca'. In addition, since the majority of users are non-native speakers interacting with non-native speakers, the need for internalization of native speakers' cultural norms is widely unnecessary.

It is much correct to say that the focus on the use of English in international business is facilitating the effective communication of a business idea within the different cultures. Since language is rooted in culture, the importance of cultural awareness in international business has become significantly noted, due to the need of 'non-native English language' business people to communicate with other speakers of English for business purposes. However it is still necessary to equip learners with the linguistic knowledge as teachers need to provide students with inter cultural knowledge particularly the concept of 'cross culture communication'. This means that business English educators need to prepare students to communicate effectively in multi-cultural settings. Since Business English is mostly taught at a tertiary level where a learner should be knowledge equipped in general English vocabulary and grammar, more emphasis should be put on business related terminology. Over the last years the importance of ESP has been emphasized drastically where English is taught as a foreign or a second language. Earlier ESP concentrated on teaching English for academic purposes (EAP) to those who wished to specialize in particular domain at a higher level of education or who were already engaged in the target field of study. However, due to the spread of business English and the world involvement in business, the role of English business teachers enhanced to promote communicative skills and language competence among the learners. This enables them to effectively communicate in business related situations and to avoid mistakes. Through its diverse thorough research regarding the echo usage of language elements and the pragmatic perspective of communication concerning English proves English as a 'Lingua Franca' of the business arena.

## 6. English the Lingua Franca of Business:

The characteristics of business English articulate this English language as the 'Lingua Franca' of the business world. It emphasizes on the form, language in use and its acceptability across the globe.

Furthermore, there is an emphasis in the literature and its macro-socio linguistic approaches on the practical use of the language. 'Lingua Franca' means it is a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers of diverse native languages. It emerges into two approaches, the first approach, is where 'Lingua Franca' is used as a communication tool amongst speakers with different native languages. The second approaches emerges as an asset of a particular language in historical setting eg., As a language of religion in Europe, the definitions of 'Lingua Franca' vary over the past decades and has come up with a definition which many scholars seem to elude to. They define 'Lingua Franca' as a communication device used by different native speakers. Moreover, English as the 'Lingua Franca' differs from the native English language and therefore has to be learned by native English speakers. Few percentage of English scholars agree with definition which puts emphasis on the role of English as the contact language between people none of whom have as their mother tongue and teacher education and curriculum studies. Who choose to use English as a common "foreign" language?EFL has been significantly adopted in academia. Case studies, scholarly review articles, books have focused on the application and the nature of ELF. Surprisingly, in 2012, the very first academic journal completely focusing on ELF was published. Moreover, there is a growing number of researchers interested in this issue, among others. According to an ELF research the characteristics of English as the 'Lingua Franca' and English as the native language distinctively takes its shape accordingly. Less attention is paid to the nature of the language being used. Moreover, it advocates for the reformation of the English language. Later on, the focus is laid on the development and research into ELF in general and on the levels on lexicon grammar, phonology and pragmatics. In their research, they presented the characteristics of ELF grammar as: dropping articles and using them where they are not required, eliminating the third person present tense "-s", confusing relative pronouns such as "who" and "which" and inserting unnecessary prepositions. Seidlhofer (2004) argued that such errors occur due to the regularization of the linguistic system. Nevertheless, the identification of such linguistic features increases the knowledge about ELF discourse, earlier researchers on ELF focused their attention on ELF regular discourse, but it now appears to focus on the dynamic nature of ELF. Various terminologies tried to explain the supremacy of English in international means to communicate and label it differently. However, it differs since BELF has three major distinct features: 1. Neutrality 2. Practicality and 3. Cultural diversity

First, BELF is an impartial and shared communication system since it is between non- native speakers it acts as a neutral tool for everyone. Moreover, it's a common communicative tool in the business world. Therefore, this means that BELF doesn't draw its attention on the originality but on communication strategies which acts as a measuring tool to gauge the English competency and fluency of non-native speakers. BELF language competence can be assessed based on the accuracy of the content and the knowledge of business terminologies rather than the linguistic correctness and English knowledge. This means that BELF users fully acquire the knowledge shared by the international business community which results in individual satisfaction. Hence, users are likely to be equipped with the language competence in professional meetings. Secondly language in its practical type is the sole tool for business communications, it does not focus on the natives or errors but rather understanding. Lastly it has cultural diversity it does not block streams of communication instead allows diverse core languages and their differences and adopts them. it changes the traditional perceptions of 'Lingua Franca' and helps them administer the achievements to goals fruitfully, with an ideal understanding and generic business knowledge.

### CONCLUSION:

Communication is the key ingredient to business growth and business world is a continuous developing arena. Language elevates its platform to greater heights. English has over the decades become an essential asset in managing and executing all business transactions. Regardless to mention its roots but yes we have nurtured this language practice from a no man's zone to a common international tongue of business. Global needs have taken a stand still until a medium of communication was adopted; trial and error methods took English to be declared as the 'Lingua Franca of the fast growing techno- global world.

To conclude Multilingualism is such a deal today but globalization is on par with growing technology and diverse needs go in vain with obscure communication. And amidst these growing platforms English rises with perfect efficiency and dignity in cracking the right cord of 'clarity', 'conciseness', and 'correctness'. Thus the language invites broader audience set for a higher acceptance of it in becoming a tool for further smooth functioning by effective communication and crystal clear understanding to close better deals in order to get behind the language of the dollar- "That's English".

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

1. R. E. Hamel, "The Dominance of English in the International Scientific Periodical Literature and the Future of Language Use in Science," AILA Review, 20, pp. 53-71, p. 53, 2007.
2. S. McKay, Teaching English as an International Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
3. J. Svartvik and G. Leech, English: One Tongue, Many Voices. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.
4. Internet World Statistics, Internet World Users by Language: Top 10 Languages [online], 2010. www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm [Accessed May 18th 2017]
5. D. Desai, On-Demand English Communication Training Enables the Global Work Force [online], 2009. [http://www.globalenglish.com/files/news/IHRIM\\_ink\\_Global\\_Perspective\\_Jan09.pdf](http://www.globalenglish.com/files/news/IHRIM_ink_Global_Perspective_Jan09.pdf) [Accessed May 10th, 2017]
6. D. Crystal, English as a Global Language, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
7. D. Graddol, English Next [online], 2006. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-researchenglish-next.pdf> [Accessed May 10th 2017]
8. <https://hbr.org/2012/05/global-business-speaks-english>.
9. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dorieclark/2012/10/26/english-the-language-of-global-business/>
10. source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_English-speaking\\_population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_English-speaking_population)

