

English Can Be a Bridge For Cross Cultural Communication

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Abstract—Many failures in International business and Intercultural exchange are just because of language barrier. In this era of globalization, there has to be a connecting language which can be spoken and understood worldwide. It makes personal and professional stay easier and optimal growth of human beings. The present paper focuses on the problems of communication in global professional exposure. It also suggests that English can be a 'harbinger' of all professionals who are keen on working globally and still working internationally. It suggests that body language, cultural knowledge and language understanding are keys to cross cultural communication.

Keywords—Professional, Communication, Cultural, Globalisation, Barrier

I. INTRODUCTION

“We didn't all come in over on the same ship, but we've all in the same boat.”

In today's scenario, work place area is becoming vast, leaving all boundaries and barriers behind. No geographic locations are holding any one. So, cultural diversity and language barrier has to be removed. Effective communication with people coming from different cultures is required as a person who speaks different language but have same goals has to meet and work together.

Cross-cultural communication is a phrase which came into existence when globalisation took place and distances become easier to cover. Now a day's one can take breakfast in India, Lunch in London (U.K.) and Dinner in France as distances have become shorter with the advent of high speed airways. But for this we need communication skills and a language which can play a bridge. So, instantly English comes in the mind of every one because English is the only language which is read, write and spoken in almost all the countries of the world. The phrase cross-cultural communication means the ability to describe foster and form a relationship and fulfil all your needs in a culture, different from own self. There can be many factors such as social structure, language, manners, traditions, and values in different countries. But cross-cultural communication means to develop a skill by which one can fulfill all needs, personal and professional.

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II. OBSTACLES OF CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Globalisation has made it inevitable to understand the need of business in different countries with different cultures and languages. The impact of culture and language is also very important to read as it affects business. So, to understand global business we have to understand obstacles of cross-cultural communication:

1. **Language Barrier:** The biggest issue in cross-cultural communication the language barrier. If one is visiting China without knowledge of Chinese, how will he survive and fulfill his professional attainment? Sometimes translators work excellently but still a link language is needed for exchange of many important issues. English is primary language but some countries like France may hesitate in using it as colloquialisms and words are quite different.
2. **Cultural Diversity** – Cultural diversity is a great problem in this context. All communication challenges of the workplace are the outcome of cultural diversity. Even people speaking same language suffer from this as the accent may be different. Take the example of US English and UK English.
3. **Awareness of Cultures** – Difference of Greetings, salutations is also a great hindrance. As some countries have some way of exchanging pleasantries and others have some different. And tolerance to each other is also a great quality, which one must have.

III. UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIFFERENCE WITH ENGLISH

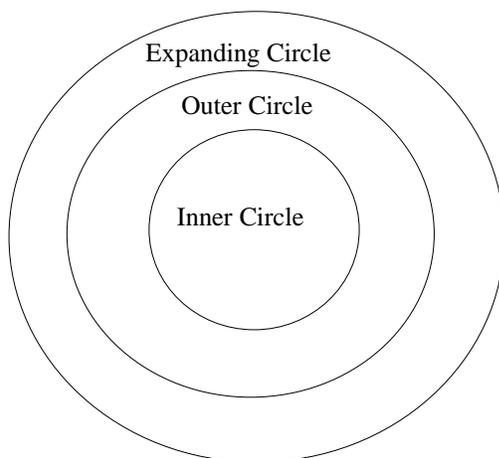
Cross Cultural communication involves understanding cultural difference and overcoming with them with the help of a connecting language. English can be a great bridging language in this regard. Internet and technological advancement have opened many new gateways for acceptance of language too. It has now become easier to talk with people living in remote locations and far away. Now if a person is sitting in Japan, he can talk to a person sitting in US, directly face to face with the help of electronic devices. For those who are Native English speakers or those who have learned English as L₂, it is fortunate because I think English has widest audience and speakers. But non-English speakers are also there. Take the example of France, They know English but they love their Mother Tongue so much that they speak in French only. Similarly in Brazil, Portuguese and Spanish rule the country. But in cultural diversity context we must try to maintain a new communication group where language cannot

be a barrier. In this regard, English holds the most important place. Many countries and their companies offer classes and short term training programs' for cross-cultural awareness and their mode of communication is English. So it works well. In Japan, China, France and other countries, which are business centers and attracts most of other countries for trading, language is also a big constraint. Japan is the forerunner of all technology; still they love their Mother Tongue. They are doing well in Japanese. But recent studies show that even Japanese authorities and their business bodies are promoting countrymen to learn, read and write English. I have observed during my stay at oxford that many Japanese people are learning English living in UK. Even there were three colleagues of mine were from Japan who were learning English at the age of 50 and above. Same is the case with Russia, Brazil, Spain and other European countries.

Although a plea of using translator is also there but one to one or face to face communication give a great impact and sometimes translators can't give their view point as strongly as the person himself. The translator can help to recognise communication and cultural differences but if both business parties talk directly, it can open barriers and restrictions better. So, English has to be a great connecting language regardless all problems. Even one can learn it online with the help of many apps, websites and devices.

IV. CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND ENGLISH

English has become an international language coming from an island of Europe from 1500 years ago. Now it has changed from British to North American English, Australian English and Indian, Philippines and many more. But so many local varieties and their adaptations tell us its unique feature of acceptance. American English has certain different features and words whereas Britishers has different. Kachru (1985) has nicely explained use of English in three circles inner, outer and expanding:



Inner circle comes in my mind as our own countrymen. Outer circle means neighbouring countries or countries with same region whereas expanding circle denotes talking globally. Now when communication across the world is possible by Internet with e-mails, blogging, and web and chatting, English becomes our backbone of connecting people across the borders. So, teaching English language from the

point of cross-cultural communication has become obvious. Many ELT emphasize not only English language teaching but cultural teaching also mandatory for global exposure and business links. English is widely accepted as a de facto world language. It has touched educational to scientific life of all of us.

V. SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEMS REGARDING LANGUAGE

ELT know about all language problems. Language is a great barrier when we go out of our area or circle. L₂ speakers normally face some problems as:

- Technical language and idiomatic language cannot be understandable.
- Acronyms also create confusion.
- Speed of delivery also creates clarity of speech.
- Pronunciation is another weakness.
- Complex Language is trouble.

In this regard only an ESP (English for Specific Purpose) teacher will help. He always will take help of:

- Visuals/OHP for lectures as pictorial memory always clears the vision accurately.
- Give handouts of all lectures so that one can revise them time-to-time.
- Reading and writing exercise will make the understanding more clear.
- Pronunciation of words has to be dealt with clearly.
- A handy word list of vocabulary useful of daily chores and business need has to be there
- Some cultural basics such as how to greet, when and where not to talk should also be taught.

Grammar practice is not required, just speaking, reading and writing task with serve the purpose and make cross-cultural communication effective.

VI. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

When we talk about cultural differences, we must take help of Internet. Prior knowledge and information from Internet can be helpful for understanding culture of any place. It gives information about country through website and plays an important role in spreading and sharing news. As in US, kissing in a business meeting is not a good manner but in UK it is permissible. Similarly, in Asian countries we find diversity in exchanging greetings in different ways. So, when one is planning for business visit one has to learn all this.

VII. ROLE OF BODY LANGUAGE

Cross Cultural Communication is a skill that requires patient practice and learning both. It is a skill that can be learned through patient practice. One has to take training in this skill. Our body language also plays a vital role. There are some movements of the body and some gestures, which have different meaning in different cultures. As handshakes in

different countries have different meaning. Similarly eye to eye contact, smile has same logic and meaning. So, in this regard body language and movements also have different meaning.

VIII. CONCLUSION

English can be a vital connection when we talk about global business exposure. We cannot deny command and love of our mother tongue, but nearly all of us cannot deny the fact that English when spoken or written has more audience and readers than other language. So, in this way, we can use it as a language of cross-cultural communication with body language, greetings, salutations and culture of the country visiting for the purpose of business. I think that can solve the purpose of business and will help in taking care of personal and professional needs and requirements.

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