CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH FOR INTEGRATION
Sayings such as, ‘United we stand divided we fall’ or ‘Unity is strength’ have been drilled into us right from our days of reasoning. However, in reality, we are living in an imperfect world where division and disunity seem to have a say in all matters of social interaction.

Everyone admits that man, basically, is a social and peace loving being; and yet we are unable to account for the violence and bloodshed that has become part of our civilization. Ineffective communication and inadequate dialogue could be the root cause of all disunity in the world.

At the United Nations 50th anniversary celebration His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar observed that ‘right education’ is that which creates in each person, a sense of belongingness with the whole world. According to him a person can be educated, for instance, to embrace all the religions of the world and choose to practice one without decrying the other.
And he adds, “Members of a family can practice more than one religion. This should be the strategy for the 21st century”.

It is regrettable that while the educational institutions train our youngsters to be professionally competent and socially ‘productive’ little attention is given to the emotional and spiritual training. Neither at home, nor in the school, are they trained to handle their emotions, nor are they conscientised sufficiently of their responsibility as members of a world community.

Now is the time for us to attend to this. Human evolution has two steps: the first is from being a “somebody” to being a “nobody”, and the second is from being a “nobody” to being “everybody”. This knowledge can bring sharing and caring throughout the world (Sri Sri Ravishankar 3).

From time immemorial, enlightened men have been making earnest efforts to harness the goodness in man, with a hope of establishing an integrated world community. The golden words of Kanian Poonkuntranar are an echo of humanity’s longing for solidarity and fraternity, during the sangam period of Tamil history:
“Yaadhum oore, yavarum keleer”

(Every place is my place and everyone is my kinsman)

(Kanian Poonkuntranar, Purananooru)

One of the most powerful exhortations for international integration and concern for fellow beings can be found in the vibrant verse of Subramania Bharathiyar, the revolutionary poet and visionary of Tamil Nadu:

“Thani oruvanuku unavilai enil Jagathinai azhithiduvom.”

(It is better to destroy the whole world than let an individual starve).

(Subramania Bharathiyar)

The individual referred to here, could be an Indonesian, a Nigerian, an American, an Indian, an Eskimo, or any human being, living in any part of the world, in need of food. It is difficult to find another verse of equal force, in any literature of the world.

Many more efforts are made today to conscientise humanity about the need to stay together as a race: for, disintegration and disunity could prove suicidal. Pope Benedict XVI’s Christmas message may be of great relevance here:

A united humanity will be able to confront the troubling problems of the present time: from the menace of terrorism to
the humiliating poverty in which millions of human beings live, from the proliferation of weapons to the pandemics and the environmental destruction ("Pope Benedict’s Message").

It is striking to note that even the Chinese who used to be more aloof and concerned about themselves in the past, are now involving themselves in the building up of an integrated world. Apart from the economic ties and bilateral relationships China is establishing with many other nations today, she is also an active agent of globalization and international cooperation.

The initiative taken by China for international integration is of particular significance, as it is carried out mostly through the medium of global English.

"The Chinese are willing to join with peoples of all nations to promote multilateralism, advance the development of Globalization toward common prosperity, advocate democracy in international relations and respect the diversity of the world."

Mr. Hu Jintao, President of China
China will do its best to help developing countries and extend it to people suffering from war, poverty, illnesses and natural calamities in the world" (Jintao 12).

The collapse of communism and the end of the cold war has drawn Russia and its Communist allies into the mainstream of globalization and International Integration.

Bulgaria and Rumania – two ex-communist nations, for instance, joined the European Union(EU) on 01-01-2007, raising the total membership to 27.

Under the charismatic leadership of the present President Vladimir Putin, Russia is emerging as a people friendly nation, joining hands with the rest of the world, eager to promote peace and harmony in the world.

With a better understanding between the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, peace seems to be returning to this region after decades of war and violence.

Pakistan and India are also proving to be more neighbourly today; efforts are being made, by good will ambassadors of both sides to ease the tension between the nations.
Integration is impossible without mutual understanding of cultures. Many researches are being made today, in the field of intercultural communication. With globalization spreading its wings across different nationalities, and with hundreds of MNCs setting up centers in developing countries like India, in the form of Call centers, BPOs etc., there is a need to bridge the gap between these cultures.

*Intercultural Communication*, a classical work produced by John Beatty of USA, and Junichi Takahashi of Japan, is such a venture of combined effort. Their diverse cultural backgrounds bring a fresh approach to intercultural communication, an upcoming subject that concerns all of us.

Tylor, the founder of anthropology, defined culture as, “...... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Beatty 16).
Integration is possible only when persons are understood in their cultural background. We should keep in mind that customs, practices and even social values vary from community to community. Nations need to sink their differences and emerge as a unified world, in order to save our planet from destruction. It is also evident that men of good will and far sight have been making earnest efforts to restore peace and harmony in the world. However these efforts haven’t been sufficiently rewarding; probably a better co-ordination and a more effective communication among all nations would produce better results in the future.

In this regard, it is needless to say that a lingua franca – a common language could facilitate and speed up the process of international integration.

However some say that a common language is not a must for teamwork and united efforts; that interpreters and machine translation can come to our aid in such situations. David Crystal has this to say concerning the limitation of machine translation:

...however, as translation software is currently very limited in its ability to handle idiomatic, stylistic, and several other linguistic features; the machines are nowhere near replacing their human counterparts. Similarly, notwithstanding the
remarkable progress in speech recognition and synthesis which has taken place in recent years, the state of the art in real-time speech-to-speech automatic translation is still primitive. The ‘Babel fish’, inserted into the ear, thus making all spoken languages (in the galaxy) intelligible, is no more than an intriguing concept (Crystal, *English as a Global Language* 27).

Moreover, an interpreter or a translating device will certainly rob us of the intimacy and the personal touch that is part of a face to face conversation.

Another possibility is to formulate a new language, synthesizing the salient features of all the prominent languages. It involves a comparative study of the grammatical structures of languages – a study of the morphemes and syntax of languages.

Example:

In English speakers are prone to making sentences in which the subject precedes the verb and the verb precedes the object. This pattern, shown here, is called SVO(subject-verb-object):

- The man sees the woman.

In other languages such as Japanese and Latin, the preference is SOV(subject-object-verb) arrangements:
Linguistics is a scientific analysis of the structures of languages. Linguistics can analyse any language and compare its grammatical structure with English or any other language of reference. The following illustration is taken from Paul R. Kroeger’s book, *Analyzing grammar: An Introduction*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Level</th>
<th>Phrasal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = Noun</td>
<td>NP = Noun Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A = Adjective</td>
<td>AP = Adjective Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V = Verb</td>
<td>VP = Verb Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = Preposition</td>
<td>PP = Preposition Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv= Adverb</td>
<td>S = Sentence or Clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det = Determiner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conj=Conjunction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linguistic analysis of a Malay sentence (Kroeger 35-50)

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Anjing itu makan tulang besar.

'That dog is eating a big bone.'
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**Diagram 1:**
```
S
  /     \\  
NP    V    NP
  /  \    /  \
 N    Det N    A
 Anjing itu makan tulang besar
```

**Diagram 2:**
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PP
  /     \\  
P    NP
  /  \    /  \
 Det N
 On the beach
```

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Is it possible to analyse the existing languages, in the above mentioned manner and create a new one, a neutral language, for global communication? Like the Euro that has emerged as an alternative to the monopoly of the US Dollar, can we hope for the creation of a new lingua franca that can replace global English? If so, who will undertake such a task?

Well, the creation of a new lingua franca for international integration, is certainly an impractical dream; it takes centuries to develop a language. Moreover, since the majority of the world, has already acknowledged English as a lingua franca, and are busy learning it now, the concept of a new lingua franca will only be an unnecessary and additional burden.

As things stand today, we can confidently propose that English is the most suited language for International Integration for the following reasons:

i) As already established in the previous Chapters, English is being learnt by more people, more than any other language today. Although ‘mono lingualism’ does not guarantee peace and prosperity, it certainly plays a major role in the integration of a society.

As already stated, it is impractical to create / develop a new language for the purpose of international integration; it is more
practical and sensible to select one from the established languages—ipso facto, English is the most suited language for this purpose.

ii) Right from its first appearance in England, the origin and source of English has been shrouded in a cloud of obscurity and mystery, belonging to no one in particular, but to everyone in general, thus creating an impression of universality in result.

As of today, English is no one’s in particular, not even the English man’s. “As a consequence nobody owns English now. That is the message we have to take on board as we begin the new millennium” (Crystal, “English in the New World”).

The present day English has descended from a large Indo European family of languages, inter-related through morphemes and syntax. The following chart will indicate that many of the English words can be traced back to the other languages of the Indo European family.
The Indo-European Language Family Tree (Barry 166)
The ‘Englisc’ that reached the shores of England through the invasion of Anglo - Saxons and Jutes, in the first half of the 5th century A.D., is hardly the English that has emerged as a lingua franca today; it has changed so much, phonemically and semantically, that it now appears as a new and unique language, containing in itself the essence of many languages. Hence, English, having lost its identity and taken a universal outlook, is a better tool of integration than any other language.

iii) Tolerance and regard for the views, way of life, and religious beliefs of others is the first step towards international integration. According to Rod Liddle, the roots of tolerance in England can be traced back to William Tyndale, the man who translated the Bible into English. “That British society is deeply Christian and yet tolerant of other faiths is because of William Tyndale, the man who translated the Bible into English” (Liddle 11).

The English version of the Bible – the King James Bible is regarded as being 90 per cent the work of Tyndale. The King James version of the Bible, not only raised the status and standard of the English language but also paved the way for tolerance. The common man had the access to the Bible and the freedom to interpret it – promoting freedom of expression and tolerance of others’ views.
This placid tolerance of the Anglican Church, that has come down as a social value is still prevalent and still influences the attitude and social life of the English man:

There is an interesting debate doing the rounds: should we allow faith schools in Britain?...if you oppose Muslim faith schools, you must with even handedness oppose Church of England faith schools. Needless to say there is no similar debate in Saudi Arabia, Iran or Pakistan. Each of these nations is wholly aware that its national culture is drawn from Islam (Liddle 11).

The English language and the English culture have proved, time and again their impartial and even handed attitude – the ideal way to promote integration.

iv) English literature has been attracting the attention of people all over the world through the values and virtues it promotes.

The endearing human values promoted through the English literature, more particularly through the plays of Shakespeare, crossed the English shores, reached far and wide, and have paved the way for social integration, to a great extent; even the peoples who do not know English have been enjoying the translated version of his plays.

In *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock may appear as a villainous character, meant to be laughed at or mocked at. But, on a closer analysis, one can easily infer
more: that through the mouth-piece of Shylock Shakespeare is denouncing racial discrimination, and pleading for integration—both religious and racial integration. He is appealing to the good-will and good sense of people, that despite religious and racial diversities human beings are basically same and equal.

Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? (Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 3.1. 58-71).

The quality of mercy, much related to forgiving and forgetting, is another indispensable ingredient of integrated society. This quality is highlighted through the mouthpiece of Portia, another memorable character of Shakespeare.

"The quality of mercy is not strain’d,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless’d;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

(*Merchant of Venice* 4.1. 83-86).
Friendship, the noblest and the closest form of familiarity, is primarily built on trust and loyalty. When this loyalty is betrayed, it is too painful to bear for a king or a commoner or any one.

Julius Caesar who priced the friendship of Marcus Brutus, more than his vast empire, lost his will to fight and his spirit to survive, when he saw Brutus in the gang of the conspirators.

"Et tu Brute? - Then fall Caesar!" (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* 3.1).

It is probable that Shakespeare used Latin as well as English in the swan song expression of Caesar, in order to stress the universality of friendship and the pain associated with its betrayal.

*Othello* is another example of international integration and a unique contribution of Shakespeare not only to literature but also to humanity’s struggle for interracial and intercultural integration.

Desdemona, a Venetian lady of extreme beauty and grace, with a noble and delicate character, falls in love with Othello of Moorish origin, a man of rough exterior and slightly over-aged, breaking the conventional grammar of love. Through the character of Desdemona, Shakespeare proves that love transcends caste, creed and colour – it is a meeting of hearts.
On the other hand, for Iago, Othello is just an “Erring barbarian” (1.3). Similarly Brabantio, the father of Desdemona could only conclude that his daughter was won by Othello only through some “magic spell” – as no girl of her beauty and upbringing would fall in love with such a person as Othello, under normal circumstances.

Desdemona looks at Othello as “a noble and valiant General (2.2) and falls in love with his personality, more attracted by his inner beauty. She symbolizes the earnest efforts made by men of good will, to promote international integration. On the other hand, Iago and Brabantio represent the negative forces at work, throwing cold water on such humanitarian efforts.

America, by herself, has been an example of racial and cultural integration. It is such oneness of purpose that has helped the Americans to sink their individual differences as immigrants from various countries, and of course, the English language also has played a part in the process of American integration.

The American literature very much reflects the liberal and pragmatic spirit of America, behind the American unity. Of all the American literary figures, Mark Twain deserves special mention as a promoter of integration through his writings. Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, The Prince and the
*Pauper* and many other works of Mark Twain contain elements of humanitarian values such as concern for the common man, simplicity of life, and above all, a spirit of integration.

*Huckleberry Finn*, for instance, is primarily a story of intercultural and interracial relationship between Huckleberry Finn, a white American boy and Jim, a Negro slave. Mark Twain successfully proves through these characters that it is possible to reach a high level of integration, despite the diversity in race, religion and culture. Huck strikes a friendship with Jim—‘Miss Watson’s Jim’, as he is referred to, in a land where a slave is treated as a mere property of the owner. However it hurts him occasionally and pricks his conscience that he is helping a slave to run away from the owner (Twain 369).

Huck’s conscience pricks him that God is watching him all the while; and as per the Sunday school instructions that he had received, for shielding a run-away slave, and for hiding this fact from the owner, one would go to “everlasting fire.”

Huck is caught up in this conflict between the two options—to hide Jim and go to hell or inform Miss Watson about the whereabouts of Jim and merit heaven. In the words of Huck, “It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray” (369).
After an agonizing mental struggle and prayer, Huck comes out with a revolutionary and drastic decision:

“All right, then I’ll go to hell…….

It was awful thoughts and awful words,

But they was said” (370).

Huck is fully aware of the dire consequences of shielding his friend; yet he prefers to go to hell rather than betray his friend. These lines of Mark Twain cannot be casually dismissed as ‘fantasy in fiction’. In these lines we cannot fail to see the vision for an integrated world – a world without slavery and inequalities, and a world where mutual love and friendship will flourish.

v) The English Dictionary by itself is a proof of the ‘accommodative’ and ‘inclusive’ spirit of the English culture and the English language:

For example, learners sometimes comment on the ‘familiarity’ of English vocabulary, deriving from the way English has over the centuries borrowed thousands of new words from the languages with which it has been in contact. The ‘welcome’ given to foreign vocabulary places English in contrast to some languages (notably, French) which have tried to keep it out, and gives it a cosmopolitan character which many see as an
advantage for a global language.” (Crystal, *English as a Global Language 8*)

Some Indian words such as ‘mulligatawny’ (molagu + tunni) or ‘catamaran’ can be easily identified but some other words like brinjal, bandh, chappals, crore, dhobi, ghee, godown, mutton and paddy have become part and parcel of our English conversation, that today most of the Indians may not be aware of the Indian origin of these words.

As of today, many of the important words of the prominent languages of the world are absorbed into the English language, and as such, English deserves to be treated as a language of international integration, more than any other language.

vi) The English language and the English culture certainly possess a magical charm, a compelling appeal that has attracted the attention of the world; but for this fact, a language that was spoken by a few thousands, on a small island could not have evolved as the global English of today.

It is this charm and the promise projected by this language that made many scholars predict the international status of English, centuries ago:
English is the language of the future” - wrote William White in the weekly The Schoolmaster in 1872, and Pitman concludes his calculations with exactly the same words. These are two out of hundreds of quotations it is possible to find in the literature of the time making this point. I have not found a single quotation to suggest that a different view was held by anyone.”

(Crystal, English as a Global Language 76)

Inspite of the colonization, many of the former British colonies have adopted the customs and manners of the colonizers! It is certainly a wonder that a tiny island like England could rule the world once, politically, and now culturally.

Instead of throwing away the customs and manners of the colonizers (way of dressing, food habits, table manners and social ethics), almost all the colonies have kept them and adopted them as their own. This certainly tells upon the integrating power of English.

vii) The willingness of the Englishman to give up the British empire and promote a COMMONWEALTH in its place is another indication of the ability of the English language to adapt and adjust.
A statement prominently displayed in the body of the associated article, memorable chiefly for its alliterative ingenuity, reinforces the initial impression: 'The British Empire may be in full retreat with the handover of Hong Kong. But from Bengal to Belize and Las Vegas to Lahore, the language of the sceptred isle is rapidly becoming the first global lingua franca (Crystal, *English as a Global Language* 1).

Yes, the English are no more ruling the world politically, but English is ruling the world today as a global language. The dark spots in their reign, during the days of colonization cannot be denied, but on the whole most of the former British colonies have benefited by their presence and are indebted to them for the developments.

Although the British rule could have carried on in some colonies, they have withdrawn from all these colonies, which are independent states today. These independent countries have formed a union known as Common Wealth or Common Wealth of Nations; as of today, the Commonwealth has a membership of 53, with Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London, as its Head Quarters.
It should be mentioned here, that the Commonwealth is a voluntarily formed association and that the British monarch is no more the ‘head’ as the word meant in the colonial days; rather the monarch today is a mere patron and a coordinator who facilitates co-operation and goodwill among the member states.

This initiative was taken by Britain, with a view to integrating the former colonies of the British empire and probably to co-ordinate follow-up programmes, in the case of some of these nations who required assistance. The willingness of the English to give up the vast political empire and to promote a Commonwealth in its place is certainly indicative of the adaptive nature of the English language as well.

It is noteworthy that one single language – English, is able to integrate these 53 nations, under the banner of Commonwealth; English, of course, is the official language of all the meetings of the Commonwealth. The key role that English has been playing in the integration of India, is proof enough of the integrating power of English, in general.

The India of pre-colonial period was hardly a nation – it was a cluster of petty kingdoms, ruled by independent Kings and Chieftains, who were not politically bound by any common principles. During the British
rule, these kingdoms were annexed one by one and merged into a nation, and English was introduced as a link language.

William White, talking in 1872 about the many languages of India, commented:

As we link Calcutta and Bombay with Madras, and by roads, railways, and telegraphs interlace province, we may in process of time fuse India into unity, and the use and prevalence of our language may be the register of the progress of that unity"(White 3).

A hundred years ago, the concept of international linguistic unity, through a common language would have been only a weird imagination for most people in India, who could not conceive the concept of even national linguistic unity – in a land where hundreds of languages and dialects were spoken.

Today, India, the largest democracy in the world, is a force to reckon with. To the outside world, India is a wonder, that she is able to hold her 1.1 billion children together as one family despite the innumerable diversities. Certainly we cannot ignore the role of Britain – the British rule
brought in political unity and stability, and the English language, linguistic unity.

In fact, English has become part and parcel of our social life and culture:

We learn English, because it is now our own language; “though formerly much identified with foreign rule, it is paradoxically the language which tends to encourage unity and discourage separatist movements. It is the mother tongue of the Anglo Indians spread all over the country. It is the language in which Sri Aurobindo wrote his immortal poetry and R. K. Narayan wrote his novels and stories of the Malgudi days. It is the language through which we so ardently wish our young ones to receive their education and our mornings begin with a glance at an English daily over a steaming cup of coffee.

ix) As in the case of India, English has become the media of integration in many other countries where multilingualism prevails.

This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in many of the African countries where there are very many tribes, each with a tribal language of its own. There was very little interaction among these tribes earlier, except for the brutal encounters to settle scores among them.
The British rule and the English language has integrated many of these tribal regions and given them an identity as a nation. In his book, *English as a Global Language*, David Crystal throws light on this aspect:

Many of the newly independent multilingual countries, especially in Africa, chose English as their official language to enable speakers of their indigenous communities to continue communicating with each other at a national level” (Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 79).

**The Opposite View**

The opposite view is that the English language has been an instrument of imperialism and cultural hegemony. “The damage to indigenous cultures, the suffering and the loss of life, and above all the smouldering resentment of these formerly colonized, for having been instilled with a sense of inferiority based on race, can never be measured” (Walder 40).

Many linguistic scholars are of the opinion that even though political imperialism is done away with, ‘Linguistic Imperialism’ continues to wield power, directly or indirectly. Linguistic imperialism is transfer of a dominant language to other people; aspects of culture are also transferred along with this language.

Robert Phillipson is widely known for challenging and denouncing linguistic imperialism. In his book, *Linguistic Imperialism*, he acknowledges the
Soviet analysis of English as the language of world capitalism and world domination. In other words, the knowledge of English helps the rich to become richer and exploit the poor. The socio-political and economic reasons compel the people of the former British colonies to learn English. He refers to this situation as linguistic hegemony (Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* 25 – 35).

Phillipson also disagrees with the methodologies and policies of the British Council, in the teaching of English. According to the British Council, English is to be taught ‘monolingually’, but Phillipson dismisses this policy as ‘monolingual fallacy’. Another policy of the British Council is, ‘the earlier English is taught, the better the result is’; but Phillipson denounces this as ‘early-start fallacy’.

In his book, *English-Only Europe?*, Phillipson sets out a vision of an ‘inclusive language policy’ for Europe. According to him the present expansion of the English language could be a threat to the other European languages. In the final analysis, he is for safeguarding a multi lingual Europe (Phillipson, *English Only Europe?* 65-95).

Alaistair Pennycook is another linguistic expert who is rather critical about the expansion of English. He is of the opinion that the spread of English is also responsible for the decline or extinction of other cultures: and this according to him is cultural imperialism. He wonders whether ‘the whole world is becoming a stage for American culture’, which he calls the hip-hop culture (Pennycook ch.4).
In his book, *Global English and Transcultural Flows*, Pennycook laments the decline of Malaysian fine-arts: the Malaysian traditional dance and music are being replaced by American pop-music and the hip-hop culture. This is also applicable to other countries like India where Bharathnatyam, Kathakali, and Karnautic music are gradually giving way to Western music and dance. Hence, Pennycook denounces the global spread of English as the vanguard of the army of Western cultural imperialism.

Suresh Canagarajah, another authority on language studies, suggests ways and means to learn the English language, without becoming a slave to linguistic imperialism. In his book, *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*, Canagarajah explores how English can be learnt and used as a business language, to satisfy the needs and aspirations of a community while subtly resisting linguistic imperialism (Canagarajah 52-67).

As we can see, even those who denounce Linguistic Imperialism are not against the teaching and learning of English as a second language or a foreign language: they only insist that the English language should be free from linguistic imperialism and cultural imperialism. Of course, it is up to the learners of the language to bear this point in mind.