ABSTRACT

CHAPTER I

Introduction

International integration and global communication are the most pressing needs of our time. The problems that threaten the entire human race are environmental, ecological, epidemic and ethnic. Hence, men of good will and far-sight needs to put their heads as well as hearts together, in order that we may fight together against these common enemies of mankind. In this context a common language is a must for communication and interaction among the peoples of the globe. Of course, every language will be more than pleased to win this title, ‘Lingua Franca’. However, English and French have been the traditional rivals for this high honor. Today there is substantial evidence to show that English stands head and shoulders above French.

This research purports to establish the proposition that among the international languages such as English, French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Swahili and Arabic, English is the most suited language today, for promoting international integration and global communication, as English is being learnt more and more all over the world.

An earnest survey was made to ascertain if any other researcher has made a similar study on the status of ‘English as a global language’. This researcher didn’t come across any among the theses submitted in the Bharathidasan University, or Madras University; there are quite a few on ELT.
CHAPTER II

Globalization and the emergence of English as a global language

This chapter deals with the globalization that is going on in the fields of trade, education, knowledge etc., and how English is being learnt in the process. “Globalization refers to the widening and deepening of the international flow of trade, capital, technology and information within a single integrated global market” (Dr. Victor Louis, in The Impact and Dynamism of Globalization). The whole world is being reduced to a ‘global village’. English is used in this global village as a global language, more than any other language.

This chapter will also provide a very brief account of the origin and evolution of the English language – from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day. It will study how English spread to the British colonies and got stabilized in countries like America, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The status of English as a global language will be analysed with the aid of statistical data.

The studies of David Crystal are heavily relied on, as he is an acknowledged linguistic expert, and an authority on world languages. The views of other eminent language scholars like David Graddol, Braj Kachru, Martin Wooding and John Slaght, and the opinions of language teachers and observers from English-learning countries like China, Taiwan, India etc. are taken into account.
CHAPTER III

The dominant factors behind the dominance of English

Right from its inception, the English language has been impressive and inspiring. On the political side, the naval power, the administrative skills and the patriotic spirit of the Englishmen were responsible for the conquest of the world by the English language. On the literary side, the inspiring works of Shakespeare, a world-renowned dramatist and a literary genius, laid in-roads for the spread of this language.

However, from the second half of the twentieth century new factors began to influence the spread of English. After the Second World War it was no more Britain but America who was “the master of ceremonies” in world affairs – trade, politics, employment opportunities, entertainment or mass-media. The emergence of America as a super-power paved the way for the continuation of English as a global language. The invention and development of computer and computer language and later the introduction of the Internet and the internet language made a big difference and extended the reach of English further.

The United Nations, the chief International forum for political communication, is certainly a major factor today, contributing to the globalization of English. The other international organizations like the Commonwealth, the SAARC, and the ASEAN also use mostly English for interaction. This trend certainly promotes English as a global language. Coming to Cinema, music, songs, and other communication media like Radio, T.V, Newspapers, Magazines etc, the supremacy of English is well known. This chapter will look into the influence of all these factors.
CHAPTER IV

The English wave in Europe: the attitudinal change in France and other Countries

This chapter will analyse the change in the attitude of the peoples of France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal towards English language learning. After the Second World War the influence of French and France over the economy and culture of the European countries has been gradually replaced by the English influence. This chapter will highlight this present scenario.

My personal experience during my visit to France will be drawn upon in this chapter. The long-standing rivalry for supremacy between the French language and the English language is well-known. However, we, as a group of English- speaking tourists did not come across any hostile attitude towards English. We were able to communicate with most of the officials at the air-port or at tourist centres, in English. There is enough and more evidence to prove that many French citizens are aware of the importance of learning English, for global interaction.

During my visit to Italy and Rome, I could feel the liberal use of English in most of the public places. Rome, in particular, being a cosmopolitan city, appears to be more open to the English language. The Keats-Shelley memorial located in the heart of Rome is a pleasant surprise for lovers of English literature. The position of English in Spain has a special significance; it must be noted that as a mother tongue, Spanish is spoken in more countries than English. However, Spanish has few second language speakers when compared with English. Hence, many of the Spaniards are learning English today, as second language, for global reach. Portuguese is another world language, spoken and flourishing in many parts of the world. But when it comes to the question of a second language, many of the Portuguese men would opt for English today, knowing its global worth.
CHAPTER V

Russia, Japan, and China – the countries that have tilted the language balance

The general increase in the number of people learning English the world over is a global phenomenon for all to see. However, a positive tilt of the language balance has been effected by the newly found interest for English in China, Japan and Russia. This chapter will briefly analyse the present eagerness of these countries to learn English, a factor which has accelerated the globalization of English at an amazing speed.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, it has become imperative for the Russians to learn a foreign language not only for international communication, but also for intra-national communication. English teachers are much sought after in Russia, these days. It has a direct bearing on the neighbouring countries, which were once upon a time under the influence and control of Russia- they too are eager to learn English.

“The Chinese nation is huge and hungry for the English Language” (Susan Griffith, in “Teaching English in Asia”). Unlike in the past, the present generation is eager to learn English, as most of the Chinese look at it today as ‘the language of opportunity’. When a country like China, which has the largest population in the world, takes to English-learning, we can well imagine the positive impact it can have on the globalization of English.

Japan is a role-model for many of the developing nations. The Japanese have understood the value of English and are busy learning it now. Naturally, the countries that look up to Japan for inspiration will also follow suit and take to English learning.
CHAPTER VI

English for Integration

Having established the fact that English is the global language today, this chapter explores the possibilities for exploiting this linguistic advantage for international integration, a pressing social need of our time. At this juncture, it is impractical to invent/formulate a new common 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.

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 every one in general, thus creating an impression of universality in result.

If the English LITERATURE could have a universal appeal in the past, integrating the peoples of the world emotionally, the English LANGUAGE can do the same today, uniting them politically and culturally. With a wide range of vocabulary, the English Dictionary contains most of the popular words of prominent languages.

English, having proved itself as a successful medium of communication for a political empire, could also play a major role today to promote a cultural ‘empire’ integrating mankind in peace and harmony. The willingness of the Englishmen to give up the British Empire and to promote a Commonwealth, in its place, is another indication of the ability of the English language to adapt and adjust.
CHAPTER VII

Conclusion: The fast-expanding English Language World.

This Chapter will reaffirm the proposition that English is the most suited language for international integration and global communication, by looking into the present status of English, in those countries where English has been in long-standing use, in some form or the other- in countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Taiwan. Of course, the status and significance of the English language in India will be dealt with in detail. It will also present a picture of the English presence in some of the prominent countries of the world, which are not dealt with in the previous chapters and thus a panoramic view of the vast English language world can be obtained.

The number of English medium schools, and English teaching institutes, that are on the increase day by day, all over the world, is a clear indication that English has emerged, as the global language, with no rival to contest its place.

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