

## English For Career Development

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines, the importance of English in Career Development in Professional life. Enhanced communication skills in English can result to not only an improved social life, but also better job opportunities in the future. From job interviews to the actual professional world, communication skills are very crucial, and being proficient in English means being able to communicate clearly and effectively. In job interviews, most interviewers conduct interviews in English. Interviewers quickly make judgments and give great importance to first impressions. Poor skills in the language can mean smaller chances of landing a job. On the other hand, being proficient in the language can help one leave a good first impression which means higher chances of getting the position one is applying for. English is the most commonly used language in the business world. Most job interviews are done in English. Most business contracts are written in English. Handling international business deals require effective skills in English. English is the preferred business language because it is an exact language. It allows a person to say what he or she wants to say without having to argue about the meaning. However, using incorrect tenses, prepositions, and the like will make one's statement less accurate. So in order to have an increased competence in the professional world, one should have a very good grasp of the English language.*

### **Key Words**

British empire, Career, Dialects, Cultural

### **Introduction**

#### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TODAY**

Modern English, sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, is the dominant language or in some instances even the required international language of communications, science, information technology, business, seafaring, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy. Its spread beyond the British Isles began with the growth of the British Empire, and by the late 19th century its reach was truly global. Following British colonization from the 16th to 19th centuries, it became the dominant language in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The growing economic and cultural influence of the US and its status as a global superpower since World War II have significantly accelerated the language's spread across the planet. English replaced German as the dominant language of science Nobel

Prize laureates during the second half of the 20th century. English equaled and may have surpassed French as the dominant language of diplomacy during the last half of the 19th century.

A working knowledge of English has become a requirement in a number of fields, occupations and professions such as medicine and computing; as a consequence, over a billion people speak English to at least a basic level. It is one of six official languages of the United Nations.

One impact of the growth of English is the reduction of native linguistic diversity in many parts of the world. Its influence continues to play an important role in language attrition. Conversely, the natural internal varieties of English along with creoles and pidgins have the potential to produce new distinct languages from English over time.

Approximately 375 million people speak English as their first language. English today is probably the third largest language by number of native speakers, after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. However, when combining native and non-native speakers it is probably the most commonly spoken language in the world, though possibly second to a combination of the Chinese languages (depending on whether or not distinctions in the latter are classified as "languages" or "dialects").

Estimates that include second language speakers vary greatly from 470 million to over a billion depending on how literacy or mastery is defined and measured. Linguistics professor David Crystal calculates that non-native speakers now outnumber native speakers by a ratio of 3 to 1.

The countries with the highest populations of native English speakers are, in descending order: United States (215 million), United Kingdom (61 million), Canada (18.2 million), Australia (15.5 million), Nigeria (4 million), Ireland (3.8 million), South Africa (3.7 million), and New Zealand (3.6 million) 2006 Census.

Countries such as the Philippines, Jamaica and Nigeria also have millions of native speakers of dialect continua ranging from an English-based Creole to a more standard version of English. Of those nations where English is spoken as a second language, India has the most such speakers ('Indian English'). Crystal claims that, combining native and non-native speakers, India now has more people who speak or understand English than any other country in the world.

### **English as a Global Language**

English being so widely spoken, it has often been referred to as a "world language", the lingua franca of the modern era and while it is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language. Some linguists believe that it is no longer the exclusive cultural property of "native English speakers", but is rather a language that is absorbing aspects of cultures worldwide as it continues to grow- It is, by international treaty, the official language for aerial and maritime communications- English is an official language of the United Nations and many other international organizations, including the International Olympic Committee.

English is the language most often studied as a foreign language in the European Union, by 89% of schoolchildren, ahead of French at 32%, while the perception of the usefulness of foreign languages amongst Europeans is 68% in favor of English ahead of 25% for French. Among some non-English speaking EU countries, a large percentage of the adult population can converse in English – in particular: 85% in Sweden, 83% in Denmark, 79% in the Netherlands, 66% in Luxembourg and over 50% in Finland, Slovenia, Austria, Belgium, and Germany.

Books, magazines, and newspapers written in English are available in many countries around the world, and English is the most commonly used language in the sciences<sup>1</sup> with Science Citation Index reporting as early as 1997 that 95% of its articles were written in English, even though only half of them came from authors in English-speaking countries.

This increasing use of the English language globally has had a large impact on many other languages, leading to language shift and even language death, and to claims of linguistic imperialism. English itself is now open to language shift as multiple regional varieties feed back into the language as a whole.

### **English Career Development**

Gaps in English language and communication amongst employees have been found to create embarrassing situations for companies in business context. It is prevalent among learners who have not been exposed to correct language formation thereby resulting in a tendency to translate directly from one language into another. Companies cannot expect to succeed unless they invest in employee learning and development.

“India's rebound from the global crisis is set to accelerate in 2010, with an estimated growth of 8.2 per cent” said an Asian Development Bank report released in April. This report augurs well for the Indian economy, which was reeling under a slowdown created by the global financial crisis a year ago. A recent survey by a leading manpower agency forecasts creation of 900,000 new jobs across 11 different sectors in 2010-11. Leading the charge are key sectors such as IT, ITeS, hospitality, healthcare, real estate, construction and education. This state of optimism is not based on the planned stimulus-driven global recovery but a robust growth in domestic demand. However, corporate India may not return to the profligate days of 2007 when fancy salaries and hefty hikes were the order of the day to attract world-class talent. “Employers are cautious and are placing stronger emphasis on skill-gap and employability”, says Rajesh, Vice President, of a staffing organization. Echoing a similar sentiment is Ashok Ramachandram, President, Human Resource, of a well-known mobile services provider. He says, “Companies are choosing responsible employees in the sector over money.”

Of the myriad business transactions that occur around the world in any given day, English dominates the front lines and hence functions as critical glue in bridging barriers in communication. A good communicator has strong foundations to apply verbal, non-verbal,

technological, mediated, participatory and mass communication skills in a variety of situations. “It is an indisputable fact that communication plays a critical role in global business, yet most companies overlook the need to refine it”, says Julian Parry, Head, Teaching Centre Network. Far-sighted companies in India are now linking training needs to their company strategy for growth.

With the rampant proliferation of Internet in most spheres of work, newer forms of media have emerged in business communication. Online communication has somewhat blurred the lines between formal and informal writing. Many businesses rely heavily on email to communicate and it is a well-known fact that such emails are full of errors in English grammar, punctuation, usage and spelling. While informal or incorrect English may be acceptable or 'creative' in a quick email between friends, it can look embarrassing when applied in a business context.

It is necessary for all people in the organization to be aware of the nuances of English language when it comes to the business context.

There are some hindrances to usage as teaching and learning have been based on different methods.

### **Approach:**

“The grammar/translation method of teaching English, which over-emphasizes repetition, pattern drills and accuracy, does not take into account the needs of different learners. This makes it difficult for learners to achieve their desired communicative competence in English”, says Manoj Mohan, Teacher, British Council

The communicative method recognizes that language has a business purpose and embraces a whole spectrum of functions. It is based on the fact that, as individuals, most of us do not learn a language in order to communicate. First, we try to communicate and in doing so, we learn. It uses meaningful activities that provide opportunities for rehearsal of real life situations (Eg: teaching Present Perfect Simple Tense by means of job interviews) through use of topical items which learners are familiar with. The message from the professionals is clear. All is not lost for those who are aware that they have these problems and want to improve their language skills as it's never too late to learn!

### **English Language and Career**

English is an indispensable language for career growth or for getting a job in today's age. The knowledge of English is required for all fields now even in the non-English speaking countries. Most of the job sectors in many countries like India, Philippines and Singapore require English totally. In other non-English speaking countries in the world where English is only a foreign language, the prevalence of this language is increasing day by day. English

is not just language of the elite class now; it is mandatory for people who want a brilliant career.

**There are certain sectors, where knowledge of English is absolutely mandatory.**

# **Hospitality Industry** - Knowledge of English, especially well spoken English skill is absolutely necessary for this industry. Tourism sector today is growing at a fast pace and English, is emerging as the language of communication between the locals and the tourists.

# **Aviation or Navigation sector** - All works in the aviation and the navigation section in the world is done in English. This language is the official language of this sector and people who want a career in these two sectors need to know both written and spoken English well.

# **Business Production Outsourcing (BPO) Sector** - the Asian countries today are very popular BPO destinations. As the job of the professionals out here is to interact with the native English speakers, it is necessary to have impeccable knowledge of English. For a great career in the BPO Industry good pronunciation skill is also necessary.

# **Research Scholars** - most of the scientific documents of the world are in English and 80% of the research materials stored in world computers are also in this language. So for higher education the knowledge of English language is very important.

# **Employees of Multi National Companies** - the professionals at the multinational companies require the knowledge of English the most. The main mode of communication between the offices in various parts of the world is English. +++++Thus, good hold over this language is mandatory.

# **Other Professions** - It cannot be said in today's world that English is just for a certain section of people. This language today is the global language, which all professionals need for their career growth.

**English Literature** is not merely the study of books. A degree in English will help you develop a number of key transferrable skills, including:

- analytical skills
- clear and logical thinking
- cultural awareness
- ability to gather, assess and interpret ideas and opinions
- ability to write clearly and concisely and to communicate complex ideas
- capacity to listen to, and take on board, other people's ideas
- ability to read quickly and with a critical eye

**Career paths for English Graduates:**

- Writing and research
- Film, television and journalism

- International development
- Charitable organizations
- Civil Service
- Health and social care
- Business
- Conservation
- Education
- Personnel management
- Town and country planning

### **SKILLS POSSESSED BY ENGLISH UNDERGRADUATES:**

Many employers are interested in the skills which English majors tend to possess. These include:

- ability to read and write articulately and analytically
- comprehensive knowledge of grammar and vocabulary
- ability to listen, clarify, question, and respond comprehensively
- ability to conduct and clearly explain research results
- ability to make critical observations
- skills in organizing ideas, materials, and people
- ability to think creatively
- ability to present persuasive arguments
- skills in textual analysis and interpretation

*From: The Metropolitan State College of Denver's Career Opportunities  
with a Major in English Homepage*

### **SAMPLE JOB TITLES FOR ENGLISH UNDERGRADUATES:**

(some may require additional education and / or training  
beyond the undergraduate degree)

copywriter  
consumer researcher  
public relations/information specialist  
corporate communications specialist  
policy and procedures analyst  
radio/television researcher  
educational sales representative  
information abstractor/indexer  
journalist (newspaper/magazine/broadcast)

project director  
creative director  
publisher  
film researcher  
volunteer coordinator  
market researcher  
fundraiser  
proofreader  
marketing assistant

editor (magazine/news/newspaper/publications/copy/film/video)	promotion specialist
special events coordinator	account executive
customer service representative	literary assistant
radio/television commentator	playwright
	instructional designer
	website developer
	script writer

**AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT:** (this list is not exhaustive)

advertising / marketing agencies	market research firms
newspapers / magazines / books	television / radio stations
consulting firms	banks / financial institutions
publishing companies	public relations firms
real estate agencies	libraries
non profit organizations	communications firms
film companies	fundraising firms
government agencies	telecommunications firms
professional journals	editorial departments
consumer organizations	theatres
multimedia firms	firms engaged in science and technology
self-employment	

**Conclusion:**

The main idea of teaching students all there is to learn from the English language is to nurture value centered leadership that involves entrepreneurial spirit, social sensitivity, global outlook, professional orientation and self efficacy.

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