

## ROLE OF FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH IN DAILY ROUTINE

Joash Thomas Abraham<sup>1</sup>, Prof G. Anburaj<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Computer Science and Engineering Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore-632 014, Tamil Nadu, S. India.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor of English Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore-632 014, Tamil Nadu, S. India.

anburaj.g@vit.ac.in

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the supremacy of English on the cultural identity, global terms, focusing mainly on China and Indonesia as case studies. Historically, English teaching in these countries mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary, often forgetting the cultural proportions necessary for meaningful communication. As English changed into a global language, which creates a medium for international communications but at the same time has posed a serious threat to the preservation of native languages and cultural practices. Through qualitative research, this study reveals that while English has increased individual's access to knowledge and opportunities, it has also led to a downfall in the fluency of native languages and the destruction of cultural traditions. Many respondents have stated their difficulties in expressing cultural nuances and maintaining family rituals, suggesting a strong influence of English on public and personal identity. The findings indicate a strong need for educational strategies that balance English competency with cultural conservation, advising for the incorporation of native language practices all contexts. Further research is recommended to explore the nuances of language switching and its effectiveness in conserving cultural heritage among the growing generality of English.

**Keywords-** Dominance, Nuances, Traditions, Cultural Identity

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English is the most commonly used language in the world. It acts as a communication tool in a variety of aspects in our daily lives like business, entertainment, education, tourism and much more. It acts as bridge to assist on the interconnection of foreign and diverse environments. It plays a vital role in how we interact and communicate with people from around the world.

There are lot of downsides to the overuse of English, one of it being the cultural issues and misunderstanding between people who speak it and those who don't especially in countries and places where English is not the primary language. This is a problem as it can lead to loss of cultural identity, inequality in various aspects of life like business, education and much more. This problem should not be overlooked as they can affect communications on a larger scale, preservation of one's culture and their identity.

To fix and address this issue we do require more information as it can helps us understand the local contexts and the practices that they do internationally so that we can protect and maintain the cultural identity and the social equality of the people. There are also a lot of limitation when we are trying to resolve this issue, one of the main limitations is that much of the research is done in English, due to this we have a limited understanding of the cultural practices and experiences of the non-English-speaking communities. Another is the lack of cultural awareness in educational institutions as most educational systems around the world prioritizes English over their native language and cultural practices.

### 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are several issues that are caused due to the role of English in our daily routine. One of the issues is foreigners trying to understand English speakers because English speakers may speak quickly or use different slangs and expressions or different accents that to a foreigner or any non-English speaking person might seem unfamiliar. Another issue is that foreigners have anxiety or the lack of confidence when they are trying to learn and communicate in English, this makes them afraid of making mistakes or being judged by others or feeling doubtful in conversations. Cultural misunderstanding is also a big issue that is faced among different communities as the vocabulary, expressions and cultural practices of these communities are also different. Few other issues include foreigners finding it difficult trying to frame sentences in English due to grammar and sentence structure difficulties and also vocabulary retention and acquisition.

#### Research Gap

This study reveals that there is a significant gap in how we understand the cultural misunderstanding and issues of English in our daily routine. One of the gaps is while most of the research has been focused on the issues and misunderstanding of verbal language, we often don't discuss about the non-verbal communications like the different gestures and body languages and how these differ between cultures. There is also a lack of focus on the variations of

regional dialect that differ between places from within the country and these differences cause a lot of misunderstandings, especially in international contexts.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past, English teaching in China mainly put their focus on grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. While this was helpful with reading and writing, it usually made it harder for people to have a deep and meaningful conversation with others. The importance of understanding culture became clearer with globalization.

The rise of English started with British colonialism and the rise of the US as a world power. As time passed by, English has developed into one of the most used languages in business, education, tourism and much more industries. Today, English is not only spoken by native speakers, but also by 1.5 billion people around the world. Famous linguists like David Crystal have indicated that English is now more commonly spoken by non-native speakers rather than native ones. This shift began in the mid-1900 and led to the idea of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), where it's mainly used for communication between people from different language backgrounds.

In Indonesia, English was introduced during the Dutch colonial period and gained importance and notability after the independence. Initially viewed as an instrument to access global knowledge, English became more significant for the economic and professional development in the 1980s. Despite being a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools, English is barely used outside educational and business settings. Unlike the other countries where English is a second language, The people in Indonesia classifies English as a foreign language, thereby limiting its use in daily communication. However, demand for English expertise has spiked due to its role in the advancements of careers and global opportunities.

A challenge in Indonesian English education is that students often excel in exams but struggle with practical communication. To overcome this, educators are encouraging students to discuss familiar topics in English, aiming to improve speaking skills and cultural awareness simultaneously. This shift towards viewing English as a tool for local and international communication reflects broader global trends in language education.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the issues that cultural misunderstandings and issues that could be faced due to the role of English in our daily lives. It's a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods. Two methods are used in the research: fifty students from a well known institution are given a physical questionnaire, and fifty more students from the same institution take an online survey using Google Forms.

The selection procedures make sure that students with different academic years and possibly with different perspectives get to give their inputs. This combination covers a wide range of student demographics and enables comparison analysis of findings from both formats. Ten multiple-choice questions about the cultural issues due to English were included in the questionnaire. The purpose of the questions is to gather data regarding:

- A) The areas where English is most prominent
- B) Impact of English on your culture
- C) Methods to keep your cultural identity alive while using English
- D) Ways to balance English and your native culture

### 5. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

#### Aspect of cultural identity most affected by use of English

Cultural identity includes a variety of different aspects that includes traditions, language, different values and beliefs. When people use English in settings where people speak different languages, it can often influence how they express and maintain these key parts of their culture

According to my research the main aspect of cultural identity that is most affected by the use of English is the language and the communication of it. This could mean the changes in people's expression, the loss of native language nuances or the adaptations in how different people communicate in a second language. Since language is the main part in cultural identity, this suggest that English impacts their capability to express ideas or concepts that could not be directly translated.

A decent percentage of responses feel that using English could also affect their traditional customs and faiths. This could suggest that certain cultural practices and expressions could be difficult to interpret and maintain when we primarily use English, which could make it difficult to convey important native traditions accurately and thoroughly.

---

### Strategies most effective for balancing English and native culture

It gives us an insight on how different individuals manages the coexistence of English and their native culture. As English becomes more dominant in communication worldwide. Many people face the challenge of maintaining their local customs, beliefs, values while trying to adapt in environments where English speakers are prevalent.

The majority of responses were people trying to implement both cultures equally. It suggests that many people try to find a balance by implementing different segments of English-speaking cultures with their own. They feel like these approaches helps them to adapt in the globalized world which is mainly dominated by English.

Individuals also choose to adapt based on the situation at hand. This implies that they could switch between languages and cultural practices depending on the situation. For example, the use of English in business settings while going back to native language with friends and family.

### Aspects that are most challenging to preserve due to the dominance of English

Individuals find it difficult to maintain different cultural practices and values due to the dominance of English in our day-to-day life. Various cultural aspects have been affected which often leads to difficulties in trying to preserve different depth and originality of an individual's culture.

Close to 50% of the respondents feel that it's difficult maintaining fluency in their own native language due to the dominance of English. Since English is spoken in majority of settings like business, educational institutions and much more there is decline in the use of the use of native language. Due to this, native languages might lose their elegance which could lead to misunderstandings and it damages the connection to an individual's cultural heritage.

One fifth of the people feel like family rituals and ceremonies are the most affected by the dominance of English. Family traditions are closely linked to cultural language and tradition that it may lose its importance and significances when English is the primary language.

A few people also feel that cultural and historical knowledge is the most difficult to preserve. This arises because cultural history is passed down through generations through stories, poems, and other literature, which may lose its value when translated to English. As the time goes on it may result in the loss of connection with one's heritage and weakens one's cultural identity.

### Significant impact of English on a person's cultural identity

The impact of English on someone's cultural identity circles around how one's language forms a connection to their moral values, heritage and traditions. English is a gateway to a variety of cultures and opportunities, but it could also isolate us from our culture and heritage. It changes how we interact with others, and how we show ourself to others.

More than half the respondents feel that the use of English has opened their paths to new cultural practices. This might indicate that English has allowed people to interact and connect with people from diverse cultures, which gives them greater awareness of practices outside their traditional context. However, this can cause a serious misunderstanding as our subjection to these practices does not ensure that we have full understanding of these practices.

A quarter of the respondents find difficulty to maintain their traditional customs due to the use of English, especially in English dominated areas. This might cause people to drift away from their native culture, practices and language. Confusions can arise when people are not knowledgeable enough about the heritage, which could possibly lead to several issues and conflicts between modern practices and traditional ones.

Few people think that English has changed the way they speak and communicate with others. English has a set of its own expressions which might cause several misunderstandings when we try to translate it back to our native language, A minority percent feel that the use of English has distanced themselves from their own cultural activities. This could indicate that the use of English in their daily life could possibly lead to the disengagement from their native culture.

### Unexpected Findings

About 50% of the students feel that it is difficult for them to maintain fluency in their native language due to the dominating English settings. This indicates that their native languages are becoming hard to protect as the dominance of English keeps rising as the days goes by in public as well as private environments. It is also unexpected that a lot of people are finding out strategies to balance English with their native culture such as using English in professional environments and their native languages in private and personal settings. This is unexpected as people are trying to find ways to navigate both worlds even though they can often face difficulty in maintaining fluency in their native language as mentioned above.

### Scope for Further Research

There could be further research on how cultural nuances and traditional practices are lost due to the primary use of English. This could be the study of some native expressions which do not get translated properly into English. We could

also have a in depth research on how effective switching between languages helps in maintaining the cultural identity and if this approach might truly help conserve the cultural values and practices.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The impact that English has on the cultural identity of a country is intense and complicated, especially in regions like China and Indonesia, where English acts as a bridge between native and global communications. Even though English provides international opportunities in many different industries, it can also pose as a challenge to the preservation of native traditions, practices and values. Through various research and surveys, it is evident that people feel that the supremacy of English has greatly affected how they speak in their native language which can pose as a great risk of being disconnected from their culture and heritage.

The problem lies in grasping the advantages of English while trying to protect the rich history of one's cultural identity, trying to make sure that globalization doesn't corrupt the values and traditions that shaped the individuals and their collective identities.

## 7. REFERENCES

- [1] English as a Global Language" by David Crystal
- [2] Language and Culture" by Claire Kramsch
- [3] Cultural Misunderstandings: The French-American Experience" by Raymonde Carroll
- [4] Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language" by Eva Hoffman
- [5] The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business" by Erin Meyer
- [6] Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction" by Ingrid Piller
- [7] "Understanding Cultural Differences" by Edward T. Hall
- [8] "Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting
- [9] In Around the World" by Marc L. Pruitt
- [10] Language, Culture, and Identity: The Meaning of English" by Gary Barkhuizen
- Global Englishes: A Resource Book for Students" by Jennifer Jenkins
- [11] The Dynamics of Language Contact" by William S-Y. Wang
- [12] "Cultural Intelligence: Surviving and Thriving in the Global Village" by David C. Thomas
- [13] "Communicating Across Cultures" by Stella Ting-Toomey
- [14] "Language and Intercultural Communication" by Will Baker
- [15] "Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace" by Linda Beamer
- [16] The Silent Language" by Edward T. Hall
- [17] "Culture and Communication: Cultural Variations and Media Effectiveness" by Karen Moustafa Leonard
- [18] "The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why" by Richard E. Nisbett
- [19] "Social History and the Sociology of Language" by Robert McColl Millar
- [20] "Language and Culture: Global Flows" by Karen Risager
- [21] "The Cultural Dimension of International Business" by Gary P. Ferraro
- [22] "Culture and Psychology" by David Matsumoto
- [23] "Intercultural Communication: A New Approach to International Relations" by Houman A.Sadri
- [24] Marketing Across cultures " by Jean-Claude Usunier
- [25] Globalization and Language in the Postcolonial World" by Ankie Hoogvelt
- [26] Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism" by Richard H. Robins
- [27] Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for a Global Workforce" by Soon Ang
- [28] Communicating Across Cultures at Work" by Maureen Guirdham
- [29] Language, ethnicity, and the nation-state: on Max Weber's conception of "imagined linguistic community" by Mitsuhiro Tada
- [30] The Role of Languages and Culture in Intercultural Business Communication" by Neha Divekar
- [31] Language and Identity in the New Europe" by Lars Andersson
- [32] Cultural Identity and Global Process" by Jonathan Friedman
- [33] The Cultural Politics of Emotion" by Sara Ahmed
- [34] Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice" by Chris Barker
- [35] Culture and Health" by Katherine Woolf
- [36] Language and Cultural Diversity in the Classroom" by Karen Nemeth
- [37] Intercultural Urbanism: City Planning From the Ancient World to the Modern Day" by Dean Saitta
- [38] Language, Culture, and Society" by Christine Jourdan
- [39] Advances in Global Education and Research" by Dr. Wayne B.James

- 
- [40] Language and Globalization" by Norman Fairclough
- [41] Language and Culture in the Multilingual Classroom" by Elizabeth Coelho
- [42] Culture, language, and multilingual education: Foreign language teachers' attitudes towards multilingual policy in Indonesia" by Amirul Mukminin
- [43] Intercultural journeys from study to residence abroad" by Jane Jackson
- [44] The Future of English" by David Graddol
- [45] Language and Identity: An Introduction" by John Edwards
- [46] Cultural Misunderstandings: The French-American Experience" by Raymonde Carroll
- [47] TEACHING ENGLISH IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS: Language, Learners and Learning" by Valentina Canese
- [48] English as a Medium of Instruction in East and Southeast Asian Universities" by Andy Kirkpatrick
- [49] English as a Lingua Franca: interpretations and attitudes" by Jennifer Jenkins
- [50] THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA" by Danai Detoraki
- [51] Multilingualism-Interdisciplinary Topics" by Xiaoming Jiang
- [52] English as a Lingua Franca" by Roby Marlina
- [53] Developing English language and intercultural learning capabilities, Case study 2: The intercultural learning project" by F.O'Neill
- [54] Language And Culture: A Study In The Sociolinguistic Perspective" by Dr. Rizwan Aftab
- [55] Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication" by Judith A. W. S. F. H. A. R. J. R. McRae
- [56] The Cultural Dimension of International Business" by Gary P. Ferraro
- [57] Language and Culture" by Chi Yue Chiu
- [58] "Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction" by Ingrid Piller
- [59] "Language and Cultural Diversity in the United States" by R. B. McNair
- [60] The Cultural Politics of Emotion" by Sara Ahmed
- [61] "Language and Media: A Resource Book for Student" by Rodney H Jones
- [62] Worlds in Collision': Salman Rushdie, Globalisation, and Postcoloniality-in-Crisis" Treasa De Loughry
- [63] Towards a more balanced treatment of culture in international business using an ethnographic design: a multinational family business case study" by Viktoriya Zipper-Weber
- [64] The Role of Language Communication with the Society and Culture" by Emmy Erwina
- [65] Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology" by James Stanlaw
- [66] Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures" by Myron W. Lustig and Jolene Koester
- [67] Communication and culture in international business – Moving the field forward" by Betina Szkudlarek