



## Contemporaneity of Language and Literature in the Robotized Millennium

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### The Impact of Globalization on Language, Culture and English Language Teaching

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#### Abstract

Globalization has brought in a fresh meaning to an individual's world and the world at large. It acts as a facilitator of communication that involves several languages, cultures, intelligence and economy. There is a huge need for an internationally accepted medium of communication wherein an individual attempts to imbibe the knowledge system across the globe and express his own to the global community. In this context, English comes into picture as a language that greatly influences various spheres of life and compresses the world into one global village. In adopting a non-native language, both the teacher and the learner create a global linguistic, geographical and cultural connection for an enhanced lifestyle. English language teaching has become a huge service provider to both the first and the second language speakers, offering a deeper insight in the way we learn and teach languages that is foreign to us and their impact on an individual's cultural identity and growth. Technology has significantly changed the face of an individual's cultural, social and economic identity, English language teaching and learning as well. It has offered us an easy access to intelligence in media, science, medicine, travel, aviation and entertainment, triggering incredible global dependence. At the same time, it has led to the slow and steady wipe out of native languages as well.

**Keywords:** Language, English, culture, teaching, learning,

#### 1. Introduction

Globalization is a term which is going global in the recent times. Though it is not a recent phenomenon, it has a far greater reach and significance today. It is viewed and defined in varied contexts by people from different sectors across the globe. Several decades ago, Martin Luther King envisioned globalization as an "inescapable network of Mutuality" (Luther King, Jr.). Steger's "Globalization: A Very Short Introduction" states globalization "as a social condition characterized by the existence of global economic, political, cultural, linguistic and environmental interconnections and flows that make the many of the currently existing borders and boundaries irrelevant (7). Giddens defines globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (64)". Rothenberg sees globalization as an influence on human well-being (including health and personal safety), on the environment, on culture (including ideas, religion, and political system), and on economic development and prosperity of societies across the world" (4). It has apparently influenced our lives and brought in a culmination of the other cultures and languages into our societies, leading to economic growth. Language and globalization are closely connected. Without language, the world will only be pockets of communities and cultures. Without languages, there is no globalization. There is no language without globalization either. Language has brought in a sense of belonging with one's own people and environment. It has led to a resurgence of knowledge and economy on a huge scale.

Language empowers us to communicate across culture. It transforms our lives and bridges the gap between people from different ethnicities to understand, acknowledge and appreciate cultures, technology, commerce and politics of one another. It forms the very core of culture. English language comes as a connecting platform to adapt diverse cultures and also to display tolerance of the cultures other than one own. This cultural diversity brings in a better understanding of the world around us. Languages can be perceived as the pulse of globalization. They transcend time, distance and space and unify the world into one. And in this fast-paced world, equipping oneself with the mastery over several languages other than one's own is a passport to a new world of opportunities that redefines academic, economic, social and ethical values of a learner and a teacher. The global linguistic system has put English on a high status. Surprisingly enough, it has become impossible to use the term "Globalization" without English. The expansion and utility of English around the world can be accredited to several factors. Crystal (2003) maintains that this increase can primarily be attributed to the British colonization era of the seventeenth century and to the role played by the United States of America as an economic and military power since the last epoch of the nineteenth century. He further asserts that English now is the dominant language of international relations, security and travel, media, education, and communications. Two-thirds of world's scientists write in English. About 80% of the computers use English. Three-quarters of the world's mail are written in English. Around 70 to 75% of advertisements are used in this language. Over 5,000 English newspapers are published all over the world. In this way we can say that English has come to stay as the language of books, newspaper, airport, and air traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science and technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, media and advertising (n.p). McKay asserts that this widespread use of English in these areas makes it 'imperative' for any country wishing to become part of the global community (n.p). This is evident from the increase in number of people in all the

countries showing interest to learn English so as to benefit from the multitude of opportunities that speaking English can offer. Graddol cites Crystal's observation that English has secured a special status in at least 75 countries with a total population of over 2 billion, as a first language by around 375 million speakers and as a second language by around 375 million speakers in the world (n.p). This shows the global dominance of English over other existing languages. It also reveals that the second language speakers outnumber the first language speakers. With the non-native speakers growing steadily in huge numbers, the demand for English teachers is also growing simultaneously. The growth of English has influenced the growth of ELT. English Language Teaching is a dynamic field of study that delineates and redefines the structures and styles of teaching English to both native and non-native speakers. ELT has advanced more than ever into cognitive, discursive and research areas implicating the importance of the first and the second language speakers of English. The English language teachers become the potential agents for the development of intellectual, social and emotional competencies of the learners. "The presence of English as a subject, or at least, as a medium of instruction in educational institutions across the globe today is virtually unquestioned and, it continues to receive and attract political attention as countries seek to balance the formulation of their language policies with the requirements and challenges of the global market (Roux 45)". English has become the most sought after and expensive instructional medium to trade it for better employment and financial status. And in countries like India, with a unique diversity in languages and cultures, there rises a dire need for a common tool of communication for survival, growth and sustenance. English colonization has broken the barriers of language, and English Language teaching and learning have enabled a compelling connection and appreciation of different languages, cultures, brainpower and economic prosperity across the country and the globe. ELT has grown into a massive service industry catering to the needs and demands of the first and the second language speakers. Phillipson asserts that several organizations like TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages), TESL (Teaching of English as Second Language) and TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language), language testing agents such as CELTA (Certificate in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages), the British Council, IELTS (The International English Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign language) and professional bodies like ELTAI (English Language Teachers Association of India) and ISTE (The Indian Society for Technical Education ) contribute majorly to promote ELT and create a new marketplace in the global economic forces. (n.p). The digital world works as a gravitational force of ELT and accelerates its growth. It has become an integral part of our existence and has introduced us to a closely knitted global intellectual hub. It serves as a vehicle in carrying English to the private rooms of people and the remotest corners of the world. At the tap of a key, technology opens the doors to a wide variety of knowledge to the learners. Technology breeds a new trend of learning and growing globally with a new English web dialect. Pennycook explains that 'the dominant role of English in the world today is maintained and promoted through a system both of material or institutional structures (e.g. through English maintaining its current position as the dominant language of the Internet) and of ideological positions (arguments that promote English as a superior language)' (61). Language teachers have an ocean of resource materials available online for teaching and learning. It offers unique opportunities to people with disabilities to learn and teach online from their private space. English Language Labs have enabled the language teachers and learners to practice, improve and prepare themselves to compete with the world's population in the best possible ways. It has awakened a new joy of learning and growing across different cultures and location. Though English language competency has elevated us at the global platform creating multitude of opportunities, it has challenged the very existence of several indigenous languages as well. English – the adopted language has pushed several native languages to extinction. The 'once bold' dots are replaced now with a single line for a better picture - a BIG picture. The dominance of one language- English overshadows several other native languages.

Globalization has deeply impacted English language and its predominant hold on the world's cultural, educational, environmental, and commercial and communications sectors. It has created a huge global human resource to meet the challenges and the demands of the work forces. The world of today comprises of a society-ready and global-ready individual. Though it has actually increased our dependency on others, it has made us become appreciative and to a certain extent, critical of other cultural, social and economic components in the world. English Language Teaching provides us lucrative offers because of the global popularity of English. Globalization has accelerated English language, culture and English language teaching and learning towards a more promising and productive future in all fields. In short, in the modern sense, English language has assumed a status that is synonymous with knowledge, class, competence and affluence.

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