



## Hen or Egg? Communication or Language?

### KEYWORDS

Communication, language, English

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**ABSTRACT** *Communication begins at the birth with senses like touch, vision and finally with speech and hearing. Each child needs to learn the "cultural codes" because the language of each culture is different. However, if a child is to learn about his/her world, the ability to communicate must exist. Even after a baby learns the fundamentals of communication through senses, those skills need to continue to be refined. Then the brain is ready to deal with the concepts involved in reading, writing, comprehension of a language or concepts and body language. The article is a distribution of concepts with concern to the development of communication or language as goes the famous uncertainty- "First came egg or the hen?" In this age of dominant research being done on languages, culture and their acquisition to challenge identity of status, we should not thoughtlessly walk past the chronology of the origin of "communication" and "language" as to which came first. And accordingly we can focus about their implications in the classrooms, for the overall development of the budding engineers and technocrats.*

While talking of the history and development of particular languages, one question has intrigued scholars for ages and that is the origin and evaluation of language in the human species in general? And what was the nature of the first language? Considerable evidence suggests that the capacity for language is a species-specific, biologically innate trait of human beings. Another question haunts, as to what came first, 'language' or 'communication'? Did we already have a language for communication or simply we communicated without any language in the pre-historic times? One idea sparsely satiating this quest could be that human beings began to mimic the sounds of nature and used these sounds as referents for the sources of the sound. This theory is sometimes disparagingly referred to as the "bow-wow" theory. The existence of onomatopoeic words such as bow-wow, meow, crash, boom might be taken as evidence of such mimicking. It has also been suggested that a gesture language- that is, a system of hand gestures, facial expressions and signals also played a role in passing messages. In addition, it is sometimes speculated that human language gradually evolved from the need for humans to communicate with each other in coordinating certain group tasks. The idea here is that people working in groups can co-operate more efficiently if they can use a vocal language to communicate. But such "functional" theories of the origin of language seem quite dubious. Why couldn't a sign language or gesture language work as a communication system in the context of groups at work?

But once human language evolved, it came to be exploited fully for all kinds of social functions; but the needs involved in such functions cannot be identified as the first cause of language evolution. At present the most reasonable suggestion about the origin and evolution of human language is that it was intimately linked with the evolution of the human brain. Over the last 5 million years there has been a striking increase in brain size, ranging from about 400 cubic centimeters in our distant hominid ancestors to about 1,400 cubic centimeters in modern Homo sapiens. The mere increase in brain size would not necessarily have led to superior intelligence and the evolution of language, since dolphins, for example, have a brain comparable in size to that of humans, yet they have only a rudimentary communication systems. Furthermore, even a mere increase in general intelligence might not necessarily have led to the evolution of language. Dolphins & primates, for instance, are considered to be more sophisticated or complex than that of birds. Lenneberg (1964) has pointed out, humans with IQ levels significantly below normal can nevertheless grasp the rudiments of language. So, brain size

is only one factor that may have played a role in the evolution of language; changes in the organization and complexity of the brain must also be supposed to have played a crucial role. Hypothesis speaks of the origin of language, some 50,000 to 1,00,000 years ago. There is an abrupt change in the quality and nature of tool development between 50,000 and 1,00,000 years ago, signalling to some anthropologists the emergence of modern humans. It is plausible that this increased ability may have been associated with a qualitative change in language ability. Because of inadequate solid evidence to base any claim concerning the origin and evolution of human language, the questions still remain unanswered. Leieberman(1975) contended that vocal tract of Neanderthal man had only a limited capacity for speech because their vocal tract was shaped differently from that of modern humans.

For the last 50 years the most common and popular conception of human linguistic communication has been the "Message Model". When the Message Model is applied to human linguistic communication between speakers of a language, the speaker acts as a "transmitter", the hearer acts as a "receiver", and the vocab-auditory path(sound wave) is the relevant channel. This model accounts for certain commonsense features of talk exchanges: it predicts that communication is successful when the hearer decodes the same message that the speaker encodes; and as a corollary it predicts that communication breaks down if the decoded message is different from the encoded message. Likewise, it portrays language as a bridge between speaker and hearer whereby "private" ideas are communicated by "public" sounds, which function as the vehicle for communicating the relevant message.

For the linguistic communication to be successful a language comes to the scene. With the fast and wide, spread and expansion of colonialism both in time and space, English got established in the colonies of the British Empire. In due course of time, colonialism gained momentum in various forms shapes affected largely by economics and technology. Consequently more and more countries started falling prey to monolingualism in the form of English currently popularly labeled as a global language. First of all among Indians, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the chief protagonist who wanted that English should be taught in Indian schools & colleges. He believed like many others that the knowledge of English could facilitate the possibility of early freedom for India by giving the Indians the knowledge of several democratic and freedom movements abroad. The importance of the ability to speak or write English has recently increased significantly

because English has become the de facto standard. Learning English language has become popular for business, commerce and cultural reasons and especially for internet communications throughout the world. India is the catalyst of various global changes, with the potential to command international growth, possessing the largest youth workforce and the world's second largest English speaking country. With the advent of Globalization and Indian companies going global, Indian professionals are expected to interact with international clients and customers. Proficiency in English language became inevitable for grabbing an opening in the global concerns. The phenomenon seems unavoidable because only the English speaking Indians can connect a contemporary India with the modern world. Corporate India is finally beginning to engage the global talent pool. A diverse workforce is today a business imperative. In the corporate world, English is used for international communication, top management meetings and high level negotiations. English is the preferred language for internal and external communication inter and intra companies worldwide. Employers expect the workforce to possess excellent communication skills apart from knowledge and expertise in their respective field. "Speaking English increases your salary 35%- Business Week Statistics.". India appeared to have an edge over international competition because of its long association with English, the use of English for administration, and the fact that English is taught either as a school language or as the medium of instruction. With the number of foreign investors flocking to India and the growth of outsourcing, English has come to play a key role in professional relationships between foreign and Indian companies. However, business organizations have started to realize that our language skills are inadequate for international communication.

Demand for Business English has burgeoned in recent years and there has been a mushrooming of courses for learners, courses for teachers, materials for learners and reference material. There is further proliferation of terms with within Business English, some focus on people, some on purpose and some on jobs. In a competitive market we aim to distinguish our products and services from those of our competitors, to find a special niche. This may be one significant reason for the range of terms: the need to sound as if we have a unique selling point.

We are interested to produce professionals who are competent enough to face the world and hold the capacity to pose

a threat to the best of the performers in their domain. But let us not forget that, such a compact creation is a by-product of several demands during the life of a student to their transition from home to college life. Besides these, a student also encounters a pressure to earn good grades. Excessive homework, unclear assignments, uncomfortable classrooms, assessment deadlines, relations with faculty members, time pressures, financial pressures, relationship with peers, opposite sex, family and friends, new eating and sleeping habits, loneliness and bleak future career prospects are other stressors identified by researchers.

Professional education, namely engineering, medicine or management degree, is an important component in the overall education system in the middle classes. It is supposed to act as a vehicle for upward mobility in a status conscious society(Kapur,1969), but students are stressed in this case. These pressures are very severe in India. It often influences a majority of the parents to force their children to opt for professional education without considering the reality and capabilities of their children. These pressures lead to physical and mental breakdown and burnouts. Hence, there could be guidance to parents as well on how to approach such social pressures and manage them rightly thus ensuring their childrens' mental well-being.

Thus a balanced student lifestyle can be achieved with time management, healthy eating, being active, setting goals and priorities. The goals have to be realistic and achievable. They have to be ranked according to priorities based on social, family and work commitments. It is important to realize that not all stress that students may experience is negative. Stress can have a positive effect in enabling individuals to respond effectively in an emergency. When people feel good about themselves, they cope with stress better. Social support, family, parents and teachers can help in building up the self-esteem of students at an early age, so that they are mentally strong to face problems. The power of positive thinking, building self-confidence, ability to face problems and succeeding after a failure are attributes which needs to be inculcated early in life. This will help them to cope with the stresses they face in higher education as well as familial and work related problems they face in later part of their lives.

So the onus of the holistic development of the budding technocrats not only is on the teachers but also on themselves and primarily on their guardians.

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