

Text of address by Smt. Daggubati Purandeswari, MoS (HRD) to the participants of International Training Programme (ITP) conducted by the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) Hyderabad on 26th June, 2006.

It gives me great pleasure to be here today and present this address to the participants of this prestigious International Training Programme CIEFL under the caption, “English for Professionals”

IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

English is not the most widely spoken language in the world in terms of the number of native speakers--there are many more Chinese speakers than native English speakers--but Chinese is spoken little outside of Chinese communities, so English is the most widespread language in the world and has attained the status of global language. According to one estimate there are

more than 350,000,000 native English speakers and more than 400,000,000 speakers of English as a second language (a language used in everyday life, even though it is not the native language) or foreign language.

However, even these numbers do not really indicate how important English is as a world language, because less than fifteen percent of the world population uses English. The importance of English is not just in how many people speak it but in what it is used for. English is the major language of news and information in the world. It is the language of business and government even in some

countries where it is a minority language. It is the language of maritime communication and international air traffic control, and it is used even for internal air traffic control in countries where it is not a native language. American popular culture--primarily movies and music--carries the English language throughout the world.

English as a First or Second Language

In some countries, English is the sole or dominant language. It has that role in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. All of these countries are former British colonies. In other countries, English is widely used, particularly among people who have no other language in common, even though it is not the dominant language of the country. For example, English is widely used in Hong Kong, Singapore, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Malaysia. In such countries, it is often used as a means of communication between people who have different native languages.

Uses of English

English for News and Information

English is commonly used as a medium for the communication of information and news. Three quarters of all telex messages and telegrams are sent in English. Eighty percent of computer data are processed and stored in English. Much satellite communication is carried in English. Five thousand newspapers, more than half of the newspapers published in the world, are published in English. Even in many countries where English is a minority language, there is at least

one newspaper in English. In India alone, there are three thousand magazines published in English. In many countries, television news is broadcast in English. Because of the power of television, demonstrators in every country use signs printed in English for the benefit of the international press.

English for Business, Diplomacy, and the Professions

English is a major language of international business, diplomacy, and science and the professions. It is the language that an Iranian businessman and a Japanese businessman are likely to use to communicate. Important commodities such as silver, tin, and hard currency are traded in English. English is also an official language, or the official language, of many international organizations, including the United Nations and many professional organizations. It is frequently the language of international conferences, and it is the language of international athletics. Throughout the world, many professional papers are published in English. Even papers that are published in other languages often have abstracts in English.

English for Entertainment

Popular culture.

Popular culture has also played an important part in spreading English. American and British popular music are heard all over the world. American movies are seen in almost every country. Books in English are available even in countries where few people actually use

English. One reason that students give for learning English is to understand these songs, movies and books.

Travel.

English is also very important for international travel. Much of the information countries disseminate about themselves outside their borders is in English. English is spoken in large hotels and tourist attractions, at airports, and in shops that tourists frequent. There are newspapers printed in English, and TV news is available in English. Tours are almost always available in English. Even in countries where few people speak English on the street, people who work with tourists generally speak English. In some countries even drivers of buses or streetcars and sellers at newsstands speak English well.

Other Uses of English

In many former British colonies, English is still used in government and as a medium of communication among people who do not have another language in common. In some cases, it is a neutral language that is used to avoid giving any one indigenous language too much prestige. English is often used in India, because it is neutral. It is the language of government. People who speak English have a certain status in society. It is used for books, music and dance. In Singapore, English is a second language, but it is necessary for daily life. Many companies there use English. In addition, sixteen countries in Africa have retained English as the language of government. Now standard English is taught in schools in those countries, because it is necessary for careers.

English is also studied as a foreign language in countries where it is not generally used as a medium of communication. In China, English language lessons are popular TV programs. Two hundred fifty million Chinese--more than the population of the US--are learning English on TV. English is usually the first or most commonly taught foreign language in many countries, and people understand it a little at least.

ENGLISH IN THE EMERGING GLOBAL SCENARIO:

The globalization of trade and commerce and the growing importance of English in fields like business, higher education and science and technology have made English a truly international language. And India, as a key player in these areas, has emerged as a major English speaking country. It is now mandatory for professionals in all these fields to acquire mastery in English. CIEFL has correctly responded to this need by offering a special course, English for Professionals' for learners from countries outside India where English has not traditionally been part of the educational Curriculum. I understand that so far, CIEFL has successfully conducted twenty two such courses which were attended by 1050 professionals from as many as 64 countries, all of them sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs. Government of India. I am told that participants from these courses came from a cross section of society, viz ministers, members of parliament, secretaries, diplomas, professors, doctors, pilots, police officers, lawyers, auditors, journalists and teachers. The feedback from them has been very positive and encouraging as

borne out the steady rise in the number of applications for admission to the courses.

For every obvious reasons English for Professionals does not address the needs of any particular profession: not does it focus attention on any particular register. (this is as it should be) special courses, tailor –made for specific traders or professionals can, should be offered, provided there is request for such a course from a minimum number of people with the same background and similar needs. In such cases, the candidates should have at least a working knowledge of English. I learnt that CIEFL is also addressing such needs and requirements.

CONCLUSION

Before I conclude, I would once again like to emphasize that most Asian countries have started recognizing the extraordinary importance of English as a language of wider communication in this region and, of course, the world around, putting a redoubled emphasis on English language teaching (ELT). China, a country of 1.3 billion people, has 300 million students enrolled in English language classrooms. Japan has initiated an all-out action program to pave the way for improved ELT in five years, with a focus on teaching English in English in primary and secondary schools.

In view of the yeomen's service which the CIEFL is rendering in the field. I congratulate them on their various programmes especially

“English for Professionals which is their flagship programme. It is of capital importance to all the participants of the programme to whom I convey my best wishes I hope and pray that armed with effective communication skill, they should go forth to the various professional disciplines with a sense of fulfillment and achievement. My very best wishes to all of you, to each one of you. With these words I once again thanks the authorities of the CIEFL for inviting me here on this grand occasion.

JAI HIND.

As you are aware Japan has achieved economic power and regulate for providing high quality manufactured goods. Many people throughout the world are interested in Japanese business and technology when I visited Japan last year as apart of an industrial delegation, Japanese authorities concerned keen interest in making large investment in India both through FDI and government channels. But one of the major hurdle I was told the language barrier. This I think can be well taken care of by two methods.

One, as I told you earlier that Japan of late has initiated an all out action to pave the action programme for importing ELT which should bring Japanese people nearer to us. Alternatively, I wonder if it would be possible to increase the scope of your activities by starting focused short term training programmes like Japanese for proessionals on the lines similar to English for professionals. This would go long way to develop better liaison between India and Japan in the international markets in the emerging global scenario.

Thank you.