An Exploratory Study to Comprehend How the Constructs of Organization Culture of Indian Banks are Being Influenced by English Language

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Abstract - In the modern world English Language (EL) has become an international language of communication. It has been part and parcel of business, science, information technology, entertainment and so on. Though many countries have English as their native language, but still those who are having command over the EL are considered as respected and highly educated nations. Moreover, in the era of globalization ample career opportunities are opened to those who can speak and write English. For instance, most of the business process outsourcing company having their set up in India, prefer English speaking and skilled human resources. As of now, the future of EL in India and the world stands inevitable. And in the coming years, the demand of the EL would be burgeoning in the corporate milieu. Thus, in this conceptual research an attempt has been made to discuss how EL is indispensable in promoting the constructs of Organization Culture (OC) with special reference or in perspective to banking sector in India.

Key words: English, English Language, globalization, Organization Culture, Banking Sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, EL is used for business communication. It is a business language which bridges the gap to carry out the enterprise and also to communicate with the people of different cultures. With the invention of multinational companies English has become an important phenomenon in all the sectors. India is developing at alarming rate. But so far, the smaller section of the executives has command over this language. In this global scenario, the acquaintance of EL has become mandatory to flourish and grow in all sectors.

This paper is an exploratory study to comprehend how the constructs of OC of Indian banks are being influenced by EL. EL works as catalysts in promoting business communication in banks. Communication is exchanging ideas, information, signals or messages through suitable medium, facilitating individuals, to seek and to provide information, to express feelings and emotions. This includes body-language and three important skills of listening, speaking and writing as an important aspect of communication. Everybody strives hard to attain good communication skills to outshine in career.

Communication is also defined as …the exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals… (ii) involves the continuous evaluation and negotiation of meaning on the part of the participants Canale(1983). This exchange may be realized through a conversation or discussion between participants, a lecture, or between a written text and the reader Brazil (1992), Communication is the process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with others in a particular time and place. This sharing can be done through various ways.

A. Verbal communication- It includes verbal utterances, face to face communication, Group Discussion, speeches.

B. Non – Verbal communication (Language of Signs and Symbols) it includes facial expressions, body language, gestures, postures.

C. Visual communication-the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photography, video or film

D. Electronic communication telephone calls, electronic mail, cable television, or satellite broadcasts.

Mumby and Stohl (1996) expressed that reality is occurred between members of organization via communication. Communication at organization helps to transfer its objectives and goals to employees and intra-organization groups. Communication is a vital part of personal life and is also important in business, education, and any other situations where people encounter each other Encarta (1998). Organization is not only an effort to provide intra-organizational cooperation. It establishes competitive, dynamic and external relationship with the outside world. OC is formed due to corporate activities within and outside of organization and this culture requires a medium to exchange information and that medium is EL.

In this context EL is also a pulsating tool of almost all the organizations including banking sector. If banks could not have effective communication, then it would sway like a ship without a steer. Effective communication helps organizations to strengthen the employees to reach organizational goals Hindi et al. (2004). English Language is
used to draft and circulate an information to employees about banking policies and rules, financial results, group and employee achievements, employee and customer feedback and appraisals. Organization management can deliver the information about organization via channels such as group meetings, brochure and newsletters, mission declaration Argenti (2005). EL form links between individuals and groups of all the organizations as well as instituted organizational structure is through communication. On the other hand, communication provides sharing organizational values and believes among employees Demirel(2009).

Proper use of English Languagein the banking sector enables members to assimilate their job position in the banks as internationalization is the aim of almost all the private banks. Therefore, commitment of the employee in this aura increases, as a result job satisfaction rises which is an important tool for the success of organization. To become a successful in banks verbal communication and non-verbal communication plays very significant role in maintaining the business relationship.

II. NON- VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Mehrabian (1939) established the concept of spoken communications (involving attitudes and feelings):

- 7% of meaning is in the words that are spoken.
- 38% of meaning is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said).
- 55% of meaning is in facial expression.

According to Mehrabian in face-to-face communication: words, vocal cues, and body language. These three essentials described as 3V’s for Verbal, Vocal, Visual i.e. Words account for 7%; Voice accounts for 38%; Body language accounts for 55% of the message. This shows that body language and tone of voice are evidently important aspects of communication. Mehrabian stated that action speaks louder than words: non-verbal communication states that the total impact of a message breaks down like this: 7 percent verbal (words), 38 percent vocal (volume, pitch, rhythm) etc. and 55 percent body movements (mostly facial expressions). This breakdown indicates that effective nonverbal communication skills are essential.

Let’s take an example of handshake, it empowers the business relationship and reflects cultural diversity. Handshake is much more than a formal greeting and acts as a tool in business for creating first strong impression. Although handshake lasts for few seconds but creates culture in an organization. The handshake is one of the most direct statements of one’s self-image and how one wants to be perceived. Learning how to communicate through a handshake should be considered acquisition of a necessary skill. It would also be worthwhile to learn how business persons respond to other genders and their handshake styles Wesson (1992).

Another example of Non-verbal communication that can change the entire culture of an organization is dress appropriately for the position you seek, not for the position you currently have Griffin(1998). It is also important to know how to dress up correctly at workplace. Although many companies don’t have any defined dress code for the employees but still there is unspoken norm that at workplace employee has to wear formals. The major reason why dressing in business attire is important for every business professional because it represents a visual image and also reflects the culture of the organization. It is generally observed that First impressions and overall personality of the people judge by the dress code. Now a day’s, proper attire with basic business and professional etiquette presents a professional image of banks. Since the way someone dresses affect the perception of a bank’s customers or business partners, therefore is important to uphold a standard of dress that creates a positive impression. Some of the banks can ask their employees to wear formals and some of them can give the freedom and accept the casual dress code. But sport shoes, rugs, beach sandals and colorful T-shirts are not acceptable at the work place. As dress code represents a highly professional personality and creates a work culture even in the banks.

That is why professional dressing is mandatory for an employee occupied in the corporate world, especially in banks because executives dress code reflects the culture of that organization. In modern times, banking sectors are very adamant and firm about wardrobe and behavior of the workforce. Employees are the representatives of the banks and hence, it’s their duty to be dressed formally so that they can create professional environment at their workplaces.

According Besson et. al. (2005) Non-Verbal communication consists of all the messages other than words that are used in communication. In oral communication, these symbolic messages are transferred by means of intonation, tone of voice, vocally produced noises, body posture, facial expression or pauses. When we interact with others, we continuously give and receive countless wordless signals. All
of our non-verbal behaviors—the gestures we make, the way we sit, how fast or how loud we talk, how close we stand, how much eye contact we make—send strong messages.

Non-verbal communication consists of body language, which includes appearance, dressing sense, gesture, posture, facial expressions, eye contact, distance between sender and receiver as well as vocal cues. In the workplace, people work together and interact using verbal and non-verbal communication. In nutshells, non-verbal messages are important in the workplace communication. Wikipedia states non-verbal communication is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages i.e. Language is not the only source of communication, there are other means also.

III. VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication is sharing of information through language. Individuals working in the banks have to efficiently use verbal communication to transfer messages to the receiver. It serves as a medium for expressing thoughts, feelings, desires, and ideas. Verbal communications comprise of oral and written communication. Oral communication includes the ability to speak well, listen keenly and respond effectively according to the situation. It helps in presentations, video conferencing, telephonic conversation, meeting, interviews etc. written communication means the skill to read and write effectively to understand the language used for communication. If a person is a good communicator in English, he is supposed to be perfect in oral as well as written form of English. Verbal communication is an essential element within the banks. It maintains rapport between employer, employee and customers. Thus, the basic function of communication is to transform culture or behavior of the sender and receiver by informing, directing, regulating the behavior and culture.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

1) Review on English Literature Kachru (1983) established three stages in which English was introduced in the sub-continent: 1) a missionary phase 2) a phase of ‘local demand’ 3) the educational phase. Ammon (1992) stated that English is the world’s dominant language because it has the greatest number of speakers reaching as many as 1.5 billion people; English is designated as an official language as many as 62 nations; English is the most dominant language in scientific communication. David Nuvan (2003) specified that the emergence of English as a global language is having considerable impact on policies and practices in all countries surveyed.

According to study by various researcher’s language is the mainstay of both personal and professional lives; and communication, both written and oral, requires language. Neelam (2013) explained that English gives us glimpses of the various developments taking place in the world and argued that language learning is one of the most important components of a good education. Vijay Laxmi (2014) explained that English is world’s most important language having communicative and educative value. In the same line Valida (2016) also examined that English Language is most important and central tool for communication. According to Soloman (2018), English Language is used as a means of communication in various contexts such as government, the judiciary, the media and the educational system. The business correspondence and the international trade among different countries in the world is carried out in English.

2) Review on OC: The concept of OC was introduced since sixties of the 20th century—starting from 1980’s this concept was popularized among the scholars and examined that organizations have distinct cultures, or sets of shared values, beliefs, and norms that guide the attitudes and actions of organizational members.

Andrew Pettigrew introduced the concept of OC in 1979 and described culture as an amalgam of beliefs, identity, ritual, and myth—a conceptualization still widely used today. Edgar Schein (1985), stated Organization’s Culture as the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared consistently across members of an organization. Geert Hofstede (1990) noticed that national and regional factors contribute to the culture of the organization and eventually influence the behavior of employees in the organization. According to Fons Trompenaars (1997) people from different cultures aren’t just randomly different from one another; they differ in very specific, even predictable, ways. This is because each culture has its own way of thinking, its own values and beliefs, and different preferences placed on a variety of factors. Cao et al. (2000), thought that organizational change showed a diversity of the organization in its environment, and also the interaction of the technical and human activities that had interrelated dimensions in the organization.

Lee & Tsai (2005) observed that OCs tends to have mutual learning, interaction and participation by personnel, power-sharing, and internal cooperation are of great benefit to organizational performance. Josy and Emmanuel (2009) developed a range of insights into the integrated, differentiated and fragmented nature of OC and the impact of these on the perception of linkages with organizational commitment. Fakhar Shahzad (2012) explained that OC has a positive impact on the employee’s job performance. André van Hoorn (2015) illustrated that Cultural change in the finance industry provides an important route to improving the financial system, decreasing the likelihood of future crises and optimizing the intermediation between suppliers of credit and credit seekers.

Maham Fatima (2016) examined the impact of OC types on the job satisfaction of employees Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Thokozani (2017) studied that the interest in OC
stems from the belief that culture influences behavior, decision-making, Organizational strategies, individual motivation and Organizational performance.

3) Review on English and Culture: According to study conducted on some European countries, India and south Africa, English is a dominant language spoken as a mother tongue by some colonial from UK, but local population uses it as a second language; English was imposed as an administrative language. As Nadkarni, M.V. (1984) expanded Language is critical component of culture. It is for this reason that anthropologists use language more than any other element of culture to define culture areas. Thus, many scholars have recognized the strong connections between language and culture and identity Kramsch, (1998) et.al. Shields and Price (2002) conducted a survey to identify the role of English in the Australian job market by and found that occupational success is associated with speaking fluency. But she argued that not all participants were in agreement as to the importance of communication skills in English. AstaPundzienė, et.al (2007) stated that enhanced managers’ communication competence required for successful change management within the enterprises. According to Said, F.F.S. (2011) losing a language is losing a culture and losing a culture is losing one’s identity.

A study was conducted by Roshid and Chowdhury (2013) about EL proficiency and employment tried to reveal the impact of mastering EL by Bangladesh immigrants upon their employment in the Australian job market. RituSoryan, et. al. (2014) explained that people deal with others in EL especially in business world Scientific world and others. Slameh and Olfat (2015) recognized that mastering English in banks’ environment, through which we may find an urgent need for English for dealing with foreign customers, understanding new electronic administration requirements and dealing with English documents and endorsements and getting use of some foreign experience in developing bank’s work. According to Chaman Lal (2016). EL education is a Major Vehicle of culture and human communication as well as plays significant role in achieving the goals of an organization

V. FINDINGS

English serves as a connecting element for a company to employee, Employee to management and also instrumental in promoting culture. In this paper nine constructs of OC have been focused to analyze the need of EL on the constructs of OC. Here are case lets showing that how OC is being influenced by EL.

A. Power Distance: Power demonstrates the space between higher authority and subordinates. This is a nonverbal attribute of Communication. Interestingly it indicates proximity which is one of the important types of Non-Verbal Communication. Usually in the banking sector demand for EL has been increasing day by day at global level, in the banks the information passes very quickly from top to down before the deadline. In these companies’ people belong to the diverse culture and language hence for communication a common language has been used i.e. EL. Head of the department always encourages subordinates to share their ideas in EL. Generally, they conduct meeting with employees and discuss problems with them in EL. In this situation if employee can speak and understand English will sustain in the company. In fact, there may be a perception that if employees can communicate in English well makes a difference and has a separate image to the higher authority. Hence the knowledge of English is important to blur the high-power distance between supervisors and employees. This case reflects that EL bridges the gap between top management and employees and also plays an important role to sustain in the corporates. Therefore, power distance is influenced by non-verbal phenomenon of EL.

B. Achievement v/s Ascription: Two dimensions identified by Trompenaars. An achievement culture is based on how well the person is performing their function. In ascription culture status is based on the age gender and social connection. To achieve success in the corporates English is designated as “official company language” to compete in the global market all the written material either its employee communications, policies, codes of conduct or benefits documents are always written in English. In many banks communication with the foreign clients takes place in EL. It is necessary in today’s globalized banks, any employ who deals with the foreign customers should understand English well. For that matter, even some multinational banks giving training to the Non-English-speaking employees. All the HR documents are basically in EL Job titles, policies/handbooks/codes of conduct/whistleblower hotline communications to global/regional bonus plans, sales incentive plans, compensation plans, benefits plans, equity plans and more.

C. Uncertainty Avoidance: This construct of OC deals with the feeling of tolerance of uncertainty. This is basically related with the behavior of the person. It reflects the extent to which members of a society attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty.

One of the Bank’s manager walks through the office and describes the various work functions on your first day, she is communicating important information throughout in English. A supervisor doesn’t understand her language. She is even scolding him for taking a long lunch as well as regulating activity to synchronize with the rules. If a supervisor persuades you to take on extra responsibility or integrate duties with the duties of others, it might arise the situation of uncertainty. To cope up with this situation communication especially in English plays an important role. In the banking sector, communication also socializes employees through conversations.
D. Collectivism v/s Individualism: Collectivism involves the group culture emphasis on sharing, assistance, and group synchronization. People in individualistic cultures emphasize their achievements in job or private wealth and aiming up to reach a better job position.

Nivedan, a fresher graduate with a master’s degree in English was a trainer at a reputed bank. At first, the bank put him to work writing and revising company brochures and helping with the most important correspondences at the senior level. But soon, senior management officials begin to notice how well he works with executives on their writing, how he makes them feel more confident about it, after working with an executive on their writing skills, the executives often feel much more eager to take on the next writing task. Ultimately Nivedan shifted into its prestigious training department. He started working with thousands of supervisors, managers, and executives, helping them to learn everything from new computer languages to time management skills, how to get the most out of the workers, many of whom were unmotivated high school dropouts. Soon Nivedan is spending all his time giving short seminars on executive writing as well as coaching the freshers to perfect their memos and letters. Nivedan’s move into training meant a big increase in salary, and he has been started working exclusively with the Bank’s top brass and become a very successful person in his career. At the end of the year, Nivedan got bonus and he also received the best employee award. Although Nivedan’s course take workers off the job for a couple of hours, but the effectiveness of employee is actually improved since his course began, employee turnover has been increased, and for the first time in over years, some of the floor workers are eligible to apply for supervisory positions.

E. Internal v/s External Control: Internal control emphasizes on self, individual functioning, in contrast to that, an external control culture represents the team-work and prefer for joint achievements over individual attainments.

Rotter (1962) describes the external locus of control as: ‘the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement or outcome is a function of chance, luck, or fate, is under the control of powerful others, or is simply unpredictable.’ An individual might have an extremely attractive personality, in depth knowledge of the subject, a good and a very strong network but if he doesn’t have effective communication skills, he fails to prove his worth and his talent. A person without effective communication skills will never be able to shape his forte in this competitive milieu. Effective communication is an art, once someone masters EL, stands apart from the crowd and believe in himself/herself. Communicating in English is an art which has to be mastered to make one’s presence remarkable and arises as a leader in all facets of life.

for example, if you are calling a client, the very first thing you may want to say is: "I realize how busy you are so I will only need one minute of your time to let you know about Insurance policy”. This way the other person knows it will be quick and painless and that you just want to give them a few facts on the call that will only last a minute. Now they can relax and listen to you as you share the requested info. But if you say it in Hindi it doesn’t create that relaxing effect. Thus, EL plays pivotal role to achieve this objective and build its brand image. After all EL provides an opportunity for bonding with international employees, clients, retailers and vendors. The national and international clients feel involved with the business and offer an objective view of their banks when they get updates time to time in the form of mailers, messages and so on. Thus, English not only helps to maintain business relationship but also create a conducive environment of working.

F. Particularism v/s Universalism: Universalists emphasis more on rules than on relationships whereas a Particularists does not go with the rules, situation varies from person to person no matter what the rules say. A particularistic treat everyone as unique.

Kim Mittal is a CEO of ABC Bank, Hyderabad. He has a wide experience of corporate affairs, consultant, author, lecturer and counselor. He is very particular about rules, regulations and policies of a bank. He is very strict and stern follower of all rules and regulations as well as always encourage employees to follow the same. Bank executives were scared of him because he uses EL for communication and expect same from the other employees. Once he conducted an interview for the post of assistant manager. The eligibility for the post is MBA with at least 3-year experience of administration and good communication skills. He interviewed 30-35 candidates but no one suits to this job. At once a candidate entered into the cabin, his attire was very simple with semi-formals, Kim was not happy to see him but still asked some questions. The boy was having outstanding communication skills and has a very impressive English. Kim was impressed and appointed him as an assistant manager although he was a fresher and just passed MBA.

Here Kim is having Halo effect about this fresher and he assumed that he can do anything with equal proficiency. Since then, the boy Rihan gained a wide variety of skills, has become employee of the month for March 2018, having perfect attendance every quarter, he also developed key communication, writing, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution skills and he became the right hand of Kim. Rihan convinced him to change his stern attitude towards worker and agreed him to conduct a workshop to improve English communication for the employees. Now the CEO of the bank has completely flexible and tries to understand the problem of the employee and treats them friendly.

G. Norms: The term 'culture' refers to attitudes and patterns of behavior in a given group. 'Norm' refers to unwritten rules and regulations of an organization. Now a
days banking sectors are inspired by foreign culture by adopting dress code, that showcases their professionalism. First impression is not only based on the way you communicate, but also on the way you look. Therefore, it is said that action speak louder than words. Whenever people meet for the first time, they mostly make judgments about one another based on their appearance. Apparels convey non-verbal cues and reflects education, personality, financial, status and background of the person. These cues are mostly used in job interviews; thus, having a significant effect on one’s career. Most of the time, person’s clothing could be suggestive of the type of personality that one possesses. It is one of the important aspects of non-verbal communication, it could also be used to communicate a few important things about the employee’s personality. In fact, appropriate dress, along with basic etiquette, is one of the most common associations made to professionalism. If the way someone dresses affects the perception of your bank’s customers or business partners, it is important to maintain a standard of dress that creates a positive impression. This way, you can be more confident and have a boost in self-esteem; thus, translating to a more positive image.

H. Value: The next level according to Schein which constitute the OC is the values of the employees. The values of the individuals working in the organization play an important role in deciding the OC. The thought process and attitude of employees have deep impact on the culture of any particular organization. It is generally said that EL skills and appealing personality go a long way. These seemingly important attributes in the career development of the candidate. Knowledge of English is important for dealing the day to day communication for instance if an executive arrives in the bank and the receptionists says "sawagatam sir" it sound weird, instead she says welcome sir this sounds professional. Possibly in Indian context many a times a quintessential vernacular speaking people avoid curtesy exchange in Hindi purposefully so that his personality may not be peril. However, in the global bank the candidate put on probation before offering a permanent position, until he or she uses English communication skills to deal the international clients. In professional world few of the standard greeting expressions like “good morning”, “good afternoon”, “hello”, “Have a nice Day” are used instead of Hindi words. Along with this few more English expressions are used in corporates like “well done”, “Keep it up”, “Good Job” that can boost the morale of employees that directly, indirectly affect the culture and increases the productivity of organization.

I. Attitude: An attitude is a psychological tendency or mental predisposition that is expressed by evaluating an object or entity with some degree of like or dislike, favor or disfavor. Attitude is affective, reflecting emotions or feelings attached to categories or objects. Attitude, or perception, can impact business communication in both positive and negative ways. Colleagues with extreme points of view may find it hard to see one another’s perspective because each has the attitude that the other must be wrong without taking time to analyze the situation. Likewise, employees with similar attitudes may inadvertently overlook instances of miscommunication because they have the attitude they are always in agreement with one another. We often see that person who can speak in English have very good impression on the people as well as it gives the reflection that the person would be skillful in every aspect. Right attitude influences the effectiveness of organization. A person who can speak in English can be easily identified in the crowd and seems to be more confident because most of the communications in the companies takes place in EL. Therefore, we can state the EL helps to improve the personality of an employee, Despite in English, speech would be very polite with relaxed tone like “excuse me”, “please”, “just a minute”, “Bye”.

Nomi and Kaira are two best friends and working in a same bank but having different designations instead of same qualification. Nomi is shy and weak in English and unable to speak fluently. Nomi works with hesitation and not at all confident as she doesn’t speak and write in English correctly. On the other hand, Kaira is not a hard worker but having good communication skills and able to write in English correctly and effectively so she has a very confident attitude. This attitude and language helped her to create a good rapport to the top management thus she is highlighted and getting good position day by day. As the time passes, Nomi realized the importance of EL and joined classes diligently studying English vocabulary and grammar. After few months her attitude towards work has completely changed and gained confidence and is less shy. Now Nomi has optimistic attitude towards work culture and she is working at the top executive position because of her optimistic attitude.

VI. CONCLUSION

Here an attempt has been made to link how EL influence certain constructs of OC in perspective to the banking sectors in India. Some of the constructs of OC related to banks in India has been chosen on the basis of a normative study. However, all these constructs of OC had already established by researchers. In this research on the basis of long observational method the level of influence of EL on these chosen constructs of OC has been initiated. It is quite interestingly being found that some of the constructs are of course has non-verbal way of transaction within the organization. However most of these constructs are directly and discretely being influenced by EL. Vernacular language too has its way of influencing some of the constructs of culture but it is being observed that EL has a very significant role of having an impact on the construct of OC. It is further observed that every organization has its own vision, mission, objective, strategy and policy – These can only be achieved if the organization has the culture that sync in with the vision and mission of the company. Here in INDIA the kind of vision,
mission, objective, strategy, policy what most of the bank possess should have a conducive OC. It is found that this right OC mostly has the constructs which are significantly being influenced by EL.

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