

## **Lack of Knowledge and Atmosphere of Speaking English creates many problems for Pakistani Athletes and International Players at International Sports Events**

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### **Abstract**

English language has gained repute of an international language. It is learnt and taught in almost all the countries of the world as a second or foreign language. Even in many Non-English countries, it is used as an official language. In many countries, tourist-guides use this language to guide the tourists. English language is widely used at international airports. It is language of medicine, internet, books and journals all over the world. Similarly, many Sports Events are conducted while taking the help of English speakers to guide the athletes and international players. Lack of atmosphere of speaking English creates many problems for international athletes and players all over the world. Many times, it has been observed that speaking and understanding of different languages between two teams and officials and even between a team and umpires creates a lot of problems during a match. This situation of speaking different languages also creates a lot of issues outside the ground for international players. Although, English language is used as a foreign language by many athletes and international players yet there are myriads of players who cannot speak English language, hence, they face a lot of problems inside and outside the field. If we talk about Pakistani International athletes and players, we find that most of them are unable to speak English in spite of the fact that English language is used as an official as well as foreign language in Pakistan. English is learnt and taught as a compulsory subject from class One to graduate level. In spite of it, there is vivid lack of atmosphere of speaking English language. It is observed that many of Pakistani international players cannot speak English and they have to take help of other officials who can speak English. Lack of knowledge and atmosphere of

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speaking English create a lot of issues for Pakistani International athletes and players which are going to be spotlighted in this ‘Research Paper’.

**Key words:** International Sports events, athletes, English Language

## **Introduction**

There are hundreds of languages spoken in different regions and countries of the world. Every language has its own importance. But one language which has got status of international language is English. English language is used as a foreign and second language in many countries of the world. Even, it is used as an official language in many non-English countries of the world. This is the reason that if we want to go abroad for study or business purposes, we have to learn English language and even we have to appear in IELTS OR TOFFEL to prove our efficiency of speaking English language. Purpose of such tests is to minimize problems which we face because of not understanding a common language i.e., English. But there is no such test for international players and athletes. Hence, they face a lot of problems inside and outside the field. As a matter of fact, there are myriads of international players who even do not have school education. They cannot speak any language other than their mother tongue or national language. They become international players because of their good physique and training of a game of their own interest. It almost happens in every country of the world. When such players move abroad face a lot of problems because they cannot speak international language i.e., English. It has been observed by the researcher that many international athletes and players take the help of translators during International Sports Events. Similarly, many cricket players especially from Pakistan cannot speak English and take help of English translator which eventually leaves a bad impact on others. There is no denying of the fact that Sports Institutes and Academies do not pay attention to make arrangement to learn an international language for their athletes and players so as to make communication easy for them.

## **Background of the Problem:**

In many under-developed countries where English is learnt as a second language at schools, even in those countries, standard of education is much poor that after the completion of twelve years education, students are unable to write and speak English. In Pakistan, the subject of English is given the status of compulsory subject due to which our English language learners have to learn this language. Regrettably, the atmosphere is not suitable for English language learners because majority of our country are uneducated and cannot speak and understand English language (Dr. Ayesha, 2011). Another fact is that our teachers of English language do not pay much attention to teach English language rather they focus on teaching syllabus of English (Iqbal, 2011).

Students are made to learn writing skill only from examination point of view which is based on spoon feeding and cramming. The students are provided ready-made material which they reproduce to pass the examination. The students are not taught speaking skill of English language effectively (Taalat, 2003). As a result, they do not become competent enough to express their views orally. There is no denying of the fact that cramming, or memorization is started right from pre-nursery or junior class, and it is continued till master's level (Haq, 1961). Even English language teachers in Pakistan dictate essays, question-answers and paragraphs to students and ask them to cram it to pass the examination. English language teachers do it to cover the syllabus (Asghar, 1965). Normally, we do not find English speaking atmosphere anywhere in our country except in a few elite class educational institutions such as Beacon House, LGS, The Roots Ivy, The City School etc. As far as government educational institutions are concerned, we find that even during English period, no one tries to speak English including English teachers.

In Pakistan, Urdu language has been officially declared as the national language of the country. English is taught as a second language in our country. There are a number of regional languages such as Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi, Balochi, Pushtu, and many other regional languages in Pakistan. All these regional languages are fairly different from our national language i.e., Urdu (Asghar, 1965). In our country, a child learns a regional language or mother tongue at home in the first place and secondly, he has to learn Urdu language at the primary stage in school. Thereafter, he is expected to learn Arabic language i.e., language of our religion. At the same time, the child starts learning English language which is entirely a different language from our regional, national and religious languages. Therefore, it is obvious that the learning and teaching of English language creates a lot of problems for our English language learners (Haq, 1961). This is because English language differs not only in syntax, structure and pronunciation from all Pakistani languages, but it has also a different mode of thought and expression. This is why, our English language users do not become competent enough to speak and write English language (Afzal, 1983).

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Lack of Knowledge as well as English speaking atmosphere causes a lot of problems for international players and athletes who take part in International Sports Events.

### **Significance of the Research Paper:**

This Research Paper is of immense significance for it spotlights a very crucial problem of lack of knowledge and atmosphere of speaking English language. It has been observed by the researcher that in our country English language teachers' pay a lot of attention to grammar, structure, vocabulary, pronunciation etc. English language learners are expected to avoid spellings, grammatical, punctuation, and preposition mistakes. English is learnt and taught from pre-nursery to graduate level, in spite of it, most of students are unable to speak English language because of lack of atmosphere of speaking English inside and outside our educational institutes. Hence, majority of our international athletes and players cannot speak English and they face a lot of problems in international sports arena. The researcher wants to realize those Sports Institutes and Academies realize the importance of international language so that international athletes and players do not face communication problems in foreign countries during their participation in Global sports events.

### **Objectives of the Research Paper:**

- To make Government realize to make international athletes and players appear in tests like IELTS OR TOFFEL, so that players may learn English language before taking part in international events and face no problems there.
- To make Sports Institutes and Academies realize to make arrangements for international athletes and players learn English by qualified English teachers.
- To make players realize the importance of a common language which everyone can speak during international sports event.
- To make International Sports Event Organizers realize to solve the issues of communication by making it compulsory to learn an international language before taking part in international sports event.

### **World Scenario:**

A recent editorial published in the journal Sport, Ethics and Philosophy (McNamee, 2013), spotlighted on the use of English language as a lingua franca by sports officials, coaches, referees and international athletes and players at any international sports events inside and outside the field. It highlights that during any international sports event, lack of knowledge and inability of speaking English language by many international athletes and players create a

lot of issues during a match and even outside the match. Many times, it happens that non-understanding of language of opposite teams, umpires, coaches, officials etc causes a tension or sometimes fight during the match.

Myriads of people all over the world see and enjoy the Olympic Games and millions of people watch it on television. Any big sports event is like a festival for the people. People take keen interest in watching games on television. Hundreds of athletes and international players participate in international sports events. A number of umpires or referees, coaches, officials, ground-men, trainers etc take part in such events at the same time. The first question arises how these people communicate? Definitely, they belong to different countries. They speak different languages. French and English languages are official languages to conduct such events. Despite, many problems arise when the matter comes to accommodation, transportation, locations and participation in games. Similarly, athletes have to face problem when officials and referees are communicating in a different language and athletes do not understand anything. Sometimes, athletes look for a translator. Sometimes, in case of any issue during a match, athletes are unable to make referee understand a matter because of speaking of different languages.

The World Cup kicked off this with a match between Brazil and Croatia officiated by a Japanese referee. How do Croatians, Brazilians and Japanese communicate on the field? After the Croatians lost the match, the Croatian player named Vedran Corluka complained that he could not understand the referee.

Another example of miscommunication is when a red card was shown at the 1996 Football World Cup. The referee for that match was a German. During the match, the referee called a foul against Argentina. Argentina's captain named Antonio Rattin questioned the foul. The problem was, as he said in an interview later, he was speaking Spanish language which the referee could not understand. Things got increasingly heated. There were wild gesticulations and raised voices in various languages. And then the German referee sends Rattin "off". "Because of miscommunication, as well as some language barrier, including body language issues, that referee didn't communicate to Rattin or Rattin didn't pick it up, and [he] stayed on the field."

Thousands of miles away from home international student-athletes at Ohio State must learn an international language so as to adjust among new athletes. The move from previous life stage to being involved in college athletics can be rigorous and intense. For some, it is as simple as learning a new training but for some, it is a complete change of scenery, culture,

food and language. Gulsah Gunenc joined the OSU women's swimming team this season. She traveled here from Turkey without ever meeting her coach or seeing the campus. Language was one the toughest things Gunenc had to adjust to when she joined a team that had 26 members-all who speak English. "When I first came here, nobody could understand me and I could not understand anybody," Gunenc said. "I kept getting better because my teammates were so helpful and patient with me." At times, language constrains became so difficult for Gunenc that she considered going back home after her first session, coach Jeanne Fleck said.

Danish Kaneria is a world-renowned Pakistani leg spinner once got 10 wickets in a test match. When Danish was moving to Pavilion, a commentator reached the ground and started questioning to him about his great performance. But it is seen by everyone that Danish completely failed to answer his questions simply because he could not speak English language. Even in many Award Ceremonies, many Pakistani Cricketers take the help of English translators from the Pakistani Officials.

### **Findings:**

It is found that many international athletes and players fail to participate in International Sports Events because of language barriers. Many players do not know procedure to participate in such events. There is no one to guide them what to do. Similarly, if some foreign coach is hired by Sports Institute, majority of athletes and players cannot understand him because of language barriers. A player can learn nothing from an international coach if he cannot understand what the coach speaks to him. Many players who cannot speak English language when they somehow manage to move abroad to participate in an International Sports Event, face a lot of issues regarding accommodation, transportation, location, purchasing something from market and in communicating with other competitors.

### **Suggestions:**

The researchers have devised the following recommendations for the convenience of international athletes and players.

- The government should focus on learning English language by the students instead of just passing the subject of English.
- Emerging players and athletes at school level must be given special attention as far as their spoken English is concerned.

- Sports institutes and Academies should make some special arrangements for athletes and players to learn English language by qualified English teachers so as to avoid any problem in foreign countries.
- If Sports Institute can hire international coaches, then it should also hire proficient English teachers to teach English language to international athletes and players.
- International players and athletes should appear in IELTS so as to prove their communication skill of English language.
- Even, International Sports Organizations should arrange some English language experts to teach international athletes and players during Mega Sports Events so as to minimize communication gap.

### **Future Perspective:**

English language has become part of our lives. We cannot keep ourselves aloof from this language. There is a wide scope as far as sports and English language are concerned. English language is almost learnt and taught in every country of the world. In every International Sports Event, it is used as a common or second language to communicate. Many issues regarding English language and Sports can be discussed by other researchers.

### **Conclusion:**

English language is used as an international language all over the world. The importance of English language cannot be denied in the lives of international athletes and players. Many emerging players and athletes face a lot of issues because of being unable to speak English language. Even, for such players, sometimes it becomes difficult to participate in International Sports Events. As far as Pakistan is concerned, majority of athletes and players are unable to speak English language despite the fact that English is taught from pre-nursery to graduate level. Another fact is that English is taught as a subject and not as a language, this is the reason, most of English teachers only pay attention to cover the syllabus and they do not teach student English as a language. Hence, most of athletes and players remain unable to speak English language. Similarly, in Sports Institutes and Academies, coaches and officials only pay attention to training of the game and there is no mechanism to teach English language to players. We also find no atmosphere of speaking of English language in under-developed



countries because in such countries majority of the people are illiterate and those who are literate do not find atmosphere of speaking English among their relatives, friends and members of family.

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