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# **Daath Voyage : An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English**

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## **Language Pedagogy and the Teaching of English**

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**Abstract:** Human language is a part of being human, All of us are born to speak or use a human language and that, we can say, is one of the wonders of the natural world like human beings animals too make noises to communicate with other members of their group but there are some significant differences between animal communication and human language. As human languages are made up of sounds of smaller units called words and sentences. Language pedagogy is the teaching of language in simple terms. The present paper attempts to highlight language pedagogy and the teaching of English language and its variants. It also highlights teaching and learning of mother tongue, second language teaching and foreign language teaching.

**Keywords:** Language, Pedagogy, Speech, Teaching and Writing.

A language is a symbol system based on pure or arbitrary vocal symbols, by means of which a social group co-operates. Taking into account the properties found in all human languages, linguistics like R. W. Langaker defined human languages as “Human languages are unlimited... an unlimited set of discrete signals... have great structural complexity... structure on at least two levels... are open-ended... allow for transmission of information.” (*Language and its Structure* 17) Human language alone is made up of sounds, of smaller units called words and sentences. E.g, man bites dog and dog bites man have different meanings because they are patterned differently; the same word can be arranged differently in order to convey another meaning or construct another sentence. A limited number of discrete elements (sounds, parts of words and words, sentences) are combined and permuted to create larger structures (words, sentences, paragraphs, texts, etc.). In



other words, animal communication does not have ‘grammar’ and animals do not learn ‘grammar’. Since there are various ways of combining the units of a language, there is considerable scope for creativity within it. Using a few basic principles, human beings create a large number of constructions. We teach these basic principles and learners learn them in nursery rhymes that teach the basic principles. For example, ‘this is the cow with crumpled horns that tossed the dog that worried the cat that chased the rat’ can be continued to any length by repeating the relative clause pattern. This principle, called recursiveness, enables us to form infinite sentences. That makes all human languages open- ended. This property is not found in animal communication. In human language, there is no inherent connection between sounds and symbols, for example, the animal known as dog in English is kutta in Hindi, naay in Tamil, kukka in Telugu, sobaka in Russian, hund in German. The relation between a word and its meaning is quite arbitrary; even onomatopoeic words (I.e. words in which the sound directly conveys the meaning) differ from language to language; a dog say bow wow in English lol-lol in Tamil.

### **Speech and Writing:**

Speech and writing are the two basic modes of language. Each has its own function. In some areas there is a one to one correspondence between speech and writing but in a number of areas there is no neat correspondence between units of speech and writing. The system of writing may be:

1. Pictographic- where each sign corresponds to a picture, an idea, or an object
2. Logographic- where each sign corresponds to a word (ICU= I see you; q =queue)
3. Syllabic- where each sign corresponds to a syllable
4. Alphabetic- where each sign corresponds to a unit that makes a difference in meaning
5. Phonetic- where each sign corresponds to a sound

Most languages have the different combinations of the writing systems listed above. Different languages share the same script; the Roman script is used to write English and a number of European languages; the Devanagiri script is used to write Hindi, Marathi and other languages used in Northern and Western parts of India. There is very little difference between Telugu and Kannada in the way they are written though they are two different languages. Similarly, the same speech for



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example, Hindi, may be written in Roman or Devanagiri script. Quite often sign boards in one language are written in different scripts in our country.

### **Variants in Language:**

Language is a phenomenon which is as complex as human relationships in a society. There is no such thing as English, Hindi or Tamil; they are labels used to refer to abstractions. What we refer to by English or Hindi is a network of varieties used by the speech community- varieties of English and varieties of Hindi. British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English, for example are regional varieties of English. Similarly, U. P, Hindi, M. P, Hindi, Bihari Hindi, etc. are regional varieties of Hindi.

- The abstract system is called langue. An individual speech act (ones actual use of language) is called parole. Parole varies from person to person. Parole and langue together constitute a language.
- Each individual has his or her own idiosyncratic ways of using a parole and that is called idiolect (idio= individual, lect= variety of language). No two persons speak alike and each one has certain characteristic ways of speaking.
- When a group of individuals share particular ways of speaking, the group uses a dialect (i.e. dia = two; lect = variety of language).
- A dialect used in a geographical area is called a regional dialect (Braj-bhasha and Khari-boli are regional dialects of Hindi).
- We may classify language varieties from a temporal point of view (e.g. Old English, Middle English, Victorian English, Contemporary Telugu).
- A prestige dialect is a dialect accepted and emulated by speakers of other dialects (like BBC English, Khari-boli, Andhra Telugu, etc.).
- Variations in pronunciation are referred to as differences in accent (e.g. Indian accent, Malayalee accent, British accent).



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- Within a register there are different styles of speaking and writing, depending on the user's intention, preferences, and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer (e.g. Shakespeare's style, R. K. Narayan's style).
- Pidgins and creoles are also varieties of language. Pidgins arise out of several complex social situations, where the conquered subject tries to learn the language of the conqueror and uses it in some restricted situations as in the case of Butler English in India. A pidgin which becomes the mother tongue of a community is called a creole.
- We may also talk of native and non- native varieties of a language. Indian English is considered as a non- native variety. During the colonial period, the English of Indian's were referred to as 'Babu English' by the British; on the other hand, Indians would like to argue that Indian English is different from the native varieties but it is not a pidgin or a creole; it is creative and many novelists and poets have used this variety in what is called Indian writing in English.

### **Linguistics and Language Teaching:**

Linguistics is a scientific study of principles underlying human languages. It has two major aims; to study the nature of language and to establish the theory of language, and to describe a language and all languages by applying the theory established. A linguist studies language in all its aspects and a person who knows or speaks several languages is a polyglot. Language pedagogy is as old as the study of language. In ancient India and Greece, scholars were interested in the study of language as well as language teaching and learning; qualities like clarity, elegance, correctness to be cultivated in order to achieve mastery over the language have always interested grammarians and these qualities were used in language teaching. There can be several kinds of language and different kinds of linguistic theories; similarly there can be different theories and models of language teaching and learning. The meeting ground of various disciplines like linguists, psychology, sociology etc. is the laboratory- what we call the classroom; the processes are more controlled in the classroom than in the world outside. This inter- disciplinary enterprise is sometimes called educational linguistics.





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### **Mother Tongue Teaching, Foreign Language Teaching and Second Language Teaching:**

Various distinctions have been made in the area of language pedagogy, Taking English as a typical case because of its worldwide use. Distinctions have been made between mother tongue teaching or teaching a first language and second language teaching, between second language teaching and between foreign language teaching.

#### **Mother Tongue Teaching:**

The goals of teaching the mother tongue are different from those of teaching a second language. The first language is not taught but caught; a child picks up the first language from the speakers in the immediate environment and it is learnt naturally. First language learning is one of the basic instincts which cannot even be suppressed; any normal child (one without any defects) will learn how to speak, listen and understand the language that is used in the social environment. The innate learning ability of the human mind, enables the child to learn the language by constructing the grammar of the language in his or her mind in a natural way. Listening and speaking are the first and natural processes, but not reading and writing. It is only when the child goes to school or is taught by someone, he \ she learns how to read and write. The goals of teaching the first language may be:

1. Teaching and learning how to read and write
2. Teaching and learning the standard language (the child may have learnt a dialect used at home, social environment and its varieties).
3. Teaching and learning the literature of the first language and through it the culture and literary heritage and value system of the language community.

The language taught and learnt may be English in English speaking countries, Hindi in Hindi speaking regions, Telugu in Tamil or any other language as the first mother tongue.

#### **Foreign Language Teaching:**

We teach a number of foreign languages in India. French, German, Japanese and Spanish etc. for example French and German is taught to a Punjabi speaker, the goal is limited. The learner is not going to use French or German for day-to-day communication in India, if he goes to France or



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Germany he has to use the language in its own cultural context. So, the literary or cultural function is the dominant one in foreign language teaching and the secondary communicative function is rather limited or minimal. In foreign language teaching the cultural aspects get the focus. During the early days of English education in India, English was taught and learnt as a foreign language.

### **Second Language Teaching:**

In teaching a second language, for example, English to a Bengali speaker, the goal is communicative. The cultural and literary goals are minimized. In the present day India, the English learner may have to use English for purposes of communication, in his day-to-day life, in the offices, in the market, in the bank and sometimes in the social gatherings. English is used as a second language of communication within one's own social and cultural context. Similarly, a Tamil user may learn Hindi as a second language. Hindi belongs to the Indo-Aryan family of languages and Tamil to the Dravidean family, but both languages are used within the cultural context of the Indian sub-continent. English, on the other hand, though an Indo- European language, is somewhat different in the degree in which it is related to India's culture. English is not as intimately interwoven with the culture of the Indian sub-continent as Hindi or Bengali or Tamil; the rural texture has not taken English as part of its mental make-up. English is different from French or German, on the one hand, and Hindi or Malayalam or Gujarati, on the other. English has a unique status- it is neither Indian nor Foreign. That is why the constitution treats it as an associate language. A large number of abbreviations are used in the area of teaching English as a second language. The teachers of English should get to know some of the acronyms and abbreviations used in this area. The important ones are given below:

- I. EAP = English for Academic purposes
- II. EEP = English for educational purposes
- III. EFL = English as foreign language
- IV. EGP = English for general purposes
- V. ELT = English language teaching
- VI. ENL = English as a native language (= Teaching English as the First Language)
- VII. EOP = English for occupational purposes



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- VIII. ESD = English as a second dialect
- IX. ESL = English as a second language
- X. EST = English for science and technology
- XI. ESP = English for specific purposes
- XII. EWL = English as a world language
- XIII. EIAL = English as an international Auxiliary language
- XIV. ESOL = English for speaker of other languages
- XV. IELTS = International English language testing system
- XVI. TEFL = Teaching English as a foreign language
- XVII. TESD = Teaching English as a second dialect (= Teaching standard English to speakers of non-standard varieties of English)
- XVIII. TESL = Teaching English as a second language
- XIX. TEIAL = Teaching English to speakers of other languages
- XX. TESOL = Teaching English to speakers of other languages
- XXI. TOEFL = Test of English as a foreign language

The very fact that there are so many abbreviated terms used in the field shows that English teaching has become a worldwide phenomenon; it is a product of rapid technological changes taking place all over the world and mobility of population. Each branch of English teaching has become a specialized field. Business English, for example, is becoming more popular in India and there is a great demand for effective publications, practitioners, and effective organizations, English teaching is big business indeed.





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