Pedagogy of Languages: Teaching English in India

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Aim and Scope:
Pedagogy of Languages: Teaching English in India engages with current studies in the pedagogy of languages and the issues abounding in language education. While the book looks at the teaching of English in Indian schools at a secondary and higher secondary level, the topics discussed in the book draw on, and have a bearing on, the larger issues of (second) language acquisition and learning, ELT studies, literacy (emergent, adult, multiliteracy, new literacy and critical literacy) studies and critical pedagogies in language and literature. Teaching of English is a dynamic practise that is influenced by socio-cultural, economic and political factors, particularly in our age of globalisation and technological advancement. As language educators, there is a pressing need to constantly update our knowledge of content and pedagogy to address the challenges in this world. At the same time, we need to contextualise teaching-learning strategies to the needs of the Indian classroom. This book aims to equip its readers, who are primarily student-teachers, teachers, teacher educators and curriculum developers, with the theoretical perspectives and pedagogical insights needed to teach language in general, and the English language, in particular, in India. Since there is no single volume currently available for students and teachers of B.Ed., M.Ed. and language education programs that draw the various threads of arguments together for a holistic view of the field of language pedagogy and literacy, this book makes an attempt in that direction.

The Rationale:
Pedagogy of Languages: Teaching English in India is for readers interested in delving into the field of language education. The book starts with the questions: What is language? What is the place of language in human life? Why and how should language/s be taught? Language constitutes an essential part of being human. It constructs thought and identity, establishes relationships, is a cultural and discursive tool and a socio-cultural artefact. At a functional level, language is a tool for communication. Knowing how to read and write is seen as a mark of literacy. This is particularly so for a language like English that has achieved a global status as an international
language of communication.

Studies in language have, over the last few decades, encompassed a variety of perspectives, from the linguistic to the philosophical, cultural and sociological, to examine its place in our lives. These perspectives have, in turn, influenced the pedagogies adopted in the language classroom, which include the nativist, behaviourist, constructivist, structuralist, sociolinguistic and (critical) literacy perspectives, among others.

In this book, we situate the teaching and learning of language, in general, and English in particular, within the multilingual, socio-cultural reality of India. The chapters provide an overview of the principal theories of (second) language acquisition and learning, current perspectives on the teaching of (English) language in India and the need for a continuous professional development of teachers to enable a dynamic teaching-learning process in the classroom. Moving into the practise of teaching, the chapters include analyses and discussions on the teaching of grammar, the development of the four skills, communicative language competence and the teaching of literary genres like poetry, prose (fiction and non-fiction) and drama, curriculum and lesson design, preparation of teaching-learning materials and assessments for language and literature, within the context of teaching language for (critical) literacy.

The textbook comes with worksheets, activities and additional resources for teachers and student-teachers, lists of references and additional readings for each topic, reflective points, case studies and infographics to trigger thought on the role of language in education.

Chapter 01 - What is Language: An Overview

This chapter looks at some broad definitions and approaches to language from a variety of disciplines like linguistics, culture studies and philosophy, to name a few. It considers the relationship between language and thought, culture and identity. By probing social, cultural and discursive attitudes embedded in our understanding of language, it situates language education within the context of literacy studies and the place of English in India today.

Keywords: Language, thought, culture, literacy

Chapter 02 - Language and Policy: English Studies in India

Chapter 02 historicises the teaching and learning of English as a second language in India. By examining policies on language and their impact on education, the chapter discusses the politicisation of language, the relationship between knowledge and power, dialects and standardisation, what English studies mean and what they can aspire to in a globalised, technologised economy. The chapter also looks at the tensions inherent in a multilingual classroom
as teachers confront the demands of policies alongside the practical necessities of teaching English.

Keywords: English studies, India, policy, dialects, standardisation, multilinguality

Chapter 03  - Language Acquisition and Language Learning

In this chapter, an outline of the distinction between language acquisition and language learning is provided. This is explored further to discuss the way pedagogies change depending on the acquisition-learning dichotomy. This distinction is important to bear in mind since acquisition refers to an informal way of acquiring language while learning remains an intentional formal act. Theories from a variety of perspectives like nativism, behaviourism and constructivism, among others, will be considered, to identify ways of teaching and learning languages, and in our case, English. The chapter will also look briefly at studies in emergent literacy, and will include sections on inclusive practices, multilingualism as an inclusive pedagogy and UDL Principles.

Keywords: Acquisition, learning, multilingualism

Chapter 04 - Perspectives on Language for Literacy

Chapter 04 makes an entry into language education through the lense of literacy. What does literacy mean? How do current discourses on literacy draw together reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking skills to reflect on the views of language as a socio-cultural artefact and its relationship to culture? These questions have a direct bearing on the pedagogy to be adopted in the classroom. Subsequently, the chapter presents an overview of the various approaches to teaching languages, which include the teaching of grammar, mechanics, communication and functional language, as well as literary discourse. The chapter concludes with a brief section on the need for continuous professional development and the need for teachers to update their skills constantly to teach language for the larger aims of (critical) literacy.

Keywords: Literacies, new literacy, critical literacy, multimodality, discourse

Chapter 05 - Teaching of Language - I (Communicative English Language Teaching)

In chapter 05, the focus shifts to pedagogies of teaching language for communication. In this context, different integrated and inclusive approaches to teaching the four skills, task based approach, functional approach to communicative English, among others, and strategies for acquiring versus learning will be discussed. Also discussed will be approaches to curriculum, syllabus and materials analysis and design, and integration of ICT into teaching-learning practices.

Keywords: ELT, communicative language teaching, reading, writing, listening, speaking
Chapter 06 - Teaching of Language - II (Language through Literature)

Chapter 06 looks at the teaching of language through literature. The objectives and conceptualisation of language through literature as a pedagogy will be discussed, historicising the idea by tracing it to the teaching and learning of classical languages (in India). The difference in approaches needed for modern languages in general and English in particular will be considered. The chapter also discusses ways of teaching the mechanics of language and the need to align pedagogies to the larger aim of critical literacy. Also considered will be approaches to syllabus and curriculum design, materials development, and the use of ICT in language learning.

Keywords: Language through literature, English studies, reading, writing, listening, speaking

Chapter 07 - Teaching Literature: Prose, Poetry and Drama

Chapters 07 deals with the interpretation and teaching of literature, which remains an under-researched area in critical and literary pedagogy. The chapter looks at ways of interpreting prose, focusing on fiction and non-fiction in particular. Examples will be drawn from a variety of genres like short stories, novels, biographies, travel writing, argumentative pieces etc. to illustrate the pedagogy. Teaching of poetry and drama will also be discussed. Discussions will also involve analysis of curriculum, syllabus and TLMs that can be used to promote literary appreciation and interpretation in and for (critical) literacy. As before, different kinds of ICT and new media will be considered for meaningful integration in literature classrooms.

Keywords: Interpretation, language arts, literature, prose, poetry, drama, genre

Chapter 08 - Assessment and Evaluation for Language and Literature

Chapter 08 will focus on the importance of assessments and evaluation for learning. This is a crucial part of any education system. Well designed assessments aid positive washback, knowledge retention and deeper understanding of the subject. By looking at different kinds of assessments and methods of administering them, this chapter discusses ways of weaving assessments seamlessly with teaching-learning practices. Topics covered include ways of assessing assessment items, ways of creating good close-ended and open-ended items and criteria for determining reliability and validity of assessments, among others. The topical focus will include assessment and evaluation of language and literature. The chapter will also consider ways in which multimedia, ICT and technology can be harnessed in assessments and evaluations of students’ learning.

Keywords: Assessments, evaluation, validity, reliability, formative, summative, multimedia

Competing titles:


**MARKET & READERSHIP**

The book will be of relevance to secondary and higher secondary school teachers, teacher educators, curriculum designers and developers of language, NGOs, public and private sector bodies who work in language teaching and learning practice.

The book caters to the course requirements of the core pedagogic papers of the integrated B.Ed./M.Ed. program offered at the Centre for Education, Innovation and Action Research (CEIAR), TISS Mumbai. It also comprises references and contents that are relevant to courses on ‘Language Education’, ‘Teaching of English’, ‘Language, Mind and Society’ and ‘Communicative English’ offered as Master’s level specialisations and optional courses in MA (Education) and MA (Elementary Education) programs offered by TISS, Mumbai and TISS, Hyderabad.

Apart from these convergences, the topics map directly to portions of the B.Ed. curriculum of the University of Mumbai and MS University, Baroda. The chapters pertaining to CELT, Second Language Acquisition, Language and Literacy are universal themes relevant to universities across the country that offer programs in language education. The book will also serve as resource for in-service professional development programs in language and literacy.

While the theoretical perspectives map to the syllabi of different national universities in the country, the book pushes the boundaries of theory and pedagogy, requiring a consideration of current perspectives on language acquisition and learning from a socio-linguistic, cultural and critical literacy perspective. In this respect, the book holds appeal to an international audience and audience, with interest in the sectors of language education and literacy.