



# Pedagogical Approaches to English Language and Literature

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## Abstract

*The British established the English language in India when they assumed control. Since then, English has evolved as a medium of communication and education. Thus, English developed connotations of status, better quality education, and the potential for upward social mobility. This trend has exploded because of its porous use and similar use in government, the business sector, and academia. On the global stage, the language of commerce, trade, diplomatic context, and international relations is English. For this reason, we can't deny its significance in the Indian context. Historically, English is arguably a significant part of the Indian education system, as it can open up pathways for students at many different parts of life. Language for humans is primarily synonymous with communication. Language does exist beyond the ability to communicate. Humans have accomplished and perfected the activity of communication to a greater extent than any other living being. Humans have taken this process way beyond the basic, and basic human actions have utilized sounds and gestures to communicate basic necessities: these basic sounds have developed into various languages through meaningful words created from certain groupings of discrete sounds. Words with meaning and the context for that meaning are accepted as a sentence form and appear to be structured in some recognizable format. Humans do not possess language in the first instance instead cry and laugh, perhaps to some extent a flush of basic emotions like hunger, anger, etc. Humans develop complex syntactical word arrangements over time.*

**Keywords:** English Language Teaching (ELT), English in India, language and literature, approaches to teaching literature, and role of English in higher education

## Introduction

Language is an expression of human cognition; it influences thought, ideas, perception, beliefs, and rationalization. Language is composed of five essential components: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Not only does the applicability of language as a living, cognitive, and social tool go beyond speech and strengthen our reality, but it is also a resource for the development and dissemination of both literature and culture. Writing and poetry not only allows writers and poets

to express the imaginary/inventive and evocative nature of imagination, philosophy, or human experience but also gives them access to the complexities of the rich cultural fabric of stories, narratives, values and traditions and maintains the integrity of a person's stories, ideologies and worldview. Storytelling now being understood as a means of conveying culture, connectedness, and continuity, it is important to comprehend it as a fundamental aspect of how civilization is created and becomes forward-thinking.



Teachers use many types of teaching aids that allow for connections to be made between abstractions and the learner's imagination, as learning can be vivid and memorable. Studies of the literature often have ideological implications of a larger scope; for instance, the specific texts selected for documentation in the curriculum could serve values, meanings, and cultural narratives with dominant interests that tend to reproduce usage, like the values embodied in social institutions. In India, an English department's curriculum is a reproduction of the Western literary canon and Western perspective and may not provide a representation of regional and indigenous voices (Chauhan et al.). The purpose of this study is to examine the role of English in India, examine English curriculums as we see them in schools, and describe purposes for teaching a language. To provide some historical background to this discussion, English was brought to India primarily during the colonization of the subcontinent by British rule. Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote about this in a minute in the British Parliament, where he wrote part of his wish was to create "a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Bhattacharya 1).

First language (L1) is the language that he/she acquires naturally, often spoken to by one or both parents and occurring in the person's immediate, physical environment. A second language (L2) is an individual learns later in life, subsequent to their L1 language. It is not the individual's mother tongue and is used either naturally through purposeful teaching of language or through incidental exposure to language either for communicative purposes in the native country and/or for purposes of international communication. Language is integral to the process of communication, understanding, and cognitive development; it is one way we are able to communicate with other people orally, with the written word, and through signed language. Humans are the only living entity on earth that has developed a fully evolved and mechanically systematized language (Richards and Rodgers).

Language offers the means to express and comprehend thought, emotion, and intention.

Language is present in many forms, including spoken language, written language, reading, auditory language, reflection, and observation. Language is closely interconnected with knowledge development, worldview, cognition, and more broadly cognitive processes. Therefore, language can be especially important for cognition, or higher-order cognitive functioning, associated with thought, perception, imagination, and reasoning. Saussure terms the components of a sign as the sign, signifier, and signified. Saussure defines a sign as composed of a signifier (the superficial form of a word/ sign/ expression) and the signified (the concept associated with a signifier). Saussure points out that the relationship between signifier and signified is not fixed or intrinsic but is arbitrary and socially constructed. Language is generally thought to only refer to spoken and written language, but it also encompasses various types of signs and gestures.

An example of this larger conception of language is sign language, even though it is mostly used by people with hearing loss (e.g., deaf or hard of hearing). Sign languages can demonstrate all of the same structural elements of spoken languages; they only differ in the modality they are used in. A sign language user produces meaning by using hand signs, finger spelling, facial expressions, and gesturing; thus, it is a fully functioning language. Language is a vehicle for communication. Language is a vehicle for expressing ideas, feelings, and information. It is the most common form of interaction for people on an interpersonal, social, or vocational basis. English holds significance in India. English is the lingua franca that links this linguistic diversity, is the diplomatic lingua franca for diplomacy, is the lingua franca for the hopes and aspirations of the global trading community and foreign relations, and is important for academic and professional advancement. English is also important for showcasing our Indian heritage and national tourism. English continues to be the predominant language on the Internet and a predominant language for digital communications. In this aspect of globalization and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), English is the dominant language for generating



global connections and is the dominant form of communication in education, business, and technology. English is no longer just a hangover of colonialism; it is a way into the world and an essential part of being a global citizen (Hall).

Literature captures the history of human experience, referring to social institutions and a variety of religious and scientific notions and philosophies. The most essential purpose of literature is to show the ways in which human ideas have evolved through time, from the earliest suggestion of human thought to the present. Literature, in all its forms and diversity, is often relevant to people reading it, since its primary purpose is to describe the differing and critical issues of humanity. Literature represents a large variety of languages, but itself develops alongside the social and cultural exigencies. Ultimately, however, there is always the underlying awareness that recognizes the connectedness across cultures and languages. The links across world literatures always form a continuum that fashions a map of human civilization. British domination had a transformative impact on language and literature in India.

The English language has extensive literary and cultural roots. It played the vital unifying role during India's freedom struggle and now is a key link language across the diversity of languages spoken in India. English has also facilitated the explosion of learning and education in India in the exchange of thought, communication, and cultural expression. Even after independence, England has quickly spread across India, and we still must recognize that in spite of a national language that is urgently called for, English is still, however, importantly relevant. The position of English in the life of a nation is very much determined by geography, culture and politics; the status of English at any moment in time will influence its teaching, which, in turn, will affect what it means for individuals and society. Throughout India, English has become the mode of communication of choice, becoming the common global language used in trade, commerce, industry, science and diplomacy, as well as

offering mechanisms for accessing global knowledge and contributing to the feeling of accelerating change in a scientific and technologically dominated age. A nation rich in one of the greatest literary traditions in the world, the English language has, linguistically, unlocked, virtually, all doors imagined in modern civilization, including science, technology, the economy, politics, administration and so forth.

Literature has always served as a mirror of life: mirroring the social milieu and the time in history the body of literature is coming from. The term literature is derived from the Latin term *litteratura*, meaning "writing made up of letters." Literature can see many more classifications, to include language, culture of origin, time in history, and genre, as well as content theme. The earliest forms of literature existed as entertainment, and in time, the respective authors began using writing as a medium of social consciousness and change. Writers began utilizing their respective literature to shine light on many social issues that encouraged daily lives and personal change for the better. Literature is unique because it has documented the world and worldly values, issues, and trends from the beginning of recorded time to the present. Readers may look to literature solely for entertainment purposes; however, literature becomes much more than a means of entertainment; good literature moves readers outside of the everyday towards uncommon truths and universal understanding (Ordeniza and Lucas).

English literature has its roots at the beginnings of English history and includes a spectrum of various forms: novels, short stories, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama. The earliest examples of English literature are a vivid portrayal of the lives and circumstances of people at a certain time and place. Each transformation of English society is expressed in the literature of the time. The mission of all literature educators is to create a total combination of flexibility toward learning in the educational process. Learning, as with the majority of subjects, begins at the basic or literal level, when students focus on the elements of setting, plot, and characters, and then answer basic



questions based on the need to refer to the text and. When students achieve sufficient levels of competence, the learning then moves to the higher level of interpreting, in which students study themes and characters and produce inferences based on the author's thoughts. Finally, in the collaborative activity, students produce personal responses and then share, discuss, and reflect on various aspects of the text.

Literature is often viewed only in reading and writing contexts, but in terms of developing students speaking and listening skills, literature is useful in this context as well. Literary texts allow for many stimulating activities for the classroom, including oral and imaginative storytelling, improvised conversation, performances of dramatizations, role-play of characters, reenactments, mimed performances, and discussion circles. Practicing these types of activities in your classroom can happen, and these activities can contribute greatly to learners developing their spoken articulation and listening attentiveness. To supplement discussions and speaking whenever feasible, educators could also use authentic audio and video recordings of literary texts or read literary texts aloud. The beginnings of standardization in English with Modern English, the standard for global use today. William Shakespeare is the father of modern English literature. He contributed not only to English literature but also to the foundation of modern English with a legacy that carries on to learners and readers around the globe. Teaching is part of an educational process; it is a process of organization that leads to learning.

Language is a central part of our daily lives. It is more than just the means of communication with which we use to share ideas, give explanations, reach out and connect with each other; it is a reflection of our social identity. We capture and convey meaning through language. Language is important to all of our lives, and as much as we may find it difficult to embody the language we speak, we also share a common global link language in English. There is no shortage of influence from the British Empire when it lost its grip on many parts of the world, and so it is no surprise to find English so embedded in so many

places in the world. This is very much the case in India with a host of indigenous languages, as well as spoken English. Listening was, and is, an integral part of communication and part of the eventual development of speaking.

Listening skills have come a long way from where they are today, and, in our media-rich lifestyle, learning English possesses greater opportunities than decades before based around technology and communication and language labs. Technology provides the learner with opportunities to carry out listening skills, which will further develop procedures and methodologies leading to improved communication skills and learning. In contemporary India, proficient spoken English skills will likely be one of the most in-demand language skills. As language is largely expressed through speech, that means their language learning must include spoken English since, generally, this is the area least focused on in the Indian classroom experience. When we say that English is a global language, it is largely because it is the dominant form of 'spoken' language. And with respect to spoken forms, societies depend on some version of spoken English, and so, as it is required as a lingua franca in our interconnected and modern world, it is very much a necessity.

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