

**DIPLOMA IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
(D.El.Ed.)**

Course-503

Learning Languages at Elementary Level

**Block -1
Understanding Language**



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Block 1

Understanding Language

Block Units

Unit 1 : What is Language?

Unit 2 : Indian Languages

Unit 3 : Language Learning and Teaching

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

*This course has been developed to enable you to know about various aspects of language. We hope that after completing this course your sensitivity to language will increase and you will become more sensitive learners and teach the language classes in a more pleasant and efficient way. The **unit-1** is about the nature of language, language usage and the psycho-social aspects of language. In the **unit-2** we will give you an idea about the multilingual character of India and we will discuss how a country with thousands of languages is still one linguistic area. In this unit we will discuss constitutional status of languages spoken in India. The **unit-3** is about language learning and language teaching methods. Children are born with an infinite capacity to learn language and by the time they are 3-4 years old, they start using the language effectively. In a very short time they begin to understand and produce new sentences giving us evidence that they have internalised the structure of language. It is really surprising to notice how children pick up such complicated grammatical structures in such young age. Are they born with a universal grammar imbibed in their brain? We will discuss this in detail. We will discuss what role grammar teaching has on language teaching. We will look at the advantages and disadvantages of various language teaching methods such as Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual method, Communicative Approach etc. Unit four talks about techniques of audio-lingual method in some details.*

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UNIT 1 WHAT IS LANGUAGE?



Notes

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will explain what language is? What is the definition and scope of language? What is the role of grammar in language? How do we acquire sound system, word formation, sentence formation and information sharing in a language? We will discuss psychological and social aspects of language. We will discuss in very short, what is the importance of language proficiency and how various language evaluation and assessment techniques work. We will also discuss about language and its relation to literature.

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit is largely about nature and structure of language. After you have read this unit, you should be able to respond to the following issues:



- language as a concept
- relationship of language and society
- innate language faculty of human beings
- the nature and structure of language
- how language is used
- language learning assessment tools
- concept of language proficiency
- difference between informal and formal communication

1.2 IMPORTANCE AND SCOPE OF LANGUAGE

There are two ways of looking at language. Ordinary people recognise language only as a means of communication. Linguists generally look at language as a pairing of a grammar and a dictionary. These two ways of looking at language restrict the versatility of language and its usage. These perspectives conclude that speakers of a given language come later than dictionaries and grammars that exist in a given language. However, unlike ordinary people or linguists for that matter, it is important that you know there is no language without speakers. Dictionaries and grammars cannot be made unless there are speakers of a language who would participate with linguists or people to prepare dictionaries and grammars. Speech community is the only vital part of language and its usage. Speech community is formed by people who speak a given language and give the given language a shape or standard. There is no doubt that language developed as humans developed in a certain process through various phases. Had there been no society or speech community, the dictionaries and grammars would have had no value. Therefore, to be able to define language, we will have to understand various aspects of language including evolution of language.

First of all, language is associated with the identity of an individual. When a person says that he speaks Gondi, he not only says which language he speaks, he also tells a lot about the society he belongs to and the social customs and norms of that society. He indicates what class of people he lives with and is exposed to and where would he return after it gets dark. Secondly, speaker of a language takes into account all these factors that are a fact of his life. Who is to be respected, who is to be loved, who is too hated and who is small etc get their due identity from the language heard to be spoken by them. Language really has got a special relationship with society. Language is a medium that maintains and moderates class hierarchy too.

The psychological aspect of language is also a very important aspect of language. It is surprising to note that children from all over the world, no matter whichever social class or geographical location they belong to, develop an adult like

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command over the language they speak. By the time she is four year old, the child develops a language of her own that matches the correctness principles of the appropriate words and grammar of a given language. We don't find it difficult to tell new stories to a four year old everyday and hear the same from her.

There is another important of aspect of language. Language is a medium that nullifies distance. A friend who lives thousands of miles away from you can get upset with over phone and that anger can get pacified if you call up again and pacify his anger. How does it happen? Only by the use of appropriate language.

It is also very common that children learn the languages spoken by their neighbours, friends, family and the environment. The capacity to learn a language is not restricted to the fact that we can learn only one language. Everyone has the capacity to acquire various aspects of language use at various levels and learn multiple languages. In fact, multilingualism is constitutive of being human.

Structural aspect of language is important to explore too. We will discuss this aspect in the next unit. The overall concept of language is that every language depends on a certain set of principles at the levels of sounds, words, grammar and usage. We simply cannot use sounds of a language in any order we like; there are very strict rules that define that order; nor can we use a grammatical structure that is not permissible by the set of principles that govern a language. Nor can we arrange the sentences of a language in any random order so that they would constitute a legitimate dialogue.

You must also know that the nature and use of language is such that it always remains in the process of change. But the process of change is so gradual that even parents think that they speak the same language that their children speak. But it is true that the language of grand children is often different from the language of grandparents.

Check Your Progress-1

1. *What is most the important for linguists?*

- (a) *words and sentences* (b) *sound system and sentence*
- (c) *dictionary and grammar* (d) *sound system and grammar*

2. *How does environment help children to learn a language?*

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3. *Language is identity of an individual. How? Explain.*

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1.3 LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR

People often see different kind of differences in correct and incorrect speech. Usually when you speak in your language you can never make a mistake; even if once in a while you do make a mistake, you know how to correct it immediately. Incorrect speech is always related to the acquisition of other languages. This may also happen when we start regarding a specific variety of a language as standard. In such cases, children born into families speaking the non-standard variety often become a target of ridicule for no fault of their own. (We will elaborate this point later.)

Each language, whether you call it a language or dialect, has a grammar of its own. That language has its own sound system, grammar rules and all levels of language formation straight. We can understand this point with examples taken for each level.

1.3.1 STRUCTURE OF SOUND SYSTEM

Every language has its own sound system. But the sound system is such that it is finite and every language has sounds that are found in the finite system of sound structures of the world. For example, every language has vowels and consonants. They may be more or less in number. There are very few languages in the language that can have less than three vowels; rather there are some languages that have 20 vowel sounds. Consonants vary from 8-10 to 40-50. The difference between Hindi and English is the following:

	<i>Vowels</i>	<i>Consonants</i>	<i>Total</i>
English	20	24	44
Hindi	10	33	43

These sounds are not listed in the alphabetical system of the language. These are corresponding sounds of English and Hindi. That means, these have specific significance in the language and these are the minimum meaningless sounds of a language that can change the meaning of the words in a language. For example,

English-	kil	‘kill’
	pil	‘pill’
Hindi-	kal	‘tomorrow’
	pal	‘moment’

These examples show that /p/ and /k/ are significant sounds in these two languages.

But can we treat all the 43/44 sounds of either Hindi or English alike? Would these two languages have these sounds in the same sequence like the other, as the native speaker or the learner of the given language learns the alphabet system of



that language in certain sequence by the age of 4 or 5? Let us imagine a situation where we would like to put the alphabet /p/ in the consonant clusters in Hindi. Do you think, in such a situation, any other consonant of Hindi can cluster with the /p/ sound of Hindi? Look at the following examples:

*pkav *pkhil *pgel *pchav *pchil *pchel
 *ptav *ptil *pthel *ptav *ptil *pthel

Are these possible words in Hindi? If no, then what is the rule in Hindi?

Look at rules in Hindi.

Rule – 1: If a word starts with a consonant cluster and the first consonant is /p/ then the consonants that can cluster with /p/ are /y/, /r/, /l/, and /v/ only and none else.

Following this phonological rule, you can make any word or find a word that has such a cluster in the dictionary.

Let's look at another phonological rule. Let's try to understand how many consonantal sounds (not letters) can appear together before a vowel sound appears. You would notice that no Indian language including English allows to have four consonantal sounds at the beginning of a word. See that in English in a word such as 'Psychology' (where you see 5 consonant letters at the beginning), there is actually ONLY one consonantal sound i.e. 's'. The word 'psychology' is actually pronounced as /saikoloji/. However, the English word 'stress' has three consonantal sounds such as, /s/, /t/ and /r/ at the beginning of a word. It is the same in the word 'street'. Let us look at some such clusters in Hindi and English.

Hindi - 'smriti' memory
 'skru' screw

English- spray, street, scratch, splash, squash etc

Don't Hindi or English have any word that can start with a consonant cluster of 4 or more sounds? Recall if the languages you know have such a cluster. Now let us make the second rule for Hindi sound system.

Rule 2:

- (a) Not more than 4 consonantal sounds can precede a vowel in the word initial position
- (b) If 3 consonant sounds occur in a cluster then we have to arrange them in a row. Let's refer to consonantal sounds as C1, C2 and C3.

C1 can only be /s/ sound

C2 can only be /p/, /t/ and /k/



C3 can only be /y/, /r/, /l/ and /v/ sounds

It should be clear to you how well organised and systematic is the rule system of a language at the level of sounds.

1.3.2 WORD FORMATION

Language is systematically organised at the level of words also. There are fixed rules about how a singular would be converted into plural or a noun to adjective. Rules are so systematic that they clearly differentiate consonant ending words from vowel ending words and also words ending with different vowel sounds.

In Hindi, ‘ghar/ meaning house’ and ‘laRkaa/ meaning boy’ are masculine words. They are singular too. What would be the plural of these two words? Of course we do know about it, but we need to know how to put them into systematic rules that all the children who learn Hindi know about and discuss it in detail. Now you tell me whether “laRke/ boys” is singular or plural. Let us look at some sentences:

1. laRke fuTbol khel rahe haiN
2. laRke ne khaanaa khaayaa
3. mohan ke paas kai ghar haiN
4. yah ghar bahut sundar hai

Sentence 1 and 3 make it clear that ‘laRke’ and ‘ghar’ are plural because in both the cases the plural marker ‘haiN’ has been used in the verb. But notice that in sentences 2 and 4, the same word ‘laRke’ is singular in number.

Let us now investigate this rule in detail because English and many other languages of the world have only one word for the corresponding word in plural. Therefore, let us assume that even Hindi would definitely have one plural number for its words. But this is somehow not the rule in Hindi. Sanskrit not only has singular, dual and plural, but it also has 15/16 different forms. In Hindi, there are 2 or 3 and even multiple plural markers for each noun, and all are rule bound. In most of the cases, there is only one number system, either in singular or in plural, for one word. Consider the following table and see how such a system gets exemplified in words such ‘laRkaa’ and ‘ghar’.

ghar ‘house’

<i>Function</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
kartaa kaarak/ Nominative	ghar	ghar
bibhakti puurv/ Elsewhere	ghar	gharoN
sambodhan/ Vocative	ghar!	gharo!



laRkaa 'boy'

Function	Singular	Plural
karta/ Nominative case	laRkaa	laRke
bibhakti purba/ Elsewhere	laRke	laRkoN
sambodhan/Vocative	laRke!	laRko!

In Hindi, every noun can have six forms in principle if we consider form and function together. Many forms may look the same but have different functions in different contexts. So, /laRke/ 'boys' can be both singular and plural. This is the reason why the word 'laRke' is plural in the nominative subject position, singular before 'ne' etc. and in the vocative case. If you look at the forms, you will notice that the word 'ghar' for example has three forms such as – 'ghar', 'gharoN', and 'gharo'. The word 'laRkaa' too has four forms such as – 'laRkaa', 'laRke', laRkoN' and 'laRko'. But at the level of usage they have six forms or case based positions. In those six case positions the word 'laRkaa' looks like the following:

5. laRkaa khel rahaa hai
6. laRke khel rahe haiN
7. laRke ne khaanaa khaaya
8. laRkon ne khaanaa khaayaa
9. O laRke, idhar aa
10. O laRko , idhar aao !

In sentence 5, 'laRkaa' is singular, in sentence 6 'laRke' is plural and they act as subjects of the sentence. But in sentence 7, 'laRke' is singular because it is followed by the postposition 'ne'. In sentence 8 'laRkoN' is plural; it is in fact the plural of sentence 7. In sentence 9 'laRke' is singular in vocative and in sentence 10 the 'laRko' is plural in vocative.

Let us take another example from the world of word formation rules. There are several rules in Hindi and English that converts a noun into an adjective. For example, 'rain', 'fun', 'sun', 'fish', 'cloud' etc. These nouns can be converted to adjectives by adding 'y' in English. So the adjectives of those words are- 'funny', 'sunny', 'fishy', 'cloudy' etc. Hindi has a group of nominal words that change their grammatical category and become adjective by addition of 'i' vowel sound. For example, 'sarkar', 'baazaar', 'baigan', 'apraadh' etc become 'sarkarii', 'baazaarii', 'baigani', 'apraadhii' etc.

1.3.3 SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

Compare sentence 5 to 10 with the following sentences:

11. laRkii khel rahii thii



12. laRkiyaaN khel rahiiN thiiN
13. laRki ne khaanaa khaayaa
14. laRkiyoN ne khaanaaa khaayaa
15. laRke ne laRkii ko maaraa
16. laRkii ne laRke ko maaraa
17. laRke ne roTii khaayii
18. laRkii ne roTii khaayii

A careful look at sentences 5 to 18 suggests that language is highly rule-governed at the level of sentences as well. You cannot arrange words in any random order to form a sentence. In fact, as compared to the level of words, language is more tightly organised at the level of sentences. Sentences 5,6,9,10,11 and 12 make it clear that the relationship between subject and verb is very significant in Hindi. It's important to note that the verb agrees with the subject as per the gender, person and number of the subject noun. The following sentences make it clearer:

- raam khaanaa khaataa hai
- siitaa khaanaa khaatii hai
- tuu khaanaa khaataa hai
- tum khaanaa khaate ho
- tum khaanaa khaati ho
- aap khaanaa khaate haiN
- aap khaanaa khaatii haiN
- maiN khaanaa khaata huuN
- maiN khaanaa khaatii huuN
- ham khaanaa khaate haiN
- ham khaanaa khaatii haiN

These sentences can give you a glimpse of the complex relationship that exists between subject and verb in Hindi.

Let us return to sentence 5 to 18. Let us see whether we see the same similarity between subject and verb in the case of sentences 7,8,13,14,15,16,17 and 18 compared to sentence 5,6,9,10,11 and 12. In sentence 7 and 8 the verb changes as per the object and not as per the subject. The same is the case with 17 and 18. In 7 and 8, object is masculine and the verb is also masculine in form. In 17 and 18, object is feminine and the verb is also feminine. It doesn't matter whether the



verb is masculine or feminine. The rule is- if the subject takes a case such as an ergative case then the verb agrees with the object. In 13 and 14 the object is feminine. Let us see what happens in case of sentence 15 and 16 and see how the verb is governed there. In these two sentences subject and object both are followed by postpositions such as 'ne' and 'ko'. In such cases, the verb is always in the neutral past i.e. what we would use with the third person like 'he' in the simple past as in 'vah bhaagaa'.

1.3.4 DISCOURSE STRUCTURE

The way sound system, word formation and sentence structure are totally rule bound, in the same way, the social communication is rule bound and we cannot cross the norms of communicative rules. For example, there is a basic rule that you should never speak in between a conversation as a third person. Sometimes, we make blunders in communication because we do not simply listen to the other person carefully. Sometime, the listener gets very upset in the middle of a talk and by the time the talk ends, he gets to know that what he thought he was hearing was not what was being talked about. Language is crucially related to understanding it in the right dimension. For example, words in Hindi like 'isliye, usne, par, aur, kyonki etc' are so important that you cannot really understand the meaning of the communication unless you give importance to these words. For example, if a man says, "mujhe isliye der ho gayii kyonki raste main trafik bahut thaa" meaning "I got delayed because there was heavy traffic on the road." If we will remove the words 'isliye' meaning 'which is why or because' then the sentence becomes meaningless. At the level of effective understanding, a sentence becomes meaningful when effective words are used in an effective sequence. When the order of those words will be scrambled the meaning of the sentence will also change.

Check Your Progress-2

1. *How many forms a noun can have in Hindi?*

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| (i) <i>Five</i> | (ii) <i>Three</i> |
| (iii) <i>Two</i> | (iv) <i>Six</i> |

2. *If a word will start with three consonants then,*

- *The first consonant can only be /s/*
- *The second consonants can only be /p/, /t/, or /k/*
- *The third consonants can only be /y/, /r/, /l/ or /v/*

Give examples to support your answers

3. *raam khaanaa khaataa hai*

siitaa khaanaa khaati hai



Explain the relationship between subject and verb taking these two sentences as example sentences.

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1.4 STANDARD LANGUAGE

Language standardization follows certain steps. As a first step, the language that is called standard language is the language that had been chosen to be called the standard language from the many other existing languages of that linguistic area or society. This language has certain status in that society. In the Brahmanic society, Sanskrit used to be the standard language. When the Arabs ruled, Arabic became the standard language and if the Iranians will rule, Persian will be the standard language. When British rule came, English became the standard language ignoring all the hundreds of languages that existed in India at that time. Now Hindi and English both are official language or standard language. Now when we speak about English, that English is standard that is found in Oxford dictionary or spoken in and around Oxford or Cambridge. When we speak about Hindi, Khadi boli would be talked about and Braj variety or Avadhi variety will only be considered dialects of Hindi. In the third step, the chosen variety will have a grammar written on its rules and various kinds of dictionaries will be made. There would be many discussions and structural and analytical books written on that variety of language too which is called Standard language. That standard language becomes the language of media, administration, judiciary and formal education. This variety gets taught in text books and it spreads this way. That's Hindi in this context. The fourth or last stage of standardization is that the language gets the opportunity to be developed in every other way such as cinema, literature, music and so on and so forth.

Standardization process is very highly related to the process of social exploitation. The language that gets chosen as the standard language of the many other languages spoken in that area is the language that has political power, corporate power and other necessary powers.

Check Your Progress-3

1. The standardized language often belongs to a social class which possesses _____
2. How is the process of standardization related to social exploitation?



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3. Language by character keeps changing. So how far is it viable to standardize a language? Give your reasons on this account.

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1.5 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

It is definite that language is very deeply seated in human brain/mind. It's been noticed that when a certain part of head is hit, the language imbalance results. Sometimes, the affected person loses the ability to understand whereas other time he loses the ability to speak. Sometimes the word formation gets distorted and sometimes the sentence construction.

The second point to note is, probably every child is born with a universal grammar. Language is pictured in that mind the we talk, walk, sit , sleep etc. Every child knows in his mind that every language has nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, punctuations, subject, object etc. By this capacity, a child learns the languages spoken in his community by the time he is three or four. We have discussed in 1.4 that the language formation is done at a rule bound manner in every stage. If would have not conceived the notion of universal grammar then we could not have found it so easy to explain how come a child of the age 3 / 4 acquires his language so scientifically and correctly so untutored. You have noticed that no one makes any basic grammatical mistake or word level mistakes in his language and if by chance he does, then he immediately corrects them. Kids of that age will always pronounce 'scooter' as 'kooter' and 'garm' as 'garam'. Even at the level of sentence construction, children find it difficult to acquire complex grammar so easily and they use words that they can easily speak and not complex or difficult words. So a Hindi speaking kid would say,' kul jana' in stead of saying the full sentence , ' aaj mujhe school jana hai.'.

In short, children are born with a universal grammar, they have a psychological readiness about language acquisition and this readiness gets completed with the environmental exposure, which are all natural and untutored. And the journey of language acquisition continues with a tutored set up as he goes to school.



Check your Progress-4

- 1. (a) Children have the _____ ability about language acquisition.
- (b) Every child is born with a _____ ability of language acquisition.

2. What kind of language disorder can emerge if a part of brain gets damaged?

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3. Children are born with the ability to speak. But does that mean that if we would leave a child in a forest, he would still be able to speak? If not, then what else is important for language learning apart from the inborn quality of language learning.

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4. What is the difference between tutored language learning and natural language acquisition?

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1.6 THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

We have talked about language and society before. When children learn language they not only learn the language in its correct form, they also learn the way a given language is used in the society. Children learn it very quickly how to behave themselves linguistically vis a vis people, places and occasion. This is how they learn the various structures and various styles of language usage.

In spite of having a universal grammar, the child learns that language that he hears from his environment. Actually, our choice of words, our selection of sentences are always dependent on the factors such as, the context, the person who speak to, the place where we speak and the theme. You don't speak to your father about your school work the same way as you speak to your mom about your food etc. You cannot use the same language with your teachers the language you use with your friends.



Social differences and stratifications are prominently observed the way we use language. Sometimes the people of different castes use different styles of the same language. Language changes in every 15 to 20 kilometres. It is often dependent on the way sentences are constructed and words are formed and even the way how words are pronounced. The moment you open your mouth you disclose your identity. Where you come from, what kind of family you belong to and what sort of people form your friend circle gets know the moment you say even a small word such as 'hello'.

In Delhi, some people say 'majja' and others say 'mazza'; some say 'zafar' and some say 'jafar'. The way of talking can tell whether the speaker is educated or uneducated, poor or rich or old Delhi or new Delhi and the like. Whether you are calling your school 'skul' or 'sakul' that too makes a lot of difference. This way linguistic identity is directly related to social identity.

In the next unit we will discuss the multilingual character of India. The same person speaks the same language in various ways or various languages in different social and professional circles. It's very common feature of Indian society that a college going girl speaks Marwari at home, Hindi with her friends and English at college. And it is also possible that she prays in Sanskrit at home and temple. This type of linguistic behaviour is generally noticed in multilingual nations. In all multilingual nations people decide which language to use and how to use that language based on the place where they are communicating. For example, in America the English that is spoken in roadside areas is different from the English that is spoken in academic fields and universities.

Check Your Progress-5

1. *In which of the following areas does language change in every 15 to 20 kilometres*
 - (a) *At the level of sentence structure*
 - (b) *At the level of word formation*
 - (c) *At the level of sound structure*
 - (d) *At the level of communicative styles*

1.7 LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Language is perfect in all its styles. Understanding someone else's speech by hearing it, understanding one's own speech having said it and even reading something. But the style of language that comes to us through literature is really fascinating. It's always a challenge for a linguist to be able to analyse a specific style of language used in a poem, story, drama or novels etc. Effective analysis



of language at the level of sound, word formation, sentence structure as it is used stylistically in literature in its various forms can help us to know how is the language of ordinary usage different from the language of literature. Try and transform the following into simple prose:

‘karat karat abhyaas ke jaDmati hot sujaan’

You will notice that the arrangement of words is crucially different.

Crucially significant differences between language of ordinary usage and language of literature can be found in the areas of simile, appreciation, synonyms, parody etc also.

Check Your Progress-6

1. *Take a poem you like. Render it into simple prose. What kind of differences do you notice?*

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2. *What is the difference between metaphor and simile?*

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3. *In Hindi you can say ‘ghar-ghar’ and also ‘ghar-var’, something you can’t do in English. What’s the difference between ‘ghar-ghar’ and ‘ghar-var’ like expressions?*

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1.8 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

When can we say that a person is fully proficient in her language? There are two aspects to this question. One, as we have already shown a 4 year old child is fully proficient in her language in that she knows the basic grammar and vocabulary and all the rules to put sounds into words and words into sentences. On the other

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hand, you never become fully proficient in any language because there is always more to learn, new words, new expressions etc. In this context, it is important to understand the nature of the context in which a given language is being learnt. Broadly speaking, there can be two contexts: informal or formal. The informal context is the natural context of the family, friends and the neighbourhood in which all children normally learn their languages. In these contexts there is rarely any formal intervention by the parents and relatives. Parents generally treat the 'errors' of their children with a sense of joy and affection. The strange thing is that children still learn language in all its richness and complexity. In the formal context, we obtain all kinds of support systems including schools, teachers, materials, new methods of teaching, radio, TV, CD player and a language lab. The striking thing is that in spite of all this children still fail to learn language. This of course is true if children are exposed to several languages at a young age in a natural environment, they easily learn all those without any support systems. We will return to these issues in greater detail in Unit 3.

So far the issue of measuring language proficiency is concerned; we have all been for a long time obsessed with measuring separately LSRW skills. We are fully aware that language proficiency can only be captured in their working as a whole rather than as discrete skills. For example, if you call a doctor with some problem and need some medical advice urgently, you speak and explain your problem, you understand his response and then you write down the names of the medicines counterchecking with him the names reading them again. So all the skills and language processing with comprehension are often used simultaneously. We talk about this in greater detail in Unit 10.

Here we conclude that all children are competent in their OWN languages before they come to school and it is of utmost importance that teachers and education system as a whole recognise this enormous potential of children.

Check Your Progress-7

1. *What is missing in the formal environment of school:*
(a) teachers (b) books (c) language lab (d) caring home environment

2. *How does a child acquire proficiency in her home languages?*
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3. *How should we measure language proficiency?*
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1.9 LET US SUM UP

- Language is not just a pairing of a grammar and a dictionary or simply a means of communication. It is much more.
- Language is constitutive of being human. It is a marker of a speaker's identity.
- Language defines the relationship among the members of a society and encodes the social hierarchies.
- A normal child in any society in any part of the world becomes a linguistic adult by the age of 4. She acquires the basic vocabulary and structure of her languages and uses them accurately.
- Every language has a grammar of its own and is rule-governed at the levels of sounds, words, sentences and dialogue.
- Language is constantly changing; the language of grandparents is different from the language of grandchildren.
- Every language has its own grammatical structure but languages will have vowels and consonants and nouns, verbs and adjectives. Sounds cannot be put together at random; there are rules that define their combinations. Similarly words cannot be put together at random.
- The processes of language standardisation are closely associated with processes of exploitation; those that have the power make all the decisions.
- All children are born with and an innate endowment for language acquisition consisting of a Universal Grammar. They learn languages around them without any formal instruction. They only need a caring environment and some language input.
- A child not only acquires linguistic competence but also communicative competence to be able to use language appropriately in different contexts.
- Language of literature differs from the language of day today conversation.
- Assessment should be holistic rather than discrete in terms of just LSRW.

1.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Agnihotri, R. K. (2007). *Hindi: An Essential Grammar*. London: Routledge.
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1.11 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Do language and society influence each other? Illustrate your answer.
2. What do you understand by multilinguality? Are you a bi-/multilingual?
3. Show how language is rule governed at the levels sounds, words and sentences.
4. In Hindi, if you add 'ii' to some nouns, they become adjectives such as: sarkaar-sarkaarii; apraadh-apraadhii etc. Identify some other way ways of making adjectives from nouns.
5. Elaborate the stages in the process of language standardisation.
6. How does language change in terms of person, place and topic? Illustrate with suitable examples.
7. What are some of the differences between the language of literature and day today language?
8. What role does environment play in language acquisition?

ACTIVITY

- Children often face difficulties in school because the language of education is different from the languages of home. Observe some classes and make a list of such problems.
- Do you think children who are taught through the languages of their neighbourhood face similar problems? Make observations in a suitable school.
- Record some of your conversations with a four year old child. Show how she knows the grammar of her language.



UNIT 2 INDIAN LANGUAGES

STRUCTURE

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Linguistic Diversity in India

2.2.1 A picture of India's linguistic diversity

2.2.2 Language Families of India and India as a Linguistic Area

2.3 What does the Indian Constitution say about Languages?

2.4 Categories of Languages in India

2.4.1 Scheduled Languages

2.4.2 Regional Languages and Mother Tongues

2.4.3 Classical Languages

2.4.4 Is there a Difference between Language and Dialect?

2.5 Status of Hindi in India

2.6 Status of English in India

2.7 The Language Education Policy in India

Provisions of Various Committees and Commissions

Three Language Formula

National Curriculum Framework-2005

2.8 Let Us Sum Up

2.9 Suggested Readings and References

2.10 Unit-End Exercises

2.0 INTRODUCTION

You must have heard this song:

agrezi mein kehte hein- I love you

gujrati mein bole- tane prem karu chhuun



bangali mein kehte he- amii tumaake bhaalo baastiu

aur punjabi me kehte he- tere bin mar jaavaan, me tenuu pyar karna, tere jaiyo naiyo labnaa

Songs of this kind is only one manifestation of the diversity and fluidity of languages in India. We are sure you can think of many more instances where you notice a multiplicity of languages being used at the same place at the same time. Imagine a wedding in Delhi in a Telugu family where Hindi, Urdu, Dakkhini, Telugu, English and Sanskrit may all be used in the same event.

How many languages, do you think are spoken in India? At least 15-20 names must have come to your mind. However, this is a very small number. The list is very long and also contains within it many smaller lists. In fact, it is believed that of about 5000 languages spoken in the world, about one-third are spoken in India. Thus, about 1600 languages are spoken in India. We will learn more about our multilingual heritage in this unit.

Till about the 20th century linguistic diversity was considered to be a problem and various efforts were made to deal with this problem. However, for the past few years this linguistic diversity is being considered a heritage and efforts are being made to use this heritage for the development of society and language itself. We will also discuss this issue in greater detail. Along with this we will also talk about the language education policy of India and about the various constitutional provisions about language.

India is a multilingual country. However, two languages - Hindi and English occupy a prominent position in this region. Thus, it is important to understand the position of these languages from a historical and current perspective.

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the linguistic diversity and richness in India.
- Be able to analyse India's linguistic diversity
- Look at India as a linguistic area.
- Familiarize with various categories of languages like - scheduled languages, mother tongues, classical languages, dialects etc.
- Understand the stands taken by various educational policies on language.
- Understand English and Hindi's historical and present status.



2.2 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

2.2.1 A PICTURE OF INDIA'S LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

You must have heard the phrase 'unity in diversity' many a times. This sentiment is very true for India. We see various types of diversity in India, for example those in eating habits, dresses and costumes, religion, customs etc. Such types of diversity are also commonly seen in many parts of the world. However, the linguistic diversity as seen in India is not seen anywhere else in the world.

More than 1600 languages are spoken in India and these languages belong to four different language families. India is called a multilingual country because of this linguistic diversity. In fact, multilinguality is an integral part of the Indian temperament. We get a composite picture of India's multilinguality from the 1961 Language Census of India. 1652 mother tongues were identified during this census and they were in turn classified into 193 languages. Multilinguality in India also has many dimensions. One dimension of this multilinguality is that the 8th schedule of our constitution names 22 languages; these are indeed some of the major languages of India. At the time of our independence this schedule contained 14 languages only; going from 14 to 22 is an evidence of our multilinguality and of the importance people attach to their languages. Another evidence of our multilinguality is that our newspapers, movies, books, TV, radio, schools, offices, courts etc, function using various languages. Similarly, there are many other dimensions of Indian multilinguality.

Monolingualism is a kind of artifact some people believe in and regard multilingualism as a problem and a marker of being backward. However, multilinguality is not a problem in India, both at an individual and a societal level. In fact, it is a resource for us and an expression of our cultural richness. Multilinguality is also a resource because people who know more than one language are not just proficient users of the languages but their views on society are also more sensitive and tolerant. "Multilinguality has very close relationship with language proficiency, scholastic achievement, cognitive flexibility and social tolerance." (Agnihotri, 2007, p. 4)

Multilinguality is not a problem but a source of strength for India. "It is natural for the Indian person and community to accept many languages and also allow for a free give and take policy with various national and international languages. It would not be surprising if you find a boy speaking to his parents in Bhojpuri, his old friends in Bhojpuri or Hindi, his college friends in Hindi or English and doing all his office work in English. In fact, in many situations we also find two or more languages mixing with each other. Languages become richer due to such processes." (Agnihotri, 2000, p. 36)

On this issue Subbarao says, "Even though Indian languages seem to *prima face* differ from each other, they share various similarities. Western countries are predominantly monolingual. Various western linguists feel that when so many languages are spoken in



the same region, it leads to problems of intelligibility (i.e. people find it difficult to understand each other). However, in reality, no such problem arises. Every educated person in India knows at least one or two languages other than his/her mother tongue. He/she is able to easily carry on his/her day-to-day work using all these languages. You will not find such linguistic barriers even in cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Calcutta. Be it a labourer, businessman, clerk or an officer, nobody's work stops because of language." (Subbarao, 2000, p. 41)

It is clear from both these quotes that our linguistic diversity is not a problem for us; neither is it a marker of our backwardness; in fact it is evidence of our linguistic richness.

Culture and attitudes towards diversity in languages have an important role to play in any nation being multilingual or monolingual. America essentially came into being when people from various continents settled there, however it still considers itself a monolingual nation. The Constitution of America states that only a person who knows English is eligible to become an American citizen. There is also a lack of facilities for children who speak languages other than English in the country. It is because of such reasons that the third generation of American citizens does not know their mother tongues. However, the situation in India is very different from that in America. After the Indian partition, the Sindhi speaking population settled in India and as per the 2001 census there are 2,535,485 Sindhi speakers in India even today. Similarly, 77,305 Indian citizens speak the Tibetan language; 10,504 Indians speak Farsi, 11,066 speak Pashto and 51,728 speak Arabic. Two thousand five hundred and ninety three Indians living in Pondicherry speak French and there are also people who speak Burmese, Hebrew, Laotian etc. It is also important to note that most of these people speak at least 2 languages. (Sinha, 2000, p. 64)

At the same time, we should not forget that many languages in India are on the verge of becoming extinct and people speaking tribal languages are becoming fewer in number. For example, the number of people speaking a particular tribal language of Pondicherry is less than 100. Speakers of various languages have also gone down in number between the 2001 and 2010 census.

We have seen that our attitude towards diversity in languages influences the existence of linguistic diversity or multilingual quality. If we have a positive attitude to linguistic diversity, we help in the existence and growth of all the languages spoken in the environment. On the contrary, intolerance and narrow thinking towards languages other than one's own may result in discord and disagreement.

Examples of both positive and negative attitudes towards linguistic diversity can be found in India, from its different parts and from different points of time. For example, there are 21 sub-castes in the Naga community and about the same numbers of languages are spoken in the community. People of a particular sub-group speak to the other members of their sub-group in their mother tongue. When people of one sub-group need to talk to



people of the other sub-group they use Nagameez language and when they have to speak to people outside their community (i.e. people outside Nagaland and Manipur) they use Hindi and English. This is an example of the positive attitude that Naga people have towards linguistic diversity and this is what makes them multilingual. On the other hand, residents of Goa keep fighting over the existence of Marathi and Konkani. Similarly, residents of Belgaon in Karnataka are arguing over the existence of Kannada and Marathi (Sinha, 2000, p. 65-66).

To conclude, India is a country with much linguistic diversity and this diversity is not a problem but an important resource for us. An open attitude towards linguistic diversity helps us in maintaining this resource while narrow thinking causes damage. Thus, we must have a healthy and positive attitude towards all languages.

2.2.2 LANGUAGE FAMILIES OF INDIA AND INDIA AS A LINGUISTIC AREA

We have seen that there are a variety of languages in India. Some of these languages have common features and common identities while some do not. Generally, languages which share common features belong to a particular language family.

India is not only unique from the point of view of linguistic diversity but also because of the variety of language families that exist in India. There are four language families in India:

1. Indo Aryan.
2. Dravidian
3. Tibeto-Burman.
4. Austro-Asian/ Munda

Some prominent languages in each of these language families are given below:

Indo Aryan: Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Assamese, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Gujrati, Marathi, Konkani, Nepali, Oriya, Kashmiri etc.

Dravidian: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Kurukh etc.

Tibeto-Burman: Manipuri, Angami, Bodo, Garo, Tripuri, Tangsa, Mizo

Munda: Munda, Mundari, Ho, Santhali, Savara etc.

It would be important to note that despite the linguistic diversity and variety of language families available in India, India is one linguistic area. For understanding this it is important to appreciate that people speaking languages of all four families have been living together here for thousands of years and thus languages have borrowed greatly



from each other. As a result, various types of structural similarities have developed in these languages over time. While talking about Indian languages K. V. Subbarao has said, “When speakers of different language families have been living together for thousands of years, they affect each others languages and languages borrow from each other. This exchange gives rise to new linguistic characteristics.” Some examples are given below:

1. Echo words: Such words can be found in all Indian languages. The second word is an ‘extra’ word and has no meaning if used on its own and sound similar to the first one. For example, the Hindi word *caay-vaay* (काय-वाय) The second word *vaay* (वाय) has no meaning on its own in Hindi but in this context refers to any other things like eatables that may accompany tea.

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>Oriya</i>	<i>Telugu</i>
khaanaa - vaanaa	baagho-faago	duulii - gilli
paanii-vaanii	cobulai-faabulai	baagh-vaagh
caay-vaay	caaval-vaaval	any - giny

2. Reduplicated words: Nouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. can be repeated to create new words in all Indian languages. When nouns are repeated then ‘every’ is added to the meaning of the word. For example, the word *ghar-ghar* in Hindi means ‘every house’.

Nouns

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>Telugu</i>	<i>Oriya</i>
ghar-ghar	dhaure-dhaure	ishTi-ishTi
pannaa-pannaa	prishThaa-prishThaa	peji-peji

Adjectives

dhiire -dhiire	dhiire-dhire	nemdi-nemdi ga
aahiste-aahiste	aaste-aaste	mella-mellaga

Pronouns

apnaa-apnaa	nijau-nijau	tanaa-tanaa
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3. All Indian languages have post positions i.e. the prepositional words are placed after the noun. Thus instead of saying ‘on the table’ where ‘on’ comes before the ‘table’, in Hindi one says ‘mez par’. More examples follow:

Hindi: raam kaa,

ghar meN

Tamil: raamod (raam kaa)

raamkku (raam ko)

Mundari: HoRaa re (ghar me)



Notes

- 4. At the level of sounds: Most Indian languages have retroflex sounds such as those of the T-varg i.e. T, Th, D, Dh etc. Again a word would never begin with a velar nasal like the one we notice at the end of ‘king’.

In the list of languages we gave above, although Hindi and Urdu are mentioned separately and are of course regarded as two separately languages. They are written in different scripts; Hindi in the Devanagari and Urdu in the Perso-Arabic script. However, they have the same structure and both were subsumed under the name of Hindustani before the partition of India.

Check Your Progress-1

- 1. How many language families are there in India?
 - (a) three
 - (b) four
 - (c) five
 - (d) six
- 2. Give examples of some linguistic characteristics that arose in Indian languages due to the exchange between languages of different language families.

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- 3. Some time back, the workers of a political party beat up non-Marathi speakers in Maharashtra. What kind of attitude towards linguistic diversity does this incident signify? Is such an attitude a threat to our linguistic wealth? Give your views.

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- 4. What are your views on Hindustani, Hindi and Urdu?

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2.3 WHAT DOES THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION SAY ABOUT LANGUAGES?

Considering, ‘language’ an important area of concern for the country, the constitution



makers of India laid down the following provisions for language in Part 17 of the constitution after due discussion and deliberation.

Keeping in mind the multilingual picture of India, the constitution makers did not give place to only one or two languages but many languages of India. According to Article 343 of the constitution, Hindi written in Devnagari script is the official language of India and English is the associate official language. Initially, English was given this status for 15 years but in 1963 it was permanently made the associate official language under the Official Language Act. Article 345 asked each state to legally adopt one or more languages spoken in their state along with Hindi as their official languages. Hindi was declared to be the official language of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Punjabi was declared the official language in Punjab, Marathi in Maharashtra and Gujarati and Hindi in Gujarat. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Assamese and Bengali were declared official languages in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Assam and West Bengal respectively. Sikkim declared Nepali, Lepcha, and Bhutia as their official languages. Nagaland declared English as their official language. Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Meghalaya did not adopt any official language and for purposes of government work, English is used here. The official languages of the centre are used in the union territories - Chandigarh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Daman and Diu and in Pondicherry the official language is Tamil.

Another important issue is that of national language. Many of us think that Hindi is the national language of India. However, it is important to remember that the Constitution of India says nothing about the existence of a national language. At the same time, Article 351 does state that the union must promote the spread of Hindi and develop Hindi as the medium of expression.

Check Your Progress-2

1. Which Part of the constitution contains provisions related to language?

- (a) 17
- (b) 18
- (c) 19
- (d) 20

2. Under which act did English get the status of associate official language?

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2.4 CATEGORIES OF LANGUAGES IN INDIA.

2.4.1 SCHEDULED LANGUAGES

Languages mentioned in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution are called Scheduled Languages. 14 languages were named in this schedule in 1950. These languages were - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Sindhi was included in this list through the 21st amendment to the constitution (1967). Similarly, Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were included through the 71st constitutional amendment (1992) and Boro, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri were included through the 92nd amendment (2003). Thus, at present a total of 22 languages are listed in the constitution as scheduled languages. Furthermore, many states are making an effort to get their languages listed in the schedule. “Once a language gets listed in the schedule, its name and status changes and it is identified as a modern Indian language or a scheduled language.” (Malikarjun, 2004)

2.4.2 REGIONAL LANGUAGES AND MOTHER TONGUES

Indian languages can also be categorized as regional languages and mother tongues. A total of 100 regional languages were listed by the 2001 Census and most of these languages contain within themselves many mother tongues and dialects. Thus, a regional language contains within itself many mother tongues. The 1961 Language Census identified 1652 mother tongues. The word ‘mother tongue’ commonly refers to the language spoken at home. The census department defined ‘mother tongue’ in the following manner for the 2001 Census-

“Mother tongue refers to the language in which a person’s mother speaks to him or her in their childhood. If the mother is not present then the language spoken at home will be the mother tongue. If there is still doubt then the language mostly spoken at home is the mother tongue.”(Malikarjun, p. 8)

Two people living in the same family can also have different mother tongues, for example when the husband and wife belong to different communities and regions. One more point of importance is that a child can have more than one mother tongue, if more than one language is spoken equally at home.

2.4.3 CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

Languages which have a long history, whose grammar has been the subject of much study and in which much literature has been written are referred to as classical languages.

The Indian government has laid down the following criteria for declaring a language to be a classical language:

1. The language has a history/ written literature which is 1500 to 2000 years old.



2. Some ancient literature/ epic has been written in the language and the speakers of the language consider this literature/ epic a valuable resource.
3. The language has an original literacy tradition and not one which is borrowed from other language communities.

Tamil was declared a classical language in June, 2004, Sanskrit in 2005 and Kannada and Telugu were given the status in 2008.

2.4.4 IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND DIALECT?

People generally consider ‘languages’ and ‘dialects’ to be different. They give various reasons for this- languages are spoken by more people, dialects are spoken by lesser numbers; languages have a literature, dialects do not; languages have a script, dialects do not etc.

However, in reality all these reasons are incorrect. From a linguistic point of view, there is no difference between a language and a dialect. Both languages and dialects have a grammar i.e. they are rule governed. Awadhi, Braj, Bhojpuri have their own grammar just like Hindi, English, Sanskrit and other language. Similar is the case of literature. Much literature has been written in so called languages like Hindi, English and Sanskrit and also in so called ‘dialects’ like Awadhi, Mathili and Braj. The matter of script’ is also not correct as any language of the world can be written in any script.

For example- याम खाता है। (Devnagari script)

Shyam khaataa hai (Roman script)

Thus, it is clear that we cannot make a distinction between language and dialect based on script, literature and grammar. What is called a language and what is called a dialect is a social and political question. As Rama Kant Agnihotri notes, “What is spoken by powerful and rich people often comes to be known as ‘language’. Grammars and dictionaries are written for this ‘language’. Literature also comes to be written in this language. The ‘language’ also becomes the medium in which school teaching takes place and thus gets identified as standard language. Languages which are similar to this standard language come to be known as its dialects. The status of a language also changes with change in the centre of power. When the political centre for power was Kanoj, then the language of literature was ‘Aparabramsh’; Khadi Boli, Braj and Awadhi became its dialects. Similarly, when the centre for political power was Braj, then, the language of literature was Braj and the Khadi Boli spoken in Delhi and Meerut become its dialects. And when the centre for power was Delhi and Meerut, Braj, Awadhi etc became dialects of Hindi.”

Thus, the main issue is that of understanding the relationship between language and power as that is what defines what will be called language and what will be called dialect.



Check Your Progress-3

- 1. How many languages are mentioned in 8th schedule of the constitution now?
(a) 14 (b) 18
(c) 20 (d) 22

2. What is the meaning of 'mother tongue'?
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3. What are the necessary conditions for categorizing a language as a classical language?
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4. Is there a difference between 'language' and 'dialect'?
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2.5 THE STATUS OF HINDI IN INDIA

Hindi is the language which is spoken in 'Hind' or India. Its ancient names 'hinduii' and 'hindvii' carry the same significance.

The Hindi: This form of Hindi is not influenced by other dialects of Hindi. It also does not contain any words of Sanskrit, Arabic and Farsi.

Khari Boli: This form of Hindi is considered to be standard Hindi, today. Different from Braj and Rekhta, this was the language of the common people, the language of day-to-day use and it was also possible to write literature in this language.

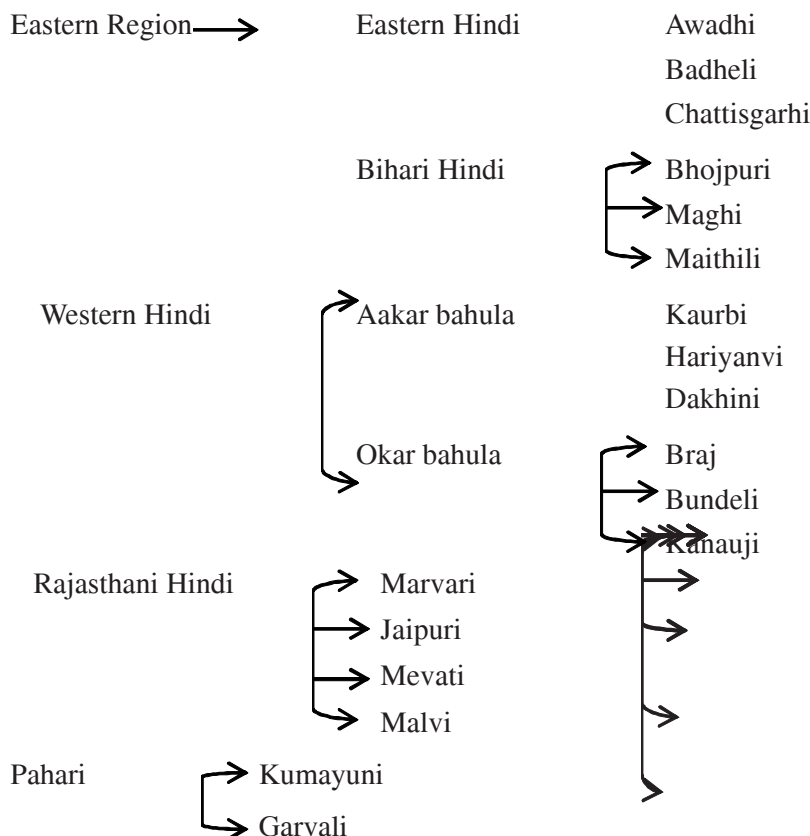
Nagri Hindi: The form of Hindi which was used to write literature.

Hindustani : Both, Hindi and Urdu are a part of this form of Hindi. It uses both Hindi and Urdu words and is a mixture of these two 'languages'.



Standard language: When, out of the many spoken dialects, one comes to be spoken by the educated and elite sections of society, it acquires the status of a standard language. “The standard language is not purer than the other languages. At the level of language, all languages are equally organized. But yes, they are not equal at a societal level.” (Agnihotri, 2007, p. 3). The Standard form of Hindi is based on the varieties of three main centres - Meerut, Delhi and Agra.

A categorization of Hindi dialects



Along with the afforesaid Pahari, Nimari, Haroti, Dhudhari, Ahirati are also dialects of Hindi. Here we seem to be talking about the Hindi language and its dialects: Awadhii, Braj, Maithili, Raajasthani, Bhojpuri etc. But it needs to be remembered that these ‘dialects’ are languages and at one time enjoyed the status of a language.

When Khadi Boli acquired prominence, due to political and economic reasons, then these languages lost their independent identities and were forced to become dialects of Hindi. Dr. Ravindranath Srivastav writes, “During processes of social re-organisation a particular dialect gets more importance than other dialects due to economic, political or cultural reasons. As a result, this ‘dialect’ starts being used as the medium of communication between speakers of the other dialects, also. In time the speakers of these other dialects attach their social identity to this dialect which has become the standard medium of communication. In present times, Khadi Boli is a synonym for



standard Hindi and enjoys the status of a language while Braj, Awadhi, Bhojpuri etc. are mere dialects.” From now on whenever we talk about Hindi, Braj, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani etc. will be depicted as dialects, however it is important to keep in mind the language-dialect distinction that we have talked about above.

Hindi as the language of literature

Braj, Maithili and Awadhi are the prominent languages that have very rich literature and it is in many ways considered a part of the Hindi heritage. A lot of literature was written in Braj till the beginning of the 20th century and it is the language spoken in quite a big geographical area, even today. Poets like Soordas, Mirabai, Keshavda, Rahim, Raskhan, Bihari, Dev, Dhanand, Senapati, Bhushan, Padmakar, Ratnakar among others have enriched the literature in the language in the medieval period.

Jaysi and Tulsidas are the prolific poets of Awadhi. Jayasi’s ‘Padmawat’ is a literary epic in Awadhi. Tulsidas has written a total of 12 prominent pieces - Ramcharitramanas, Kavitali, Gitawali, Vinaypatrika etc. Gitawali, Vinaypatrika and Kavitali are in Braj. Tulsidas wrote with equal control in both Braj and Awadhi.

Various sufi poets like Kabir, Dadu, Redas and Guru Nanak enriched Sufi literature.

In modern times, Bharatendu, Mahaveer Prasad Dwivedi, Bal Krishna Bhatt, Prasad, Pant, Nirala, Mahadevi, Agyay, Raghuvveer Sahay and many other writers have given new shape to Hindi literature, have provided it with energy. Poems, stories, plays, historical accounts, critiques, biographies, travelogues, essays, diary accounts, reports written by these authors have contributed significantly to the growth of Hindi.

The publication of newspapers and magazines in Hindi has also contributed to giving Hindi stability. It is relevant to mention over here the contribution of the first Hindi newspaper ‘Udant Maatrand’ released from Calcutta in 1826 as well as that of the second newspaper ‘Bangdoot’. Calcutta and non-hindi speaking Bengali’s have had a significant role in the growth of Hindi newspapers and magazines.

The growth of Hindi as the language of administration

The Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the official language of the Indian union on 14 September 1949. This does not mean that Hindi did not have an identity in the form of a regional language before this development. The administrative work in various princely states (riyasat) like Gwalior, Jaipur etc was carried out completely in Hindi. Furthermore, even though English was the official language of the Indian government, it was necessary for the British to learn Hindi and this had started as early as the 1800s with the establishment of Fort William College. In 1878-79 it was necessary for every official coming from England to India to know Hindi and Hindustani. In 1925 the Congress decided that it would carry on its day-to-day work in Hindustani, due to Gandhi’s efforts.



Present status: Hindi is not only the official language of the central government but also the official language of various state governments. It is common knowledge today that in states where the official language is Hindi, most of the administrative work is done in Hindi. The High courts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan give their decision in Hindi and documents can also be submitted in the language. In many states, Hindi is the alternate medium of education for graduate courses in Science, Humanities, Law etc. Various centers have also been established to teach computer sciences in Hindi. In fact, in government offices a variety of work on the computer is being done in Hindi.

Hindi is also being used as the alternate medium in recruitment examinations of various important offices, institutions and banks of the central government, even through these examinations have a necessary paper for English language. Lastly, Hindi continues to be the medium of communication among common people, to a large extent.

Check Your Progress-4

1. *In which language Jaysi's Padmawat is written?*

- (a) Braj
- (b) Awadhi
- (c) Maithili
- (d) Hindi

2. *The name 'Hindustani' was used to denote which two languages?*

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3. *Hindi is not only the official language of the central government but also the official language of various state governments. Name these states.*

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4. *Describe briefly, the development of Hindi as a language of literature.*

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2.6 STATUS OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Christian missionaries from Britain came to India in 1813 and established various primary schools which used the local language as the medium of education. Later on, they established various English medium high schools. British administrators established their universities after 1857 and English became the first language for Indian education. Indians who were proficient in English became the new class of elites. Many English medium schools were opened. English became the medium of education at the university level also and aspiring Indians were partial to schools which emphasized English. English continued to be a language of prominence even after independence. At a government level it got the status of an associate official language. Even today, schools which emphasize English are considered to be better schools. The situation is not different at the university level as well.

One-third of the Indian schools were English medium between 1970 and 1980. English continues to play an important role in India, even today. The reasons for this are as follows:

Important books and most of resource material is written in English.

English is the language for commerce.

Proficiency in English is the marker of a dignified and distinct personality.

English is used as a medium of education.

World-over development in science, technology agriculture and business use English as the medium of communication.

At an international level, English has an important status. It is also spoken and understood in most countries of the world.

English occupies an important position at a governmental level. States use their regional languages for purposes of official work, but English aids them in communicating with each other.

The place of English in the school curriculum

The Secondary Education commission (1952-53) emphasized the importance of English. The Education commission (1964-66) also agreed to it. It proposed the Three-language Formula till class 10. The Three-language Formula states that the first, second and third languages in school will be:

First language

The first language which should be taught in school should be the mother tongue or regional language.



2.7 THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN INDIA

Since independence, the Central and State Governments in India have continued to give careful consideration to education, as a matter of national development and security. It is important to understand the recommendations made by various commissions and committees for education, for understanding the Language Education Policy of India.

The National Policy of Education 1968 accepted that the development of Indian languages and literature is a necessary condition for educational and cultural progress and until this is done, people's creative energies will not be utilized, there will be no improvement in the status of education and the gap between the academic and common people will not be bridged.

The use of regional languages as the medium of education in primary and secondary classes has been encouraged for many years now. It has also been said that State Governments should enforce the three-language formula for the secondary classes. Thus, children should learn three languages at the secondary level.

While talking about the development of languages, the National Policy of Education, 1986 has accepted that the National Policy of Education, 1968 should be implemented meaningfully and with speed. In this context, the Ramamurthy committee, 1990 reviewed the National Policy of Education 1986 and significantly commented that an important reason for why rural children are not able to access higher education is the continued dominance of the English language. Thus, it is the need of the times that regional languages may be encouraged as the medium of education at all levels.

According to NCF-2005 children have an innate (by birth) potential to acquire language. Most children have internalized various complexities and rules of language even before they enter school and when they start school can understand and speak two or three languages.

This curricular framework has asked for the effective implementation of the three language formula. There is also an emphasis on gaining acceptability for using children's mother tongues including tribal languages as the medium of education. The multilingual character of Indian society should be looked upon as a resource for developing multilingual proficiency in each child and proficiency in English is a part of this package. This is only possible if the pedagogy of language teaching is based on the use of the mother tongue.

Bilingualism or multilingualism definitely has cognitive benefits. The three-language formula is an attempt to deal with our linguistic challenges and opportunities. It is a strategy which lays down the path for learning various languages.



Check Your Progress-6

1. *In which years were the National Policies of Education released?*

- (a) 1968
- (b) 1986
- (c) 1990
- (d) 1992

2. *What does the Three-language Formula state?*

.....

.....

.....

3. *What advantages did the National Policy of Education, 1968 think would come out from the development of Indian languages and literature?*

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2.8 LET US SUM UP

Multilinguality is an integral part of the Indian linguistic heritage.

Being multilingual is not a problem for India, both at an individual and societal level. It is in fact a resource and an expression of our cultural richness.

Multilinguality is a resource because people who know more than one language are not just proficient users of languages but their views on society are also sensitive.

The culture and attitude towards language has a prominent role to play in a country being monolingual or multilingual.

If, we have an open attitude to diversity in languages than we help in the existence and growth of all languages spoken in the environment. On the contrary intolerance and narrow thinking about languages other than our own become reasons for discord and disagreement.

Languages belonging to four different language families are spoken in India, but we are still one linguistic area.

From the point of view of the science of language there is no difference between ‘language’ and ‘dialect’.

Stories, poems, plays, historical accounts, critiques, biographies, travelogues, essays, diary accounts, reports etc. have all contributed to the growth of Hindi.



Hindi was declared to be the official language of the Indian union and English was declared the associate official language in the Constituent Assembly on 14th September, 1949.

English in India is a global language in a multilingual country.

The Three-language Formula is the strategy which lays down the path for learning many languages.

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2.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Describe the linguistic diversity of India in your own words.
2. Multilinguality is not a problem but a resource for India. Explain.
3. Which language families are found in India?
4. India is one linguistic area. Explain how?
5. What are the parameters for declaring a language to be a classical language?
6. Braj, Maithili and Awadhi have contributed immensely to the development of Hindi literature. Give arguments in favour of and against the aforesaid statement.
7. Critiques, biographies, autobiographies, character sketches, reports, diary accounts, travelogues, plays, essays, have all contributed to the development of Hindi literature.



Express your views on the aforesaid statement.

8. What does NCF-2005 say about multilinguality? What is your opinion on its stand?
9. How many languages are there in the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution, at present? Name them.
10. The positive attitude that the Naga community has towards diversity in languages makes them multilingual. What is it that the Naga community does, that provides evidence of their positive attitude towards variety in languages?

ACTIVITY

1. Do a survey of one or two villages around you and find out if the people in the village are multilingual? Also name the languages they know?
2. Which activities will you organize on Hindi Day in school in order to generate interest among children for Hindi?
3. Find out which languages are taught under the Three-language Formula in schools around you.



UNIT 3 LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

STRUCTURE

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 First Language Acquisition

3.2.1 *The Biological Adaptation of the Human Body for Language.*

3.2.2 *The Role of Environment.*

3.2.3 *Stages of Language Acquisition*

3.3 Second Language Acquisition/Learning

3.3.1 *Can Second Language be ‘acquired’ like the First Language?*

3.3.2 *How can we Help Children to ‘acquire’ their Second Language?*

3.3.3 *What is the role of ‘learning’ in developing competence in the Second language?*

3.3.4 *Does our First Language interfere with the Learning of our Second Language?*

3.4 Methods of Language-Teaching

3.4.1 *Grammar Translation Method*

3.4.2 *Direct Method*

3.4.3 *Audio Lingual Method*

3.4.4 *Communicative Method*

3.4.5 *Natural Approach*

3.5 Let Us Sum Up

3.6 Suggested Readings and References

3.7 Unit-End Exercises

3.0 INTRODUCTION

A lot can be learnt about how to teach language in the classroom if we carefully study the processes of how we acquire language in our home environments. This unit will discuss the relationship between language learning and language teaching, in detail.



This unit begins by asking the basic question: How do children acquire a language? It will ask this question for languages that children acquire at home i.e. their first languages. It will then discuss how processes of developing competence in second languages must be similar to ‘acquisition’ processes. It will also provide evidence to counter the claim that most mistakes in second language are due to first language interference. This unit will end with the various approaches and methods of teaching of second languages that have been used over time as well as the need to adopt a method which approximates a child’s natural processes of language acquisition.

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

How do children acquire their first language(s)?

1. What is the relationship between first language acquisition and second language learning?
2. How should language be taught in a classroom?

3.2 FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

A girl called Genie was admitted to the children’s hospital in the state of California in 1970. She was 13 at that time and had been confined to a small room, since she was 20 months old. During her confinement, she had been either tied to her potty chair or kept in a home-made sleeping bag, in a crib covered with wire mesh. She had no access to TV or radio and her only human contact was her mother, who used to get her food. The reason for this situation was her father, who was intolerant to sound and would beat her up every time if she made any. When Genie was found, she was without speech and even years after being exposed to language in a normal home environment has not been able to produce fully grammatical sentences.

Sandhya was 20 years old when she had a car accident. She suffered a head injury in which the left side of her brain was damaged. As a result, Sandhya’s speech got severely affected. When asked about what she had for breakfast she said- *mein poha khaa aur pii doodh.*

Homna is my friend’s four and a half year old grand daughter. She was born in Delhi and the languages spoken at her home include Hindi, English, Panjabi and Mandiyali (a language spoken in Himachal Pradesh). She is comfortable in listening to all these languages at the same time and also interacts with their speakers in the way she can. She was two and a half year old when she shifted to South India, more precisely Bangalore, Karnataka. As a result she also started



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listening to a lot of Kannada and Tamil. Today, she talks to her maid exclusively and fluently in Tamil, while nobody at home understands any bit of their dialogue. She sings bits of Tamil and Kannada songs flawlessly and often uses these languages with her friends. She is at the same time a fluent speaker of Hindi and English.

What do the above true-life situations tell us about how we acquire language? Do we simply pick up a language because we hear it all around us or does our biology have any role to play in this acquisition? Sandhya, Genie and Homna provide evidence for a bit of both. Sandhya's ability to speak gets affected when she suffers a brain injury and Genie picks up no speech when she is exposed to none. Homna, on the other hand, learns more than one language, which she is exposed to in her caregiving home environment. Like Homna, most children pick up more than one language, spoken in their home environment with no explicit teaching and with what seems like effortless ease. Our biology provides us with immense potential for acquiring language(s) as long as our environment provides us with the required exposure to them. It is thus, meaningless to ask whether language is inborn or learnt. Both nature and nurture have a role to play in its acquisition.

In the first unit, we have discussed how difficult and complex the structure of language is. Still, by the time a child is 3-4 years old, she is able to comprehend the grammar of not only one but 2-3 languages. This clearly shows that human beings are born with an innate ability to acquire language and all children come to school with this innate ability. It is very important for every person working with education, to appreciate this. It is also very important to understand that this ability will not blossom if it does not get a language-rich and affection-filled environment.

Check Your Progress-1

1. Why does the child say “ *mein poha khaa aur pii doodh* ”?

- a) *as the left side of her head has been injured*
- b) *as she did not get a language rich environment.*
- c) *as she was not given practice in speaking*
- d) *as she had not been able to acquire the language*

2. *How many languages did you learn from your home environment in your childhood?*

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3. *How many languages do the children in your school speak in their home environments?*

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4. *What are the two things that we must keep in mind while providing a learning environment for language?*

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.....

5. *Talk to a four-year old child. Write down 20 sentences spoken by her. Can she tell you what she wants? Can she tell you what she does not want? Can she tell you what she likes or dislikes? Can she ask you questions? Can she ask you for something?*

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.....

3.2.1 THE BIOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF THE HUMAN BODY FOR LANGUAGE

Human beings are biologically adapted for language. This essentially means that human beings can produce sounds and hear and build meaning out of these sounds as various parts of their body have been adapted to help in this process.

Talking

To speak, we let the air move from our lungs, through the windpipe and then let it pass through different parts of the vocal tract to finally reach the mouth to produce all kinds of sounds; sometimes air passes through our nose as well. While each one of the organs mentioned above is involved in speech production they also perform other essential functions. The tongue is specialized for taste, teeth for eating, lips for sucking and the lungs, wind pipe, mouth and nose are involved in breathing. However, unlike primates like monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas etc., who are our closest biological relatives, in humans each of these parts has been adapted for speech.



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While speaking, our lungs help in regulating our breathing rhythm and it gets adapted to allow us to speak for long periods, without being out of breath; the number of breaths per minute is reduced: 'breathing in' is considerably accelerated while 'breathing out' is slowed down. Our lips have muscles which are considerably more developed and can be moved towards each other, firmly closed, moved apart, forward, backward or in a round shape. The human tongue is thick, muscular and mobile and opposed to the long, thin tongues of monkeys and the lower jaw is mobile. All this helps in producing various sounds.

Comprehension

Like many other animals, the human brain is divided into a lower section- the brain stem, and a higher section- the cerebrum. The brainstem which is connected to the spinal cord and keeps the body alive by controlling breathing, heart beats etc. The cerebrum, though not essential for life, helps in integrating the organism with her environment. The cerebrum is in turn divided into two halves or two cerebral hemispheres, namely the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. The hemispheres are linked to one another through a series of bridges.

Many studies have established that anything that is experienced on the right-hand side of the body is processed in the left hemisphere, and anything on the left side is processed in the right hemisphere. Research also tells us that the ability to comprehend and produce speech for many of us (about 90% right-handed and about 70% left-handed) is present in the left hemisphere of the brain.

The simplest and most recently developed test which helps in discovering which hemisphere controls speech is the Dichotic Listening Test. In this test, the subject wears a head phone. Two different words, one into each ear, are played simultaneously for example 'eight' in one ear and 'four' in the other. Most people are found to repeat the word played in the right ear, as this side of our body is controlled by the left hemisphere of the brain, which is the language centre. The sound heard by the left ear takes longer to process as it is first sent to the right hemisphere and then to the left hemisphere(language centre). This non-direct route takes longer to comprehend and produce the word.

Various studies have also proven that two areas of the left hemisphere of the brain are concerned with language: the Broca's area (in front of and just above the left ear) and Wernicke's area (region around and under the left ear). Damage to the Broca's area causes problems in speech production and Wernicke's area damage causes problems in speech comprehension. However, there have been instances where patients had no language disorder even after damage to these areas. According to research, this may be due to variations in the size of the brain areas specialized for these functions from person to person.



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The human body, thus, does have a role in our ability to produce and comprehend speech.

Check Your Progress-2

1. *In how many hemispheres is the human brain divided?*

(a) one

(b) two

(c) three

(d) four

2. *Which hemisphere of the brain is meant for language?*

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.....
.....

3. *Describe the Dichotic Listening Test? What does it show?*

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.....
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3.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

By the time a child is 4, she is a fluent speaker of her home languages. She acquires these languages when she is exposed to them in plenty of natural, day-to-day situations.

Both Genie and Homna’s examples reveal the importance of exposure to a language for a child to start speaking it. Genie was without speech because she did not hear any language and Homna on the other hand picked up more than one language from her surroundings. Thus, a language rich environment where the child can hear care givers/adults talk to each other, or to her, read books to her, sing songs to her, interact with other children, listen to music, watch TV etc is imperative in triggering the natural human predisposition to acquire language.

This is also clear from Isabells’s example. Isabella, the child of a deaf-mute had no speech, when she was found at the age of six and half in Ohio in the 1930s as she had spent most of her time in a darkened room alone with her mother. However, once she was exposed to language in a normal environment, she picked it up at a very quickly. She covered in 2 years, the learning that ordinarily takes 6 years and it was not possible to distinguish her from other children by the time she was eight and half.



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Besides the need for a linguistically rich environment, what is also clear is that there is a critical period for the acquisition of language- a time set aside by nature for acquisition of language; this essentially varies between 2 to 14 years and during this time acquiring languages almost seems like an effortless task for children. This becomes clearer when we contrast Genie's experience of language acquisition with that of Isabella. Genie was only exposed to language at the age of 13 and was not able to speak grammatically correct sentences, even years after, while Isabella was able to catch on and within two years of being exposed to language was no different from any other child of her age.

Children brought up in linguistically impoverished surroundings like orphanages and institutions, where caregivers do not have adequate time to interact with each child, start speaking at the same time as other children but their speech eventually lags behind and has lesser varieties of construction. The extreme manifestation of this is the case of deaf children, who begin to babble at the same time as the rest of the children but do not hear any language and eventually do not learn to speak if they are not provided hearing aid. However, they all evolve Sign Language. Sign Language is NOT just a set of gestures; it is a language which is systematic as oral language. So, in order to speak a language, a child must be able to hear that language. However, hearing language is also not enough. In one real-life case, a normal hearing son of deaf parents was provided ample exposure to TV and radio programs but did not acquire the ability to speak or understand what was being spoken. What he did learn very effectively, by the age of three, was the use of Sign Language- the language he used to interact with his parents. **Thus, the crucial requirement to acquire a language also appears to be an opportunity to interact with others using the language.**

Children who migrate with their parents from their home countries seem to acquire the language spoken in that country with effortless ease while the adults who have gone with them find this a much more difficult task.

Another question that is pertinent when studying the role of the environment is: Do children learn their home language by imitating their adults? Many studies and observations provide evidence that this is not the case. We will discuss these henceforth.

If children were learning how to speak by imitating adults i.e. hearing their parents speak and repeating after them then they would be responsive to direct corrections and repeated practice provided by parents and other adults. However, it has been found that such corrections and practice have relatively little effect in children acquiring a language.

Let us also see what came out of some efforts of direct correction and repeated



practice made by parents and researchers. In this example a father is trying to teach her child to say ‘papa’

Father : papa

Child : haappa

Father : papa

Child : haappa

(Repeated at least two times)

Father : papa

Child : aappa

In the example given below a father is trying to teach her child to say ‘papa aayaa’.

Child : papa aaii

Father : nahiin ‘papa aayaa’

Child : papa aaii

Father : bolo ‘papa aayaa’

Child : papa aaii

Father : nahiin ‘papa aayaa’

Father : bolo ‘papa aayaa’

Child looks away and does not respond.

(Examples of two different children living with their parents in Udaipur.)

We can see in the above examples that forcing children to repeat and imitate does not lead to any success in teaching a child how to speak. Research has also proven that parents try correcting only a small portion of the errors that children make while learning how to speak. Also, more often than not, they end up correcting the truthfulness of the statement rather than whether it is grammatically correct, for example a father will not correct his child when she says *mammii so raha hai* but will correct her if she says *kal somvaar hai* i.e. ‘It’s Monday tomorrow.’ when it is in fact *mangalvaar* ‘Tuesday’.

It has also been seen that the very frequent use of ‘expansions’ by parents is also unsuccessful. When an adult is talking to a child, he very often ‘expands’ the child’s utterances. However, what does seem to help language learning is talking



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to the child about new things. It also seems useless to repeatedly 'correct' children. They learn only when they are cognitively ready to do so.

Check Your Progress-3

1. *What kinds of mistakes are corrected by parents?*
 - (a) *grammatical errors*
 - (b) *sentence related errors*
 - (c) *fact related errors*
 - (d) *imitation related errors*

2. *Read the following situation carefully:*

Child: Want other one spoon, Daddy.

Father: You mean, you want the other spoon.

Child: Yes, I want other one spoon, please Daddy.

Father: Can you say "the other spoon".

Child: Other ... one ... spoon.

Father: Say "other".

Child: Other.

Father: 'spoon'.

Child: Spoon.

Father: "Other spoon".

Child: Other ... spoon. Now give me other one spoon?

(Braine, 1971)

 - a) *What is the father trying to teach the child?*
 - b) *Was he successful?*
 - c) *What does this example tell you about how children learn language?*

4. *Which of the following things help children acquire language?*
 - a) *A home environment where the child is not allowed to speak*
 - b) *Playing with other children*
 - c) *Hearing adults talk*
 - d) *Asking children to repeat correct sentences*
 - e) *Repeating what the child says*

Further evidence to show that children do not really learn language by imitating adults can also be gathered from the more or less fixed stages



children pass through as they acquire language and also in the pattern of errors they make in this process.

3.2.3 STAGES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Children seem to pass through a series of more or less fixed 'stages', as they acquire language. The age at which different children reach each stage can vary considerably, however, the order of 'stages' remains the same.

Cooing/Gooing

At around 6 weeks, a child starts cooing and gooing. Initially these sounds seem mostly like a string of vowels – 'uuuu, iiiii'. At around four months, these include consonantal beginnings; the most commonly heard ones are- 'cuuu, guuu'.

Babbling

At about 6 months, when a child is generally sitting up, they progress to babbling. Here they start producing a wider variety of vowels and consonants which are mostly in the form of single consonant - vowel clusters like 'gi-gi-gi', 'ka-ka-ka', 'ma-ma-ma', 'pa-pa-pa', 'mi-mi-mi' etc. At around nine to ten months there is a variation in the combinations such as 'ba-ba-ga-ga' which become more complex like 'mim-mim-mai-yaaaa' over the next few months; these express emotions and emphasis and include attempted imitations. To parents it seems like children are talking to them and they often react to it. This provides children with some experience of the interactive role of language.

One-word stage

At around the age of one, children produce their first recognizable words. Many of these words are names of people and things that they see around them like *mamaa*(mother), *paapaa*(father), *baiyaa*(brother), *diidii*(sister), *ciriyaa*(bird), *guriyaa*(doll). Also common at this stage are words like *na* (negation), *khatam* (something finishes) and *dedo* (asking for something). This stage is often referred to as the holophrastic (meaning a single word functioning as a phrase or sentence) stage. For example, instead of saying 'I want water' the child could simply say 'mam mam' (water). In fact, they may use just 'mam mam' for a variety of expressions and it is only from the context that parents figure out the approximate meaning of such utterances.

This is also the stage where children's 'mistakes' are caused by both an over-generalization and under-generalization of the meaning of words in comparison to adult meaning. For example, a child will over-generalize the word 'doggie' and call all four legged animals 'doggie'. On the other hand a child who uses the word 'duck' for only her 'toy duck' is under-generalising.



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Two-word stage

By about one and a half years, a child generally has an active vocabulary of some 50 words and starts putting together words in two-word utterances. The first two-word utterances also express the same kind of meaning as those of the one word stage like *duudh nahii, khaanaa nahii* (negation), *duudh katam* (something finishes) and *ball dedo* (asking for something). New kinds of meanings begin to appear later in this stage— *mummii khaanaa* (*mummy I want roti*), *jjijii maaraa* (*jiji hit me*), *ghuumii jaana* (*I want to go out*), *paapaa fona* (*papa's phone*), *duduu piinaa* (*I want milk*).

At this stage children's utterances begin to resemble the structures of sentences in the languages used around them. This speech is also referred to as telegraphic speech as it very closely resembles telegraph messages which only have content words i.e. words like *doodh, mummii, khaanaa, paapaa, maaraa, fone* etc that carry meaning and does not use little words like *ne, ko, hai, par, se* etc as well as word endings like *yaan, on, iyyan* for plural or *rahe* for continuous tense.

In this stage children also start imitating, taking sentences said by adults and uttering them. For example, the child will say *papa jaa* for *papa jaa rahe hai* and *ghuumii jaa* for *hum ghuumne jaa rahe hai*.

Longer utterances

With time, the word length of children's sentences increase and between the ages of 2 and 4 they acquire various grammatical forms. What is interesting is that most children acquire these forms in roughly the same order. In research studies undertaken by Brown (1973) and de Villiers and de Villiers (1973) with children whose home language is English it was found that children acquire some grammatical forms early and others later; the continuous 'ing' form as in- 'I am **singing**', and the plural 's' as in- 'blue shoes, bad dogs' is acquired much before the possessive 's' as in- 'daddy's **car**' and the third person, singular 's' as in- 'he wants an apple'. They also acquire irregular past tense verbs like 'came', 'went', 'saw' before they acquire regular past tense verbs 'loved', 'played' and 'worked'. If we study the acquisition of the past tense more carefully we will find that the acquisition of the regular past tense form involves acquisition of the correct irregular forms being replaced with the over generalised forms such as 'comed', 'goed' etc and these eventually get replaced with the correct forms 'came' and 'went'.

The significance of this apparent regression and the similarity in stages that children undergo to acquire language is immense. It means that language acquisition is not a straightforward case of practice brings perfection or of simple imitation. If it were, all children would not be following similar stages while



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- Then acquires regular plural forms like cats and bags.
- She over generalizes the above rule to make plurals of foot and man as feets and mens.
- Eventually the over generalized plurals are corrected and the child goes back to pluralizing foot and man as feet and men respectively.

What does this tell you about how children learn language?

3.3 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION LEARNING

By the time children come to school they are fluent speakers of their home languages. The medium of instruction in school for some is the language being spoken at home but for most others the medium of instruction is new to them. For example, a child in Bihar may be speaking Bhojpuri or Maithili at home but goes to school where the medium of instruction is Hindi or a child in Bengal who speaks Santhali or Nepali at home may encounter Bengali in school. In both the above situations a child may also be required to learn English at school in the primary classes. Hindi, Bengali and English are all second languages for these children.

Acquiring second languages in all the above situations is challenging as children either do not encounter the language at all in their home environment or do so to a limited extent. Children also get only few hours of exposure to the second language during school time and more often than not for languages like English this exposure may not be possible at all as the teacher herself may not know the language. In this section we will discuss whether children can ‘acquire’ their second languages like their first. In doing so, we will discuss the various factors that affect the acquisition of second languages in the classroom. We will also discuss the role of ‘learning’ in second languages. We will conclude by critically examining the generally held belief that languages already learnt by the child interfere with her learning second languages.

3.3.1 CAN SECOND LANGUAGES BE ‘ACQUIRED’ LIKE FIRST LANGUAGES?

Before answering this question, let us discuss the difference between the terms ‘language acquisition’ and ‘language learning’.

Language Acquisition refers to developing competence in a language by using it in natural, communicative situations as available while learning languages we hear in our homes and the neighbourhood. Language Learning on the other hand refers to developing competence in a language by learning its rules and vocabulary through explicit teaching in a classroom setting.



Krashen talks about these two as ways of developing competence in second languages and states that, ‘...*language acquisition, (is) a process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication....(in this process) we are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired. Instead, we have a “feel” for correctness. Grammatical sentences “sound” right, or “feel” right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated. Other ways of describing acquisition include implicit learning, informal learning, and natural learning. In non-technical language, acquisition is “picking-up” a language.*

The second way to develop competence in a second language is by language learning. We will use the term “learning” henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In non-technical terms, learning is “knowing about” a language, known to most people as “grammar”, or “rules”. Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language, or explicit learning.’ (Krashen, 1982:10)

We have seen in the first section that children have immense potential for acquiring language. Most children learn at least two languages in their childhood from their home environments and like Homna, can pick up more languages, which they are exposed to in their natural settings. If we take into account this immense capacity that a child has for acquiring language, as long as normal, day-to-day exposure to it is provided, then we will appreciate that a second language can also be acquired in an environment which provides ample exposure to it.

We can see this clearly in the example of children who leave their home countries with their families to settle in foreign countries. For example, Hindi speaking children who leave India to settle in America, acquire English at school where they hear and interact with their classmates and teachers in the language and also in various other places like the market, TV etc. Thus, the richer the exposure to the second language, the greater is the possibility that we will acquire it.

However, helping children acquire a second language holds considerable challenge for teachers. The language rich environment that is available in the first language is invariably not available in the second language. And in the case of a language like English in India, where exposure at school is also restricted to 30 minutes or less in the day and the teacher herself may not be a fluent speaker of that language, the situation is even more demanding.



3.3.2 HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN TO ‘ACQUIRE’ THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE?

Though challenging, providing a language rich environment similar to the one that is available to children when they are acquiring their home languages, remains one important part of the answer. In Krashen’s words children require ‘comprehensible input’ in the second language. ‘Comprehensible input’ refers to using language which children are capable of understanding, and at the same time holds challenge for them. An important part of making this language comprehensible is providing it in natural, communicative situations that are meaningful to children and this will help children in meeting the challenge. For example, if children in your class know some words in English then ‘comprehensible input’ might mean using these words in sentences that are meaningful for them. A teacher may give instructions like - rub the black-board, pick up the pencil, read from the chart etc., to children where the context and the teacher’s actions/ demonstration will help the child in building meaning around words like black-board, pencil and chart she already knows. Thus, here the teacher provides ‘comprehensible input’ in the form of instructions which contain words that a child is familiar with and at the same time the challenge of understanding the instruction can be met because of the context in which it is being given. Unlike traditional second language teaching approaches which require the child to learn the structure/grammar rules first and then practice them as communication, second language acquisition requires ‘going from meaning’ to ‘structure’.

Krashen clearly states that *‘speaking fluency cannot be taught directly. Rather it, ‘emerges’ over time, on its own. The best way, and perhaps the only way, to teach speaking, according to this view, is simply to provide comprehensible input. Early speech will come when the acquirer feels “ready”; this state of readiness arrives at somewhat different times for different people, however. Early speech, moreover, is typically not grammatically accurate. Accuracy develops over time as the acquirer hears and understands more input (Krashen, 1982:22).*

Besides the need for ‘comprehensible input’ some other factors also affect acquisition of the second language. Children’s motivation’s to learn the target language, their self confidence, their curiosity/anxiety about learning in general, and their attitude towards the language all affect language learning. These factors can either impede or encourage second language acquisition.

Much research has shown that even though people may be provided ‘comprehensible input’ in the target language, they may be unsuccessful in acquiring it if they have low motivation or low self confidence or low curiosity levels. The process of language learning may also become slow if learners have high anxiety levels About learning in general.



While a teacher does not have much control over student’s motivation, self confidence and attitudes (s)he must provide ‘comprehensible input’ in the classroom and also create such an environment where children can learn without any fear or hesitation. According to Krashen, *‘The effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation. (Krashen, 1982:32)*

3.3.3 WHAT IS THE ROLE THAT ‘LEARNING’ HAS IN DEVELOPING COMPETENCE IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE?

Learning the rules of a language, is not a replacement of the process of language acquisition which helps children become fluent speakers in that language, however it can help children in monitoring their progress to see whether they have written or spoken correctly or not. According to Krashen, *‘Normally, acquisition “initiates” our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as a Monitor, or editor. Learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been “produced” by the acquired system. This can happen before we speak or write, or after (self-correction).’ (Krashen, 1982:15)*

Needless to say that conscious learning of the rules of grammar can act as a monitor only when a person has enough time to think about and use these rules to correct her and must also be continuously focused on the accuracy of what she is saying. Generally when two individuals are in a conversation, fluency is more important than accuracy. In fact, if a person was to use the monitor in his speech it would be unnaturally hesitant and inattentive. However, the monitor is useful when we are writing and have time to think about the accuracy of what we have written.

Check Your Progress-5

1. Generally speaking second language acquisition starts from:

- (a) expression (b) comprehension
- (c) self-analysis (d) analyzing right/wrong

2. Which language do you consider your second language(s)?

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Notes

3. Which are second languages to children who come to your school?

4. What factors are important for children to acquire their second languages?

3.3.4 DOES OUR FIRST LANGUAGE INTERFERE WITH OUR LEARNING OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE?

For some time now it was thought that many errors that children make while acquiring the second language are due to their first language-its grammar, vocabulary and phonology (sounds). We shall discuss this in the context of Hindi as the first language and English as the second language.

Grammar

Perhaps the most obvious difference between Hindi and English sentences is that in Hindi the verb is placed at the end of sentences and in English it is in the middle of the sentence. For example:

meiN seb khaa rahaa huuN

I am eating an apple.

However, this never seems to cause a problem to native Hindi speakers learning English. We never heard a native speaker of Hindi saying ‘I an apple am eating’ where like Hindi the verb is placed at the end of the sentence.

Much research has proven that many ‘mistakes’ made by children while learning the second language are not caused by an interference of their first language. Children and even adults follow a ‘natural order’ of acquiring the rules of the second language regardless of what their first language is. This order is also similar to the order in which they would acquire the language if it was their first. Thus, when English is being acquired by native speakers of different first languages then the continuous ‘ing’ form and the plural ‘s’ is acquired much before the third person, singular ‘s’ and the possessive ‘s’. Prominent among them is the study done by Dulay and Burt (1974) with children of Chinese and Spanish origin.



A 'natural order' can also be seen in the errors that children make while acquiring a structure. For example, in acquiring 'negation' many students put the negative marker in front of the sentence:

Not like it now. Ravem (1974)

At a later stage, they put the negative marker in front of the verb:

I no like this one Cancino et al. (1975)

This uniformity of stages that children of different native languages undergo while acquiring a common second language and the fact that these stages are similar when the language is acquired as a first language suggests that we all undergo a natural process of language acquisition and these errors are not a case of first language interference.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary of any language is affected by the socio-cultural environment it is being spoken in, for example, Indian users of English have to use English to communicate with other Indian users in contexts which are essentially Indian. For example:

- On *Diwali* a person goes to the temple and he is given *prasad* by the *pujari*. He buys a new *kurta pajama* for himself and new *sari* for his wife. They light *diiyaas* around their house and eat various sweets like *jalebi*, *ras gullas* etc.
- The newspaper was full of reports of *dharnaas* and *bandhs* being organized all over India.
- The *shamiianaa* was beautifully decorated for the marriage.
- The *feraa* and the *kanyaa daan* took place after one at night.

(*Diwali*- A Hindu festival of lights, *Prasad*- holy sweets given in the place of worship of Hindus(temple) *Pujari*- A Hindu priest, *kurta-pajama*- an Indian dress, *sari*- an Indian dress worn by women, *diiyaas*- small lamps made of mud, *jalebi and rasgulla*- Indian sweets, *dharnas and bandhs*- strikes, *shamiianaa*- a large tent generally used to house a big gathering of people, *feraa*- a ritual at a hindu marriage in which the bride and the groom walk around a lit fire, *kanyaa daan*- a ritual at a Hindu marriage in which the bride's father gives away the bride)

The italicised words are Hindi words and are used in English sentences without any change. They are an effect of Indian society and culture on the English spoken by the Indian user. Such words express an Indian style of living and are not



included in other varieties of English such as British, American, Australian, Singaporean, South African etc. Some part of the vocabulary of every variety of English would thus inevitably be culture bound.

At the same time, when English is spoken in India some words will be used differently. In the so-called native varieties of English (such as British, American etc.) the words 'uncle' and 'aunt' are used only to refer to familial relationships like – *mama, masi, bua, fuufaa* etc but when Indians use these words they also use them to refer to elders, neighbors, shopkeepers, friends of parents, bus drivers etc. We also shorten groups of words like 'address of welcome', 'members of the family', 'bunch of keys', 'box of matches' as 'welcome address', 'family member', 'key bunch', and 'match box'. Similarly, while native English varieties contain the word 'postpone', the word 'prepone' is only a part of Indian English, although it is now widely understood and often appreciated. Indian English also contains various phrases which are not found in any native variety of English like 'pin-drop silence', 'change of heart', 'each and every', 'do the needful' etc.

The importance given to people higher in rank is also expressed in a variety of address forms, signing off forms and phrases used in formal communications used in Indian English which are not a part of varieties of some other varieties:

Respected sir

Draw your **kind attention** to

To bring to your **kind notice**

Thus, using words from the languages already known for various concepts/ objects etc., which do not have any equivalents in the second language, using words of the second language differently and coining new words and phrases based on the environment in which the language is being spoken are natural processes when two different languages and cultures come in contact with each other. They cannot be termed as interference which connotes a negative transfer from the first language to the second language.

Check Your Progress-6

1. Where do we find phrases like 'pin-drop silence', 'change of heart', 'each and every'?

(a) Indigenous English

(b) Indian English

(c) American English

(d) Australian English



Notes

2. *What is the main difference between the sentences of Hindi and English?*

3. *'India's cultural and social aspects are clearly visible in Indian English.'*
Give examples to prove the above statement.

Phonology

English spoken in different parts of the world does not sound the same. A British speaking English sounds very different from an American speaking English. An Australian sounds different from both the American and the British and an Indian sounds different from all three. The same is true for Hindi spoken in different parts of the country, for example, it would not be very difficult to tell whether the person speaking Hindi is from Bengal, Bihar or Tamil Nadu.

This is not because the vocabulary and grammar of the language being spoken by people from the different regions is different but because they sound different to our ears. There are several reasons for this. One is being discussed here-

The second language that we learn may have sounds that are not present in the first language. For example, a native English speaker uses two different sounds to pronounce the first letters of the words 'van' and 'watch' but a Hindi speaker of English pronounces both words with the same 'v' sound. Similarly, Hindi speakers will invariably pronounce the word 'treasure' or 'measure' as 'treazure' and 'meazure' as they do not have an equivalent sound for the 'Z' in the two words.

Similar things would be true for native speakers of English when they are trying to learn Hindi. They would find it extremely difficult to say words like *khargosh*, *ghar*, *chhatrri*, *jharnaa*, *thelaa*, *phuul*, *bhaaluu* etc and might pronounce them as *kargosh*, *gar*, *chatrri*, *jarnaa*, *telaa*, *puul*, *baaluu*, *gar* respectively. This is because the sounds *kh*, *gh*, *ch*, *jh*, *th*, *ph* and *bh* are not available in English. The same would be true for words starting with **T**, **Th**, **D**, **Dh** as these sounds are also not available in English.



Notes

(*khargosh*- rabbit, *ghar*-house, *chhatree*-umbrella, *jharna*- stream, *thela*-bag, *phuul*-flower, *bhaalu*- bear)

Thus, phonology is an area where we can actually see an interference of the first language. One thing that affects the learner’s ability to grapple with the sounds of a language is her age. With time our jaws get fixed and it becomes difficult for us to produce certain sounds. Also the capacities of our brain to comprehend new sounds diminish after a certain age. Children pick up sounds of the second language up to the age of puberty i.e., by the time language gets specialized in the left hemisphere of the brain. In fact, if you place an Indian child of about 3-4 years in an English speaking nation like America or Britain and provide him opportunity to interact with English speaking children, the child would sound like an American or British child in a matter of a few months.

Check Your Progress-7

1. *Why does a native English speaker find it difficult to say ‘khargosh’?*

- (a) *this word is not found in English*
- (b) *‘kh’ sound is not present in English*
- (c) *doesn’t want to speak Hindi*
- (d) *does not try to learn.*

2. *Why do we find it difficult to speak out sounds that are not present in our environment after a certain age?*

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3. *Listen to any TV channel or radio station from Britain or America. Does the English that you hear on these channels sound similar to the English spoken on an Indian channel or station? Make a similar comparison of the Hindi spoken on a regional channel say a Bengali channel or a Punjabi channel with that of a channel which has country-wide viewership. Does the Hindi spoken on all these channels sound the same?*

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3.4 METHODS OF LANGUAGE-TEACHING

Methods of language-teaching have been influenced by a variety of extant social, political and psychological factors. Prominent among these are the 'needs of society at a particular point of time', 'an understanding of what language is' and an 'understanding of how children learn'.

3.4.1 GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

It is the oldest method that has been used for teaching language and is still commonly used. The main objective of teaching language through this method is developing proficiency to read literature in the target language and write in it. Students are expected to memorise rules of grammar and vocabulary lists and translate from the base language to the target language and vice versa with the support of teachers. The biggest limitation of this method is that the children do not acquire proficiency in listening and speaking the language.

The methods that came to be commonly used after this method gave more attention to listening and speaking. These methods were- Direct Method and Audio Lingual Method. These methods developed not only to give more attention to listening and speaking skills and as a response to the grammar translation method but also as an echo of the understanding that had developed in linguistics that the basic form of language is speech and only few languages are found to have written forms. This was also the time that the Second World War had given rise to the need for many translators, spies, code room assistants etc., who were fluent in many languages. Thus, these methods emphasise listening and speaking. In the Audio-lingual method, dialogue became a primary unit of teaching.

The discovery of the tape-recorder and language laboratories helped in the use of this method. Given below is the example of a dialogue used in the Audio-lingual method.

Kamal: What is your name?

Geeta: My name is Geeta. What is yours?

Kamal: My name is Kamal. Geeta, where do you live?

Geeta: I live in Ashok Vihar. Where do you live?

Kamal: I live in Rajendra Nagar.

It is now important to talk about the modern methods of teaching language- the Communicative Method and the Natural Approach.



Notes

3.4.4 COMMUNICATIVE METHOD

Communicative Method is affected by the various researches that have been undertaken in linguistics. Socio-linguistics made it clear that acquiring language does not mean learning only the structure of language but also learning how to use language appropriately according to context. It was natural that methods of language teaching that were affected by these ideas made ‘communication in context’ the basis of teaching language. If we teach using this method then chapters look like this– ‘At the railway station’, ‘With the Doctor’, ‘In a Job’ etc.

3.4.5 NATURAL APPROACH

This method gives maximum attention to the fact that in language teaching the focus should not be on the teacher or the teaching-learning material but on the learner (student). This fact was also affected by researches done in linguistics. From these researches it also became clear that making mistakes is an essential step in the process of acquiring language. On analyzing these errors it was also found that these errors are in fact indicators of a child’s knowledge and learning process.

These researches also tried to prove that children have innate ability to acquire language from birth. A 4-year old internalizes the rules of her language and does not make mistakes in speaking even before entering school. That is why the Natural Approach focuses on giving the child a tension free environment for learning language as well as providing interesting and challenging teaching-learning material of her level.

Check Your Progress-8

- 1. *What is the focus of the Direct Method?*
 - (a) translation
 - (b) contextual use language
 - (c) children
 - (d) accuracy in speaking
- 2. *Which is the oldest method of teaching language? What are its limitations?*

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- 3. *Today which language teaching method is used commonly and why?*

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Notes

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4. *Create an interesting dialogue to teach language through the Audio Lingual Method.*

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

- Children learn the first language from their environment without any explicit teaching i.e., without going to schools or reading books.
- Children have an innate ability to acquire language. They acquire more than one language proficiently if it is present in their environment. Therefore, children do not learn language by just imitating adults.
- Children acquire language naturally between 2-14 years. This period is thus referred to as the critical period for acquiring language. After this period it is difficult to learn language so naturally and as a native speaker, particularly if our focus is on pronunciation. Grammar and vocabulary may be learnt at any age if adequate exposure is available.
- The Broca’s area and Wernicke’s area in the left hemisphere of the human brain, are responsible for language related activities. These areas are responsible for speech production and speech comprehension respectively. Damage in these areas affects language acquisition.
- While learning language children go through various stages such as cooing, babbling, one word stage, two word stage, etc.
- Explicit teaching may be important in learning a second language. However, the second language can also be learnt as we learn the first language if the child gets a language rich environment during her critical period.
- ‘Comprehensible input’ and a ‘natural and communication friendly environment’ play an important role in acquiring second language.
- In the teaching of second languages, in addition to contextualised meaning, a focus on grammar may also help a great deal.
- In second language learning accuracy and fluency increase with time.
- Children’s motivation, self confidence, curiosity and attitude towards learning language play an important role in language acquisition.



- Our first language does not interfere in the learning of the second language.

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3.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. What are the differences and similarities between language learning and language acquisition?
2. Think of the role a rich language environment plays in first language acquisition.
3. How does the biological adaptation of the human body help in learning language?
4. Explain with an example (of a conversation) that children do not learn language by imitation.
5. What is the importance of the 'critical period' in acquiring language?
6. What is the difference between telegraphic speech and holophrastic speech?



Notes

7. If children are provided with a language rich environment for the second language can they also acquire the second language as they have acquired the first language? If yes, explain how?
8. Discuss the various methods and tools to learn second language.
9. Do you believe that our first language does not interfere in the learning of second language? Explain with logical arguments.
10. Which part of the brain is responsible for language related activities? What are the functions of Broca's area and Wernicke's area?
11. List the advantages and limitations of the different methods of teaching language while discussing them in short.