

## INTRODUCTION

Language enables people to better understand the world around them, to communicate with others, to establish and maintain relationships, to influence others, to think, reason and imagine, and to pass on their culture. People also use language creatively to convey ideas, feelings, emotions and images. Language is vital to all human beings. Thus, language is an indispensable tool for all learning and teaching. Language is learned and used in all aspects of life. It is therefore vital that learners have language skills to use in their learning, working and recreation as social beings.

There are many varieties of language, and these varieties change with changes in time and place. As language changes the methods of teaching language change too. Thus we have to continuously keep changing and improving the language teaching syllabus and materials.

Language varies and changes. It varies and changes according to the person using it, and according to time, place and purpose. Learners become more flexible users of language when they experience it in a variety of appropriate contexts. Language is not static; meanings and usages change over a period of time.

A syllabus sets out the broad guidelines of teaching matter, but it cannot take into account all the needs of each learner in every school. It provides a starting point for teachers to prepare a school programme that suits the needs of the learners they teach.

Teaching in primary school is influenced by a number of widely recognised characteristics of language and the way it is used and learned. These characteristics need to be considered as they are the foundations upon which the aims of language learning rest.

Language develops best when learners have opportunities to communicate. Growth will occur when the teacher judges the needs of the learners, guides them towards appropriate models, and rewards them for making good attempts. Learners become versatile users of language when they have a wide variety of satisfying experiences which encourage them to practise and develop their skills.

### **ORIENTATION**

A functional approach to language teaching is in line with current psycholinguistic theories on second language teaching. Lessons focus on the meanings and usage of language (its functions) rather than its structures. The emphasis has moved from ideas of "correct speech" to a more practical idea of "getting the message across".

New learners of any language will need, right from the outset, a number of basic communicative functions in order to understand and be understood in school and social situations. Such functions obviously include:

- Being able to ask for wants and needs;
- Being able to tell about him/her self;
- Being able to ask and reply to questions; and
- Being able to tell what happened.

The functional approach aims to help develop such competence in contextual

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF A FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE APPROACH**

real-life situations, and to equip the learner, then and there, with the necessary sentence patterns and vocabulary items.

There are several features by which a functional language approach can be identified.

- Learners learn to use the language naturally as they are participating in an activity or experience.
- The particular functions needed by the learners are the ones which are taught and practised in a variety of situations.
- The approach accepts that in language learning there is a distinction between language that is primarily heard and that which is spoken. Many learners have a fairly long receptive period in which attempts to put words together are minimized. This is normal and the learner will benefit from constantly hearing the language s/he needs in context, and being encouraged to speak as his/her confidence develops.
- The specific needs of each learner can be covered through group work. Individual learners can be assisted with their own special needs.
- The type of teaching shows spiral progression rather than a linear mastery of specific language patterns in a pre-determined textbook.

The basic functions for communication (e.g. questioning, describing, telling, etc.) remain the same for a beginner as for the more competent learner of language. The change and progression lies in the greater multiplicity and sophistication of language patterns, and ways of expressing a particular function. Additional functions (e.g. suggesting, predicting) will be needed as the learners' competence increases.

The functional approach to language teaching aims to equip the learner as quickly as possible with the actual language he needs for the real-life situations which the learner encounters - and when, how and where to use that language.

Although structure is to be taught incidentally and not consciously as grammar, by the end of this programme learners should be familiar with common grammatical terms like noun, verb, tenses, adjective, adverb, and preposition. However, note that these are not to be taught formally.

English should be taught in normal classroom groups. This syllabus outlines the material to be covered from Grade I to Grade VII. Teachers should use the English textbooks published by the Educational Development Centre, the reading scheme, and any other supplementary material suggested in the annual booklist.

### **GENERAL AIMS**

In addition to the general aims of the National Curriculum, which apply to all subjects, the general aim of teaching English is:

*To guide learners, in accordance with the developmental stages, and through a programme of enjoyable meaningful activities, in acquiring the English skills necessary for fluent, effective and appropriate*

*communication, so that they are able to gain access to higher education, social mobility and economic opportunity.*

### **SPECIFIC AIMS**

The specific aims of teaching English are:

1. To guide and enable learners through developmental stages to
    - Listen to, understand, evaluate and react appropriately to oral communication in English.
    - Communicate clearly, adequately and confidently in oral English.
    - Communicate clearly, adequately and confidently in written English.
    - Use a combination of decoding, syntactic and semantic cues in bringing meaning to print.
    - Learn from written English.
    - Use research skills to find relevant and appropriate information.
  
  2. To develop in the learners certain attitudes and values:
    - Enjoyment of the English language, and the desire to use it appropriately and effectively;
    - Respect for English as a means of communication and expression;
    - Respect for the mother tongue language, and acceptance of linguistic differences;
    - Enjoyment of reading as a leisure time activity;
    - Sensitivity to the expression and emotive qualities of English;
    - Desire to constantly improve English language skills; and
    - Appreciation of English as a literary medium.
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Suggested period allocations:

<b>Grades</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>No of periods per week</b>	5	5	6	7	7	7	7