

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

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Annotation: This article reviews that teaching the English language to students with different first languages, typically used to imply that the English Language Learner may have already learned more than one language, prior to learning English.

Key words: English, foreign language, world language, teaching of modern languages, English-speaking, bilingual.

We learn English as a foreign language. So far we have been considering English as a second Language. But in the rest of the world, English is a foreign language. That is, it is taught in schools, often widely, but it does not play an essential role in national or social life. In Spain, Brazil and Japan, for example, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese are the normal medium of communication and instruction: the average citizen does not need English or any other foreign language to live his Daily life or even for social or professional advancement. English, as a world language, is taught Among others in schools, but there is no regional variety of English which embodies a Spanish, Brazilian or Japanese cultural identity. In foreign language situations of this kind, therefore, the Hundreds of thousands of learners of English tend to have an instrumental motivation for learning the foreign language. The teaching of modern languages in schools has an educational function, and the older learner who deliberately sets out to learn English has a clear instrumental intention:

He wants to visit England, to be able to communicate with English-speaking tourists or friends, to Be able to read English in books and newspapers. Learners of

English as a foreign language have a Choice of language variety to a larger extent than second language learners. The Japanese situation is one in which both British and American varieties are equally acceptable and both are taught.

The choice of variety is partly influenced by the availability of teachers, partly by geographical Location and political influence. Foreign students of English in Mexico and the Philippines tend to learn American English. Europeans tend to learn British English, whilst in Papua New Guinea, Australasian English is the target variety. The distinctions between English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are, however, not as clear cut as the above may suggest. The decreasing role of English in India and Sri Lanka has, of recent years, made for a shift of emphasis to change a long established second language situation to something nearer to A foreign language situation. Elsewhere, political decisions are changing former foreign language situations. Official policies in, for example, Sweden and Holland are aiming towards a bilingual Position where all educated people have a good command of English, which is rapidly becoming an alternate language with Swedish and Dutch—a position much closer to ESL on the EFL/ESL continuum. It may be seen, then, that the role of English within a nation's daily life is influenced by geographical, historical, cultural and political factors, not all of which are immutable. But the role of English at a given point in time must affect both the way it is taught and the resultant impact on the daily life and growth of the individual. The place of English in the life of many second and foreign language learners today is much less easy to define than it was some years ago.

Michael West was able to state in 1953: The foreigner is learning English to express ideas rather than emotion: for his emotional expression he has the mother tongue.... It is a useful general rule that intensive words and items are of secondary importance to a foreign learner, however common they may be. This remains true

for learners in extreme foreign language situations: few Japanese Learners, for example, need even a passive knowledge of emotive English. But Danish, German And Dutch learners, in considerably greater contact with native speakers, and with English radio, Television and the press, are more likely to need at least a passive command of that area of English which expresses emotions. In those second language situations where most educated speakers are bilingual, having command of both English and the mother tongue, the functions of English Become even less clearly defined. In a second language situation, English is the language of the mass media: newspapers, radio and television are largely English media. English is also the language of official institutions of law courts, local and central government—and of education. It is also the language of large commercial and industrial organizations.

Clearly, a good command of English in a second language situation is the passport to social and economic advancement, and the successful user of the appropriate variety of English identifies himself as a successful, integrated member of that language community. It can be seen, then, that the Chinese Singaporean is motivated to learn English for integrative purposes, but it will be English of the South-east Asian variety which achieves his aim, rather than British, American or Australian varieties.

Literature

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