

# Languages



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Learning a foreign language from a scratch is cumbersome to say the least. It requires intensive other than extensive study as well as tested patience. Unlike our mother tongue, learning a foreign language demands that one gets the basics of the language in a much shorter time frame and usually without so much of a choice as the situation at hand may have forced its study. As an Egyptian, my native language is Arabic. However, at the age of 13, learning the English language became imminent as it became clear to my family that we were soon to relocate to the United Kingdom due to family reasons. I had earlier shown interest in Linguistics, so this simply provided a perfect opportunity to pursue my dream of becoming an English teacher.

As expected, learning was not rosy but I was determined to win. There was no turning back now. With my eyes steady on the target, I enrolled for a two lesson a week in my school which luckily offered English lesson. My teacher was petite Lady from London who took her job as a calling rather than a mere profession. Her devotion to the language and immense commitment in passing this new language to us served to awaken a much love for the subject. In fact I would fondly refer to her as madam English and whenever her schedule allowed, I would give up my other classes just to be at her office for informal classes.

Though my English tutor strived to balance her curriculum by encompassing all learning avenues- speaking, reading, writing, grammar, translation Literature and pronunciation teaching, she had a bias for speaking. As expected, I soon took a bias for speaking too given her deep influence on me. I always made it a point to learn a new word and used it given the slightest opportunity with her. This caught her eye and she returned the

favor by quenching my thirst for the language. She would ask me to read for the class on numerous occasions as well as charging me with the collection of class assignments to her office. This new found relationship made my learning of English much easier and faster.

In addition to class notes, I borrowed English journals, novels and appropriate English texts. Consequently, my grammar and writing skills improved as much as my speaking skills. Through her, I made an online friend with whom we conversed a lot. Initially the conversations were limited to typing and soon we were talking for long hours. This gave me a vantage point to excel in the study of English. I had the best teachers at my disposal and I was not going to disappoint. Talking with my online friend helped me improve on pronunciation while my English teacher sharpened my written English.

After my High school, I had no doubt what my profession was going to be. The love for English was so intense that I took up a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English language at the university. Here, I only did polishing and acquitted myself with the various aspects of the language. Needless to say, I achieved my target of being an English teacher. In my teaching practice, the following challenges are consistent with to all the learners of English as a second language. First is the fact that both the learner and the tutor are both non – natives of an English speaking country. The challenge here is that both are trying to translate English to their native language and yet try to communicate without any success. The next challenge is the recent cuts in National budget on foreign language studies by Governments around the world.

Explain, with examples, how language varies according to the context in which it is spoken or written.

More often than never, the use of language in a given context may yield a varied meaning from what was initially intended. This follows that while using particular words in a given language, it is imperative that the speaker frames the words in a suitable context to communicate the desired message. This is because words are governed by distinct rules and convention such that a particular word will have more than one meaning when subjected to a variety of contexts. For example, if a teacher asks a student if they can reach the top of the chalkboard or white board, he will not be questioning the length of the student's arm but rather the possibility of the student rubbing the board. In essence, both the linguistic and social rules should be weighed by the speaker so as not to send the wrong message.

Another example would be a father asking his son-“ how fast can you run?” with an intention to send him to pick up the spare car keys after locking his copy in the car yet it is about to rain. In this case, the father is fully aware that his son can run. His real interest at this point is the time that his son would use to get him the keys without being rained on; and not his ability to run.

What is meant by appropriateness (or appropriacy) in language use?

The main aim of every language is to create an interface of communication. This means that the message being communicated in whatever language should satisfy certain parameters. Key among this is the message's capacity to be understood by both the sender and receiver. To achieve this, the

message must be both accurate and appropriate. In this sense, the accuracy of the message is crucial for two reasons, one is to successfully pass the message across and two, to generate a right answer. On the other hand, language appropriateness means that the language being used must first of all, be understood by everyone in the forum and secondly be within the scope of everyone present. In a nutshell, language appropriateness is a language's ability to be free from jargon.

Language is communication. Discuss.

According to the advanced learner's dictionary, a language is the system through which people of a given country or area communicates. This means that a language, in whichever form is an interface through which two or more people can communicate. On the other hand, the same dictionary presents communication as the process of expressing ideas and feelings. A closer look at these two terms shows a mutual and direct link between them. Communication is a process that depends on the existence of a language to take place. Thus a language is the means or the link.

This does not mean that a language is automatically a communication on its own. For the above description of language is communication to hold, the language has to be understandable by the two parties intending to use it. The sender or speaker must either use a language that the receiver understands or use a translator. However, it is important to note that communication can take place through other means other than a language. This can be through use of gestures and symbols, unless such symbols are

qualified as a language. A good example is use of hands signs, although this has been termed as sign language.