

CAMBRIDGE

# Introduction to Undergraduate

# *English*

BOOK 2

Only textbook for LCC and GE courses  
of University of Kalyani

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**Paper V: Text and Performance****Parthapratim Bandopadhyay**

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UNIT

1

Language

1A. Language and Communication

We all have an idea that language is the primary means of communication. Animals also make noises to communicate with each other but here we are concerned with human language. Humans can communicate with each other with the aid of gestures too like hand and/or head movements or eye contact et cetera but in most cases they take recourse to language. As a definition of language, it can be said that language is a system of sounds, words, patterns et cetera used by humans to communicate thoughts and feelings.

Language can be both spoken and written. Humans learn to speak first and most of those who learn to speak, subsequently learn to write. Speech is then the basic mode of communication, but writing is also a very important aspect of communication. In this section and three subsequent sections, we shall concentrate primarily on spoken language, but written language is not at all excluded from our discussion.

Human language or communication has certain characteristics which distinguishes it from that of animal communication:

12. **duality of patterning:** language is made up of meaningless sound units called phonemes, which are then combined into formal units with meanings called morphemes or words. All developed human language has this dual structure of patterning.
13. **creativity:** combining the same units in multiple ways, humans can create any number of sounds or meaningful utterances.
14. **arbitrariness:** there are no inherent connections between sounds and symbols or between symbols and what they symbolise. Thus, it is a purely arbitrary quality of the English language that associates the combination of the sounds "p", "e" and "n" to mean *pen*, a writing equipment.
15. **displacement:** humans can and often do communicate outside the context and this is known as displacement.
16. **dynamic nature:** human language is always dynamic; it keeps on changing at all levels: be it at the level of sounds, words, sentences or semantics.