



Department of English  
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

**First Call for Papers  
for  
International Conference (Online)**

[MHRD-SPARC Supported]

On

Language Ideologies and the 'Vernacular' in  
South Asian Colonial and Post-colonial  
Literature(s) and Public Spheres

15-17 March, 2021

## Concept Note

The international conference proposes to address recent formulations and debates regarding the status of regional languages of South Asia vis-à-vis English. The vernacular as a category commands a whole range of ambivalent meanings and has been a contested term ever since the colonial age. Implying a hierarchical set-up and the subjugation of “lower” languages under the “high variety” of English with its cosmopolitan positioning, the vernacular has also received empowering impulses and has been invested with qualities like grounded-ness and expressive strength. Thus in the thoroughly multilingual literary and public spheres of South Asia, a recalibration of the notion of vernacularity vis-a-vis language ideologies in the context of the ongoing rise of literary Anglo-phonía in South Asia and post-liberalization India seems relevant.

Multilingualism covers up a host of hierarchical relationships, contact scenarios, historical and ongoing entanglements. Our focus on language ideology proceeds from the contention that languages rarely exist in an unmarked state of just being there. Various perceptions, narratives, stereotypes add up to a thick conundrum of attributes that get attached to a language and its community of speakers. The forms of language ideologies vary greatly. The conference would aim to capture this diversity, no matter whether the ideologies in question are fluid and agitational or whether they have been sedimented and become doctrinal. By the side of inland constellations, we will also aim to include the diaspora, since diasporic situations are known to reverberate in multiple ways upon the domains of origin. We will concentrate on the way the languages in question are imagined and projected, and questions like, do vernaculars still aspire to the full-fledged autonomous status twentieth century nationalist movements had claimed for it, or do they dive off into parochial bubbles? How are language ideologies of the vernacular positioned vis-a-vis language ideologies of English in South Asia?

One of the concerns of the conference is to explore what happens to “bhasha literatures” during the colonial and post-colonial periods, and how to position them by the side of Indian English and international literature. Another focus is on critically discussing and gauging the impact of indigenist theories like those of Bhalchandra Nemade, G. N. Devy and others, our guideline being the question whether such indigenism can help keeping a linguistic culture intact without unduly essentialising the (sub-)nation and cutting off the larger world. A third idea is to use the umbrella of the 'vernacular' to explore cultural spaces and their specific positionalities, locating anew such divides as the one between high and folk culture, etc. Finally, moving away from literature into public and political spaces, we also want to look into the ways vernacular publics and political rhetoric are intertwined with Anglophone (national or global) positionalities, and their role in claiming stakes in the political process. Some of the themes of the conference are:

- Language Ideologies of South Asian Vernaculars
- Vernacular and the Colonial Context
- Trajectories of Vernacularity in Postcolonial Context in South Asia
- Globalisation and Vernacularity
- South Asian Public Sphere and Vernacularity
- Ideologies of English in South Asia and its Vernacularisation
- Vernacularity in Pedagogy
- Global Cultures, Transnational Spaces and Vernacular Resistance

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Submission of Abstracts : November 20, 2020

Intimation of Accepted Abstracts : November 30, 2020

Submission of Full-Length Papers : January 30, 2021

## **GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACT AND PAPER SUBMISSIONS:**

Abstracts of about 300 words along with short bio-note of about 100 words be preferably sent by e-mail to [vernacularconference2020@gmail.com](mailto:vernacularconference2020@gmail.com) on or before November 20, 2020. Full-length papers of 6000-8000 words, citation style: MLA 8th Edition, should reach on or before January 30, 2021.

**For further queries and submissions kindly mail at**  
[vernacularconference2020@gmail.com](mailto:vernacularconference2020@gmail.com)

**PATRON:**

**Prof. Najma Akhtar**

Vice Chancellor

Jamia Millia Islamia

**CONFÉRENCE CHAIR:**

**Prof. Nishat Zaidi**

Department of English

Jamia Millia Islamia

**CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL CHAIR:**

**Prof. Hans Harder**

Roprecht-Karls-Universitat Heidelberg

University of Heidelberg

**CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR**

**Dr Saroj K Mahananda**

Department of English

Jamia Millia Islamia

**CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL CO-CHAIR**

**Dr. Jurgen Schaflechner**

(Ruprecht-Karls-Universitat Heidelberg).