



## Exploring the Challenges Faced by Non-Native Speakers in Learning English at the International School of Management, Patna

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### Abstract

Language learning is an interesting process. There are polyglots around the globe who can speak multiple languages. Unfortunately, these polyglots are handful in numbers. As mandated by NEP 2020, students need to learn at least three languages, which emphasize the importance of foreign languages, specifically English, in India. Learning English language presents numerous challenges, particularly for non-native speakers in Bihar, India. (i) Introducing English Language in grade six in Hindi medium schools, (ii) teaching English content in Hindi language for better understanding by the learners, and (iii) professional undergraduate programs are in English language and learners from different schooling boards who might have studied in regional or Hindi medium are forced to study in English language - on these three problem statements, the research work is conducted based on qualitative methodologies. The researcher aims to describe approved tactics and new technologies to address the problem statements.

Keywords: Challenges, Obstacles, Non-native Speakers, Qualitative Research Methodology

### 1. Introduction

#### Rationale for the Research

Language helps in expressing feelings, thoughts, and emotions in words, whether oral or written. Due to globalisation, there is a profound level of interdependence across all spheres of modern social life. Limitations are being lifted, boundaries are expanding, and knowledge is being shared more openly among people. For all of these, the role of language is vital and can't be ignored. Academics contend that English is no longer a language of one nation; instead, it has evolved into an international commodity, globally acclaimed. In every sphere, the English language is used for international information interchange, including Business Professionals, Doctors, Scientists, Engineers, and Teachers. Students are accessing global information through this medium.

As time changes, the criteria for judging and identifying learners' qualities and skills also change. To strengthen a nation's economy, it is equally important for its citizens to expand their businesses and engage with others. Use of the English language is a way to broaden one's horizons.

But the fact is, learning any language other than one's native language demands extra patience and time. In

a state like Bihar, where students' native language differs from the national language, learning English is a real challenge for those surrounded by native speakers round-the-clock. In schools and higher educational institutes, English is taught at different levels and for various purposes. Learners find it difficult to apply and use because there is a lack of motivation and the right environment that can support their practice and learning. It is a bitter truth that students face challenges when communicating in English. In the later phases of life, after graduation, most of them lack confidence and struggle to express their opinions and thoughts in the English language (when required), resulting in a significant loss of job opportunities and lower pay packages. Let us face the mirror. English language proficiency is advantageous in the workplace, as it can help expand business and develop networks across states and countries.

The questions are:

1. What stops a teacher from teaching English?
2. What kind of challenges do they encounter while teaching this foreign language in the class?

### 2. Hypothesis

Non-native English teachers and learners in Bihar



perceive that inadequate pedagogical resources, interference from local languages, and prevailing socio-cultural attitudes collectively impede the effectiveness of English language teaching and learning. It is difficult for a native student of Bihar, to communicate fluently in English, even though many students are enrolled in different reputed and recognized schools under the Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) or the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), studying in English-medium schools. However, they face challenges in reading, writing and speaking in the English language. Similarly, it is difficult for teachers to teach English content and help students learn and understand it cohesively. The major problem of the students at the International School of Management, pursuing a professional course, is speaking and writing in the English language, which is the most Herculean task. Students are taught grammar, and they mug up the rules. Many learners lack the real-time application of grammatical rules when communicating in English. Therefore, many fail to frame grammatically incorrect sentences. As they listen to very little in English, students face difficulties with sentence structure, grammar, appropriate vocabulary, and correct pronunciation. To address these issues, there is a need to revamp teaching pedagogy and andragogy. Using short stories with common English words creates a positive speaking environment that encourages learners to speak in English. Encourage the formation of literary, debating, and dramatic clubs, etc. Teachers must foster a culture of English-language communication and gently correct learners without hurting their emotions. Assisting students in identifying their mistakes and showing ways to overcome them is the key responsibility of a teacher teaching the English Language. The right use of technology can also help Gen Z learn English through multimedia. According to the Global Ranking conducted by the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2024, India ranks 69th and falls in the low proficiency category. It indicates that the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other educators are at stake. In Bihar, the situation is worse. The majority of students who have studied in English-medium schools and have qualified for class-

12 face difficulty speaking fluent English. While writing a 100-word paragraph, most fail to present their thoughts clearly, as they lack command of sentence structure and appropriate vocabulary.

### **3. Research Questions and Objectives**

Learning the English language is a fundamental requirement for an educated person. It widens the scope for working professionals, entrepreneurs, and startups to achieve global reach.

The questions:

1. How can we overcome this challenge?
2. What changes must be adhered to by teachers while teaching the English language to learners?

The primary focus will be to identify the obstacles students in Bihar face in learning English, and the second aim will be to offer appropriate solutions to the challenges learners face. In Bihar, native speakers speak various languages, including Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Angika, and Hindi. In schools, learning English can be challenging for learners, as they miss the peer group that can communicate in English. It is often observed that students prefer to communicate in their regional language or in Hindi, the national language. To hone any language skill, a learner must concentrate on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As English is a foreign language, students often receive inadequate support, even from their teachers. The problem can probably be addressed if teachers can find a viable solution for delivering their sessions and help create a better environment for learners with the latest technological aids. Learning a language has its own impediments and challenges. The purpose of this study is to explore solutions that teachers can apply when teaching English to students. Emphasis is placed on developing solutions that help students improve their English language learning skills in Bihar.

### **4. Analytical Review of Literature**

(Oder, T. & Eisenschmidt, E, 2018) have cited the importance of learning English as a tool that facilitates access to and the acquisition of new knowledge and opportunities in a global, competitive market. Globally, the English language is widely used by non-native speakers for international communication, to meet their day-to-day needs, as



mentioned in the book by (Broughton, G., Brumfit, C., Pincas, A., & Wilde, R. D. , 2002). The reasons for learning the English language began with colonisation and spread widely across continents due to the significant contributions of researchers in this language (Howson, 2013). Teaching English to non-native speakers is teaching a foreign language.

(Kumaravadivelu, 2006) suggested a significant approach in his book on Understanding Language Teaching: From Method to Post-Method, a pattern that connects the various segments of teaching and learning. In this book, the author vividly articulates his personal practices and their implications for learners, examining the progress of learners' transition from method to post-method language teaching and learning. He elucidates the relationships among applied theory, research, and its practical applications. The real challenge is to control the variables that influence learning a second or a foreign language. Students with poor hearing, speech impairment, weak eyesight and a lack of strong memory or mental illnesses may find it challenging to compete with their peers, and this can affect their learning too. A few learners may face personal or social problems that can impair their learning. The major issue is insufficient knowledge of the English language. The grammar and sentence structure of a vernacular language like Hindi differ significantly from those of English. Often, learners try to translate. As a result, it has been identified that non-native English learners often make mistakes when speaking. In worst-case scenarios, these mistakes prevent a learner from putting effort into learning in a social setting. Personal behaviour highly influences a learner. Learners influenced by shyness, a lack of linguistic knowledge, pronunciation problems, and incorrect vocabulary use can impair their learning behaviour, as stated by (Khan, 2007). In his empirical research, he highlighted the disparities observed in L1 and L2 pronunciation patterns, which have led to phonological issues among learners. Listening and speaking are two complementary activities. Researchers have proven that listening assertively leads to better speaking skills. A learner must paraphrase and try to speak what was learnt through listening. It helps in developing active listening skills

and builds confidence in speaking content. Therefore, a teacher must emphasise effective communication, creating a proper balance of listening and speaking (Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L., 2005)(Tickoo, 2003). Developing a positive attitude among learners and delivering the appropriate content to them are the two key aspects that every teacher must follow. With so many aids and tools available in the digital format, the role of an English teacher is more critical. Measuring effective teaching is highly unstable and conditional on the teacher's mental state. There can be two aspects. Intrinsic factors include the teacher's traits, such as self-enthusiasm, motivation, and interpersonal communication with learners. Extrinsic factors that are based on competency in designing the lesson plans, creating instructional material and teaching strategy, which relate to the methodology applied to teach, managing the classroom (Rothenberg, J. J., McDermott, P. C., & Gormley, K. A., 1993) and applied teaching approach (Raganwati, 2015). identified that motivated teachers, while teaching, encourage active participation of learners. They promote active, functional learning strategies rather than dysfunctional ones to achieve the desired outcome. However, the real challenge is that teachers and learners often use their L1 (Hindi, Maithili, or Bhojpuri) to communicate daily, even in regular classrooms, rather than in English. There is a lack of exposure and environment for communication, as noted by (Khattak, Z. I., Jamshed, T., Ahmad, A., & Baig, M. N., 2011). Therefore, learners often struggle to understand the correct application of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Learners often face syntactic difficulties when speaking and formulating appropriate sentences. Generally, these issues arise when teachers adhere to the old school of thought and teach grammar and its rules without applying them in practice through communication methods (Alam, Q., & Bashir Uddin, A., 2013). Generally, students use the wrong pronouns, substituting nouns for verbs, and applying incorrect tenses while speaking are common mistakes that occur only when speaking. Learners may write correct sentences as they have time to think, frame, and check the written sentences. (Songbatumis, 2017) through her research, investigated the issues faced by English Teachers.

Many teachers are untrained, lack command of the English Language, lack mastery of teaching techniques, may not be aware of the latest technological developments that can enhance teaching and learning, and lack professional development opportunities. In certain schools and educational institutions, there can be facility issues such as lack of a projector, audio system and language labs. According to (Harmer, 2001), students require a learning environment both in and outside the classroom. Teachers must encourage language learners to break down silos, come out of their shells and comfort zones, and focus on autonomous learning. As stated by (Kumari, N., & Dubey, P., 2025), teaching a language is an art, and a teacher must help learners enrich their lateral thinking and support them in the continuous learning process. As mentors, teachers should create an environment that allows learners to apply their learning in a practical setting.

### 5. Methodology

For this research study, an empirical qualitative approach is used to identify real-time challenges and obstacles in learning and teaching English to non-native speakers at the International School of Management, an educational institution affiliated with Aryabhata Knowledge University, offering BBA, BCA, and other vocational courses in Bihar, and to identify desirable solutions.

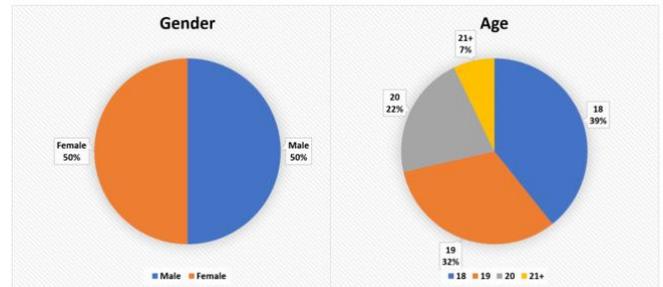
### 6. Description of Participants of the Study

To understand students' real-time problems at the International School of Management, Patna, a random selection process was used. Participants were students enrolled in vocational courses for the 2025 academic year, consisting of 30 female and 30 male students. Data was collected from these respondents in four ways:

1. Through Interviews
2. Through Questionnaire
3. Through Google Form

Building students' confidence to participate and share opinions was vital. Connecting with and motivating them to express real-life challenges required effort. The research purpose and value were clearly explained, highlighting how their input could improve the academic environment. Individual

appointments encouraged open and honest data collection.

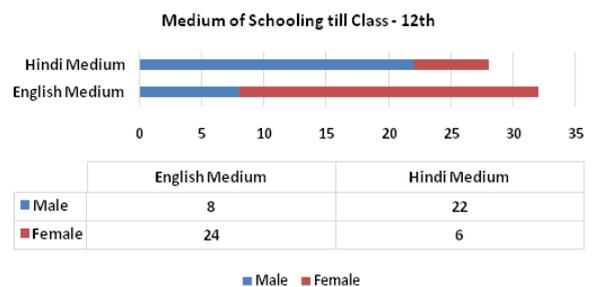


**Figure 1 Gender and Age**

The printed questionnaire collected real-time data on respondents' English proficiency, including reading, interpreting, understanding, and verbal abilities, as shown in their written responses. Google Forms enabled a quick grammar, speech, and reading test, saving time and facilitating efficient data compilation.

### 7. Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

Most male respondents were from rural Bihar, had completed Class 12 in Hindi Medium, and then joined the International School of Management in Patna for BBA and BCA programs that require higher English proficiency. All course modules and content are in English. Therefore, a teacher has to adapt bilingual instruction to help students understand and retain concepts.



**Figure 2 Medium of Schooling**

Initially, students face challenges adjusting to English-medium instruction, leading to avoidance and difficulty in participation. Some adapt over time, while others drop out. In a co-educational environment, competition intensifies as English-speaking female students outperform those from Hindi-medium schools, further affecting morale and

classroom dynamics.

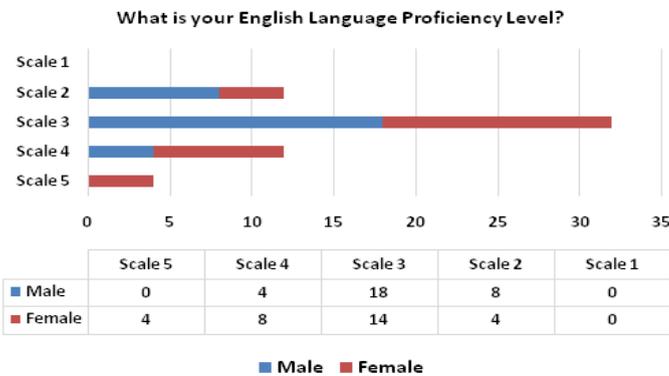


Figure 3 Level of Language

Teachers play a critical role in teaching a language, but a lack of consistent English instruction hinders progress. Lack of appreciation, overburdened with workload and number of students beyond the prescribed number as per UGC norms, stop a teacher from thinking out of the box. Though a pre-assessment can gauge proficiency, faculty often resort to simpler language, missing the chance to immerse students in English, which slows learning and creates an unsupportive environment for students' future needs.

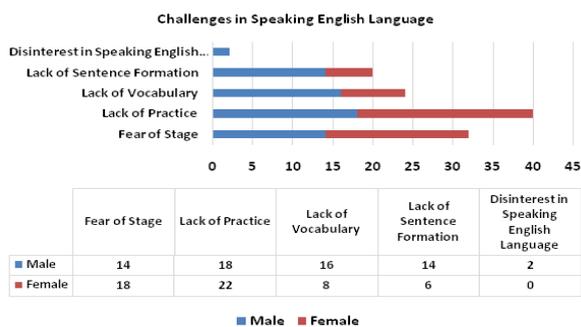


Figure 5 Challenges of Languages

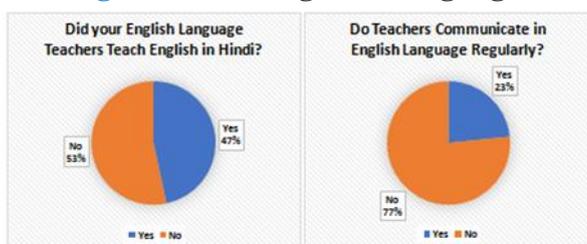


Figure 6 Comparison

Beyond the prescribed syllabus, the curriculum offers little to encourage learners to participate, explore, and learn English Communication Skills. Short-term training programs and activity-based learning should be integrated to foster greater student engagement and skill development. As students speak in their vernacular, they often misspell and mispronounce words when speaking English. To address this, introduce targeted spelling and pronunciation exercises that connect to their native speech patterns. Systematic activities can help minimize mistakes in sentence structure, tense usage, and syntax. In a huge classroom, it is difficult for teachers to concentrate on slow learners, partly because these students lack an English-speaking environment. To address this, special classes or training modules should be implemented. Additionally, a language lab can be very helpful, and technology can be a true blessing in creating supportive conditions. Instead of highlighting learners' weaknesses, teachers should start with simple assignments and activities. By taking this approach, they can improve students' morale, support the creation of interest, and help them learn things from scratch. Additionally, it is important to encourage students to speak English. Wherever possible, recording their statements allows teachers to reiterate and identify common areas for development. This method also helps learners create a focus group and start improving together. Since learning is a continuous process, regularly assess students in all four language components - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - to clearly track their growth and mastery. Use the assessment results to identify specific strengths and target areas for improvement.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

- Students enrolled in professional or vocational courses are typically mature. At the time of enrollment, a prompt assessment will ascertain students' English language proficiency. Accordingly, from the very beginning, a proper goal can be set.
- Language learning is not rocket science. In every educational institution, an English Language Expert should be recruited to interview students and identify their



developmental gaps. This information should be shared with other teachers, so they can apply strategies in their regular classes. It will encourage these students to participate and learn new things with zeal.

- Institutions should designate classrooms and other common areas as English-Speaking Zones. A positive campus environment can encourage learners to challenge their weaknesses, overcome their hesitations, and build their confidence.
- A few motivational sessions are a must to bridge gaps in language and address emotional and psychological barriers. Every day, at least three students must start their regular classes with a recap of what the teachers taught in their previous sessions. This will help overcome stage fright, be more outspoken, and improve oral presentation skills.
- Regular loud-book reading classes, presenting dramas or plays, debate or extempore should be a part of regular academics. Initialing, learners may commit mistakes. In a very subtle way, the English Language Expert must correct their mistakes, rather than pointing them out in front of a crowd. It will be difficult to face the audience if publicly humiliated or corrected.
- Use of multimedia technology is a boon for students. It improves both cognitive and language skills. Instead of traditional teaching methodologies, teachers must now seek better alternatives that offer greater practical involvement of the learners.
- These will help even teachers improve their English-speaking skills. Many teachers are not comfortable with public speaking. Only a confident teacher can build students' confidence.

### Limitations

As this research is focused on students who took admission in the International School of Management, Patna, Bihar, it is difficult to say whether the scenario is similar in other educational institutions.

### Future Scope of Research

To provide a broader spectrum, similar research should be conducted at the affiliated colleges of Aryabhata Knowledge University. Only then can a well-defined solution be crafted that helps students, faculty members, and society at large.

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