# Exploring Linguistic and Non-Linguistic Impediments in Learning English

**Neha Singhal, Sanjay K. Jha, and Shradhanwita Singh**

Amity School of Liberal Arts
Amity University Haryana, India

## Abstract

Language impediments arise while reading, writing, speaking and listening. English is often learned but not up to the verge of absorbing it. This study hypothesizes that majority of nonnative speakers of English in Eastern Haryana remain deprived of learning English to a desired level due to impediments of different types. Hence, this study aims to explore linguistic and non-linguistics impediments in learning English language. Also, this paper forwards some suggestive measures to overcome linguistic and non-linguistic impediments. Questionnaires were used to collect the data and the analysis revealed fourteen impediments in learning English language.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has not only become important for learning but is also considered to be a key to progress in every path of life where we stand. In some parts of India, English is used as second language after their regional language like Tamil Nadu but they still face problems because of state margins. In view of concern of the learners this research paper believes in thesis that learning is earning the linguistic components instead of impediments. Learning is process to pave your path towards betterment of an individual. One needs to be tenacious while absorbing this language and ostracize excuses while learning.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This paper discusses the ongoing problems while reading, writing, speaking and listening English. As for my observations, I figured out that different people have different approach towards English language and that is the reason they find it difficult to study English as a language.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

1. To explore different types of Linguistic impediments in learning English language.
2. To explore different types of Non-Linguistic impediments in learning English language.
3. To overcome Linguistic and Non-Linguistic impediments in learning English language.

## 1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the Linguistic impediments in learning English language?
2. What are the Non-Linguistic impediments in learning English language?
3. How to overcome Linguistic and Non-Linguistic impediments in learning English language?

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will prove worthwhile to the society in a sense that it will pave the path of overcoming plausible impediments faced by the English learners from different walks of life. In addition, the findings of this study will also help teachers as well as curriculum designers to design appropriate and engaging lessons for the learners.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language barriers are a common challenge these days. Therefore this section will provide a literaturereview on betterment of an individual on the concept of communication. This research indicates that many learners come across many barriers in attaining the target of learning English language. Many studies have been carried out by different researchers like Radhika (2015), It has also been observed by many researchers that lack of socio-cultural competence, lack of interest, lack of motivation for learning, lack of authentic materials, lack of engaging activities, and lack of comprehensible inputs are also responsible for delayed learning of the language. Not only this, teaching methods or styles can be considered as another barrier for learning as observed by Jha (2013) in the form of *English in Eastern Ethiopia is Learnt; not Mastered*. But every teacher is not the same and every student is not the same. For example, while communicating a much more local language environment is observed so we are clueless and hopeless about learning new approach. This example is strongly connected with Social/Cultural/Economic differences as well as local teaching/learning problems that appear to be insoluble. To some extent it is presumed these contextual facts hinderances in way of learning English. The people of this context do not like to avoid their own language and they prefer to use it in their daily life. Their attachment to their own language is naturally acknowledged and that is the reason they vary from one another linguistically.

In our context of study, the learners are the graduate students which means they already have learned their mother tongue and their national language so the obstacle arises in learning English at senior level. Also, there is lack of understanding between a context where a learner lives and where the task is given. In this way, such obstacles are difficult to trace out as it has become an unavoidable habit in the life of learners. In India, people often avoid communicating in English because of fear of being judged and excuse by following a few quotes that restrict the oral communication. For instance, blessed is the man who have nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of the fact. Also, Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill. Additionally, fear of making errors and losing face was among all the factors that influenced them bit to speak. As we all know, English is the leading language worldwide and with every passing year English is becoming more and more competitive. Thus, learning English is very important at present for future and improving our lifestyle. Hence, it is advised to make our learning an earning towards living standard.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

## 3.1   Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study were 100 common people globally. The participants were selected on the basis of unique sampling as they had uncommon ability to explain information about the impediments while speaking English language.

## 3.2 Data Collection

The study used only questionnaire to gather the required data on the patterns of a similar study carried out by Jha (2013). The questionnaire was distributed and completed by the selected sample of 100 respondents in which 20% of respondents came on board internationally.

# 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section discusses the findings of (i) the major linguistic impediments in learning English and (ii) non-linguistic impediments in learning English. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Jha (2013). The following are some of the striking findings drawn after analyzing the collected data.

## 4.1 Linguistic Impediments

Using participant observation in questionnaire, twelve linguistic impediments were explored as follows.

### 4.1.1 Lack of exposure to Comprehensible Input

Most of them are unaware of basic terminologies because they have always ignored English as a language thinking that they already know it up to the mark. Terminology is another word for the group of specialized words or

meanings relating to a particular field, and also the study of such terms and their use, this also known as terminology science. Terms are words and compound words or multi-word expressions that in specific contexts are given specific meanings—these may deviate from the meanings the same words have in other contexts and in everyday language.

### 4.1.2 Mother Tongue Influence

The importance of pronunciation in communication cannot be ignored. In fact it is as important as grammar and vocabulary. Yet, the evidence of mother tongue influence on English is very obvious. This manifests in the form of incorrect pronunciation. As a regular practice, they have been using their mother tongue and that is the reason it affects their accent too. It not only affects pronunciation but sounds as well. For instance, while speaking "*LIVE*" they sound it as "*LEAVE*".

Example - They often say it *I LEAVE IN GURGAON* instead of saying *I LIVE IN GURGAON*.

### 4.1.3 Choice of Exposure to Content

Your choice of content is another impediment as we can observe people tend to ignore content with vast vocabulary and limit themselves to what they already know. So, new vocabulary should be used as soon as it is discovered to encourage people to think and learn beyond their limit that they have set.

### 4.1.4 Grammatical Errors

Mistakes in English can definitely make you feel embarrassed and make you hide your true intellect. Inappropriate verb tense uses occur due to apparent contradiction of terms and teaching problems hence leads to formation of wrong sentences. Using descriptive approach can solve this issue instead of using Prescriptive approach.

### 4.1.5 Word Formation

It is nothing but a creation of new word and word is formed by joining parts of two words after clipping. An example is smog, which comes from smoke and fog. In this context, base should be clear from very beginning to easily form words. For example- Happy becomes Unhappy when prefix is added and unhappily when suffix is added. So, people often say *I AM NOT HAPPY* instead of saying *I AM UNHAPPY*.

### 4.1.6 Absence of Motivational Teaching

It becomes bossy when students are not appreciated for what they speak. Motivational Teaching does not mean promoting wrong information but promoting insufficient information with positive outcome. Teachers can structure or supervise students to do better in the given field. They can form an acceptable and supportive environment while they speak and make them self-actualize their drawbacks.

### 4.1.7 Goal Orientation

In order to achieve goals, students are more focused in scoring instead of learning due to which they are not only gaining stress but lacking confidence as they see a higher competition in front of them and their attitude towards learning change, hence, leads to spoiling motivation. According to me, everyone who scores well does not own good knowledge just like every successful person does not own a higher education. Learning and Scoring are two different parameters just like that of success and education. None of them can walk parallel to each other as each one of them has their own outcomes.

### 4.1.8 Written Versus Spoken English Confusion

Students may be able hear and understand spoken English but confuse sentence structure and grammar when writing the same thing. It can be difficult for students to write clearly in a second language, as their native language may have different requirements for tenses and placement for sentence structure. Teachers often face problems with sentence formatting and grammatical requirements needed for writing to be coherent. For example, if we compare English and Haryanvi, sentence formation changes and people tend to speak in the same form they speak their native language.

*4.1.9 Dyslexia (where the person has trouble understanding the written word)*

It is a learning disorder that affects your ability to read, spell, write, and speak. Kids who have it are often smart and hardworking, but they have trouble connecting the letters they see to the sounds those letters make. The incidence of dyslexia in India is believed to be 15% such as slow reading, trouble spelling, or mixing up words. Adults can have this learning disorder, as well. Some people are diagnosed early in life. Others don't realize they have dyslexia until they get older. Kids with dyslexia often have normal vision and are just as smart as their peers. But they struggle more in school because it takes them longer to read. Trouble processing words can also make it hard to spell, write, and speak clearly.

*4.1.10 Dysgraphia (where the person has trouble with forming letters when writing)*

It is a learning disability that affects writing abilities. It can manifest itself as difficulties with spelling, poor handwriting and trouble putting thoughts on paper. Student won't be able to learn when he won't be able write as we grab things from writing.

*4.1.11 Unfamiliar Vocabulary*

One of main concern these days people don't know enough vocabulary because of poor learning, reading and thinking habits. People speak what they think or see that is why they are limited to learn new things everyday.

*4.1.12 Curriculum*

Curriculum came up as an impediment because people think there is no standard form of delivering the information to the students which eventually leaves them in a confusion f figuring out what are they supposed to learn and how are they supposed to grasp.

## 4.2 Non- Linguistic Impediments

Using participant observation in questionnaire, thirteen non-linguistic impediments were explored as follows.

### 4.2.1 Ego complex with others

People don't speak English language because their ego would get hurt if someone would correct them. Jealousy pops out among the students with higher knowledge as everybody adores being superior in their own terms.

### 4.2.2 Hesitation

It is caused by lack of skills and confidence. People with poor skills hesitate to speak in front of higher authorities like interviewer. They are afraid of being rejected by them so they tend to speak less in English language. Even when it comes to face a crowd or audience their hesitation shows up through the facial expressions or body language.

### 4.2.3 Fear

You should figure out as to why you feel shy or ashamed of speaking English language. Once you do it own an I CAN DO IT confidence and stop comparing yourself with others. It happens because of low vocabulary, problems with pronunciation and ignorance towards grammar. You can only overcome this fear just by practicing and repeating the same.

### 4.2.4 Lack of interest

Slower results lead to lack of interest as everybody cannot be qualitative and hard working. Instructors should consider giving students tips on how to study and work effectively, for example how to read articles (e.g., skim headings, review sources and tables, identify the author's argument) and solve problems in their discipline (e.g., formulate the problem, identify constraints, generate possible solutions).

### 4.2.5 Slow grasping power

We can also consider it as slow learner. If you don't communicate on regular basis you will definitely face problems in absorbing English language. It should be compulsory to communicate in English language while moving ahead in normal lifestyle because people grab from everyday conversations or lifestyle.

### 4.2.6 Lack of motivation

Participants think that it is something that can be used just to complete the task given in classroom and has to be performed during examination and other activities so they limit themselves towards such environment where it is a deal of less time.

### 4.2.7 Inability to express oneself

Participants lack in expressing themselves because of non-verbal gestures, posture and body language. Casual body language leads to shyness, lack of confidence etc. They don't feel as confident as others because of not being able to face what they actually need to face in real life. They go through a hard time in putting appropriate words can be another reason towards it.

### 4.2.8 State Margins

People are not able to communicate qualitatively because of language differences which lead to accent problems and stretching of a single word more than that of desired seconds. States that resist the imposition of Hindi, such as Tamil Nadu, choose to teach English as their second language but still they are not able to make proper use of it due to advance linking with their own state.

For example- 1) They stretch a sound in TALKING and pronounce it as TAAALKING. 2) They say OSKING instead of ASKING.

### 4.2.9 Lack of Environment

Sometimes people don't receive enough of social support and if you try to improve yourself individually they make fun out of you thinking it's of no use. They are more interested in communicating in their regional languages so they don't find enough room left to communicate with.

*4.2.10  Psychological Root*

Here, we not only discuss about family culture towards education that is being followed but other situational factors are also involved, such as shame, fear, topic, task, and group size while interacting. Sometimes we disrespect teaching profession because of fluctuating mindset. At times, we feel like overcoming this trend and follow our own minds but at the same time we feel like continuing with what we have been watching in our family tree. And since language learning is primarily a social activity, it involves interaction with others; it is bound to arouse emotions, some of which may be obstacles to successful learning and teaching.

*4.2.11 Learning Inferiority*

In an ESL/EFL classrooms, it has often been found that a good number of learners has learning inferiority due to which they don't feel like being part of the discussion. Moreover, due to teachers' more attention on fast learners, the students with low proficiency remain deprived of competing with the rest of the class. High Proficiency Students by Teachers students usually observe that the toppers are engaged in an end-to-end discussion, so they prefer to ignore what is being discussed. Hence, it leads to a thinking where students prefer being quiet and make up their mind in such a direction where their contribution is not required and the toppers are doing the same by representing the whole class.

*4.2.12  Lack of Infrastructure facility*

Lack of infrastructure facility plays another hike which leads to no motivation and students lack background as infrastructure creates favorable environment for student's holistic development and makes learning joyful.

*4.2.13  Social Stigma*

Social stigma demotivates them as they feel they won't be accepted if they speak incorrect as slowly, we can already observe the competition live in terms of speaking English.

## 4.3 Overcoming these Impediments

Here are some remedial measures based on the study of Jha, (2013) to overcome plausible impediments.

### 4.3.1 Communicate in English on Daily basis

*It will promote habit of speaking and listening.*

### 4.3.2 Make it a habit of reading newspaper every day

*It will promote habit of reading.*

### 4.3.3 Learn ten new words daily

*It will promote habit of learning and writing.*

### 4.3.4 Compete with yourself

*It will not only make you work on a better you but showcase you to overcome the older version of you.*

### 4.3.5 Have a stay on commitment

*It will enforce desired learning of the span.*

### 4.3.5 Imitating

*It can boost your confidence without even others knowing it.*

### 4.3.6 Thinking in English

*It will help you in critically analyzing content formation.*

### 4.3.7 Practicing

*As it is said practice makes a man perfect, you definitely need to practice a lot even if you speak wrong just speak. Initiate in a discussion and start talking the way you want, let others correct you and you will feel the changes.*

## 4.4 Data Interpretation

**Table-1: Linguistic and Non-linguistic Impediments**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Curriculum | 31 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 31.0 |
|  | Lack of infrastructure facility. | 26 | 26.0 | 26.0 | 57.0 |
|  | Social stigma | 19 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 76.0 |
|  | Unfamiliar vocabulary | 24 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

According to the analysis and observation of **table-1**, it is found that curriculum is one of the major impediments which shows 100 respondents, 31.0% respondents were not satisfied with the existing curriculum as there is no specified way of delivering content, 26.0% fall in the category where lack of infrastructure facility is highlighted, 24.0% are dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary and 19.0% are influenced by social stigma which demotivates them as they feel they won't be accepted if they speak incorrect English.

*Table-2:* **Remedial Measures important in improving the linguistic and non-linguistic abilities.**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Communicating | 24 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 24.0 |
|  | Imitating | 14 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 38.0 |
|  | Learning new words everyday | 12 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 50.0 |
|  | Practicing | 21 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 71.0 |
|  | Reading | 22 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 93.0 |
|  | Thinking in English | 7 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

According to the analysis and observation of table-2, it is found that communicating-24%, Reading-22% and Practicing-21% can be the best remedial practices for overcoming the learning impediments and Imitating-14%, learning new words everyday-12% and thinking in English can contribute in a same manner from the collected data out of 100 respondents.

**Table-3: Degree of Linguistic and Non-linguistic Impediments**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Linguistic | 55 | 55.0 | 55.0 | 55.0 |
| | Non-linguistic | 45 | 45.0 | 45.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**TABLE-4: Degree of Remedial Measures**

| | | | Linguistic | Non-linguistic | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Curriculum | Count | 31 | 0 | 31 |
| | | Row N % | 100.0% | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| | Lack of infrastructure facility. | Count | 0 | 26 | 26 |
| | | Row N % | 0.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | Social stigma | Count | 0 | 19 | 19 |
| | | Row N % | 0.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | Unfamiliar vocabulary | Count | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| | | Row N % | 100.0% | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| | Total | Count | 55 | 45 | 100 |
| | | Row N % | 55.0% | 45.0% | 100.0% |

According to the given analysis of table-3 and table-4, 55% of Linguistic impediments arise while speaking English; whereas, 45% of Non-linguistic barriers arise while speaking English. In conclusion, there are four major impediments in which Curriculum count is 31, Lack of infrastructure counts 26, Social Stigma counts 19 and Unfamiliar counts 24 which in total makes 100 responses.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The paper has tried to attain all three objectives by learning (i) the major linguistic impediments in learning English (ii) non-linguistic impediments in learning English and (iii) overcoming Linguistic and Non-Linguistic impediments in learning English language. To summarize the findings, five facts are worth mentioning here. First, curricular design is at fault in a sense that it is not in line with the base of the students. Second, different states have different approaches towards teaching and learning. Third, Confidence is a problem with people who can speak incorrect English and it leads one to feel shy, hesitated, fearful and ashamed. Fourth, Curriculum plays a vital role as there is no specific way of conducting engaging activities for the students. Fifth, Lack of infrastructure facility especially multimedia classrooms or smart classrooms equipped with language labs is also a prominent reason of learning impediment Thus, it is recommended that language teachers must create a joyful environment of learning and use good authentic materials in the classrooms and keep themselves updated in terms of best practices followed by the leaders in the field.

## References

Jha, S.K. (2013), English in Eastern Ethiopia is Learnt; Not Mastered. English Language Teaching. English Language Teaching; Vol. 6, No. 4; 2013 ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916-4750. Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

Johnson, Shannon. (2019), Problems Facing Teaching and Learning of the English Language.

Radhika, V. (2015), Impediments in Language Learning.