



## **A STUDY OF THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY BENGALI SPEAKING STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH**

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### **Introduction**

“Language is related to culture. When you study another language you begin to understand the culture that uses this language. You see the history of these people and where they are going in the future. You experience their world” *Rita Mae Brown*

"English meets the test of practical value. It is the language of the world in all fields of the arts, hard science, humanities and social science. International trade, commerce and diplomacy are conducted in English." *Mueen*

Due to its importance as international language, English has got a privileged position as a second compulsory language in India. English is taught as a compulsory subject at different levels.

Learning a language is a difficult task and children make mistakes while learning a language. Making errors is the natural thing in the world and it is evidently attached to human beings. It is necessary part of learning and teacher should use the errors with the view of having better result in the classroom. This indicates that second language teacher should be experienced and enough qualified to use the learner's errors for learning process. Moreover, teaching of English is an extra ordinary complex task. All who know English cannot teach it well so it is imperative for the teachers of English to improve the teaching by knowing the learning difficulties and factors affecting the learning of the students in English on the basis of errors done by them. The area regarding the second language learning in Bengali medium schools has been ignored. This study will provide a base for the research in teaching and learning English as a second language in secondary level in Bengali medium schools.

### **Need of the Study**

Review of the related literature reveals that students with difficulties in learning English doubted their abilities and showed poor academic performance & achievements. Especially in

case of Bengali speaking students, while teaching them in the schools it has been observed, that they face difficulties in learning English which affects their academic performance and achievement. In Bengali medium schools, students feel themselves uncomfortable in English language. They feel shy, hesitation, inferiority complex. There is no system to bring them out of this condition. There are no efforts from family, school or from the society resulting into the slaughtering of the personalities of the students. From child hood to adult hood, from primary to higher secondary they remain in a state of distrust upon themselves about English speaking resulting into losing their self-confidence and there by spoiling their own career. It's not like that they don't have talents, abilities, potentials or qualities of becoming successful in their field of interest but just because of inability to speak English fluently like a native speaker they are unable to convert their dream into reality. The researcher, being a teacher of Bengali speaking students experienced that self-confidence is a very important factor in learning English language. During the course of teaching to Bengali speaking students, researcher experienced that the majority of Bengali speaking students consider English as a difficult subject and this may generate affective problems. Hence, the need for investigating the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English.

#### **Operational Definitions:**

##### **Difficulties in Learning English:**

Language learning practice often assumes that most of the difficulties that learners face in the study of English are a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English. This may be true for anyone of any mother tongue. Following components of difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English will be studied.

- a) **Psychological:** Non-linguistic difficulties like hesitation accompanying the use of language. It is the language behaviour - the use of language in daily life.
- b) **Linguistic:** the difficulties in use of the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of language.
- c) **Pedagogical (educational):** difficulties in teaching-learning of the language

##### **Bengali speaking students:**

The students studying in Bengali medium schools are also called as Bengali speaking students or Vernacular students (nonnative speakers of English).

##### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To study the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of
  - a) Gender

- b) Type of school
- 2. To compare the difficulties faced by Urdu speaking students in learning English on the basis of
  - a) Gender
  - b) Type of school

**Hypothesis of the Study**

- 1. There is no significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of
  - a) Gender
  - b) Type of school

**Scope and Delimitation of the Study:**

The present study covers the students studying in SSC board, Std. X, in the schools of Kolkata, West Bengal district, Bengali as the medium of instruction. The present study includes the study of the difficulties faced by students as perceived by the students.

**Methodology of the Present Study**

The researcher wants to know the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English. In keeping with the aim, the researcher has adopted the Descriptive Survey of Correlational type as research method.

**Sampling Technique**

For the purpose of the present study the researcher has adopted the Simple Random Probability Sampling technique. The three stage process is used in selecting the sample.

**Ist Stage** - Bengali medium schools of West Bengal District were identified.

**IInd Stage** - Aided and unaided schools affiliated to SSC board of West Bengal were chosen.

**IIIInd Stage** - Boys and Girls were chosen by sample random technique.

**The Sample-Nature and Size**

The total sample consisted of 646 students. The sample consisted of 255 boys and 345 Girls of Bengali schools of West Bengal.

**Gender wise distribution of the sample**

Gender	Aided schools	Un-aided schools	Total
Girls	230	115	345
Boys	148	107	255
Total	378	222	600

**Tools used in the Present Study**

As no readymade tool was available, the researcher prepared his own tool to be used for the purpose.

1. Personal Data Sheet
2. Difficulties rating scale

**Rating Scale for difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English. The final form of the tool for difficulties contains 30 items.**

Aspects	Positive statements	Negative statements	Total
Psychological	8	5	13
Linguistic	3	6	9
Pedagogical	5	3	8

**Analysis of Data**

**Descriptive Analysis:**

**1a) To study the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of Gender.**

**Table 1.1 The scores of the difficulties faced by Urdu speaking students in learning English on the basis of gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Boys	255	73.94	12.47	-0.655	1.35
Girls	345	76.95	10.99	-2.832	19.33

**Interpretation**

From the above table mean scores of the girls is higher than the boys. That means difficulties faced by the girls are higher on the average level. The standard deviation of boys is higher than the girls showing more deviation from the mean among boys and hence heterogeneous in nature. Girls are homogenous group in nature.

The negative value of Skewness in both the cases shows that many students in the group have scored more than the average score of the group. The value of the kurtosis of boys i.e. 1.35 and girls i.e. 19.33 which is more than 0.263 (NPC), therefore the distribution is Platykurtic.

**1b) To study the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of type of school**

**Table 2 The scores of the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of type of school**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Unaided	222	71.64	11.109	-0.996	2.479
Aided	378	78.03	11.450	-2.425	15.64

### Interpretation

From the above table mean scores of the students of the aided institutions is higher than the students of the unaided institutions that means difficulties faced by the students of the aided institutions are higher on the average level. The standard deviation of both the students of aided and unaided institutions is nearly equal; therefore, spread of scores from the mean is similar.

The negative value of Skewness in both the cases shows that many students in the group have scored more than the average score of the group. The value of the kurtosis of students of the aided institutions i.e. 2.479 and students of the unaided institutions i.e. 15.64 which is more than 0.263 (NPC), therefore the distribution is Platikurtic.

### Inferential Analysis

Testing of Hypothesis

#### Hypothesis I

- a) There is no significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of Gender

**Table 3 The difficulties faced by Urdu speaking students in learning English On the basis of Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>Level of Significant</b>
Boys	225	73.93	12.47	598	3.13	Significant at 0.01 level
Girls	345	76.94	10.99			

### Interpretation

The calculated t value is 3.13. Table value oft for df 598 is 1.96 at 0.05 level and 2.59 at 0.01 level. The calculated t value 3.13 is more than table value 1.96 and 2.59 at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, hypothesis is significant at 0.05 & 0.01 levels Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Conclusion

There is significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of Gender.

### Hypothesis II

There is no significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of type of school.

**Table 4 The difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of type of school**

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	Level of Significant
Unaided	22	71.64	11.11	598	6.67	0.01
Aided	378	78.03	11.45			

### Interpretation

The calculated t value is 6.67. Table value of t for df 598 is 1.96 at 0.05 level and 2.59 at 0.01 level. The calculated t value 6.67 is more than table value 1.96 and 2.59 at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, hypothesis is significant at 0.05 & 0.01 levels. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Conclusion

There is significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of type of Schools.

### Findings and Discussion of the Study

- There is significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of Gender.  
It can be inferred that girl learners are having more difficulties in learning English than boys.
- There is significant difference in the difficulties faced by Bengali speaking students in learning English on the basis of type of Schools.  
It can be inferred that students of Aided schools are having more difficulties in learning English tasks than the students of Un-Aided Schools.

### Suggestions to the Stakeholders

#### Teachers

1. For the enhancement of speaking skill in school environment English language teacher should cultivate English communication culture among Bengali speaking students within schools.

2. Students should be encouraged to speak in English language with fellow students and to converse in English.
3. English language teachers should accept students' mistakes as a natural part of learning and encourage trying and risk-taking in English learning.
4. English language teachers should foster psychological security and develop peer-supportive activities.
5. Teachers should support vocabulary development. For example, word mats banks, webs, topic banks, dictionaries, thesaurus, visuals, key vocabulary, and classroom posters in dual languages.
6. Teachers should build in planned opportunities for purposeful talk. For example, talk partners (first language and others), encourage and extend responses by asking probing and open ended questions and request use of taught language structures.

### **Students**

1. Students should expose themselves to English as much as possible. The more students expose themselves to English, the more they get used to it and the more familiar it becomes to them. They will start recognizing what sounds right and what sounds wrong. They will also start understanding why certain words or phrases are used instead of others, and they will start using them in their own conversations and writing.
2. Students should enlarge vocabulary by
  - a. Watching News, and good English movies.
  - b. Listen to the radio.
  - c. Read as much as possible
3. Students should cultivate friendships with multi-cultural community.
4. Students should keep a diary that allows them to utilize the vocabulary skill, that they have been practicing with reading, listening and grammar.

### **Parents**

1. Parents should tell their child stories in English language. Encourage their child to join in with the English story telling classes.
2. Parents should talk in English with their children about what they did at playgroup, nursery or school in English language.
3. Parents should use simple commands, appreciation, in English.

4. Parents should ask basic questions in English and encourage their wards to respond in English only.

Students study various subjects till class 10th only because they are required to choose a specialised stream thereafter. Hence, class 10 is a career shaper, a game changer. Students study all the subjects thoroughly and try to figure out their interests. Based on that and their performance in exams, they decide which stream to opt for. This is how class 10th helps students in sorting their choices and decision-making, thus enlightening the path to successful careers.

The content of English has its own special significance. Students need to know every minute details of English language, which makes them develop and grow infinitely; makes them sensible and responsible citizens. Once the students grow up they truly realise the importance of English and nothing can ever undermine its value in one's life.

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