

IDENTIFYING THE LEVEL OF PROBLEMS FACE BY STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LEARNING AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL – A STUDY**Dr. Sipankar Das¹ & Mr. Jagamuhan Kalita²**<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17444071>**Review: 01/10/2025****Acceptance: 03/10/2025****Published: 25/10/2025**

Abstract: English has become an indispensable global language, playing a crucial role in education, career and communication. However, at the secondary level, students in non-English speaking regions often face considerable challenges in mastering it. This study, conducted in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri District, Assam, investigates the level and nature of problems faced by class IX students in learning English. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 80 students across four provincialized Assamese-medium high schools, representing both rural and urban settings. Findings reveal that 28.75% of students experience very high levels of problems, while 16.25% report very low levels. Gender-wise analysis shows no significant mean difference between male and female students, though female learners slightly report higher problem severity. Similarly, urban and rural students display no significant statistical difference, though urban students tend to face relatively more severe difficulties.

Keywords: English learning, secondary education, Secondary level Students and Bilasipara

Introduction: Language is a structured medium of communication that allows individuals to convey their thoughts, ideas and emotions. Some linguists, drawing from psychology, view language as a habit formed through constant use and practice. Among world languages, English holds a prominent place as it is the most widely spoken and serves as a vital international link language.

The importance of English continues to grow rapidly and its role in education cannot be overlooked. For the development of a nation's education system, English plays a crucial part. Therefore, aspects such as syllabus design, lesson planning, examinations and evaluation methods must be framed in a way that prepares students to meet modern educational demands. Introducing such approaches from the secondary level can help learners improve their command of English and reduce difficulties faced by both students and teachers. When children are first introduced to a foreign language, their responses often vary, largely because the new language differs significantly from their mother tongue in terms of structure, rules and systems.

In today's globalized world, English proficiency is a key skill that opens doors to academic achievement, career growth and cross-cultural exchange. Yet, many secondary-level students, especially in non-native English-speaking regions, struggle with learning English. These difficulties arise from factors such as ineffective teaching methods, limited exposure, lack of motivation and socio-economic constraints.

This study aims to identify the major barriers faced by secondary school learners in acquiring English. It will examine both teaching practices and broader contextual issues that contribute to these challenges. The ultimate goal is to provide practical insights and recommendations for teachers, policymakers and other stakeholders to create a more effective, supportive and inclusive environment for English language learning.

Statement of the Problem: This study aims to explore and identify the core issues that affect English language learning among secondary school students in Bilasipara area of Dhubri District and to suggest possible solutions for addressing

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them. It is crucial to identify the root causes of these problems and explore practical solutions to improve English language learning outcomes in secondary schools. The area of the study selected by the investigators is "Identifying the Level Problems Faced by Students in English Learning at the Secondary Level – A Study of the Bilasipara area of Dhubri District".

Significance of the Study: This study is significant because it aims to identify the challenges faced by secondary level students in learning English. As English is a global language and an essential subject in the school curriculum, difficulties in learning it can negatively affect students' academic performance and future opportunities. It will also provide useful insights for policymakers to support improvements in English education. The findings of this study will contribute to enhancing students' language skills, boosting their confidence and preparing them for further education and professional development. It will also guide curriculum designers to develop more suitable and engaging English learning materials. School administrators and education policymakers can also use the findings to support programs and policies that improve English education in schools. This research will greatly assist the investigator in understanding the challenges students face in both spoken and written English. It will also be beneficial to English language teachers and textbook writers. Most importantly, it will highlight the need to adopt innovative methods for teaching the English language.

Background of the study Area: Bilasipara is a lively town in the Dhubri district of Assam, functioning as both a town and a sub-division. It is managed by the Bilasipara Municipal Board and politically represented through two Assembly constituencies—Bilasipara East and Bilasipara West. Beyond the town, the larger Bilasipara Block serves as an administrative hub, looking after several villages and Gram Panchayats, thereby connecting local governance with the everyday lives of people in the region.

Objective of the study

1. To study the level of problems faced by secondary level students in English learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.
2. To Study the level Problems faced by male and female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.
3. To Study the level of Problems faced by urban students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.
4. To Study the level of Problems faced by urban male and female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.
5. To Study the level of Problems faced by rural students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.
6. To Study the level of Problems faced by rural male and female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. **H01:** There exists no significant mean difference between the problems of male and female students in English learning.
2. **H02:** There exists no significant mean difference between the problems of rural and urban students in English learning.

Delimitation of the study:

1. The study has been delimited to the class nine students only.
2. The study has been delimited to 80 samples only.
3. The study has been delimited to the Assamese Medium schools only.
4. The study has been delimited to the Bilasipara area of Dhurbri District only.

Review of Related Literature : The reviewed studies focus diverse challenges and approaches to English language teaching and learning at secondary and higher levels across different contexts. Nasir and Dermawan (2021) and Qomariyah (2021) emphasized the effectiveness of Project-Based and Problem-Based Learning in enhancing students' confidence, participation and interest in English. Zafar et al. (2022) demonstrated that socioeconomic status significantly

impacts English learning influenced by resources, environment and communication. Decker (2021) found greater learning difficulties in provincial schools of Pakistan, particularly in grammar, comprehension and sentence construction. Cabrera (2023) stressed task-based learning as essential for adapting to global demands, while Lalmawipuii (2024) reported that Mizoram teachers largely use traditional methods like Grammar Translation and rely heavily on textbooks and blackboards, with limited use of modern aids. Chhetri (2023) studied rural West Bengal schools, noting enthusiasm among students despite challenges in reading, teaching methods and resource use. Rabha (2022) studied problems faced by Bodo-medium students transitioning to English medium, especially in reading and writing. Similarly, Changkakoti (2020) found Assamese medium teachers lacking training and neglecting teaching aids, leading to difficulties in effective English teaching. Overall, the literature reflects that while innovative methods like PBL can boost engagement, systemic issues socioeconomic disparities, inadequate resources, untrained teachers and over-reliance on traditional methods continue to hinder effective English language learning.

Method of the study: The present study adopts a descriptive survey design. Given the study's objectives and suitability, the researcher has selected the descriptive survey method. This approach is widely recognized and frequently applied in educational research.

Population and Sample: The study covered all high schools in the Bilasipara area as a population of the study from which 4 schools, 2 government and 2 private schools were selected with the help of purposive sampling technique under non-probability sampling method to represent both rural and urban settings. All are provincialized and follow the Assamese medium of instruction. A total of 80 participants were chosen, including 49 from rural and 31 from urban areas, with a gender distribution of 38 males and 42 females. This sample ensured diversity across geography and gender, aligning with the objectives of the study.

Data collection Tool: To collect data from the selected sample, the investigator employed a self-constructed tool. The primary instrument used was a Questionnaire for Students, comprising 30 items. These items included a mix of both positively and negatively worded statements. The response format was a simple Yes/No option, allowing participants to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Statistical Implication of the study: The selection of proper statistical techniques for the analysis and interpretation of data is the important steps in research. In this study, the investigator has used simple percentage, SD, t-test techniques for analysis and interpretation of data.

Analysis and Interpretation of data on the basis of Objectives of the study:

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 1: To identify the problems faced by secondary level students in English learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Table No-1**Level of problems face by students**

SL No	Category	Range	No of students	Percentage of students
1	Very high	1-12	23	28.75%
2	High	13-24	10	12.5%
3	Average	25-36	18	22.5%
4	Low	37-48	16	20%
5	Very Low	49-69	13	16.25%
Total			80	100%

Interpretation: Table No-1 it is illustrate 28.75% of students fall into the "Very high" problem category, 22.5% experiences an "Average", 20% report having a "Low" level, 16.25% of students fall into the "Very low" category and only 12.5% are categorized as having a "High" level of problems.

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 2 To Study the Problems faced by male and female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Table No 2
Level of problems face by male and female students

SL No	Category	Range	No of Male students	% of Male students	No of Female students	% of Fmale students
1	Very High	1-12	08	21.05	11	26.19
2	High	13-24	05	13.16	06	14.29
3	Average	25-36	09	23.68	09	21.43
4	Low	37-48	07	18.42	07	16.66
5	Very low	49-60	09	23.68	09	21.43
Total			38	100%	42	100%

Interpretation- Table no-2 present the distribution of male and female students according to the level of problems they face. The data reveals that 23.68% male students fall into both the “Average” and “Very low” categories, 21.05% are categorized under “Very High and 13.16% fall under “High” level, while only 18.42% fall into the “Low” category.

The data indicates that a significant proportion of female students experience challenges to varying degrees. Specifically, 26.19% of the respondents face very high levels of problems, 21.43% of students who face average levels of problems and an equal percentage (21.43%) who report experiencing very low levels of problems. Meanwhile, 16.66% of students fall into the low category and 14.29% report facing high levels of problems.

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 3 To Study the Problems faced by urban students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Table No-3
Levels of problems face by urban students

SL No	Category	Range	No. of students	%of students
1	Very High	1-12	13	26.53
2	High	13-24	11	22.45
3	Average	25-36	08	16.32
4	Low	37-48	07	14.29
5	Very low	49-60	10	20.41
Total			49	100%

Interpretation-Table No-3 illustrate the levels of problems faced by urban students. The data reveals that the highest 26.53% of urban students experience very high levels of problems, 22.45% of students who face high levels of problems, 20.41% of students report very low levels of problems, 16.32% fall under the average category and the lowest 14.29% of students experience low levels of problems.

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 4 To Study the Problems faced by urban Male and Female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Table No-4
Levels of problems face by male urban areas students

S.L No	Category	Range	Male students	% of Male students	Female students	% of Female students
1	Very High	1-12	16	45.71	06	42.86%
2	High	13-24	6	17.14	02	14.29%

3	Average	25-36	5	14.29	03	21.43%
4	Low	37-48	2	5.72	01	7.14%
5	Very low	49-60	6	17.14	02	14.28%
Total			35	100%	14	100%

Interpretation: The data presented in Table No. 4 clearly indicate the Problems faced by urban Male and Female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district. The highest percentage, 45.71%, falls under the Very High category, 17.14% of students in both the High and Very Low categories. Meanwhile, 14.29% fall under the Average category and only 5.72% of male students fall under Low category accounts.

Again in case of female students 42.86% students fall under the "Very High" category, 21.43%, falls under the "Average" category, 14.29% of the students experience a "High" level of problems, 14.28% of students fall in the "Very Low" category and only 7.14% report a "Low" level of problems.

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 5: To Study the Problems faced by Rural students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Table No-5
Level of problems face by Rural students.

SL No	Category	Range	No of rural students	Percentage of students
1	Very High	1-12	08	25.80
2	High	13-24	03	9.68
3	Average	25-36	05	16.13
4	Low	37-48	08	25.81
5	Very low	49-60	07	22.58
Total			31	100%

Interpretation- Table No.5 presents the level of problems faced by rural students in learning English at the secondary level in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district. From the above table it is found that 25.81% of students facing a low level of problems, 25.80% of students reported facing a very high level of problems, 22.58% of the students fall under the very low problem category, further showing that a fair number of students face minimal difficulty in learning English. 16.13% of the respondents reported experiencing an average level of problems and 9.68% fall into the high level problem category.

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 6: To Study the Problems faced by rural male and female students in English Learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

Table-6
Level of problems face by Male and Female Rural areas students

Sl. No	Category	Range	No. of Male Students	% of Male students	No. of Female Students	% of Female students
1	Very High	1-12	4	30.77%	6	33.33%
2	High	13-24	2	15.38%	4	22.22%
3	Average	25-36	1	7.7%	2	11.11%
4	Low	37-48	2	15.38%	1	5.56%
5	Very Low	49-60	4	30.77%	5	27.78%
Total			13	100%	18	100%

Interpretation- The data presented in Table No. 6 illustrates the levels of problems experienced by male and female students in urban areas. It is observed that 30.77% of the students fall into the "Very High" category, an equal percentage (30.77%) of students also fall under the "Very Low" category, the "High" and "Low" categories each account for 15.38%

of the students, reflecting a balanced representation of those facing moderately serious or less serious problems. The smallest portion, only 7.7%, of students falls under the “Average” category,

On the other hand the highest 33.33% of female students falls under the “Very High” category. Following this, 27.78% of students are categorized under the “Very Low” level of problems, the “High” category accounts for 22.22% of the students, meanwhile, only 11.11% fall into the “Average” category and a very small portion just 5.56% experience a “Low” level of problems.

Difference between the problems faced by Male and Female secondary level students in English learning at the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district

H01: There exists no significant mean difference between the problems of male and female students in English learning.

TABLE-7

Mean difference between the problems of male and female students

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t-value	Level of significant
Boys	38	32.71	17.86	78	0.5134	Not significant at both level
Girls	42	30.69	17.31			

Interpretation: Table-7 presents the statistical comparison between male and female secondary-level students regarding the problems they face in learning English. The mean score for male students is 32.71, while the mean for female students is slightly lower at 30.69. This indicates that male students, on average, report facing more problems in learning English than female students. The standard deviations are 17.86 for boys and 17.31 for girls, suggesting similar variability in their responses. The calculated t-value is 0.5134 with 78 degrees of freedom. This value is not significant at either the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01), which states that there is no significant mean difference between the problems of male and female students in English learning, is accepted.

Difference between the problems faced by Urban and Rural secondary level students in English learning in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district

H02: There exists no significant mean difference between the problems of rural and urban students in English learning.

TABLE -8

Mean difference between the problems of Urban and Rural students

Area	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of significant
Urban	49	29.96	17.16	78	0.5883	Not significant at both level
Rural	31	32.29	17.13			

Interpretation- Table-8 presents the comparison between the problems faced by urban and rural secondary-level students in learning English. The mean score of urban students is 29.96, while that of rural students is slightly higher at 32.29. However, the standard deviations are very close (17.16 for urban and 17.13 for rural), indicating similar variability in responses within both groups. To determine whether the observed difference is statistically significant, a t-test was conducted. The calculated t-value is 0.5883 with 78 degrees of freedom. The result is not significant at either the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance. Based on this, the null hypothesis (H02), which states that there is no significant mean difference between the problems of rural and urban students in English learning, is accepted.

FINDINGS, SUGESSTION AND CONCLUSION

- 1. Overall Distribution of Problems Among Students High Prevalence of Severe Problems:** A significant proportion of students (28.75%) experience “Very High” levels of problems in English learning, while many students face severe difficulties, others report minimal issues, with 16.25% in the “Very Low” category and 20% in the “Low” category.

2. **Gender-Based Differences in Problem Severity:** Male students show a balanced distribution across problem levels, with 23.68% each in the “Average” and “Very Low” categories and 21.05% in the “Very High” category and female students have a slightly higher proportion (26.19%) in the “Very High” category compared to males, but an equal percentage (21.43%) report “Very Low” and “Average” problems.
3. **Urban vs. Rural Differences in Problem Severity:** Urban students exhibit a high concentration of severe problems, with 26.53% in the “Very High” category and 22.45% in the “High” category and in case of rural students, it shows a more balanced distribution, with 25.81% in the “Low” category and 25.80% in the “Very High” category.
4. **Gender-Based Differences within Urban Areas:** Significant proportions (45.71%) of urban male students fall into the “Very High” category, indicating severe challenges for nearly half of this group. However, 17.14% report “Very Low” problems which reflect a polarized experience but urban female students also show a high prevalence of severe problems, with 42.86% in the “Very High” category. Only 7.14% report “Low” problems, indicating that most urban female students face moderate to severe challenges.
5. **Gender-Based Differences within Rural Areas:** Rural male students report a higher mean problem score (35.23) compared to rural female students (23.67), suggesting that male students face more challenges. And rural female students have a high proportion (33.33%) in the “Very High” category, but 27.78% report “Very Low” problems, indicating significant variability.

Recommendations of the Study: Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made for various stakeholders like parents, teachers and head master, government and policy makers to get involve in the process of English language education at the secondary level in the Bilasipara area of Dhubri district.

1. Parents should provide a supportive home environment that encourages the use of English in everyday communication, even if at a basic level.
2. They should motivate their children to read English newspapers, books and watch English-language educational programs to develop listening and reading skills.
3. Regular interaction with teachers can help parents understand their child’s progress and areas that require improvement.
4. Teachers must adopt innovative, student-centered and interactive teaching strategies, such as role plays, group discussions, debates and storytelling.
5. Emphasis should be placed on developing communicative competence alongside grammar and writing skills.
6. Remedial teaching should be arranged for slow learners, with a focus on building foundational English skills.
7. Headmasters should ensure the provision of essential teaching-learning resources, such as English language books, audio-visual aids, dictionaries and internet access.
8. Regular monitoring of classroom teaching and teacher performance should be carried out to maintain instructional quality.
9. The government should increase investment in rural education infrastructure, particularly in English language learning facilities.
10. Posting of adequately trained and qualified English teachers in rural and remote areas should be prioritized.
11. Policies should aim at minimizing the urban-rural divide in English language education through equitable resource distribution and teacher placement.
12. A policy shift towards a more skill-based and learner-friendly English curriculum should be encouraged.

Conclusion: English holds a vital place as a global language. In colonial India, it dominated as the medium of instruction, giving learners more exposure. However, today most non-English medium schools still rely on the grammar translation method, depriving students of an English-rich environment. Major hurdles include lack of motivation, ineffective methods, untrained teachers, absence of supportive environments, parental unawareness and the government’s

no-detention policy. This study, focusing on Bilasipara in Dhubri district, reveals that linguistic, pedagogical, environmental and socio-economic factors hinder English learning. Common errors appear in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and sentence construction, largely due to weak foundations, limited exposure and inadequate resources. The findings stress the need for teacher training, improved pedagogy and better learning environments. They also provide practical insights for both teachers and students to overcome challenges. Ultimately, a systematic, inclusive and context-sensitive approach can raise the standard of English education in Bilasipara and similar rural and semi-urban areas.

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