

## Challenges in Teaching English in Multilingual Classrooms of Jharkhand: A Special Reference to Ranchi

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### ABSTRACT

English language proficiency has become an essential requirement for academic success, employment, and social mobility in the contemporary world. In India, English functions as a second language; however, its effective teaching remains a major challenge in several socio-economically backward and multilingual states. Jharkhand, characterized by its tribal population and linguistic diversity, presents a unique context where English is largely limited to classroom instruction with minimal real-life exposure. The present study examined the major problems associated with teaching English language in Ranchi (Jharkhand) at the selected secondary and higher secondary levels. Using a descriptive and analytical research design, data were collected from English teachers and students through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The findings revealed that mother-tongue interference, shortage of trained English teachers, low learner motivation, inadequate infrastructure, and examination-oriented pedagogy significantly hinder effective English language teaching. The study emphasized the need for context-sensitive teaching strategies, continuous teacher training, and policy-level support to improve English language education in the state. The paper contributes to existing literature by providing region-specific insights and suggesting practical measures for strengthening English language teaching in Ranchi.

**Keywords:** *English Language Teaching, Ranchi, Multilingual Classrooms, Teacher Challenges.*

### I. Introduction

English has emerged as one of the most influential languages in the contemporary world, functioning as a medium of international communication, higher education, science, technology, and global employment. In the Indian context, English occupies a unique position as a second language and a

link language, connecting diverse linguistic communities across the country. Proficiency in English is often associated with academic success, professional mobility, and social empowerment. As a result, English language education has become an integral component of the Indian school and higher education system. However, despite its recognized importance, the teaching and learning of English continue to face serious challenges in several regions of India, particularly in socio-economically and educationally backward states such as Jharkhand [1].

Jharkhand presents a distinctive educational and linguistic landscape. Formed in 2000, the state is predominantly tribal and rural, with a large proportion of the population belonging to indigenous communities.

The linguistic environment of Jharkhand is highly multilingual, with languages such as Santhali, Mundari, Ho, Kurukh, Nagpuri, Khortha, and Hindi being widely spoken. For most learners, English is neither a first language nor a language of daily interaction. It is largely confined to the classroom and textbooks, which limits natural exposure and practical usage. This multilingual setting, while culturally rich, creates significant challenges for both teachers and learners in acquiring English as a functional language [2].

One of the central issues in teaching English in Jharkhand lies in the gap between policy intentions and classroom realities. English is introduced as a compulsory subject at the school level, yet it is often taught as an academic requirement rather than as a skill for communication. The emphasis remains on rote learning, grammar rules, and examination preparation, with little focus on listening and speaking skills. Consequently, students may pass examinations without developing communicative competence. This problem becomes more pronounced at the higher secondary and college levels, where students are expected to engage with complex texts and academic discourse in English [3].

Teacher-related challenges further complicate the situation. Many schools, especially in rural and remote areas, suffer from a shortage of trained and qualified English teachers. In several cases, teachers assigned to teach English lack adequate proficiency, confidence, or professional training in modern English Language Teaching (ELT) methodologies. Limited access to refresher courses, workshops, and digital teaching resources restricts teachers' ability to adopt communicative and learner-centered approaches. As a result, traditional methods such as the grammar-translation approach continue to dominate classrooms, reducing student engagement and interaction [4].

Learner-related factors also play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of English language teaching in Jharkhand. A significant number of students are first-generation learners who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Their home environment often does not support English learning due to parental illiteracy, lack of learning materials, and minimal exposure to English media. Fear, anxiety, and low self-confidence further inhibit students from actively participating in English classes. Mother-tongue interference in pronunciation, sentence structure, and vocabulary use is another persistent issue, making English acquisition a slow and challenging process [5].

Infrastructural and institutional limitations add to these difficulties. Many government schools lack basic facilities such as language laboratories, libraries, audio-visual aids, and reliable internet connectivity. Overcrowded classrooms and unfavourable student–teacher ratios make individual attention nearly impossible. Additionally, the rigid examination-oriented education system discourages experimentation with innovative teaching practices and communicative activities. Together, these factors create an environment where teaching English becomes a mechanical process rather than a meaningful learning experience. A systematic study of the problems of teaching English in Jharkhand becomes essential. Understanding the linguistic, pedagogical, socio-economic, and institutional challenges can help policymakers, educators, and researchers design context-sensitive strategies to improve English language education. The present study aims to explore these issues in depth, providing insights into the ground realities of English teaching in Jharkhand and laying the foundation for effective and inclusive pedagogical interventions [6].

## II. Literature Review

Research conducted between 2015 and 2025 revealed persistent challenges in the teaching of English as a second language in multilingual and socio-economically disadvantaged regions of India. Scholars consistently emphasized that regional context played a decisive role in shaping English language teaching outcomes, particularly in tribal-dominated and rural states.

**Graddol (2015)** examined the changing role of English in India and observed that although English had expanded rapidly across educational institutions, access to quality English education remained uneven. The study indicated that rural and backward regions suffered from weak instructional support, resulting in low communicative competence among learners.

**Mohanty et al. (2016)** investigated multilingual classrooms in tribal areas and reported that mother-tongue dominance significantly influenced English language acquisition. The authors noted that the absence of a supportive bilingual pedagogy led to learner anxiety and reduced participation in English classrooms.

A study by **Rao (2016)** focused on teacher preparedness in ESL contexts and found that many English teachers lacked adequate training in communicative language teaching. The research highlighted that dependence on traditional grammar-translation methods limited students' speaking and listening skills.

**Coleman (2017)** analysed English teaching in low-resource settings and concluded that infrastructural inadequacies, such as the absence of language laboratories and teaching aids, hindered effective ELT practices. The author further noted that large class sizes prevented personalized instruction.

**Annamalai (2017)** explored language policy implementation in Indian states and observed a mismatch between curriculum goals and classroom practices. The study reported that English syllabi often ignored learners' linguistic backgrounds, making comprehension difficult for first-generation learners.

According to **Kumar and Subramaniam (2018)**, socio-economic factors played a critical role in English language learning. Their study revealed that students from marginalized communities lacked exposure to English outside the classroom, which negatively affected fluency and confidence.

**Sharma (2018)** examined learner attitudes toward English in rural schools and found that fear of making mistakes discouraged active classroom participation. The study concluded that examination-oriented teaching reinforced memorization rather than communicative competence.

A regional study by **Singh and Mishra (2019)** on eastern Indian states reported a shortage of trained English teachers, particularly in government schools. The authors observed that non-specialist teachers were often assigned English classes, leading to ineffective instruction.

**Krishnan (2019)** analysed the impact of teacher training programs and found that limited professional development opportunities restricted teachers' awareness of modern ELT techniques. The study suggested continuous in-service training to improve instructional quality.

Research conducted by **Das (2020)** during the implementation of digital education initiatives indicated that technological integration in English teaching remained minimal in rural and tribal areas. The study identified poor internet connectivity and lack of digital literacy as major barriers.

**Pandey and Tiwari (2021)** examined the effects of the National Education Policy on language teaching and reported that although the policy emphasized multilingualism, practical implementation at the grassroots level remained weak. The authors argued that English teaching reforms had yet to reach marginalized regions.

A post-pandemic study by **Sahu (2022)** revealed that learning losses in English were more severe among rural learners due to limited access to online education. The study emphasized the widening gap between urban and rural English proficiency levels.

**Verma et al. (2023)** focused on learner motivation and found that contextualized teaching materials improved engagement in ESL classrooms. However, the study noted that such materials were rarely used in government schools.

**Khan and Ali (2024)** examined English teaching in tribal belts and reported that cultural distance from English learning contexts contributed to low achievement levels. The authors stressed the need for culturally responsive pedagogy.

Most recently, **Choudhary (2025)** analysed English language outcomes in eastern India and concluded that systemic issues such as policy gaps, inadequate teacher support, and socio-economic deprivation continued to impede effective English teaching. The study recommended region-specific interventions and sustained investment in teacher education.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrated that the problems of teaching English in Jharkhand aligned with national-level findings on ESL education in marginalized regions. However, the scarcity of focused empirical studies on Jharkhand highlighted a significant research gap, which the present study sought to address.

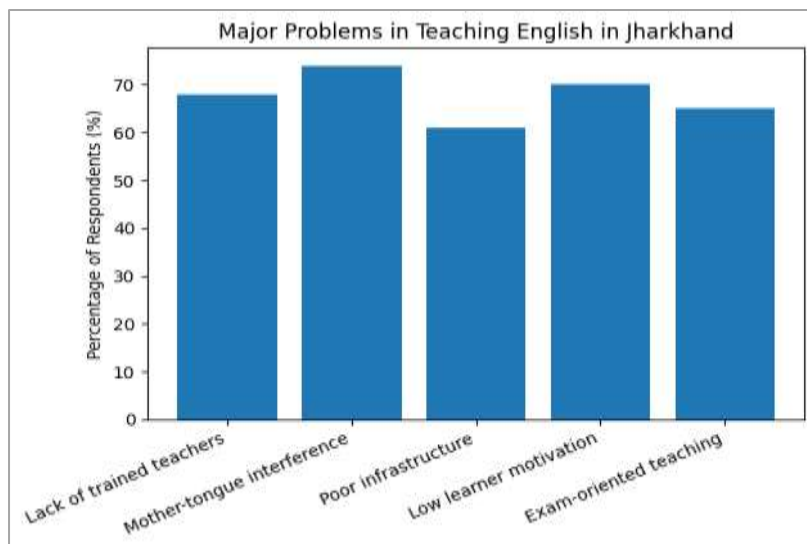
### **III. Research Methodology**

The present study adopted a descriptive and analytical research design to investigate the problems associated with teaching English language in Ranchi. This design was considered appropriate as it enabled a systematic description of existing conditions while also allowing analytical interpretation of the factors influencing English language teaching and learning. The study focused on identifying teacher-related, learner-related, institutional, and socio-economic challenges affecting English language education at the secondary and higher secondary levels. The area of study comprised selected rural and urban districts of Ranchi. Both government and private educational institutions were included to ensure a balanced representation of diverse educational settings. Ranchi was purposively selected due to its multilingual character, tribal population, and relatively low levels of English language proficiency compared to national averages. The population of the study included English language teachers and students studying at the secondary and higher secondary levels. From this population, a sample was drawn using stratified random sampling to capture variations across rural–urban location, type of institution, and learner background. The final sample consisted of English teachers responsible for classroom instruction and students who were actively engaged in learning English as a second language.

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were collected directly from teachers and students to gain first-hand insights into classroom practices and learning difficulties. Secondary data were gathered from textbooks, research journals, government reports, policy documents, and previous studies related to English language teaching and multilingual education in India. For the collection of primary data, multiple research tools were employed to enhance reliability and validity. Structured questionnaires were administered to teachers and students to collect quantitative data on teaching methods, availability of resources, learner difficulties, and attitudes toward English. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers to obtain qualitative insights into instructional challenges, training needs, and curriculum-related issues. In addition, classroom observation schedules were used to record teaching practices, student participation, and language use during English classes. The data analysis procedure involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were analysed using percentage analysis and simple descriptive statistics to identify major trends and patterns. Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations were analysed thematically to interpret recurring issues and contextual factors influencing English language teaching. Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured, and the collected data were used strictly for academic research purposes. The adopted methodology provided a comprehensive framework to examine the multifaceted problems of teaching English in Ranchi and to generate findings that are both context-sensitive and academically valid.

#### IV. Result and Discussion

The analysis of data collected from teachers and students revealed several interconnected problems affecting the teaching of English language in Ranchi. The results have been presented using both tabular and graphical representations to provide clarity and support interpretation.



**Fig. 1. Major Problems in Teaching English in Ranchi**

*Source: Primary Survey (Data Retrieve from Survey Conducted in selected schools of Ranchi)*

The bar graph above illustrates the major problems reported by respondents. Mother-tongue interference emerged as the most significant issue (74%), followed closely by low learner motivation (70%). The shortage of trained English teachers (68%) and examination-oriented pedagogy (65%) were also reported as major constraints, while poor infrastructure (61%) remained a persistent challenge.

**Table 1. Major Problems in Teaching English Language in Ranchi**

| S. No. | Identified Problems                   | Percentage of Respondents (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1      | Lack of trained English teachers      | 68%                           |
| 2      | Mother-tongue interference            | 74%                           |
| 3      | Poor infrastructure and facilities    | 61%                           |
| 4      | Low learner motivation and confidence | 70%                           |
| 5      | Examination-oriented teaching methods | 65%                           |

The results indicated that mother-tongue interference posed the most serious challenge in teaching English in Ranchi. Since students primarily use tribal and regional languages in their daily lives, English exposure remained limited to classrooms. This linguistic gap negatively affected pronunciation, sentence formation, and fluency, leading to reduced confidence in using English for communication. Another major issue identified was low learner motivation and confidence. A large proportion of students were first-generation learners from economically weaker backgrounds. Fear of making grammatical mistakes and lack of encouragement in classrooms discouraged active

participation, particularly in speaking activities. This finding supported earlier research emphasizing affective factors in second language acquisition. The shortage of trained English teachers was reported by 68% of respondents. Many teachers lacked professional training in communicative language teaching methods and relied heavily on textbook-based instruction and translation techniques.

This resulted in teacher-centered classrooms where students played a passive role, limiting opportunities for meaningful language practice.

Examination-oriented teaching was also highlighted as a significant problem. The pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare students for examinations encouraged rote learning rather than skill development. Listening and speaking skills were largely neglected, as they were not directly assessed in examinations. Finally, poor infrastructure and limited resources further restricted effective English teaching. The absence of language laboratories, audio-visual aids, libraries, and digital tools reduced opportunities for interactive and experiential learning, particularly in government schools located in rural areas. Overall, the findings demonstrated that the problems of teaching English in Ranchi were systemic and interrelated, requiring holistic and context-sensitive interventions. These results were consistent with earlier studies on English language teaching in marginalized and multilingual regions of India, while also highlighting region-specific challenges unique to Ranchi.

## **V. Conclusion and Future Work**

The present study examined the major problems associated with teaching English language in Ranchi and revealed that these challenges are complex, interconnected, and deeply rooted in the socio-linguistic and educational realities of the state. The findings indicated that English language teaching in Ranchi is significantly affected by factors such as mother-tongue interference, shortage of trained and proficient English teachers, low learner motivation, inadequate infrastructure, and an examination-oriented teaching approach. These issues collectively hinder the development of communicative competence among learners and limit their ability to use English effectively for academic and professional purposes.

The study concluded that the multilingual and tribal context of Ranchi, while culturally rich, poses unique challenges for English language acquisition. English remains largely confined to classrooms, with minimal exposure in learners' daily lives. As a result, students tend to memorize content for examinations rather than develop practical language skills. Teacher-centered instructional practices and limited use of communicative and technology-assisted methods further restrict meaningful language learning. The lack of institutional support in terms of teaching resources, language laboratories, and continuous professional development programs also emerged as a critical concern. Based on these conclusions, the study emphasized the need for context-sensitive pedagogical reforms. Teacher training programs should focus on communicative language teaching, multilingual strategies, and learner-centered approaches. Incorporating learners' mother tongues as a supportive bridge in the early stages of English learning can reduce anxiety and improve comprehension. In addition, the integration of digital tools, audio-visual aids, and interactive activities can enhance learner engagement, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Curriculum and assessment practices should also be revised to prioritize language skills over rote memorization.

In terms of future work, the study suggested several directions for further research. Comparative studies may be conducted between rural and urban schools or between tribal and non-tribal learners to gain deeper insights into regional disparities. Longitudinal research could examine the impact of specific teaching interventions on English language proficiency over time. Future studies may also explore the role of digital learning platforms and blended learning models in improving English teaching in Ranchi. Additionally, research focusing on the implementation of the National Education Policy (2020) and its implications for multilingual and English language education in Ranchi would provide valuable policy-level insights. Addressing the problems of teaching English in Ranchi requires sustained efforts from educators, policymakers, and researchers. With appropriate interventions and continued research, English language education in the state can be made more inclusive, effective, and aligned with learners' socio-cultural contexts.

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