

## Understanding and Addressing Challenges Faced by Management Students in Developing English Communication Skills: A case Study

Bhakta Bahadur Raut<sup>2</sup> & Shanta Bahadur Dahal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Gaurishankar Campus, Nijgadh Bara, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Campus Chief, Gaurishankar Campus, Nijgadh, Bara, Nepal

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#### Corresponding Author

Bhakta bahadur Raut

#### Email

[bhaktaraut134@gmail.com](mailto:bhaktaraut134@gmail.com)

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#### Orcid

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0903-1815>

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### ABSTRACT

*The article focuses on the challenges faced by Nepalese students in learning English for business communication, particularly in the context of Tribhuvan University's curriculum. The study employs a qualitative approach, collecting primary data through interviews with first and second-year students of the Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS) program at Tribhuvan University. Literature reviews of global context-related articles and books were also conducted to generate ideas and validate the findings. The study highlights issues with the curriculum, teachers, students, and educational institutions that contribute to subpar English language acquisition. The findings suggest that students face numerous obstacles in learning English, including limited exposure to the language, inadequate teaching methods, and lack of motivation. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the challenges faced by Nepalese students in learning English for business communication, highlighting the need for a more effective and student-centered approach to language acquisition.*

**Keywords:** challenges, management, communication, global language, ESP

### Introduction

Effective communication is a crucial skill in today's world, and it is essential for individuals to possess strong communication skills to succeed in their personal and professional lives. According to L M Wahyuni, effective communication is a generic ability that must be cultivated in order to succeed in vocational school and enter the workforce. A person with strong communication skills can learn more and become more knowledgeable, and they can use this knowledge to improve their performance in any sector. Additionally, having improved English communication skills gives everyone an added push to become a good professional (Wahyuni, 2018).

The business sector is expanding, and business education is flourishing worldwide. As a result, there is increased pressure to construct a sophisticated system that goes beyond simply comprehending different business concepts and principles due to competition. Being able to communicate is essential to human existence. Everyone is able to properly converse in their mother tongue. But things are different when it comes to second or foreign languages (Badur et al., 2017).

Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within and outside a company. According to Mary Ellen Guffey, management and staff collaborate through



efficient business communication to accomplish organizational objectives. Its goal is to lessen errors and enhance organizational procedures (Guffey, 2021) . Communication is a process of sharing ideas, feelings, knowledge, and information. The purpose of communication decides what and how ways the communication is implemented to the specific setting. Communication is used in all aspects of human life, ranging from personal to professional situations (Thapa, 2021) .

The requirement for effective communication skills has grown as a result of popular attempts to empower employees, decentralize decision-making, and form work teams (Maes et al., 1997) . The rise of service-oriented industries has raised the demand for communication abilities (Buckley et al., 1989) . Information technology advancements are forcing accountants into more internal consulting roles—where effective communication is crucial—instead of the traditional function of scorekeeper (Anastas, 1997) .

In a business setting, various forms of communication are used to meet professional and commercial needs. This is known as business communication. The action is being driven by communication. After business communication is finished, there is a call to action that must be followed. In corporate communication, effectiveness is essential. Professionalism and successful business both depend on effective communication. Proficiency in English communication skills is essential for business students to succeed in the increasingly interconnected global corporate world. Proficiency in English for idea transmission, negotiation, and teamwork is not only essential for academic success but also a valuable asset in the workplace.

### **Statement of Problem**

On the global map, Nepal is situated in South Asia. There are 124 native languages spoken in Nepal including Nepali (NPHC, 2021). At home, they acquire and utilize their language and culture. The people of Nepal speak their own language. There is no English spoken in any Nepali home. Following

their enrollment in ECD School, all Nepali students begin studying English. Neither the neighbor's nor the houses have an English-speaking atmosphere. Students in government or community schools in all rural regions study in Nepali medium. The majority of pupils speak Nepali as their first language. The English language proficiency of Nepali students is inadequate. As a result, they were unable to converse or interact in English.

Although the value of English proficiency in the business world is widely acknowledged, little research has been done on the unique difficulties faced by business students in non-native English-speaking nations like Nepal. It is imperative that educators, governments, and other institutions comprehend these problems if they are to improve the educational experience and employability of business graduates in multicultural and international environments. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the issues business students have with learning in the classroom and with the development of their communication abilities. The focus of the analysis is on Nepalese college students studying business. The article's main goal is to examine issues that are relevant to the circumstances in Nepal. The study attempts to provide guidance for developing curricula, instructional strategies, and support systems.

### **Research Objective**

This study aims to explore the difficulties faced by Nepalese business students as they navigate the development of their English communication abilities.

### **Literature Review**

The term "international link language" refers to English, which is in use everywhere in the world and in every industry. Therefore, one of the fundamental areas in which to use English is business. English for special purposes (ESP) is the form of English used in business. According to Brown, ESP is intentional because of its very nature. It makes it possible to determine the demands of the learner by means of the methodical

information gathering and analysis that is required for creating and verifying the intended curriculum (Brown, 2016). Students studying business in this setting need to be ready for effective English communication.

All messages sent and received for official purposes, such as administering an organization, running a business, or managing the official operations of a voluntary organization, are collectively referred to as business communication. Formality characterizes business communication, in contrast to social and personal communication. In business, communication plays a critical role. Many companies, according to Gerstein, Friedman, and Hershey, assert that institutions should help students develop their soft skills because disciplinary knowledge alone is insufficient for a successful career. However, a number of obstacles that university students must deal with are impeding their ability to learn English language communication skills (FRIEDMAN, 2016).

A study conducted by Raja Manner Badur et al. on Thai L2 students revealed difficulties arising from the content, the classroom setting, the medium of instruction, the students, and the teachers. The essay goes on to discuss the implications of business English in the classroom, including how teachers may be excellent classroom managers, motivators, and educators (Badur Raja Mannar, 2017).

Through her research, Ivana Nasywa Rafafie investigates how business management students might begin learning English by setting goals for themselves and taking a variety of approaches to learning it. She offers some helpful suggestions for enhancing communication abilities in the English language, such as listening to English music, seeing English movies, and expanding their vocabulary (Rafafie, 2021).

In Nepal, English is not a native language; even English has not got the status of second language (L2). In the Nepalese context, English is a foreign language and only limited within the classroom

setting. Thus, students have very little exposure to an English communication environment. In most cases, students cannot have access to English movies or songs.

According to Shahad Haj Moahmad et al., through their study in Gaziantep, Turkey, the primary obstacles that learners encounter are the learners' lack of confidence, the teaching methodology, interacting with individuals who speak their mother tongue, the restricted nature of learning spaces, the excessive use of local language in the classroom, and insufficient learning resources. The participants said that the least likely obstacles to learning English were those related to time and money. The study's conclusions are consistent with the circumstances in Nepal, where the majority of English teachers are not native speakers and are unable to handle problems with pronunciation, accents, and context-related English language communication. Due to inadequate facilities in the majority of Nepalese colleges and institutions, students could not obtain sufficient learning resources in the classroom.

A study titled "Resolving ELT Challenges through Critical Thinking Strategies" was conducted by Rajan Kumar Kandel. According to him, there are a number of real difficulties facing Nepalese students studying English, including a lack of qualified teachers, a disconnect between theory and practice, heterogeneous classrooms, inadequate facilities, treating English as a subject alone, and fear and anxiety related to the language. He claims that by using critical thinking techniques, these issues can be resolved or reduced (Kandel, 2015). The majority of the time, students from different faculties and business students face comparable difficulties with the English language.

Similarly, Shankar Khanal noted several fundamental difficulties with teaching and learning English in the setting of Nepal, such as English being treated as a subject rather than a language, the role of the teacher as a translator, less focus on oral language skills, lack of trained teachers,

maximum use of the mother tongue, weak support system of management and community, and lack of modern technology and facilities (Khanal, 2021).

In the literature review highlights the importance of effective English communication skills for business students, particularly in the context of Nepal, where English is a foreign language with limited exposure. The studies have identified various challenges faced by students, including lack of confidence, teaching methodology, limited learning resources, and the dominance of the mother tongue in the classroom. The findings suggest the need for a more student-centered and technology-driven approach to English language teaching and learning, as well as the importance of addressing the systemic issues in the education system to improve the English communication skills of business students in Nepal.

## Methodology

The primary research methodology employed in this study is a mixed-method approach, combining data analysis from interviews and a review of the literature to examine management students' challenges with English communication in the context of Nepal. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and nuances of English communication skills among management students in Nepal.

To gather data, a set of questions was created to assess students' difficulties and concerns with their English communication skills, both linguistic and non-linguistic. The primary instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire, which is a widely accepted and reliable method for gathering information from a large number of participants.

The research was conducted in the following ways:

**Sample Selection:** A total of 30 students from Gauri Shankar Campus, Nijgadh, Bara, were selected from the BBS first year and second year. This sample size was chosen to ensure a representative and diverse group of participants, allowing for a

comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by management students in Nepal.

**Questionnaire Administration:** The participants were asked 15 questions based on the English communication skills prepared by the researcher. These questions were designed to elicit detailed and specific information about the students' experiences and perceptions of their English communication skills.

**Data Analysis:** The answers to the questionnaire were analyzed to discover the most frequent students' difficulties in learning English communication skills. This analysis was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including frequency analysis and thematic analysis.

**Synthesizing the Findings and Drawing Out Conclusions:** The findings from the data analysis were synthesized and conclusions were drawn to identify the most significant challenges faced by management students in Nepal in terms of their English communication skills. This synthesis was conducted using a systematic and rigorous approach, ensuring that the findings were accurate and reliable.

Overall, the methodology used in this study was designed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by management students in Nepal with case of Gaurishanker in terms of their English communication skills.

## Results and Discussion

The questionnaire's results indicate that improving and growing English communication skills is a common source of difficulties and obstacles for GSC's management students. The problems and obstacles in the questionnaire, both linguistic and non-linguistic, are examined in terms of three limitations: The most frequent items for students, teachers, and resources/infrastructures are presented below.

**Table 1: Challenges or Problems Concerned with Business English students**

Problems/Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
English as second language	30	100
Cultural influence and diversity in the classroom	28	93.33
Poor previous learning or knowledge	25	83.33
Lacking English environment	28	93.33
Lacking grammar knowledge	23	76.67
Having poor pronunciation	28	93.33
Using mother tongue to learn English	28	93.33
Lacking vocabulary	25	83.33
Fear of mistakes	27	90

As can be seen from Table 1 above, 100% (30) of the students studying English are not natural speakers of the language. When studying English as a second language, people must overcome a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic obstacles in order to develop their communication skills. Furthermore, 93.33% (28) of students believed that cultural variety and variances impact the rate at which English is learned. They struggle as a result of the detrimental transfer of local language and culture. In a similar vein, a sizable portion of students 83.33% (25) voiced concerns about the teaching and learning processes in schools. The foundation for language acquisition is essentially laid at the high school level. However, because of their inadequate prior education, they have difficulties in college. 93.33% (28) of students

stated that they were unable to improve their English communication abilities because they were not provided with an appropriate setting in which to practice the language. As per the students' feedback, certain issues, including inadequate vocabulary 83.33% (25), bad pronunciations 93.33% (28), and a lack of grammar understanding 76.67% (23), impede the process of developing English communication skills in the classroom. According to 93.33% (28) of students, learning English through translation in their mother tongue hinders their ability to become fluent and authentic speakers of the language. Ninety percent of the students stated that they were afraid of making mistakes, which prevented them from speaking in class.

**Table 2: Challenges or Problems Concerned with English Language Teacher in Management Classroom**

Challenges/Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Non-native teacher	30	100
Lack of native exposure	30	100
Lacking knowledge of business communication in teacher	28	93.33
Traditional theory based classroom teaching	27	90
Inability of English teacher using modern technology in teaching	24	80
Inability of teacher to motivate students	25	83.33
Using mother tongue as a means of instruction	20	66.67

The statistics in the above table show that management students encounter a range of difficulties when acquiring communication skills

in English with English language teachers who provide regular classroom instruction. Students asserted 100% (30) that a teacher who was not native

could not help them develop native language skills. Similarly, nearly all students concur that studying a language without native exposure presents challenges for developing real-world abilities. Furthermore, the majority of business English classes are instructed by general English teachers who lack the necessary background knowledge and experience in business communication scenarios. Students questioned the teacher's business communication skills in 93.33% (28) of cases. The table makes it evident that traditional, theory-based business English instruction is still taught in classrooms. Students expressed unhappiness with theory-based classrooms in 90% (27) of

cases. They believed that the only exercises that improve pupils' English communication abilities are practical ones. According to the table, 80% (24) of students said that English language instructors lacked the necessary skills to employ contemporary instructional technologies in the classroom. Speech-based instruction is tedious and uninspiring. According to 83.33% (25) of pupils, their teachers have not been able to inspire them to acquire communication skills in the English language. In the business English classroom, two-thirds of the pupils are not happy with the English teacher for teaching in their mother tongue too much.

**Table 3: Challenges or Problems Concerned with Educational Resources and Infrastructures**

Challenges/problems	Frequency	percentage
Lacking educational technology	27	90
Ineffective curriculum	15	50
Course book imposing theoretical concept only	22	73.33
Traditional classroom setting	29	96.66
Lacking real-life exposer	26	86.67
Poor practice of internship, tour and educational visit	27	90

The third table demonstrates the significant issues that business schools and colleges are facing in helping their students improve their English communication abilities. Infrastructure and educational resources are crucial to improving students' ability to learn English. 90% of students (or 27) felt that modern educational technology should be used to its fullest extent in business English classes. Technology enhances the effectiveness and interest of instruction. Similarly, 50% (15) of the students expressed their displeasure with the curriculum, 73.33% (22) with the Business English course book, and 96.66% (29) with the typical classroom environment. In other words, the students believe that the current Business English curriculum should cover business communication concerns, and the Business English course book should be useful and include real-world language usage. A corporate English language school nowadays should be filled with cutting-edge technology and inspiring content. Of the 26

students, 86.67% expressed dissatisfaction over the business institutions' lack of efforts to expose their students to real-world business communication scenarios. 90% of students (27) felt strongly that extracurricular activities like internships, tours, and visits should be organized on a regular basis to give students real-world experience and practical knowledge of English communication abilities.

**Recommendations for Teaching and Learning Business English Communication Skills**

Through her research, Aisha Ganesh Ratnasari identified four barriers to effective English communication: a lack of vocabulary, anxiety, an unsupportive atmosphere, and a lack of grammar expertise. In addition, she offered five suggestions: code-switching; viewing audiences as statues; utilizing Google Translate; approaching the English teacher directly; and motivating oneself to enhance English communication abilities (Ratnasari, 2020). According to a study by Yong Hua Ying,

using social media and video conferencing apps like Facebook, WhatsApp, and others to enhance English communication skills online is one of the interventions used to teach communication skills. Then, English as Second Language (ESL) teachers may select the ones that would be most effective in their specific classroom (Yong Hua Ying, 2021).

### **Dealing with Challenges or Problems Concerned with Business English students**

When developing English language communication skills in the classroom, students who are second language learners face a variety of obstacles or issues. The majority of issues are normal and unavoidable. Students should therefore be exposed to corporate culture, English culture through trips or tours, documentaries, English-language films, etc. in order to cope with issues like cultural shock or influence. It is possible to set up an artificial English environment in the classroom where students can practice the various language abilities they have learned. The majority of pupils struggle with the English language when they get to university level. English instruction and learning in schools need to be enhanced in order to overcome this problem. Students have a solid foundation in English as a result. Similar to this, problems with vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and other aspects can be resolved by altering the way that you teach, providing your students with access to contemporary technology in the form of an interactive whiteboard, a tape recorder, and various computer programs, and encouraging them to read aloud from texts and use dictionaries, among other things. Teaching grammatical rules inductively can improve grammar. Students should be encouraged to think and communicate in English in order to reduce the amount of time they spend speaking in their native tongue. They ought to be instructed to realize that making mistakes is a normal part of the learning process.

### **Dealing with the challenges or problems concerned with English language teacher in Management Classroom**

English language teacher has to play important role in business English classroom. In the context of

Nepal, Most of the English language teachers are non-native. In such a situation, it's rare to get native English teacher in the remote areas or villages. Thus, students should be exposed with English movies, music, documentary, interviews etc. to meet the needs of native or authentic language exposure. This is all the responsibility of English language teacher. The English language teacher who teaches business English to the students must be trained with business communication. The English teacher experienced at business communication should be sent to the classroom as far as possible. Traditional theory-based classroom should be converted into practical and activities based classroom so that students could get ample opportunities to practice English language communication. Business English teacher must be skilled at using modern educational technology. If not, the colleges or campuses should provide them training in using technology in the classroom. Business English language teacher should motivate students to learn and take part in the learning activities actively. The teacher should encourage learners to be autonomous learners. The teacher should minimize the use of mother tongue in the process of instruction. They can use simple English to instruct the students so that students feel easy to learn and understand the content.

### **Dealing with the Challenges or Problems Concerned with Educational Resources and Infrastructure**

The majority of Nepal's educational establishments lack adequate infrastructure and resources. The course materials and content may occasionally be judged inapplicable and ineffectual. Thus, there should be good facilities for colleges and business schools. They ought to have access to every form of contemporary technology. The course materials and curriculum for business English should be current and appropriate for the demands of today's students. The course and curriculum should be created in a way that generates human resources capable of handling every business communication scenario that now arises in corporate settings. The traditional classroom should give way to the contemporary one. To give their students a taste of real-world experience, business schools and

universities ought to encourage internships, tours, corporate visits, and other events.

All challenges or problems obtained from the study can be shown in the points below.

- English as a second language for Nepalese students
- Cultural influence and diversity in the classroom
- Poor previous learning or knowledge
- Lacking an English environment
- Lack of grammar knowledge
- Having poor pronunciation
- Using the mother tongue to learn English
- Lacking vocabulary
- Fear of mistakes
- Non-native teacher
- Lack of native exposure
- Lacking knowledge of business communication in teachers
- Traditional theory-based classroom teaching
- The inability of an English teacher to use modern technology in teaching
- Inability of teachers to motivate students
- Using the mother tongue as a means of instruction
- Lack of educational technology and materials
- Ineffective curriculum and courses
- Traditional classroom setting
- Lacking real-life exposure
- Poor practice of internships, tours, and educational visits

Following recommendations would be useful to address the above challenges or problems:

- Tailor-made language programs ought to be implemented to address problems with syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and other aspects.
- Using communicative teaching strategies to help students participate more actively in class activities and improve their communication skills.

- To address problems like cultural shock, negative transfer, and diversity, educators should provide cultural sensitivity training to their students.
- To address problems like cultural shock, negative transfer, and diversity, educators should provide cultural sensitivity training to their students.
- Incorporating technology while conducting teaching and learning activities in the classroom.
- Introducing real-world simulations to provide real-life situations for the students to practice their communication skills practically.
- Providing constructive feedback to minimize errors and mistakes in students.
- Promoting peer learning will motivate students to learn for themselves.
- Providing resources and support to enhance the classroom setting and facilities.
- Providing additional learning materials to students to meet the lack of curriculum and course books.
- Organizing conferences and sending students to internships so that they get experience in real working situations.

The study's focuses on the challenges faced by GSC's business English students in acquiring effective English communication skills have several implications for improving English language teaching and learning in Nepal, particularly in the context of higher education. The findings align with the insights and recommendations provided by A.K. Mishra in his research on teaching and research operations at Pokhara University (Mishra, 2022) and the implications of Industry 4.0 for Nepal's education sector (Mishra & Aithal, 2022).

Mishra (2022) emphasizes the need for a student-centered approach to teaching and learning, which



involves engaging students actively in the learning process and providing them with opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. This aligns with the study's recommendation of incorporating more interactive teaching methods and providing students with more opportunities to practice their English communication skills through role-playing, group discussions, and presentations.

Furthermore, Mishra and Aithal (2022) highlight the importance of leveraging technology to enhance the quality of education in Nepal. This is particularly relevant to the study's findings on the need for improved educational resources and infrastructure, including access to technology and adequate library facilities. By investing in technology and digital resources, institutions can provide students with a more engaging and effective learning environment, which can help them develop their English communication skills more effectively.

The study's highlights also have implications for the implementation of e-government services in Nepal, as discussed by Bhagat et al. (2022). Effective communication skills are essential for the successful implementation of e-government services, as they enable citizens to interact with government agencies and access public services more effectively. By improving the English communication skills of business students, who are likely to play a key role in the implementation of e-government services, the study's recommendations can contribute to the overall success of e-government initiatives in Nepal.

Finally, the study's findings on the challenges faced by business students in acquiring English communication skills have implications for project management in Nepal, as discussed by Mishra (2020). Effective communication is a critical component of successful project management, as it enables project managers to coordinate with stakeholders, communicate project goals and objectives, and manage project risks and challenges. By addressing the challenges faced by business students in acquiring English communication

skills, the study's recommendations can contribute to the development of more effective project management practices in Nepal.

In the study's highlights on the challenges faced by GSC's business English students in acquiring effective English communication skills have significant implications for improving English language teaching and learning in Nepal, particularly in the context of higher education. By addressing these challenges and implementing the study's recommendations, institutions and educators can better equip business students with the communication skills they need to succeed in the fast-paced and competitive corporate world, ultimately contributing to the overall development of Nepal's economy and society.

## Conclusion

The study's conclusions highlight the significant challenges faced by business students at Gauri Shankar Campus (GSC) in acquiring effective English communication skills. The findings indicate that students struggle with a range of issues, which can be categorized into three main areas: issues related to other business students, issues involving English language teachers, and issues involving educational resources and infrastructure.

The study reveals that business students encounter various difficulties when learning English communication skills, including:

Issues with other business students: Students reported difficulties in communicating effectively with their peers, citing issues such as language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of shared knowledge and experience.

Issues with English language teachers: Students expressed concerns about the teaching methods and materials used by their English language teachers, citing issues such as lack of relevance to their field of study, inadequate feedback, and insufficient opportunities for practice.

Issues with educational resources and infrastructure: Students reported difficulties in accessing adequate

educational resources and infrastructure, including limited access to technology, inadequate library facilities, and insufficient support services.

The study's findings suggest that institutions and educators need to be aware of these issues and take specific action to address them. The study provides recommendations for resolving these challenges, including:

**Improved teaching methods:** Teachers should adopt more interactive and student-centered approaches to teaching English communication skills, incorporating real-life scenarios and case studies to enhance students' engagement and motivation.

**Enhanced educational resources and infrastructure:** Institutions should invest in improving educational resources and infrastructure, including technology, library facilities, and support services, to provide students with a more conducive learning environment.

**Increased opportunities for practice:** Students should be provided with more opportunities to practice their English communication skills, including through role-playing, group discussions, and presentations.

The study's conclusions emphasize the importance of addressing these challenges to better equip business students with the communication skills they need to succeed in the fast-paced and competitive corporate world. By offering a comprehensive and practical curriculum in communication skills, business schools can help students develop the skills they need to effectively communicate with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders, ultimately enhancing their career prospects and professional success.

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