

Helping Learners with Common English Difficulties

हिन्दी

Hindi



Introduction & Background

This guide is designed to support ESOL tutors, volunteers, and staff working with **Hindi**-speaking learners. It outlines the most common challenges these learners face when learning English and offers practical examples, explanations, and exercises to support more effective communication. The aim is to build understanding, patience, and confidence in supporting **Hindi** speakers on their learning journey.

Hindi

Hindi is primarily spoken in **India**, where it is one of the two official languages of the central government (alongside English). It is also one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.

It is widely used in:

- **India** – Especially in the northern and central states such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi.

Hindi speakers often face predictable challenges when learning English because **Hindi and English differ in phonology, grammar, script, and vocabulary.**

Pronunciation & Phonology

1. Sounds not in Hindi

- /θ/ (“think”) → often replaced with /t/ or /s/
 - “*think*” → “*tink*” or “*sink*”
- /ð/ (“this”) → often replaced with /d/
 - “*this*” → “*dis*”
- /v/ → sometimes pronounced as /w/
 - “*very*” → “*wery*”
- /z/ → sometimes pronounced as /j/ or /s*
 - “*zoo*” → “*joo*” or “*soo*”
- /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ distinctions may be blurred
- /ŋ/ (as in *sing*) → replaced with /n/

2. Consonant clusters

- Hindi words generally avoid complex clusters at the beginning of words; learners may insert vowels:
 - “*street*” → “*istreet*”, “*school*” → “*iskool*”

Pronunciation & Phonology

3. Final consonants

- English words ending in consonants can be tricky; extra vowel sounds may be added:
 - “*cat*” → “*cata*”, “*desk*” → “*desku*”

4. Vowel differences

- English has more vowel sounds than Hindi, so distinctions like /ɪ/ vs /iː/ (“*ship*” vs “*sheep*”) or /ʌ/ vs /ɑː/ (“*luck*” vs “*lock*”) are difficult.



Grammar & Syntax

1. Articles (a/an/the)

- Hindi does not have definite/indefinite articles; learners often omit them:
 - “*I bought book*” → “*I bought a book.*”

2. Verb tenses

- Hindi uses aspect and auxiliary verbs differently, so perfect and continuous tenses in English can be confusing:
 - “*I have eaten*” vs “*I am eating*”

3. Word order

- Hindi is generally **SOV (Subject-Object-Verb)**; English is **SVO**:
 - “*I the book read*” instead of “*I read the book.*”

4. Plural forms

- Irregular plurals (*child* → *children*, *foot* → *feet*) can be tricky.

5. Prepositions

- Hindi postpositions differ from English prepositions, leading to mistakes:
 - “*I am waiting you*” → “*I am waiting for you.*”

Vocabulary & Expression

1. Literal translation

- Hindi speakers often translate idioms or phrases word-for-word, producing unnatural English:
 - *“I am feeling bored”* → *“I feel boredom”*

2. Politeness & register

- Hindi politeness forms may cause learners to overuse formal expressions in casual English.

Writing System

1. Devanagari script

- Hindi uses Devanagari (written left-to-right), but spelling and phonetic differences make English writing tricky.

2. Spelling irregularities

- English spelling often does not match pronunciation, which can confuse learners.

Sociolinguistic Factors

- Exposure to English varies widely in India depending on region, schooling, and media.
- Regional accents may influence pronunciation in English.

Summary

Hindi speakers usually struggle with:

- **Pronunciation:** /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ŋ/, vowel distinctions, consonant clusters, final consonants
- **Grammar:** articles, verb tenses, word order, plurals, prepositions
- **Vocabulary & Expression:** literal translations, idioms, over-formality
- **Writing:** English spelling irregularities, phonetics

Common mistakes Hindi speakers make in English

Pronunciation Mistakes

1. /θ/ → /t/ or /s/

- “*think*” → “*tink*” or “*sink*”

2. /ð/ → /d/

- “*this*” → “*dis*”

3. /v/ → /w/

- “*very*” → “*wery*”

4. /z/ → /j/ or /s/

- “*zoo*” → “*joo*” or “*soo*”

5. /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ confusion

- “*she*” → “*sī*”, “*measure*” → “*mezure*”

6. Consonant clusters

- “*street*” → “*istreet*”, “*school*” → “*iskool*”

7. Final consonant vowels added

- “*cat*” → “*cata*”, “*desk*” → “*desku*”

8. Vowel confusion

- “*ship*” vs “*sheep*”, “*luck*” vs “*lock*”

Grammar Mistakes

1. Articles omitted

- Incorrect: “*I bought book.*”
- Correct: “*I bought a book.*”

2. Verb tense errors

- Incorrect: “*I go school yesterday.*”
- Correct: “*I went to school yesterday.*”
- Incorrect: “*I have eat lunch.*”
- Correct: “*I have eaten lunch.*”

3. Word order (SOV → SVO)

- Incorrect: “*I the book read.*”
- Correct: “*I read the book.*”

4. Plural errors

- Incorrect: “*Childs are playing.*”
- Correct: “*Children are playing.*”

5. Preposition mistakes

- Incorrect: “*I am waiting you.*”
- Correct: “*I am waiting for you.*”
- Incorrect: “*I go to home.*”
- Correct: “*I go home.*”

Vocabulary & Expression Mistakes

1. Literal translation from Hindi

- Incorrect: “*I have hunger.*”
- Correct: “*I am hungry.*”
- Incorrect: “*I have thirst.*”
- Correct: “*I am thirsty.*”

2. Over-formal expressions in casual conversation

- “*I request you to help me in this matter.*” → better: “*Can you help me?*”

3. Idioms / fixed phrases

- Literal translation issues: “*It rains heavily*” may be translated word-for-word and sound unnatural.

Writing Mistakes

1. Spelling influenced by phonetics

- “wery” for “very”
- “iskool” for “school”

2. Word order issues

- Literal SOV structure from Hindi: “I homework did yesterday” → “I did homework yesterday.”

3. Confusing homophones

- “their / there / they’re”, “to / too / two”

Examples in Conversation

- **Hindi speaker:** “I go school yesterday.”
 - → Correct: “I went to school yesterday.”
- **Hindi speaker:** “This book very interesting.”
 - → Correct: “This book is very interesting.”
- **Hindi speaker:** “I am waiting you.”
 - → Correct: “I am waiting for you.”

✓ Summary

Hindi speakers' most common mistakes are:

- **Pronunciation:** /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ŋ/, vowels, consonant clusters, final consonants
- **Grammar:** articles, tense, word order, plurals, prepositions
- **Vocabulary/Expression:** literal translations, idioms, over-formality
- **Writing:** spelling influenced by phonetics, homophones, SOV word order



Teaching Strategies for Hindi Speakers Learning English

Pronunciation Strategies

Challenges: /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, vowel distinctions, consonant clusters, final consonants

1. Minimal Pairs Drills

- /θ/ vs /t/: *think – tink, three – tree*
- /ð/ vs /d/: *this – dis, that – dat*
- /v/ vs /w/: *very – wery, visit – wist*
- /z/ vs /s/: *zoo – soo, zero – sero*
- /ʃ/ vs /s/: *she – see, ship – sip*
- /ʒ/ vs /ʒ/: *measure – mezure, pleasure – pleshure*
- /ɪ/ vs /i:/: *ship – sheep, sit – seat*

2. Consonant Cluster Practice

- Start with added vowels: *iskool → skool → school*
- Gradually remove inserted vowels: *istreet → street*

3. Final Consonant Awareness

- Drill words ending in consonants: *cat, desk, lamp*
- Emphasize not adding extra vowels: *cat ≠ cata*

4. Recording & Playback

- Students record themselves reading sentences, then compare with native speakers



Grammar Strategies

Challenges: Articles, tenses, word order, plurals, prepositions

1. Articles (a/an/the)

- Visual aids: *a cat* (any cat) vs. *the cat* (specific cat)
- Fill-in-the-blank exercises: *I saw ___ apple, ___ sun, ___ cat*

2. Verb Tense Awareness

- Use timelines for past, present, future
- Storytelling activities: “*What did you do yesterday?*”
- Practice perfect and continuous tenses using real-life examples

3. Word Order (SOV → SVO)

- Sentence rearrangement exercises: *I the book read → I read the book*
- Pair work to build correct sentence structures

4. Plural Forms

- Drill irregular plurals: *child → children, man → men*
- Classroom games: memory match, “plural hunt”

5. Preposition Practice

- Teach prepositions in chunks: *wait for someone, go to school, sit on the chair*
- Role-play exercises for reinforcement

Vocabulary & Expression Strategies

Challenges: Literal translation, idioms, over-formality

1. Idioms & Fixed Expressions

- Introduce gradually, with visuals or stories
- Encourage simplified equivalents initially:
“It’s raining heavily”

2. Politeness & Register

- Teach casual vs. formal English:
 - Casual: *“Can you help me?”*
 - Formal: *“I request your assistance”*
- Role-play everyday situations: asking directions, ordering food, shopping

3. Avoid Direct Translation

- Encourage thinking in English structures rather than translating word-for-word from Hindi

Writing Strategies

Challenges: Spelling irregularities, Latin alphabet, SOV → SVO transfer

1. Spelling Practice

- Focus on tricky consonants and vowels: *very, school, desk*
- Dictation exercises using minimal pairs

2. Guided Writing

- Start with sentence frames: *I went to ___ yesterday*
- Build up to paragraphs with word banks

3. Direction & Script Awareness

- Hindi is left-to-right, but spelling and phonetic differences can cause mistakes
- Use lined paper and word maps to guide correct letter usage

Speaking & Listening Strategies

1. Dialogues & Role Play

- Everyday scenarios: shopping, traveling, asking questions
- Encourage peer correction and self-correction

2. Stress & Intonation

- Clap or tap syllables to practice stress patterns
- Show meaning differences through stress: I didn't say he stole the money

3. Listening Exposure

- Short videos, songs, or podcasts with repetition
- Shadowing exercises: repeat immediately after native speaker

Cultural & Confidence-Building

1. Acknowledge Dialect Influence

- Regional accents may affect pronunciation
- Use familiar vocabulary to ease learning

2. Safe Speaking Environment

- Peer groups, pair work, and games reduce anxiety
- Correct gently, focusing on communication first

3. Celebrate Multilingual Skills

- Hindi speakers often know multiple languages (e.g., English, regional languages), which is an advantage



Summary

For Hindi speakers, focus on:

- **Pronunciation:** /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, vowels, clusters, final consonants
- **Grammar:** articles, tense, word order, plurals, prepositions
- **Vocabulary/Expression:** idioms, literal translations, register
- **Writing:** spelling, Latin alphabet, direction
- **Interactive practice** is key – role-play, drills, and listening exercises are essential

Common Hindi phrases

Greetings & Basics

- नमस्ते (Namaste) → Hello / Hi
- नमस्कार (Namaskār) → Hello (formal)
- आप कैसे हैं? (Āp kaise hain?) → How are you? (formal)
- तुम कैसे हो? (Tum kaise ho?) → How are you? (informal)
- मैं ठीक हूँ, धन्यवाद (Main thīk hūn, dhanyavād) → I'm fine, thank you
- अलविदा (Alvida) → Goodbye

Introductions

- आपका नाम क्या है? (Āpkā nām kyā hai?) → What is your name?
- मेरा नाम ... है (Merā nām ... hai) → My name is ...
- मिलकर खुशी हुई (Milkar khushī huī) → Nice to meet you



Politeness

- धन्यवाद (Dhanyavād) → Thank you
- बहुत धन्यवाद (Bahut dhanyavād) → Thank you very much
- कृपया (Kripya) → Please
- माफ़ कीजिए (Māf kījiye) → Excuse me / Sorry



Food & Drink

- पानी (Pānī) → Water
- चाय (Chāy) → Tea
- कॉफ़ी (Kāfī) → Coffee
- मैं भूखा हूँ (Main bhūkhā hūn) → I'm hungry (male speaker)
- मैं भूखी हूँ (Main bhūkhī hūn) → I'm hungry (female speaker)
- मैं प्यासा हूँ (Main pyāsā hūn) → I'm thirsty (male speaker)
- मैं प्यासी हूँ (Main pyāsī hūn) → I'm thirsty (female speaker)

Getting Around

- ... कहाँ है? (... kahān hai?) → Where is ...?
- इसकी कीमत कितनी है? (Iskī kīmat kitnī hai?) → How much does it cost?
- दाएँ (Dāen) → Right
- बाएँ (Bāen) → Left

Polite Closings

- अलविदा (Alvida) → Goodbye
- शुभ दिन (Shubh din) → Have a good day
- सुप्रभात (Suprabhāt) → Good morning
- शुभ संध्या (Shubh sandhyā) → Good evening
- शुभ रात्रि (Shubh rātri) → Good night

✓ Notes:

- Hindi is written in the **Devanagari script** and is read left-to-right.
- Politeness words like “**Kripya**” (**please**) and “**Māf kījiye**” (**sorry/excuse me**) are frequently used in daily conversation.
- Pronunciation can vary slightly across regions in India and Nepal.