

SOME DIFFICULTIES OF TELUGU STUDENTS OF ENGLISH

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The following short paper is a summary of two small research projects I completed while serving as a British Volunteer on the English teaching staff of the A.P. Residential School Kodigenahalli. Thanks are due to the pupils and staff of the school for various kinds of help. The full manuscripts of the two projects are available to inspection at the C.I.E.

The main aim of these projects was to discover some of the common errors of students in our school and to try to identify their causes, be it L1 interference, bad teaching, Indian English interference or whatever. The first paper concentrated on receptive difficulties at the phonological level, the second on productive difficulties at the grammatical and lexical levels.

Paper 1: Listening difficulties

This piece of work was based on an extensive listening test in the form of the triplets test described in Lado's book, "Language Testing" (p. 54). This is a more sophisticated form of the minimal pairs test and is designed to find out which phonological contrasts can be heard by the subjects and which cannot. Great efforts were taken to ensure the reliability of the test and much statistical work was done which will be omitted in this summary. The items (phonological contrasts) to be tested were selected on the basis of casual observation of the pronunciation mistakes and misunderstanding of students. The subjects were 9th class boys in the school from many different areas of Rayalseema but all with Telugu as mother tongue. The 80 or so boys are all of above average intelligence, having been selected to come to this special school.

The subjects were split into three groups of about 30, 30 and 20. Each group had a slightly different variation of the test though the test items were the same. Group A listened to the words in the test recorded on tape by a British native speaker of English (more or less R.P.), Group B listened to a recording of an educated Telugu native speaker and Group C listened to the British speaker "live."

The results will be presented as follows :

- (1) General performance and overall scores.
- (2) A list of the most difficult contrasts and possible explanations.
- (3) Differences of performance between British and Indian English.
- (4) Differences between pupils from different districts.
- (5) The relationship between performance in the listening test and in the school exam.
- (6) Problems of using tape-recorders.

1. *General performance and overall scores*

In general the performance in this test was quite poor (though we must admit it was a very difficult test). The scores ranged from 104 to 14 out of 150, with an average of 55. It is significant that Group C who listened to the "live" speech from the native speaker did best with an average of over 70, group A who listened to the recording of British English came next (average 57) and Group B listening to the Indian speaker did worst with an average of 39.

It is interesting that all three classes tended to divide into two groups, one clustering around a point 10 or 20 marks above the mean and one clustering about the same distance below.

2. *The most difficult contrasts*

The most difficult phonological contrast in English for Telugu learners in this test was that between /v/ and /w/. Only one boy in 80 was able to get 4 out of 5 examples correct. The reason for this is undoubtedly L1 interference as there is in Telugu only one phoneme in the range of English /v/ and /w/. This is probably compounded by the fact that most Indian speakers of English only use one phoneme, a fact which is borne out by the slightly lower scores on this item of the subjects listening to the Indian speaker.

The next most difficult phonological listening problem, and perhaps the most important concerns final consonants and consonant clusters. The test items actually involved the contrast between a final consonant and zero, or between one consonant and a cluster. Other evidence from the contrast between /n/ and /ŋ/, /dz/ and /dʒ/, etc., which had to be tested in the final position indicates that this problem is widespread. I would venture to say that many Telugu learners of English have some difficulty in distinguishing words with quite different final consonants. More

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detailed work is needed on these problems (in fact most items in this test involving consonants were tested only in the initial position). The reason for this difficulty probably lies in the fact that Telugu has generally only open syllables and the Telugu speaker tends to hear a final C as either C+a weak vowel or zero. If this difficulty is as serious as the test results suggest, it may have disastrous implications, for a tremendous amount of lexical and grammatical information is carried in English by final consonants.

The next lowest scoring contrast in the test was that between /st/ and /tr/ in the initial position. The whole area around /tr/, /st/, /θ/, /t/ is difficult for Telugu students of English, but in this particular case I can suggest no plausible explanation. The contrasts /t/ v. /θ/ /st/ v. /t/ and /st/ v. /t/ are only slightly less difficult, /t/ v. /θ/ is a problem because Telugu has no fricative with dental articulation and Telugu speakers generally equate /t/ with their retroflex /ʈ/ and /θ/ with /ʈ/ (dental). The contrast /d/ v. /ð/ (dental fricative) scored slightly better than its voiceless counterpart but still very badly for the same reason. However, all this is surprising because both Telugu and Indian English maintain a sufficient number of contrasts in this area to suggest that the distinctions will be heard.

The contrast between /p/ and /f/ in initial position is also very difficult. The reason for this is no doubt the aspiration of initial /p/ in British English, which to the Telugu ear does not contrast with /f/. In Telugu there is a contrast between aspirated and unaspirated /p/, the former of which is often realised by a fricative. It would seem likely that Indian English would take over this distinction but it appears not to be so from the test, since subjects had equal difficulty with the Indian and the British speaker.

The contrast /n/ v. /ŋ/ proved quite difficult but this is probably a function of its being tested of necessity only in final or medial position.

The two contrasts between /dz/ and /dʒ/ and /ts/ and /tʃ/ were very low scoring. Again part of the difficulty may arise from their being tested in the final position. However, casual observation confirms that there is great difficulty, especially with /dʒ/. It would have been valuable also to test the contrasts /dʒ/ — /z/ and /tʃ/ — /s/, but this slipped through the net when the test was designed. The reason for the difficulty is that in this area of articulation most Telugu speakers have only one voiced phoneme which corresponds to English /z/ and /dʒ/ and includes allophones.

of both fricative and affricate types. The situation with the voiceless counterpart is probably more complex, as Telugu, though it has no /z/, does have /s/. But there are two varieties of the affricate, they may even be distinct phonemes corresponding roughly to /ts/ and /tʃ/.

The contrast between voiced and voiceless stops also proved very difficult according to the test results. However, the test items for this group are rather heterogeneous making it impossible to draw firm conclusions. The reasons for this difficulty may be that the contrast in British English at least, is between light aspiration and slight voicing while Telugu has a four way contrast with independent features of voicing and aspiration with different phonetic realisation from English. If the difficulty is as great as the test suggests it could cause serious problems in listening.

We now come on to those contrasts which according to the results of the test might be classified as quite difficult as those already discussed.

The contrast between an initial vowel and a glide+vowel sequence, e.g., *east* v. *yeast* was correctly heard by a fair number of subjects especially when listening to "live" British speech. The low scores of those listening to Indian speech suggest the problem is not so much as one of listening but pronunciation. The reason behind this is that in Telugu front vowels are invariably preceded by an onglide /j/ when in initial position.

The contrast /s/ v. /ʃ/ showed a certain degree of difficulty. It is likely from evidence of casual observation that this problem occurs mainly before high front vowels. Telugu and English phonology are not isomorphic in this area as Telugu has three sibilants v. English two.

The contrast between /ʌ/ and /ə:/ caused a significant amount of difficulty for all subjects. This is simply a result of the Telugu vowel system having no similar contrast, in fact having only one phoneme in the whole of the low, central area of articulation. Closely related to this and at about the same level of difficulty are the contrasts between /ə:/ and /ɛə/ and in fact all the possible contrasts between /ə:/ |ʌ/, |ɔ/, |əu/, |ɑ:/. There was no room in the test to investigate all these contrasts thoroughly, as they include a large number of permutations. However the evidence which was gathered shows the whole area to be a listening problem.

We now move on to the series of difficulties that are for the most part shown to be less severe by the test but still worthy of note.

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The contrast between /e/ and /i/ causes a certain amount of difficulty especially in recorded speech. The reasons for this are not clear since Telugu has a similar contrast, though there may be some overlap at the phonetic level.

The contrast between words ending in a long vowel and those ending in a centralising diphthong (orthographic *r*) cause a certain amount of difficulty. It is not immediately clear why this should be so. The subjects listening to the Indian speaker did noticeably worse on this item (but not statistically significantly). This may be because of the pronunciation of final /r/ by the Indian and the previously mentioned problems with final consonants.

The next contrast in this group is that between /ai/ and /ei/. About half the subjects got it right half the time, some only occasionally, and some all the time. This shows there is some, but not impossible, difficulty with the contrast. However it is noticeable from casual observation that though many pupils can hear the contrast they cannot identify the phonemes consistently, correctly, and have great difficulty in trying to repeat any word I say which includes these phonemes. This may be because the phonetic quality of my contrast (both members slightly more open than those of R.P.) is quite different from the normal one of Indian English. There is also a related problem with /oi/ which was not tested. The underlying reason for this is probably that where English has /ei/, /ai/, and /oi/, Telugu has /je:/ and /ai/ only.

The contrast /ɔ/ v. /o:/ shows a remarkable difference between the groups that listened to British and Indian English. The former did very well, the latter very badly, indicating that this is not really a listening problem but one of pronunciation and Indian English.

Some difficulty was caused by the contrast between final /l/ and a vowel. This probably relates to the general difficulty with final consonants but the British pronunciation using a dark almost vocalic /l/ makes the contrast easier to spot. However there is evidence from casual observation that identification is not so easy.

There is also some difficulty with the contrast between a back round vowel and a glide + vowel sequence in initial position, (e.g. *oak/wake*). Actually the difficulty proved to be mainly with the Indian speaker. The reason underlying this is basically the same as with the front glide + vowel difficulty, i.e., that Telugu vowels in initial position are generally preceded

by a glide. There is a problem however, as to whether, this contrasts with a sequence of /j/ or /w/ + vowel, which carries over into English for the Telugu learner.

The final problem which was tested and seemed to cause a certain amount of difficulty was the contrast between /r/ and /l/. The difficulty here probably lies in the phonetic closeness of the two sounds, especially in the case of British English. Telugu of course also has a retroflex /ʃ/ which complicates the situation. However it is difficult to see a clear explanation of this problem.

3. Differences between British and Indian English

Generally speaking the scores for Group A were much better than those for Group B, the main significant difference being that the former listened to a recording of a British speaker and the latter to an Indian. Other conditions being kept as equal as possible this would suggest that the Indian speaker fails to make consistently some or all of the contrasts which the British speaker makes. However this does not necessarily mean that the British speaker is more intelligible since unfamiliar phonetic realisations may be disturbing to the Telugu listener and many other factors especially in connected speech.

However for a certain number of contrasts the scores with the Indian speaker were worse than those with the British speaker at a statistically significant level. This suggests that the difficulty is not so much one of failing to hear the contrast but of the pronunciation of Indian speakers.

These groups were :

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| (a) /t/ v /θ/
(b) /d/ v /ð/
(c) /st/ v /tr/ | } | (Though the generally poor score may cast doubt on the statistical validity of these differences). |
| (d) /s/ v /ʃ/ | | |
| (e) /V/ v /jV/
(f) /V/ v /wV/
(g) /ɔ/ v /ɔ:/ | } | (these are a definite case of an Indian pronunciation of English which fails to make the contrast, which however, can be heard by the subjects). |
| (h) /V/ v /Vl/ | | (final position) This is a case of failure to hear the final consonant in the Indian pronunciation while easily spotting the contrast in the British which is mainly one of vowel quality. |

4. *Differences between the Districts.*

In order to find if there were any significant differences between the performance of boys from different regions a sample of ten boys from each district (Anantapur, Chitoor, Cuddapah, Nellore and Kurnool) was taken and their scores on each contrast were analysed. Unfortunately this sample was too small to draw any statistically reliable conclusions but on certain contrasts some noticeable differences were found.

On three groups involving the contrast between stop and fricative /p/ v /f/, /t/ v /θ/, and /d/ v /ð/ a pattern seemed to be emerging where boys from the western districts of Kurnool and Anantapur did better than those from the east especially Cuddapah and Chitoor.

On the contrast /s/ v /ʃ/ Nellore did best and Kurnool and Cuddapah grouped together as the worst. These latter districts also formed a group on the contrast between final /l/ and zero though here they did best, with Nellore and Anantapur doing worst.

With contrast between voiced and voiceless stops Cuddapah did noticeably better than the rest and Chitoor did worst.

With the contrast between long vowels and centring diphthongs Chitoor did noticeably best and Anantapur worst.

On the other contrasts there are no noticeable differences between the districts. Further work and observations from Telugu dialectology might throw more light on this subject.

5. *The relationship between test performance and exam. marks*

In order to check if there was any correlation between listening skills and general academic performance, especially in English (I hesitate to say language skills), the subjects were asked to write their most recent exam. mark in English at the top of the paper. These were then correlated with the test scores and there was found to be no significant correlation. The scores of the three classes were also recalculated for better comparison and the fact that on corrected scores the highest scoring boy came from the lowest academic stream seems to bear out this finding. It seems reasonable to deduce that listening skills tested in regular exams are in no way related.

6. *Problems of using tape-recorders.*

The generally better performance of Group C who listened to live speech tends to suggest that it is easier to hear difficult distinctions in live

speech than on tape. This is not surprising as live speech offers visual as well as auditory cues, the speed of delivery can be better regulated and there is less distortion especially of high frequency sounds which are so important for distinguishing certain phonemes.

A certain number of contrasts showed significant differences between the scores of groups A and C, which can be attributed to the difference of live v. recorded speech. It may be noticed that some of them at least are maintained by acoustic cues in the high frequency range which my tape-recorder is simply incapable of picking up.

The contrasts were.

- (a) /dz/ v /dʒ/
- (b) /t/ v /θ/
- (c) /st/ v /θ/
- (d) /V/ v /jV/
- (e) /V/ v /wV/
- (f) /e/ v /i/
- (g) voiced v voiceless stops
- (h) /n/ v /ŋ/
- (i) /ʌ/ v /ə:/

Value of this project

In fact this investigation is merely a first step as it merely tests a small portion of the general skill of listening to a foreign language. The ability to hear certain phonemic contrasts implies nothing about the ability to assign a series of sounds to a particular utterance or to understand it. To investigate this ability it is necessary to test listening skills in connected speech in contexts with redundancy, and contexts where vital information is carried by the difficult contrasts. Much work remains to be done on the intelligibility of native and Indian English for Indian learners. (See Bansal, *The Intelligibility of Indian English*, C.I.E. Monograph 4).

This project has pointed out some of the difficult contrasts for Telugu learners and shown which ones are real listening difficulties and which are mainly caused by Indian English failing to make the distinction. It is to be hoped that it will be of some use to applied linguists and teachers who wish to improve the listening skills and pronunciation of their Telugu speaking students.

Paper 2

Some common grammatical and lexical errors in the spoken English of Telugu students

The second project I undertook while in the school was simply to track down and try to explain some of the most common errors in the speech of Telugu learners at the grammatical and lexical levels. To do this I simply recorded on tape a corpus of free conversation from about a dozen groups of X class boys, six in each group. They were asked to talk about the school or their experiences during the holiday. The conversations were then transcribed and the mistakes analysed. Most of these mistakes are predictable by contrastive analysis (see Prakasam; *Syntactic patterns of Telugu and English; a Study in Contrastive analysis*, C.I.E. Monograph 5). However other errors were made and not all predictable errors turned up, simply because of the size of the sample and possibly the subjects "playing safe" in what they said. There follows a list of about 15 grammatical and 15 lexical errors which were most common and significant.

Grammatical Errors

1. *Tenses*

Perhaps the most common error made by all the students is the misuse of tenses. It is estimated that in the recording for this project two out of every three verbs were in the wrong tense. There seems to be very little system about the errors but certain trends can be seen. The most common mistake is the use of the simple present for the past tense (and for some other tenses too) indicating that the students have learnt only the basic form of the verb and not how to use it in different tenses. However sometimes they got it right or even used the past where the present was wanted. (A kind of over-correction). Sometimes the error was a problem of morphology as well as of choosing the correct form, e.g., /ri:d/ v /red/ which were regularly confused probably because of identical spelling and too much teaching of the written language. Not surprisingly the more complex tense forms, interrogatives, negatives and modal forms were even more consistently wrong.

Certain other tense errors seemed to be more consistent and explicable by reference to L1 interference. (1) The present continuous is occasionally used where normal English would use a simple present. This may be the result of the preponderance of continuous tense forms in Telugu coupled with inadequate learning of the uses of the tenses in English. (2) The

future is occasionally used instead of the general present, e.g., *IN OUR SCHOOL THEY WILL GIVE COLD WATER (EVERY DAY)*. This is a clear reflection of Telugu usage where the future tense is used for such expressions. (3) The verb "to be" is occasionally used by the students as an auxiliary where it would not be used in standard English, e.g., *I AM BECOME* (future?). *I AM WENT* (past). Sometimes this gives a form which is morphologically passive but syntactically obviously is not. The reason for this may be that the main auxiliary verb in Telugu is "to be" (there is no "have" and "will" is translated by a future inflexion). (4) Often the modal verb *CAN* is used as a general all-purpose auxiliary, e.g., *ALL BOYS CAN PLAY GAMES?* where the meaning is really *DO ALL THE BOYS PLAY GAMES? BUT THEY CAN'T CATCH = BUT THEY DIDN'T CATCH HIM*, (better examples than these occur but not in the tapes). The reason for this is not clear.

It is noticeable that mistakes of tense are frequent in the second of two co-ordinate clauses (and also to some extent in subordinate clauses) perhaps because Telugu usually uses participial forms for subordination and co-ordination. More work needs to be done on all these tense mistakes as so far no simple explanation can be found to cover all cases.

2. Articles

The most common mistake with the articles is complete omission but almost all other permutations of mistakes also occur, e.g., use of definite article for indefinite use of articles with proper nouns, etc. The reason for this is obvious; Telugu has no articles and the English system is complex. A subsidiary mistake is the misuse of "a" and "an" probably simply because the rule has been taught not as a phonological one but as an orthographic one and is not easily applied by the students in spoken English.

3. Questions

With yes/no questions it is a common mistake to fail to invert the subject and auxiliary verb. Needless to say the complexities of the dummy verb *Do* add to the problem. The same problem is found in *Wh*-questions, and perhaps more often since many students have mastered the formula *Do You + verb* for yes/no questions but fail to use it with *Wh*-questions. Also there appears to be some confusion because of recent learning of reported speech patterns and the use of *whether* in direct questions. These mistakes can generally be explained as LI interference as Telugu makes no change in word order for questions but uses a particle (*AA*) on the last word of the sentence or simply a *Wh*-type question word.

Another tendency of the students is to use a double question form more frequently than it would be done in standard English, e.g., *Is There Any Girls or Not?* This perhaps reflects a favourite Telugu sentence pattern.

4. Omission of Copula

In the data this error seems to be almost exclusively found in questions of the pattern *HOW MANY TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL?* This is probably a result of Telugu interference since in sentences of this pattern and indeed of several others Telugu has no copula. Further investigation might reveal the extent of the influence of such forms on the English of learners.

5. Adjectives, adverbs and nouns

This type of problem mainly arises with adjectives in predicative position and usually the problem is in the morphological changes between nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Often an adverbial-*ly* ending is added where it is not necessary. Sometimes a noun is used instead of the adjective or the adjectival form is used where a noun or adjective + *Thing* is needed, e.g., *WHAT IS THE SPECIAL OF THE SCHOOL?* There is not enough evidence in the data to give any firm conclusions about such problems but it can be pointed out that they arise mainly because the Telugu system of adjective use is very different from the English, especially in predicative position. Telugu in fact prefers to use adverbial or nominal forms. The situation is so complex that it is probably best to look at each error of this type individually.

6. Omission of to with places

Often we find sentences like *I WENT MY VILLAGE*, where the *To* is omitted. The situation is complicated because of expressions like *to go home* or *to go there*. This may be the result of Telugu interference for the marker of this category in Telugu is a suffix rather than a preposition which at least with the names of places is optional.

7. Numerals

With human nouns (understood) it is quite normal to hear the word *members* following the numeral. This may be a general feature of Indian English but probably is a reflexion of the Telugu distinction of two sets of numerals, one for human and one for non-human nouns.

8. *Short answers*

Often instead of short answers with the dummy verb *Do* we find the student repeats the main verb. Similarly with the modals. Also with transitive verbs which demand an object in the answer, it is omitted, e.g., *DID YOU READ THE BOOK? YES, I READ.* There is probably some influence of Telugu which does not usually have a pronoun in such cases but the problem with the verbs is mainly one of complexity in English discourse, structure, which in any case has probably not been taught very thoroughly.

9. *Genitive 's*

Omission of genitive 's a fairly common mistake. This may arise from sheer carelessness but it may also be influenced by the fact that with many classes of nouns Telugu does not mark this category phonologically (though with certain nouns it does). There is also some confusion as to the decision whether to use *Of* or 'S probably arising from intrinsic complexity in English.

10. *Know v. can*

The use of *KNOW* with a skill instead of *can* is quite common, e.g. *DO YOU KNOW DRIVING?* instead of *CAN YOU DRIVE?* The reason behind this is not obvious as Telugu seems to make the same type of conceptual distinction. (*telusu/vaccu*). It may be that the problem arises from the different constructions accompanying *CAN/vaccu*, English using an infinitive where Telugu prefers a verbal noun plus an awareness that *CAN YOU DRIVING** is wrong. Or there may be the influence of Indian English which generally uses *KNOW*. There is also of course the general difficulty with modal auxiliaries especially *CAN* mentioned above.

11. *Gerund for infinitive*

As mentioned above, Telugu students often use a gerund construction where English prefers an infinitive, a reflexion of Telugu usage, e.g., *I HELPED MY FATHER IN CORRECTING PAPERS.*

12. *Word order: adverbs*

The students had a certain amount of difficulty with word order especially with adverbs. There is not enough time or evidence to analyse this in detail but a common fault was to put the adverb immediately after the verb e.g. *I SPENT HAPPILY MY TIME.* The problem was especially noticeable with *ONLY* and *ALSO* which have very subtle shades of meaning in different positions. The whole problem is quite complex and deserves further investigation. Strangely enough, there were few problems with the

major sentence items and their order although Telugu prefers *SOV* to English *SVO*.

13. Repetition

Several students used repetition of an adjective where English might use *VERY* e.g. *THERE ARE MANY MANY BUILDINGS*. This is almost certainly following a favourite Telugu pattern.

14. Sentences with *THERE ARE*: stress.

All the students by wrongly stressing *THERE* give the impression to a native ear of a locative rather than an existential sentence. This is especially true in questions e.g. *HOW MANY TEACHERS ARE THERE?* Presumably this is because the students have just not been taught anything about stress and in fact may never have heard the correct form in the Indian English they hear.

15. Comparatives and Superlatives

These cause a number of problems not all of which were found in the data but can be observed in casual listening to the learners' English. One error which was found was the use of *WORST* and *BEST* as simple positive adjectives (meaning *VERY GOOD/BAD*). It is also possible to find literal translations of the Telugu forms such as:

Compared to this that one is Good

In these Books which is Good?

The problem of course arises from the vastly different systems of comparison in Telugu and English, the most outstanding fact being that Telugu does not have the inflexion of adjective forms found in English.

Some lexical errors

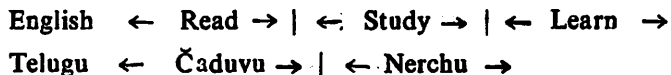
1. One of the most common errors is the phrase *TAKE MEALS* and *TAKE A BATH* which in standard English would be *HAVE A MEAL/BATH*. This is probably the result of Indian English which generally uses *TAKE* but may be added to by the fact that Telugu has no verb *to have* and says *MAKE A MEAL/BATH*.

2. ETC

Is used indiscriminately in spoken English of the students where a British person would use several different phrases and reserve *ETC* for the end of a list. *AND SO ON* is also used indiscriminately. The use of *ETC* is no doubt influenced by excessive teaching of the written language but is also a noticeable feature of Indian English.

3. *Learn/read/study*

The students have great difficulty in using these three words especially the latter two in their right contexts, e.g., *I AM READING A.P.R.S. SCHOOL*. The reason behind this is that Telugu's translation equivalents are only two words. The semantic field might be diagrammed thus.



This is reinforced by the acceptability of *READ* in wider contexts in Indian English and perhaps by the fact that education in India equals reading.

4. *Names*

The students in general are very poor at names and titles tending to address their classmates as *Mr.* and me as *SMITH*, i.e., surname alone. Of course the problem is that Telugu and Indian society generally has no precise equivalent for the English pattern of Christian name v. surname with title usage, indicating strength of personal relationship.

5. *Dates*

Dates are generally given as if read directly from a book, e.g., *THIRTEENTH APRIL 1974* omitting the article and *OF* or like this, *ON 13.4.74*. Usually the year is mentioned unnecessarily. Again this shows the influence of written language.

6. *Native Place*

This expression is used where British English would use *HOME/ HOME TOWN* or some other expression. This is really a mistake on the cultural level and hence perhaps not a true mistake in the Indian context, for *NATIVE PLACE* is a key concept in the social knowledge of the average Indian. However, one or two students shorten the expression to *NATIVE* which is definitely wrong.

7. *Cinema*

Most students use *CINEMA* instead of *PICTURE* and *CINEMA HALL* for British English *CINEMA*. The reason for this is that Telugu has borrowed the terms from English with *CINEMA=PICTURE* and *CINEMA HALL=CINEMA*, and hence learners use what they know are English words, but in the Telugu contexts.

8. *Join in*

The expression *join in* is used for almost any case of undertaking a new activity like *JOIN IN COLLEGE; JOIN IN MILITARY, JOIN AS A TEACHER*; where British English would use a variety of expressions like *GO TO, START (WORK AS)*, etc. This seems to be a common feature of Indian English though there may be L1 interference underlying it.

9. *By Walk*

This is obviously formed on analogy with *BY BUS*, though it is close to the Telugu form which is *NADUCI POYINANU* (lit. Walking/having walked I went). British English would use either *ON FOOT* or say *I WALKED*. But *BY WALK* is so widespread it might be regarded as part of Indian English.

10. *Pants*

The students generally talked about pants in the singular, e.g., *I BOUGHT A NEW PANT*, where British English would always say *A PAIR OF PANTS* (or more likely *trousers*). The reason is that the word has been borrowed into Telugu, but in the singular; when the Telugu plural suffix is added it means two or more pairs.

11. *Write Exams*

This is used instead of *SIT EXAMS* not only by the students in this project but by most Indians. It is a literal translation of the Telugu idiom.

12. *Older/younger brother/sister*

In the recordings the students generally specify the age of their siblings in relation to *EGO*, which is not done in English except for special purposes. This follows the Telugu pattern where separate lexical items are used. There is also some confusion over English's use of *OLDER* v. *ELDER*.

13. *Wedding/Marriage*

The students, generally speaking, have not grasped the distinction between these two words (ceremony/institution) and use *marriage* in both cases. They also don't know how to use the normal English idiom *GET MARRIED*.

14. *Farm*

The data shows that the students do not generally use the normal idiom *ON THE FARM* but use abnormal forms like *IN THE FIELDS, IN AGRICULTURE, IN FARMING*. In such sentences as *I HELPED MY FATHER*. These errors are probably simple gaps in the students' knowledge but vital ones which teachers could well note.

Summary and Conclusions

These two projects have served to point out some of the difficulties of Telugu students of English and their probable causes. As in any second language situation some of the difficulties are the results of L1 interference, but it has been shown that others are mainly the result of influence of Indian English. The lack of a good model plus the generally poor standards of teaching and lack of work on the spoken language may well be the major reason behind the decline in standards of spoken English, which most people agree is taking place in India. If we wish our students to speak and understand English as an international language rather than as an Indian one (and that is a socio-linguistic and even political question which I do not wish to discuss) I feel it is important that we should provide them with good models of English, ideally as live native speakers, or failing that recorded or broadcast speech of a relevant content and level. Teachers too should be taught better spoken English and the exam system should be changed to give some emphasis on spoken rather than written language. But in India where economics and tradition rule education much of this will remain no more than a hope.

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