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Anglo-Indian English: A nativized variety of Indian English

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ABSTRACT

The speech of native speakers of Indian English has generally been neglected in studies of English in South Asia. This article describes a variety of Indian English used by a section of the Anglo-Indian community in Madras, South India. A comparison of this variety to available descriptions of “General” or “Educated” Indian English shows that the two are substantially similar, but that the Anglo-Indian variety differs in two features: deletion of /h/ (*h*-dropping) and the distribution of *r*-lessness. The community shows class-based variation in the phonological feature of *h*-dropping and in one syntactic feature: auxiliary movement in questions. Sources for features of Anglo-Indian English are discussed, including possible inheritance from both standard and non-standard BrE dialects as well as transfer from Tamil, the likely substrate Indian language for this section of the Anglo-Indian community. (South Asia, Indian English, language variation)*

Discussions of English in South Asia focus almost exclusively on second-language (L2) users of this language, with no more than passing reference to the existence of native speakers (cf. Kachru 1969, 1975, 1976, 1982, 1983, 1992, as well as Smith 1981, Bailey & Görlach 1982, Pride 1982, Platt et al. 1984, Williams 1987, Lowenberg 1990, Gramley & Pätzold 1992, Baumgardner 1993, 1996).¹ Although writers like Kachru refer to the existence of at least two South Asian communities that have the reputation of being native speakers of English – the Anglo-Indians in India, and speakers of Burgher English in Sri Lanka (see e.g. Kachru 1994 for a brief reference) – very little empirical research has been carried out on the structure and use of English by these communities. Thus there are only five existing publications on the speech of the Anglo-Indian community, which maintains English as its “mother tongue” or community language, and which has undergone a process of shift to English dating back at least to the 18th century. These publications – Spencer 1966, Valentine 1969, 1978, Bayer 1979, 1986 – contain interesting sociolinguistic observations on the community, but are inadequate as linguistic descriptions of Anglo-Indian English.² Further, no empirical research has been carried out on the extent to which English is actually

used as a first or dominant language by members of South Asian communities other than the two mentioned above. Such research is necessary at least in India, where, with increasing post-colonial use of English, an increasing number of persons belonging to traditionally non-English-speaking Indian communities have shifted to using English as their first language, and use an "Indian" language only as their L2 (sometimes with marginal fluency in the L2). For example, some sections of the Mangalorean and Goan Christian communities show loss of their community language (Konkani) and shift to English as a first language.³

The interest shown in the "institutionalized" use of English as a second language in South Asia is understandable given the predominance of non-native speakers; however, the tendency to neglect the presence of its first-language (L1) users has resulted in an inaccurate and imbalanced representation of South Asian English (SAsE). One instance of this imbalance is the frequent characterization (in the literature cited above) of SAsE as non-native, in contrast to "native" varieties such as American English or Australian English. It is not clear whether the authors who use this term do so with the intention of deliberately excluding native speakers of SAsE from their discussions, or because they do not believe that native speakers of SAsE exist. In either case, the fact that native speakers do exist makes the term NON-NATIVE inapplicable as a general label for SAsE; it is more appropriate to describe SAsE as a group of varieties which has both native and non-native speakers.⁴ A distinction could, perhaps, be made between native and non-native SAsE varieties, but to do so it would be necessary to show that the non-native varieties are spoken exclusively by non-native speakers. It would also be necessary to provide linguistic motivation for such a distinction by showing that substantial linguistic differences exist between the speech of the native and non-native speakers.

Kachru, in his discussions on the distinctiveness of SAsE, attributes its "South Asianness" to its use as an "additional" language. However, the existence of native speakers of this dialect suggests that its distinctiveness lies in the HISTORICAL PROCESS that led to its development, rather than in the issue of NATIVENESS. Varieties such as SAsE are similar to Hiberno-English in being "shift-based" varieties: they are the outcome of language shift to English by an originally non-English-speaking population of South Asians and Irish. A small section of the South Asian population has undergone complete shift to English; English is their native or first language, although they are also bilingual (with varying degrees of fluency) in other languages. A larger section shows partial shift to English; they acquire and use English as a second language (the bulk of the literature on SAsE deals with this group of speakers). In contrast, American and Australian English are "transplanted" varieties, in that the contact situation in which they developed consisted of the transplantation of English to regions outside Britain by a relatively large proportion of British native speakers who became permanent settlers in those regions. They have, of course, been influenced by language shift among indigenous people, and immigrants belonging to ethnic groups that historically

did not speak English – but to a lesser degree than the “shift-based” varieties. The most important changes in SAsE stem from transfer during the initial process of shift and transmission of these transferred features to later generations of speakers. These changes are likely to show themselves in the speech of native as well as non-native speakers of this dialect.

In this article, I present a contribution to the study of SAsE as a first language through a description of the speech of a section of the Anglo-Indian community. The data for this study were collected from members of this community who reside in the neighborhood of Perambur in the city of Madras, South India. All participants in the study are identified as native speakers of Indian English (IndE). My description deals with two issues. First, I examine the extent to which the English of the participants, hereafter called Anglo-Indian English (AIndE), shows similarities to and differences from some aspects of “General/Educated” IndE as described in the available literature (e.g. Bansal 1969, Masica 1972 on phonology; Verma 1973, Sahgal & Agnihotri 1985 on syntax; Kachru 1965 etc. on vocabulary; Kachru 1969 on some general aspects of IndE; Sahgal & Agnihotri 1985, 1988 on social variation in Delhi; and Kachru 1994, Sridhar 1996 on mother-tongue-based variation). Second, I address the possibility of socially determined variation within the Anglo-Indian speech community, by checking whether any variation in the data corresponds to class-related differences among the participants. The latter have been selected such that they all show uniformity in factors not directly related to class, such as gender and place of residence, but vary in class-related factors such as profession, educational level, and income. I show that the Perambur variety of AIndE is similar to descriptions of General/Educated IndE in most features, but that it differs in two: the presence of *r*-lessness in the speech of all participants, and the presence of *h*-dropping. These speakers also show class-based variation in two features, *h*-dropping and the presence of auxiliary movement (hereafter called AUX-movement) in *yes/no* and WH-questions. I emphasize that my description of AIndE should be taken to refer to the Perambur variety alone, unless specified otherwise.

Since SAsE is the outcome of shift, this study is designed within the framework of Thomason & Kaufman’s discussion (1988) of contact-induced change, where the authors predict that the phonology and grammar are most likely to be affected in cases of substratum interference in “language shift with normal transmission.” They also point out that the extent to which target language features are learned, and L1 features retained, will depend on extralinguistic factors such as the relative numerical strength of the shifting group, the nature of the input, and attitudinal and pragmatic factors related to the use of the target language. In previous work on IndE, the only studies that explicitly view it as an outcome of shift are those carried out on South African Indian English by Mesthrie 1987, 1990, 1992, who shows that differences in substrate languages and in social factors have resulted in variation in this dialect. Mesthrie discusses mainly syntactic features, but also comments briefly on phonology. My study investigates both

phonological and syntactic features of Perambur AIndE. I point out possible sources for the features mentioned in this study in British English dialects and in the likely substrate, Tamil (the regional language of Madras), and consider the possibility that extralinguistic factors such as class, educational background, and historical circumstances of language shift could have influenced the formation of AIndE. Features that have their source in substrate Indian languages are treated as cases of transfer, and those that have their source in British dialects are treated as cases of inheritance. The possibility that some of the features could be independent innovations is not discussed, for two reasons: first, the early development of AIndE dates back little more than two hundred years, which is not very long for independent innovations to become widespread in the speech of the Anglo-Indian community; second, a single explanation, suggesting that the features derive from the relevant contact languages, is more convincing than a number of unconnected innovations.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

The Anglo-Indian community is one of many Indian cultural communities. A cultural community in India is generally characterized by a shared religion, language, and historical origin. In the case of the Anglo-Indians, the religion is Christian,⁵ the language is English, and the historical origin is their mixed Indian and European ancestry. Exact information about the population of Anglo-Indians in India is not available, since Census surveys after 1951 have not counted them separately; but according to Anthony (1969:11, cited in Schermernhorn 1975:180), an unofficial estimate made in 1968 was 250,000. While the Anglo-Indian population must have increased along with the general population growth in India, estimates about increase are complicated by the fact that members of this community have continued after Independence to emigrate in large numbers to Australia and Britain. Like most Indian cultural communities, the Anglo-Indian community has a tendency to endogamy, although opposition to exogamous marriages is less strong than in other communities; according to Bhattacharya (1968:166), "marriage outside the community is not particularly objected to, but such cases are not numerous."

The constitution of India defines Anglo-Indians in the following way:

An "Anglo-Indian" means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory, of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only. (Art. 366(2) of Government of India Act, 1935, cited in Bayer 1986:9)

Legally, therefore, any Indian with European lineage on the male side is an Anglo-Indian. Socially, however, the situation is not so simple. Anglo-Indians' consciousness of themselves as a distinct community with a shared cultural identity arises not so much from racial descent as from a unique experience under British

colonialism. Thus not all persons of mixed racial ancestry are considered Anglo-Indians; for example, Anthony 1969 excludes from the community those who belong to the erstwhile Portuguese colony, Goa, and the French colony, Pondicherry, on the grounds that their native language is not English. Further, as Cottrell points out, only children of mixed marriages contracted before Indian independence tend to identify themselves as members of this community:

Contemporary Asian–Western couples represent quite a different phenomenon from [early Indian–European marriages] because of differences in the nature of social relations during the colonial and contemporary periods and differences in the socioeconomic position of the people intermarrying. They have not experienced the same degree of social marginality as the Anglo-Indians have done; thus they are not becoming a community with a sense of identity and shared culture as the Anglo-Indians have done. (Cottrell 1969:351)

The importance of British colonialism in defining the Anglo-Indian identity is apparent in the fact that members of the community, irrespective of whether they are of British or other European ancestry and irrespective of the geographical region that they live in, all speak English and claim it as their community language or “mother tongue.”

The British were instrumental in shaping a single community out of what might otherwise have been scattered groups of Eurasians (an older term for Anglo-Indians), having diverse origins and no conscious link with each other. A letter dated 1778 to the Governor of Madras, calling attention to their plight, indicates that they were at least initially seen merely as offspring of European soldiers stationed in India: “The distressed and forlorn Condition of the numerous male Issue of European Soldiery in India hath long attracted my Attention” (Richard Wilson, cited in Love 1988:3.179). Wilson goes on to suggest to the Governor that it would be advantageous to the British to unite Eurasians into a group of people who, because of bonds of kinship with their rulers, would willingly serve British interests in India:

It shall be my first Endeavour to prove that this Class of People is sufficiently numerous to merit the Attention of Government . . . and lastly proceed to point in general the Methods by which this vagrant Race may be formed into an active, bold and usefull Body of People, strengthening the Hands of Dominion with a Colony of Subjects attached to the British Nation by Consanguinity, Religion, Gratitude, Language and Manners (179) . . . [Thus] they will no longer remain an obscure, vagrant and miserable Race; they will assume a Name . . . (182).

Thus, as Gist (1967b:361) points out, “a community consciousness, based upon ethnic similarities, emerged only after the British dealt categorically, not just individually” with Eurasians. As part of a policy of fostering loyalty, Anglo-Indians were given greater access to employment and to education in institutions

reserved for the British, and were encouraged in developing a perception of themselves as different from Indians; however, this policy fell short of full acceptance into the social sphere of British life. Cottrell 1979 comments:

until the end of the eighteenth century intermarriage [by the British] with Indians was common. In fact, such marriages were often encouraged ... This changed during the nineteenth century, and by the end of that century it was taboo for all but the lowest status British men to associate with Anglo-Indians or Indians (351–52).

The Indian reaction was one of resentment at the preferential treatment given to Anglo-Indians, and disapproval of the nature of their social relations with their rulers. Shunned socially by both British and Indians, the Anglo-Indians turned to each other for a sense of “belonging” in a community. Although resentful of British treatment of them, they maintained loyalty to their colonial rulers and identified culturally with them, while they looked upon Indians as their social inferiors. Indian Independence and the departure of the British further jeopardized their situation; they were faced with the difficult choice of either leaving together with the British, or staying on. If they stayed, they would lose the economic privileges they had enjoyed under the British, and also face the task of developing a more acceptable identity for themselves in independent India. Many chose to leave; those who remain exist as a marginalized community seeking to gain acceptance (cf. Gist 1967a,b, Bhattacharya 1968, Anthony 1969, Scherm-erhorn 1975, and Cottrell 1979 for studies on the marginalization of Anglo-Indians).

The task that this community faces in modern India is to strike an acceptable balance between preserving aspects of their traditionally “Western” lifestyle and adapting to the post-Independence pressure to “indianize.” Attitudes toward Anglo-Indians range from acceptance of them – as one among India’s diverse communities, with a cultural lifestyle of their own—to continuing doubts about their allegiance to India and about their willingness to acknowledge the Indian side of their cultural heritage. Indians have an ambivalent attitude toward westernization: On one hand, it is accepted that the global trend for westernization (as well as the cultural influence of British colonialism) has had far-reaching effects on most communities; on the other hand, reactions to colonialism and global westernization have resulted in pressure to “indianize,” to reaffirm the Indian cultural tradition. The pressure (and voluntary desire) to indianize affects not only Anglo-Indians but also communities like the Indian Christians – who adopted the Christian religion and assimilated to British culture in varying degrees, but do not generally claim Eurasian ancestry, and have not suffered the extreme marginalization that the Anglo-Indians have. However, the problem for Anglo-Indians is not just one of cultural assimilation, but of identity. Unlike Indian Christians, they had developed a perception of themselves as “more British than Indian”; their acceptance in India depends upon their willingness to affirm that they are

Indian. The community does show signs of indianization in their cultural habits; e.g., some women now wear saris and salwar kurtas, whereas they were previously seen only in dresses. It is possible that their speech too has undergone some "indianization" after independence, resulting in the incorporation of features of IndE that may not previously have been present. In the absence of detailed linguistic information on earlier stages of AIndE, it is difficult to determine whether and to what extent their speech was different from other local varieties of IndE; however, the description in this study will permit a comparison of the current speech of a sample population of the community, in Madras, with available descriptions of "General" IndE.

The unique historical origins of the Anglo-Indian community make it an especially interesting case for a study of language shift in India. Most other Indian communities describe their historical origins through reference to a geographical region (e.g., a Mangalorean is a descendant of people who once lived in Mangalore); the result is that their ancestors can be clearly identified as having come from one region, and as having spoken one common language. For the Anglo-Indians, by contrast, the geographical origins of their ancestors are diverse. On the European side, they claim British (English, Scottish, Irish), French, Portuguese, Australian, and Dutch descent (Bayer 1979:78). On the Indian side, small sub-communities of Anglo-Indians sprang up in cities and towns across the country wherever members of local Indian communities intermingled with Europeans. Consequently, the languages and dialects spoken by their non-Anglo-Indian ancestors varied considerably – a factor that could be reflected in current patterns of regional or social variation in the speech of the community.

This community is unique also in that it is the only one that claims English as the mother tongue. In popular Indian usage, the term *mother tongue* does not have its usual linguistic meaning; it is used to mean "community language," the language a person claims as a marker of membership in a cultural community. Such a claim does not necessarily indicate actual fluency in the language; for example, a Mangalorean who has lived all her life in Madras, and for whom English is a first language, would typically identify herself as Mangalorean and claim Konkani as her mother tongue, even if she has never been to Mangalore and is hardly fluent in Konkani. She could, however, qualify this claim with details about her real familiarity with Mangalore or Konkani. Since language plays a crucial role as a marker of community identity in India, the fact that Anglo-Indians claim English as their mother tongue is an important factor in distinguishing them from other non-Anglo-Indians who use English extensively: members of other communities learn English for various circumstantial reasons, but are determined to retain their ethnic links with their traditional mother tongue, if only in name.⁶ English continues, in this sense, to be regarded as a foreign language – despite recognition of its intranational use as a lingua franca, and the fact that there are small numbers of non-Anglo-Indians who are native or near-native speakers of IndE. Interestingly, although English is a prestige language in India, the Anglo-

Indian variety is treated derogatorily in some regions. Spencer's observation that local attitudes toward this accent were influenced by British attitudes is true of Madras, although the term *chee-chee* is not commonly used anymore:

Predictably, the British in India provided [the Anglo-Indians] and their accent with a pejorative name, *chee-chee*; British attitudes towards the accent also appear to have been absorbed by many middle-class Indians. It is not uncommon, for instance, in my experience, to find a middle-class Indian mother rebuking her child for picking up a *chee-chee* accent as a result of attending an Anglo-Indian school. (1966:62)

The circumstances of shift to English within this community differs from other Indian communities in two major respects: First, the history of shift probably dates back to an earlier period than the other communities; second, it is likely that the BrE input to which the Anglo-Indians were exposed differed both quantitatively and qualitatively from that to which other Indian communities were exposed. One effect of the British policy of according special status to the Anglo-Indians was that they enjoyed freer access than most other Indians to schools reserved for the British, where English was the medium of instruction. Consequently, they had relatively more exposure to standard or at least socially acceptable varieties of BrE used by British teachers and scholastic peers in such schools. At the same time, the fact that they intermingled informally with the British suggests that they also had the opportunity to learn English informally; such informal contact must have occurred with the lower British classes more often than with the higher classes, providing exposure to less prestigious BrE dialects. By contrast, Indians in other communities were exposed to English mainly in formal situations in school and at work, and therefore may have had less exposure to non-standard dialects of BrE. In addition to dialectal variation in the BrE input itself, there must also have been variation in the extent to which members of the Anglo-Indian community were exposed to various BrE dialects. Since it is highly unlikely that social stratification did not exist within the Anglo-Indian community, it is unlikely that all Anglo-Indians received equal exposure to standard or socially acceptable BrE dialects; some must have had more exposure to these dialects, while others must have had more exposure to non-standard BrE. The possibility of socially determined differences in exposure to the input raises the possibility of socially determined linguistic variation in the speech of the community arising from the initial circumstances of shift. However, it is probably impossible to recover much of the historical data that would provide evidence for such variation in the early stages of shift.

METHOD

The data for this study were collected through fieldwork carried out in August 1993 in Madras. The study was limited to one neighborhood, Perambur, in order to avoid the inclusion of regional (neighborhood-based) variation. Perambur was

chosen because it contains the highest concentration of Anglo-Indians in Madras, albeit less than 10%.⁷ The following social factors were kept relatively uniform:

- (a) Age was limited to the range of 20–35 years.
- (b) Gender: the participants chosen are all females.
- (c) Place of residence: almost all participants had lived continually since early childhood in Perambur.
- (d) Native language: all participants are native speakers of English.⁸

The participants were asked the age at which they had first learned English, and questioned on the extent to which they used English in everyday life. All reported that English was the first language they began to use in early childhood, and that they had maintained it as the dominant language of communication since their first acquisition of it. Further information about their language background was elicited during the data collection interviews. Religion is uniform to the extent that all participants are Christian; however, one (VM) is Protestant, and the others are Roman Catholic. All are bilingual to some extent in Tamil, which is their second language; a few have slight knowledge of other languages as well (most commonly Hindi and French, which they studied to fulfill school requirements). Their fluency in Tamil ranges from marginal to very good. The participants show variation in class-related factors, such as income, educational level, and profession.

The target number of participants was 15.⁹ Income group was used to represent class, with five participants chosen for each of three income groups corresponding to three social classes: Upper Middle Class (UMC), Lower Middle Class (LMC), and Lower Class (LC). The participants were assigned to class on the basis of self-reported information about combined family income: the participants' personal income added to that of family members who support her financially, i.e. her spouse or her parents. In this study, members of the UMC are those whose income allows them to (i) send their children to "good" schools; (ii) own a small apartment or house; and (iii) own a car plus a few luxury items such as a TV and VCR. Their annual income is more than Rs. 84,000 (appr. \$2,800).¹⁰ Members of the LMC are those whose income allows them one or two of items (i–iii), but not all; their annual income ranges from Rs. 24,000 to below 84,000 (appr. \$800 to below \$2,800). Members of the LC cannot afford any of the three items; their annual income is below Rs. 24,000 (below \$800). Table 1 shows the participants' social profile in terms of age, income, educational background, profession, and fluency in Tamil.

The interviews were tape-recorded sessions lasting approximately one and a half hours each. The first part of the interview focused on linguistic data; it provided opportunities for the elicitation of monitored speech, as well as spontaneous, relatively unmonitored speech. A variety of tasks were used, some designed to elicit specific phonological features (duration 20 minutes) and some to elicit specific syntactic features (20 minutes). The second part was a loosely structured

TABLE 1. *Social profile of participants showing age, income, education, profession, and Tamil fluency*

| Participant | Age | Annual Family Income | Highest Level of Education ^a | Work Experience | Tamil Fluency ^b |
|---------------------------|-----|-------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Lower Class | | | | | |
| WV | 28 | No regular income | Grade 8 | None | V. Good |
| JC | 32 | Rs. 6,000 (\$200) | Grade 7 | None | Fair |
| EH | 26 | Rs. 8,400 (\$280) | Grade 8 | None | Marginal |
| GV | 35 | Rs. 12,600 (\$420) | Grade 5 | Kindergarten tutor | Fair |
| AC | 22 | Rs. 17,400 (\$580) | Grade 9 | Kindergarten tutor | V. Good |
| Lower Middle Class | | | | | |
| LR | 21 | Rs. 36,000 (\$1,200) | Grade 10+2, doing BA | None – still a student | Fair |
| MM | 20 | Rs. 48,000 (\$1,600) | Grade 10+2 | None | Fair |
| KM | 25 | Rs. 62,400 (\$2,080) | Grade 10+2, doing BCom | Secretary, salesperson | Marginal |
| VM | 20 | Rs. 66,000 (\$2,200) | Grade 10 | Beautician | V. Good |
| ED | 24 | Rs. 72,000 (\$2,400) | Grade 10+2+ BCom | Secretary | Fair |
| Upper Middle Class | | | | | |
| CT | 31 | Rs. 84,000 (\$2,800) | Grade 10+2+ BA | Secretary | Marginal |
| SJ | 21 | Rs. 120,000 (\$4,000) | Grade 10+2+ BA | None – recent graduate | V. Good |
| MiM | 27 | Rs. 180,000 (\$6,000) | Grade 10+2+ BA | Public relations asst. | V. Good |
| CM | 21 | Rs. 84,000+ (\$2,800+) | Grade 10+2+ BCom | Asst. accountant | Good |
| JR | 33 | Rs. 120,000+ (\$4,000+) | Grade 10 | Secretary | V. Good |

^aIn Madras, students do a state-level 10th grade examination, followed by two years in a higher secondary school (also called “+2”), following which they may enter college for the undergraduate degree. The participants in this study did the “+2” and undergraduate courses in institutions located outside Perambur, except for KM, who was doing the BCom (Bachelor of Commerce) through a correspondence course.

^bV. Good = near-native fluency; Good = ability to hold a long conversation, but with grammatical mistakes and a non-native accent; Fair = ability to hold a short conversation; Marginal = sufficient knowledge to ask for directions on the street or buy something at a store.

section consisting of free informal conversation and questions about the sociolinguistic background of the participants – such as the historical circumstances under which the participants' families shifted to using English, their knowledge of languages other than English, and any sociolinguistic factors (other than class) that could have influenced the women's speech.

Most of the features targeted for elicitation were chosen because they are described in the literature as characteristic of General/Educated IndE. In addition, I targeted two features which are not described very clearly in the literature, but which I have personally heard used in India. They are deletion and insertion of /h/ (briefly mentioned in Bayer 1979) and the relatively low frequency of auxiliary movement in *yes/no* questions – compared, for example, to the American English I have heard in the US. To elicit phonological features, I first asked the participants to count up to 20; then showed them a set of pictures which they were asked to name; then asked them to read a list of words and a set of six sentences. The syntactic features targeted for elicitation were the use of auxiliary movement in *yes/no* and WH-questions and the use of tag questions, for which I used two question interviews of 10 minutes each (hereafter called q-interviews).¹¹ In one of the q-interviews, the women were told that I had witnessed an accident, and that they had 10 minutes in which to ask me questions that would give them information about the accident. They were told that I could answer only "Yes" or "No," so they would have to restrict their questions to ones that would elicit this response. In the second q-interview, the topic was my trip to America, and the requirement that the participants use WH-questions rather than *yes/no* questions.

A DESCRIPTION OF SOME FEATURES OF PERAMBUR AIndE

Similarities to General/Educated IndE

Perambur AIndE is similar to General/Educated IndE in a number of phonological and syntactic features. The following phonological features mentioned in Bansal 1969 and Masica 1972 were found in my data: substitution of retroflex stop phonemes for BrE alveolar stops; substitution of dental stop phonemes for BrE interdental fricatives (thus creating a phonemic contrast between retroflex stops and dental stops in IndE, rather than the BrE contrast between alveolar stops and interdental fricatives); absence of systematically distributed allophones [p^h, t^h, k^h]; absence of BrE [ɬ]; at least partial merger of /v/ and /w/ into /v/; substitution of monophthongs /e:/, o:/ for BrE diphthongs /ey, əu/; use of /o:/ in words such as *four, bored, course*, where standard BrE has /ɔ:/; and prosodic characteristics such as scarcity of vowel reduction and a different distribution of stress.

Most of the phonological features show a great deal of free variation; the only exceptions are the absence of [ɬ], the substitution of /e:/, o:/, and the distribution of /o:/, ɔ:/. Variation occurs in the following features:

(a) AIndE retroflex stop phonemes vary phonetically between alveolar stops and retroflex stops.

(b) Words which normally have dental stops in IndE occasionally show free variation between dental stops and retroflex/alveolar stops in these data (e.g. *thread* [tʃɛd ~ tʃɛɖ], *then* [dɛn ~ ɖɛn], *enthusiasm* [ʔɛntu:ziæzm ~ ʔɛntʃu:ziæzm]).¹²

(c) Allophones [p^h, t^h, k^h] occur, but their occurrence is unpredictable, and is most frequent in word-final position.

(d) The phoneme /v/ shows variation in its phonetic realization (usually between [v, w, ʋ]).

(e) Stress varies in some words.

Most of the variation appears unsystematic; however, the distribution of stress shows tentative indications of a possible correlation with social class. This is exemplified in four pairs of words that were used to check whether AIndE shows the morphological stress pattern usually found in English: *phótophraph/photógrapher*, *présents* (n)/*présents* (v), *cónduct* (n)/*condúct* (v), and *cóntents* (n)/*contént* (adj.). Only two words in this set were stressed in a uniform manner by all participants: *phótophraph* and *présents* (n); the other words all show variation. Stress in the UMC is quite consistent, and corresponds on the whole to that of Standard BrE; participants in this class differ from BrE only in the pair *contents/content*, where they stress both words on the second syllable. The LMC were consistent in some words: all have the stressed forms *présents* (n), *cónduct/condúct*, *contént* (adj.). They show variation in *photographer* (varying between *photógrapher* and *phòtographér*), *contents* (n), and *presents* (v). Data for these words from one LM participant, i.e. VM, and from all the LC participants are unreliable because they had reading problems, and were confused when faced with the orthographic similarity in the three verb/noun/adjective word pairs.

Two syntactic features of IndE mentioned by Verma 1973 and Sahgal & Agnihotri 1985 were investigated in this study: the use of invariant tag questions, and the irregular use of auxiliary movement in WH-questions. Verma 1973 observes that speakers of IndE do not use the complex, rule-generated tag questions available in English, such as *You have eaten, haven't you?* *You haven't eaten, have you?* *You went to the store, didn't you?* *You didn't go to the store, did you?* Instead they use a finite set of simple tag questions consisting of *Is it?*, *Isn't it?*, and *No?* The complex forms are generated by rule with the structure of the tag question being determined by that of the main clause, whereas the simple forms appear to be chunk utterances with no structural relationship to the main clause. He also observes that IndE WH-questions do not show regular subject-verb inversion (which I refer to here as auxiliary movement, or AUX-movement); thus forms like *Where are you going?* alternate with *Where you are going?* In contrast, WH-questions obligatorily undergo AUX-movement in BrE dialects, except when they are echo questions. Sahgal & Agnihotri 1985 tested Verma's observations on the speech of IndE speakers in

Delhi. They show that the use of tag questions varies: educated, elite speakers in Delhi tend to use the simple forms in informal registers, and the complex forms in more formal registers. They concur with Verma's observation that WH-questions show variation, but they point out that educated, elite speakers consider WH-questions without AUX-movement "unacceptable," except in echo questions.

Perambur AIndE corresponds to reports about IndE in showing variation in WH-questions; i.e., there are examples with AUX-movement, e.g. *When do you have your dinner there?*, as well as examples without: AUX: *What course actually you're doing there? How it happened?* Both variants always show WH-movement, even if they have not undergone AUX-movement. The discourse context in which they occur clearly shows that they are not echo questions. Complex tag questions do not occur at all in the data in the q-interviews; instead, only the simple ones *Is it?*, *No?*, and *Isn't it?* occur. Examples are:

- (1) a. He just walked blindly, is it?
b. You'll stay and then you'll go if you're feeling bored up, is it?
- (2) a. Oh, you said he died on the spot, no?
b. There must be full blood, no?
- (3) I think whatever I wanted to ask you about the accident, I think I've asked you, isn't it?
(Only one example of *isn't it?* was found.)

The source for many of the phonological features and both the syntactic features is quite readily identified as transfer from the local Indian substrate. The syntactic features can be attributed to the fact that Tamil, like other Indian languages, does not use AUX-movement to form questions. It has in-situ WH-words in WH-questions, and the question particle *-aa* in *yes/no* questions. The tag questions in these data parallel those in Tamil: Asher (1985:5) shows that Tamil has two forms only, *ille* 'not' and *illeyaa?* ('not' + interrogative particle) 'is it not so?'; they resemble the *No?* and *Isn't it?* of AIndE. The tag question *Is it?* may correspond to the Tamil question particle *-aa*. The absence of complex tag questions does not necessarily imply that the participants do not "know" them – since my data do not, of course, reflect the participants' absolute knowledge of English syntactic rules; it only demonstrates the non-occurrence of complex tag questions in a sample of actual speech. It is possible that the women treated the interviews as an informal conversation for which they used only "informal" forms. It is also possible that substratum interference has resulted in a low frequency of use, rather than a total absence of complex tag questions.

A feature that could be attributed to multiple causes (transfer and inheritance) is the substitution of monophthongs /e/, o:/ for BrE diphthongs. This could have been derived from both BrE dialects and the Indian substrate: Wells says that it "may reflect the pronunciation used by English people at the time English first became established in India . . . we put the date of Long Mid Diphthonging at about 1800, and the Anglo-Indians, as a group, date from before that time" (1982:625).

A feature that must have been derived from inheritance alone is the use of /o:/ in words such as *four*, *bored*, *course*. This can be traced to an earlier stage of

Standard BrE as well as to non-standard BrE dialects. Currently, Standard BrE has the vowel /ɔ:/ in the words *force*, *pork*, *north*, *fork*; but AIndE uses /o:/ in the first two, and /ɔ:/ in the last two. Wells points out that the distinction between /o:/, ɔ:/ in these words derives from an earlier stage of BrE: "In what from the RP point of view is a striking archaism, the historical distinction between the lexical sets FORCE and NORTH is maintained [in IndE]" (1982:626). This distinction is preserved now only in non-standard dialects of BrE (and in some AmE dialects, according to Wells 1982:159–60); but it was present until very recently in standard, or at least socially acceptable, BrE. The *Oxford English Dictionary* of Murray et al. (copyright dated 1933, though its data were collected ca. 1888–1928) actually maintains the distinction in its transcription, representing vowels of the lexical set FORCE with the symbol *ō*, and those of the lexical set NORTH with the symbol *ɔ*. Table 2 shows examples of words with /o:/, ɔ:/ that I elicited in AIndE, as well as a list of OED 1933 transcriptions of the same words in British English.

Differences from General/Educated IndE

Perambur AIndE shows two major differences from General/Educated IndE: the presence of /h/-deletion or *h*-dropping in the speech of some members, and the uniform presence of *r*-lessness among all members of the sample population used in this study. *H*-dropping is not reported in the literature as characteristic of General IndE – though Mesthrie 1990 reports that some speakers of South African Indian English who come from a Tamil or Telugu background pronounce /h/ as a glottalized onset, or as a weak murmur on a vowel. However, it is popularly seen as a stereotypical feature of Anglo-Indian speech in Madras and Bangalore (a city in the state of Karnataka) and is mentioned briefly in Bayer 1979. My data show considerable *h*-dropping in the speech of my Lower Class participants, and some *h*-dropping among members of the Lower and Upper Middle Classes (see the following section for a discussion of class-based variation). Examples are given below; stressed vowels are marked with the acute accent, and unstressed vowels with the breve.

(4) [ʔiz léɡ ɪz ɔ:t] *His leg is hurt?*

(5) [d̪ə æ:nɔ̃ɪd ɪm t̪ə d̪ə pólɪ:s] *They handed him to the police.*

Wells points out that a certain amount of *h*-dropping is normally found even in standard dialects of English: "In standard accents the pronouns *he*, *him*, *her*, *his* (and sometimes *who*), together with the auxiliaries *has*, *have*, *had*, regularly lack [h] if neither stressed nor postpausal. Thus RP *tell him* ['telɪm] must not be counted as an instance of H Dropping" (1982:254–55). The examples above show that *h*-dropping is not limited to these standard contexts in the speech of the Perambur Anglo-Indians. A small amount of *h*-insertion also occurs in the data; the LC shows the most examples (10 in the q-interviews, and 16 in the questionnaire), the LMC have a few (3 in the q-interviews), and the UMC show none. Given below are examples of *h*-insertion:

TABLE 2. Correspondents of AIndE /o:, ɔ:(ɔ)/ in the Oxford English Dictionary 1933.^a

| | AIndE /o:/ | OED Transcription | AIndE /ɔ:(ɔ)/ | OED Transcription ^b |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>four</i> | [foə] | fō ^a ɪ | [nɔ:t] | nōɪθ |
| <i>fourteen</i> | [foʊi:n] | fō ^a ɪf·n | [hɔ:n, ʔɔ:n] | hōɪn |
| <i>door</i> | [dɔ] | dō ^a ɪ | [fɔ:k] | fōɪk |
| <i>pork</i> | [pɔk] | pō ^a ɪk | [fɔ:fʏun, fɔ:fɪn] | fō·tiʊn |
| <i>fort</i> | [fo:t, fɔt] | fō ^a ɪt | [stɔk] short vowel, homophone of <i>stock</i> | stōɪk |
| | | | [ʃɔt] short vowel, homophone of <i>shot</i> | ʃɔt |
| | | | [ʔɪmpɔɪnt] | impōɪtənt, -pō ^a ɪ |
| | | | [θɔ:n] | thōɪn |

^aVowel length in the AIndE examples in this table varies, except where specified.

^bThe symbol used here for the interdental fricative is not the same as the one in the OED.

- (6) [dʒ pɜːsn ō hɪndʒɜːd] the person who (is) injured
 (7) [mɔy hɔnkɪl ō kɛːm] my uncle who came

“General/Educated IndE” is described as an *r*-ful dialect by Bansal 1969 and Masica 1972. However, Sahgal & Agnihotri 1988, in a study of social variation in IndE, show that *r*-lessness is characteristic of prestigious speakers of IndE in Delhi (their speakers were categorized into three groups according to the prestige level of the high school they had attended, and the number of years of “English-only” instruction offered in the school). Perambur AIndE differs from these descriptions in that *r*-lessness is characteristic of all participants – irrespective of prestige group, which in this study is represented by class. The phoneme /r/ is phonetically realized as a rhotic sound in the syllable onset position; but it is realized as a schwa, or as lengthening of the preceding vowel, or deleted immediately before consonants or a pause. Intrusive *r* was, however, not found in these data. Examples of *r*-lessness are:

- (8) [tɜːtɪn] *thirteen*, [nɔːt] *north*, [fɛdɜː] *feather*, [flaə] *flower*
 (9) [wɔz ɪt bɪtwiːn ə ʔɔtɜː en ə skuːtɜː] *Was it between a(n) auto and a scooter?* (by GV of the LC).

Examples where word-final [r] is present before an immediately following vowel, as in BrE, are:

- (10) [bɪhevyɜːɪ æ skuːl] *behavior at school* (by CT of the UMC)
 (11) [brʌdɜː en sɪstɜː] *brother and sister* (by ED of the LMC) – elsewhere she has [brʌdɜː] *brother* before a pause
 (12) [dɛɪ æːndz] *their hands* (by EH of the LC) – elsewhere she has [dɛ ʃɛːz] *their chairs*

Both *h*-dropping and *r*-lessness can be traced to inheritance from British dialects; however, the former could also be attributed to transfer from the Tamil substrate, since /h/ is not a native phoneme in this language. It normally occurs only as an intervocalic allophone of /k/ in some colloquial dialects of Tamil; but according to Asher (1985:213), it sometimes occurs as an optional variant in loanwords from languages that have /h/; his examples are [hɪndɪ ~ ɪndɪ] ‘Hindi’; [hanumaːn ~ anumaːn] ‘Hanuman’ (a Hindu deity). Mesthrie’s observation (1990) that *h*-dropping in South African IndE occurs among speakers of Tamil and Telugu background further supports the possibility of substratum influence as a source. It is possible that other Tamil-based dialects of IndE in India also show *h*-dropping – an issue that requires further investigation.¹³ The likely British source for *h*-dropping is clearly inheritance from non-standard British dialects, since at least some of the British in India must have been speakers of *h*-less dialects such as London Cockney. The source for *r*-lessness could have been Standard BrE as well as non-standard *r*-less BrE dialects.

AUX-movement in yes/no questions

No mention is made in the literature of differences between IndE and other English varieties in the use of *yes/no* questions, or of variation in these questions within IndE itself. In an experiment conducted in Pittsburgh (Coelho 1992), using

two native speakers of American English (AmE) and two second language users of IndE as participants, and employing the same method to elicit questions that is used in the present study, I compared the frequency with which the two groups used *yes/no* questions with AUX-movement (*Are you coming?*) rather than those with intonation alone (*You are coming?*)¹⁴ The results of that experiment indicated that the AmE speakers do use intonation-based questions quite frequently, but that their usage differs significantly from that of the IndE speakers in a discourse feature – namely the AmE speakers added discourse markers like *so* (e.g., *So, the driver was concerned about the car?*) to most intonation-based questions, whereas the IndE speakers used relatively more “bare” intonation-based questions, devoid of discourse markers (e.g., *The accident was nearby your house?*) The two AmE speakers had only 32% and 17% “bare” intonation-based questions in their data, whereas the two Indian speakers had 80% and 51%.

The present study utilizes the same method used in the 1992 experiment to elicit *yes/no* questions; however, the speakers are L1 users of IndE. Bare intonation-based questions like *You are coming?* were sorted out from those with discourse markers like *So, you are coming?* or those with tag questions like *You are coming, no?* Individual percentage scores for the use of bare intonation-based questions, as opposed to questions with AUX-movement, were then calculated. Lacking data on the frequency of AUX-movement in BrE, I compared the frequency of the participants’ use of AUX-movement to that of the AmE speakers in my 1992 study. The results show that half the Anglo-Indian speakers use bare intonation-based questions to a higher degree than the AmE speakers – scores for five speakers of the LC and three speakers of the LMC (KM, VM, and MM) are much higher than the 32% obtained from one of the AmE speakers. (Table 5, in the next section, gives scores in terms of percentage of AUX-movement questions in the *yes/no* q-interviews; the reverse of these scores shows the percentage of bare intonation-based questions.) Incidentally, one speaker, GV, showed an idiolectal pattern not present in the speech of the others: 11 of her 25 questions have *did* occurring sentence-initially accompanied with inflection for tense on the main verb, example *Did his parents or friends or anyone came?* The sentence-initial position of *did* could not have resulted from AUX-movement, because the main verb is inflected for tense. It looks, instead, like a question particle.

Since the two IndE speakers in the 1992 experiment were L2 users of the language, with low proficiency, their relatively high scores could be related to their proficiency levels. However, the participants in the current study are native speakers of the language; therefore, the variation in their use of AUX-movement could be a feature of AIndE that has resulted from contact-induced language change. The early shifting speakers (of AIndE, as well as other varieties of IndE) are likely to have encountered some difficulty in learning the rule for AUX-movement, which is not present in their own language. Since it is permissible in English to form *yes/no* questions using intonation alone, IndE speakers could have circumvented this difficulty by that means. Even if the AUX-movement rule

were adequately learned, contact with Indian languages could still influence IndE speakers, causing them to use bare intonation-based questions more often than in British or American dialects of English.

CLASS-BASED VARIATION IN *h*-DROPPING AND AUX-MOVEMENT

Perambur AIndE shows class-based variation in two features, *h*-dropping and AUX-movement. In each case, the participants fall into two groups: the first, consisting of the LC, shows a relatively high percentage of *h*-dropping, and low percentage of AUX-movement; the second, consisting of the LMC and UMC, shows a relatively low percentage of *h*-dropping and high percentage of AUX-movement.

The data used to analyze class-based variation in *h*-dropping are drawn from the two q-interviews, which lasted approximately 10 minutes each. Words that fit into the domain that Wells describes as characteristic of *h*-dropping in standard accents have been eliminated from the analysis; i.e., instances of *he, him, her, his, who* and the auxiliaries *has, have, had* when they are unstressed and not post-pausal. Unstressed and non-postpausal *how* was also eliminated because it belongs to the same lexical class as *who*. Individual raw scores and percentages for *h*-dropping for each speaker were calculated by counting the total number of words that normally contain /h/ in standard English varieties, and the total number of these words in which the speaker did not use [h] or [h̥]. The raw scores and percentages for *h*-dropping are given in Table 3, and their correlation to class is illustrated in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 displays the division into three groups, with the LC in one (relatively high average score of 72.15%) and the LMC and the UMC in the others (relatively low combined average score of 6.29%). Note that two LC speakers, GV and AC, have scores of 50% and 43.9%, respectively; the fact that these scores are lower than the average for the LC is correlated with the fact that their income is higher than the other members of the LC, as shown in Table 1. The scores in Table 3 show a partial correspondence also to the class-related factor of education. As shown in Table 1, all members of the LC left school before the 10th grade; they have scores of 43.9% and above. VM of the LMC and JR of the UMC (who have scores of 21.87% and 12.99%, respectively) studied up to the 10th grade. The other participants all studied beyond the 10th grade; with the exception of MiM, they have scores below 10%. MiM goes against the correlation of education level to *h*-dropping, since her score is slightly higher than JR's; but she has completed the undergraduate degree.

Table 4 gives individual percentage scores for each speaker in the WH-question interview. The scores indicate the percentage of WH-questions that showed AUX-movement out of the total number of WH-questions used in the interview. Figure 2 illustrates the correlation of class to percentage of AUX-movement in this interview. All speakers in the two Middle classes, except VM, show rates of above

ANGLO-INDIAN ENGLISH

TABLE 3. *Scores for h-dropping in the q-interviews*

| Participants | Total No. of <i>h</i> -words ^a | No. of Words with Dropped <i>h</i> | % of <i>h</i> -dropping |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lower Class | | | |
| WV | 30 | 24 | 80.00 |
| JC | 29 | 27 | 93.10 |
| EH | 16 | 15 | 93.75 |
| GV | 32 | 16 | 50.00 |
| AC | 82 | 36 | 43.90 |
| | | | Av. = 72.15 |
| Lower Middle Class | | | |
| LR | 70 | 2 | 2.86 |
| MM | 70 | 0 | 0 |
| KM | 77 | 0 | 0 |
| VM | 96 | 21 | 21.87 |
| ED | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Av. = 4.95 |
| Upper Middle Class | | | |
| CT | 69 | 6 | 8.69 |
| SJ | 65 | 1 | 1.54 |
| MiM | 45 | 6 | 13.33 |
| CM | 62 | 1 | 1.61 |
| JR | 77 | 10 | 12.99 |
| | | | Av. = 7.63 |

^a*h*-words are words that contain /h/ in standard varieties of English.

88%, whereas the highest rate in the LC is only 63.16%. The average percentage for the two middle classes together is 90.543, and the average percentage for the LC is 36.52, i.e. a difference in percentage of 54.023. The scores correspond again to educational level, since all members who did not study beyond the 10th grade show low rates for AUX-movement. VM's difference from the other members of the Middle classes parallels the difference she showed in *h*-dropping.

Table 5 gives percentages for the use of AUX-movement in the *yes/no* questions interview, and Figure 3 illustrates the correspondence of class to percentage of AUX-movement. There is a partial correlation of class to frequency of AUX-movement: all members of the LC show low scores, and most members of the two Middle classes show high scores. Four speakers in the two Middle classes weaken the correspondence pattern – MM, KM, VM, and CT. Educational level, however, shows a better correlation; all those who score below 50%, except CT and KM, have not studied beyond the 12th grade. The exception is CT, whose score is only 29.27%, although she has completed undergraduate studies. The fact that the correlation is only a partial one could result from the status of AUX-movement as

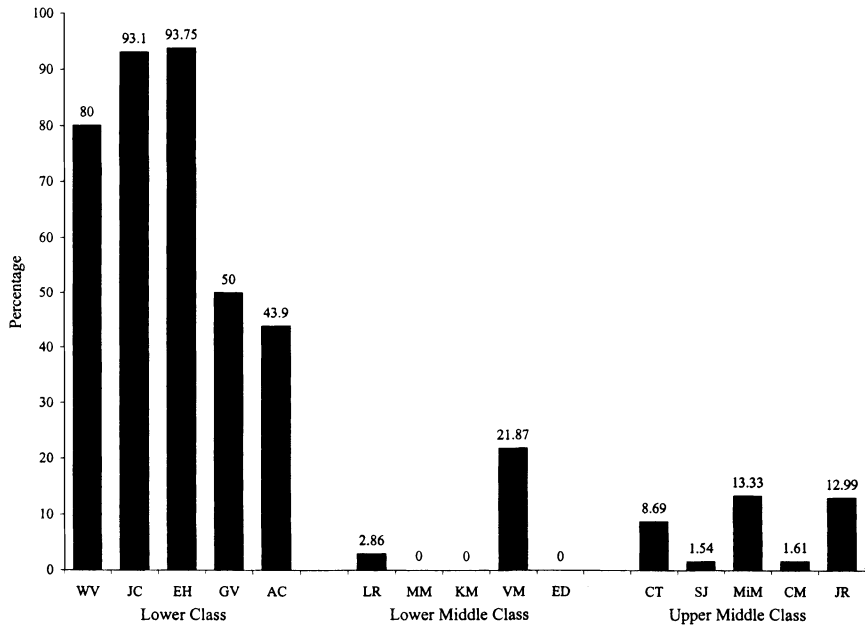


FIGURE 1: *H*-dropping in the q-interviews

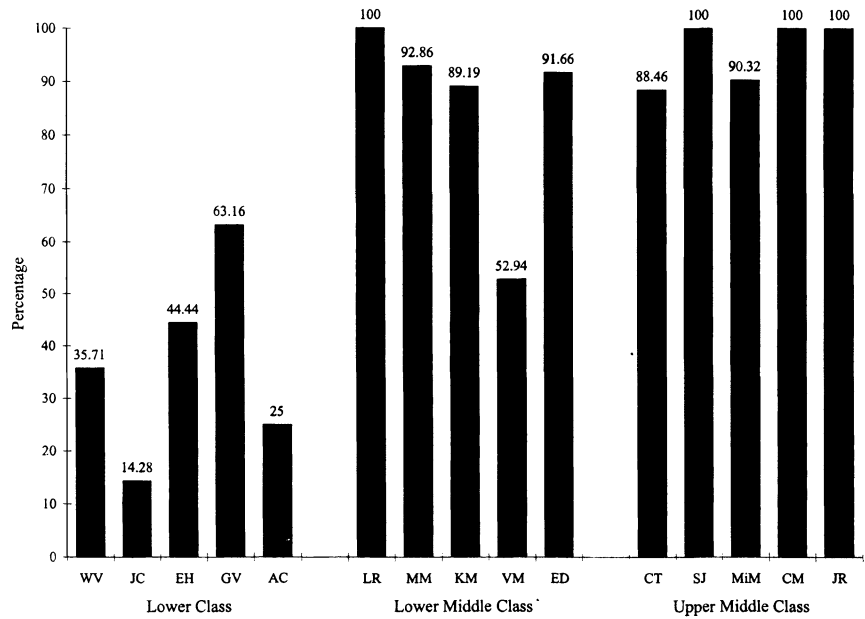


FIGURE 2: AUX-movement in WH-questions.

ANGLO-INDIAN ENGLISH

TABLE 4. *Scores for AUX-movement in WH-questions*

| Participants | Total No. of WH-Questions ^a | No. of Questions with AUX-Movement | % of AUX-Movement Questions |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lower Class | | | |
| WV | 14 | 5 | 35.71 |
| JC | 14 | 2 | 14.28 |
| EH | 9 | 4 | 44.44 |
| GV | 19 | 12 | 63.16 |
| AC | 16 | 4 | 25.00 |
| | | | Av. = 36.52 |
| Lower Middle Class | | | |
| LR | 17 | 17 | 100.00 |
| MM | 28 | 26 | 92.86 |
| KM | 37 | 33 | 89.19 |
| VM | 17 | 9 | 52.94 |
| ED | 12 | 11 | 91.66 |
| | | | Av. = 85.33 |
| Upper Middle Class | | | |
| CT | 26 | 23 | 88.46 |
| SJ | 22 | 22 | 100.00 |
| MiM | 31 | 28 | 90.32 |
| CM | 22 | 22 | 100.00 |
| JR | 12 | 12 | 100.00 |
| | | | Av. = 95.76 |

^aThe speakers tended to lapse very often into *yes/no* questions, and did not use WH-questions as often as I would have liked.

an optional rule in English. Since it is optional, members are likely to show greater idiosyncratic differences in the extent to which they use it. However, the fact that certain participants show low frequency of AUX-movement also in the WH-questions interview suggests that the rule may be only marginally present in the idiolects of these speakers. This possibility was tested by averaging the percentage scores of each participant in both *yes/no* and WH-questions together, to check the overall use of AUX-movement in the two q-interviews.

Figure 4 shows the pattern arising from the combined scores. The reasonably high overall scores of MM, KM, and CT in Fig. 4 suggest that their low scores for AUX-movement in *yes/no* questions resulted from a "preference" for bare intonation-based questions, rather than a difficulty with using the AUX-movement rule. All members of the LC and one member of the LMC (i.e. VM) show low overall use of AUX-movement, raising doubts about whether the rule is fully incorporated into their idiolects. The fact that one speaker (GV) uses *did* as a ques-

TABLE 5. *Scores for AUX-movement in yes/no questions*

| Participants | Total No. of yes/no Questions | No. of AUX-Movement Questions | % of AUX-Movement Questions |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lower Class | | | |
| WV | 24 | 6 | 25.00 |
| JC | 11 | 1 | 9.09 |
| EH | 25 | 2 | 8.00 |
| GV | 25 | 7 | 28.00 |
| AC | 23 | 4 | 17.39 |
| | | | Av. = 17.50 |
| Lower Middle Class | | | |
| LR | 56 | 51 | 91.07 |
| MM | 53 | 27 | 50.94 |
| KM | 30 | 14 | 46.66 |
| VM | 55 | 18 | 32.73 |
| ED | 26 | 19 | 73.08 |
| | | | Av. = 58.90 |
| Upper Middle Class | | | |
| CT | 41 | 12 | 29.27 |
| SJ | 68 | 53 | 77.94 |
| MiM | 41 | 31 | 75.61 |
| CM | 56 | 50 | 89.28 |
| JR | 34 | 28 | 82.35 |
| | | | Av. = 70.89 |

tion particle (as described above) strengthens the possibility that the AUX-movement rule is not fully incorporated into her idiolect.

The distinction into two groups found in these data (i.e. LC speech as distinct from that of the two Middle classes) reflects in a reasonably accurate manner the social situation in the Anglo-Indian community in Perambur. All participants in the study live close to each other – within an approximate radius of one mile; however, the social background of the LC differs quite strongly from that of the two higher classes in terms of income, educational level, and profession (see Table 1 for the participants' social profiles), whereas the two higher classes are not very different from each other. Members of the Lower Class are either unemployed, with an extremely low family income (WV, JC, and EH), or are employed in very low-paying jobs (GV and AC). The educational level in this group ranges from 5th to 9th grade only. In contrast, 9 out of 10 members of the UMC/LMC group had either worked in higher salaried jobs, or were current/recent undergraduate students: four had worked as secretaries, three had worked briefly in other positions, one was still an undergraduate, and one had recently completed

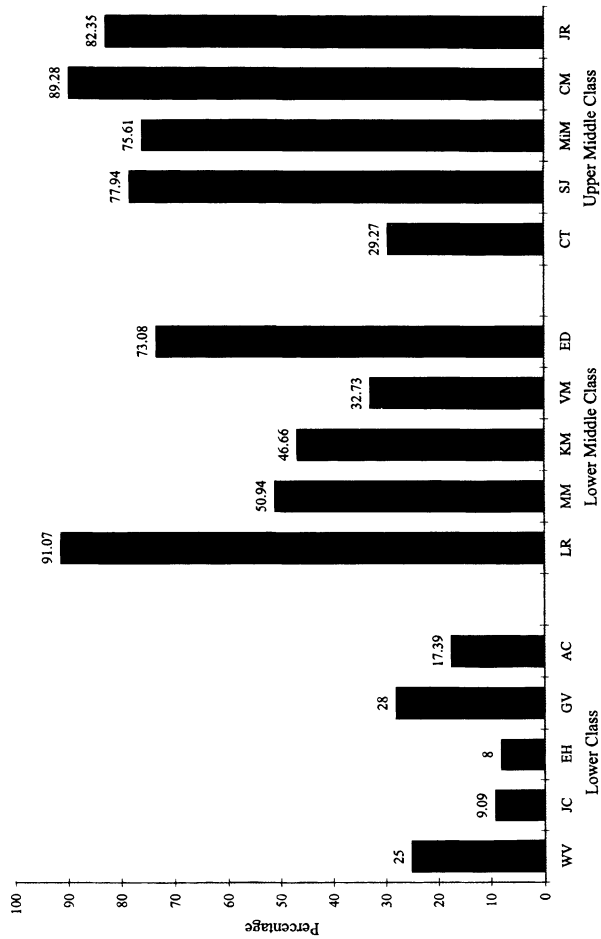


FIGURE 3: AUX-movement in yes/no questions.

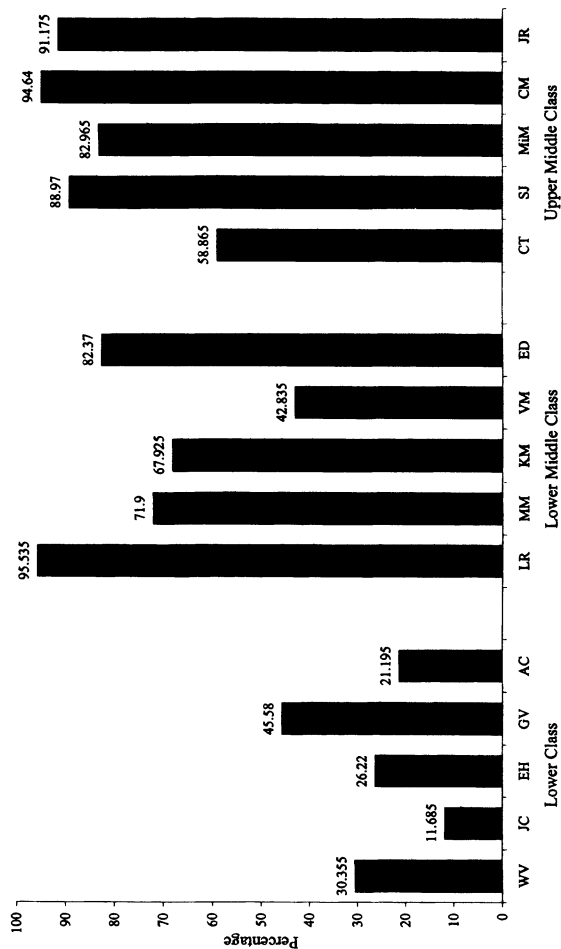


FIGURE 4: Averaged percentage of AUX-movement in the two q-interviews.

the BA and was considering her next career option. The 10th, MM, had chosen not to work or study beyond the 12th grade. All had studied at least up to the 10th grade – and interestingly enough, the college graduates among them had all studied in the same institution, Stella Maris College. Given the social differences between members of the two higher classes and those of the Lower Class, it is likely that the latter do not intermingle socially to a very great extent with the former. This social gap is reflected in the pattern of linguistic variation present in these data.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

A comparison of the speech of the Perambur Anglo-Indians to available descriptions of General/Educated IndE reveals that their variety of AIndE is similar to IndE in many respects, but that it differs in two aspects: the presence of *h*-dropping and *r*-lessness among low-prestige speakers. AIndE, however, does not appear to be the only IndE variety with *h*-dropping and *r*-lessness, since Mesthrie 1992 reports that IndE speakers of Tamil origin in South Africa show *h*-dropping, and Sahgal & Agnihotri 1988 report that prestigious speakers of IndE in Delhi show *r*-lessness. The data on class-based variation in *h*-dropping and AUX-movement indicate that there are at least two sub-varieties of AIndE: Middle Class AIndE and Lower Class AIndE. The former differs only to a negligible extent from General/Educated IndE; the latter differs to a greater extent because of its high rate of *h*-dropping and the presence of *r*-lessness even among low-prestige speakers.

Most of the features discussed in this study appear to be the result of transfer; however, some can be attributed to inheritance, and some appear to be derived both from transfer and inheritance. The BrE source in most cases could have been Standard BrE; however, the British source for *h*-dropping must have been non-standard BrE. It is possible that *r*-lessness, the distribution of /o, ɔ/, and the use of /e:/, o:/ were derived from standard as well as non-standard BrE dialects – since they are currently present in non-standard dialects of BrE, and have been at some stage present even in standard or at least socially acceptable varieties of BrE (see Orton et al. 1978 for details about their distribution in current dialects of England).

Class-based linguistic variation in AIndE indicates that extralinguistic factors could have influenced the outcome of language contact between the substrate and BrE; however, in the absence of sufficient historical information on the circumstances of shift, it is impossible to do more than speculate on the history of the correlation of class with linguistic variation in the Anglo-Indian community. It is possible that the community always showed class-based variation, with some shifting members gaining greater access to input from standard BrE varieties, while others had greater exposure to non-standard varieties in which *h*-dropping was common. Alternatively, it is possible that there was an initial stage of AIndE during which the community was uniform in not having /h/; variation could have

developed at a later stage because of borrowing from prestigious *h*-ful varieties. The second possibility would probably require a combination of substrate influence and a predominance of input from *h*-less BrE dialects during the earliest stage of shift. Since the source for *h*-dropping and AUX-movement can be at least partly traced to Tamil, the participants' current bilingualism in that language could, in principle, have a structural influence on their English. However, there is no discernible pattern of correlation between current levels of bilingualism in Tamil (see Table 1) and variation in the linguistic features discussed here. Indications that extralinguistic factors could have influenced the outcome of language contact is also provided by the fact that *h*-dropping and *r*-lessness are found more extensively in AIndE than in the other varieties of IndE described in the available literature. The presence of these features suggests that the higher opportunity for informal social contact that the Anglo-Indians had with the British (compared to other Indian communities) could have contributed to more extensive acquisition of these features from non-standard *h*-less BrE dialects and standard or non-standard *r*-less BrE dialects.

NOTES

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¹ This tendency is exemplified in the work of Kachru, who has recently written:

English is an additional language in South Asia . . . Only a small number of the total English-using population claim it as their first or only language. Such a claim, for example, has been made by some members of the Anglo-Indian community in India . . . and the Burgher English users in Sri Lanka. (1994:513).

In an earlier work, he comments that the "fraction" which "claims that English is their first language is so small that for the purpose of the present discussion it can be ignored" (Kachru 1986:37–38). In fact, he appears to doubt that the Anglo-Indians are truly native speakers of English: in his 1983 essay, he comments that Spencer's 1966 study of the Anglo-Indians "begins with an erroneous presupposition that the Anglo-Indians are one 'distinct group of Indian citizens whose *native tongue* is English' " (1983:24, Kachru's italics). However, he provides no empirical data in support of his contention that this is an "erroneous presupposition."

² Spencer 1966, a description of Anglo-Indians from Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh, North India), has many interesting sociolinguistic insights, but not much information about the linguistic details of their speech. Valentine 1969 is cited in Bayer (1979:83), who comments: "Only a brief description of Anglo-Indian English phonology has been attempted at the CIEFL, Hyderabad." Valentine 1978, on Anglo-Indians in Thangassery (Kerala, South India), is a description of salient non-segmental features (pitch, loudness, rhythm etc.) Bayer 1979 is a discussion of the origin of the term *Anglo-Indian* and the status of English as the mother tongue of Anglo-Indians. Bayer 1986 is the longest study so far on Anglo-Indian English, but it is not much more informative than the others. The major portion contains sociolinguistic observations about Anglo-Indians in general and about Bayer's speakers (Anglo-Indians of Mysore, Karnataka, South India).

³ This observation is based on my experiences as a member of the Mangalorean Christian community in India.

⁴ Williams points out that, in areas like South Asia, Ghana, and Singapore, "the very definition of the terms *native* and *non-native* is problematic. For many adult speakers, English is the second language they learn, but it is also the language in which they are most proficient and the one which they use in the widest variety of domains" (1987:161, italics in original). However, she decides to retain *non-native* "to describe these chronologically second languages in spite of the fact that functionally, they may be the dominant variety for a large number of speakers." The full term she uses is "*non-native institutionalized varieties of English* (NIVEs)" (162, italics in original).

⁵ The majority are Catholic. The rest usually belong to the Church of South India and the Church of North India, which are ecumenical churches formed from the unification of non-Catholic denominations in India, such as the Lutherans, Anglicans, and Presbyterians.

⁶ My point that an Indian's claim to a "mother tongue" does not necessarily imply actual fluency in the language applies, of course, also to Anglo-Indians. A study of AIndE as a native variety must, therefore, use data from speakers who make a recognizably genuine claim to the status of native speaker of English. In this study, I questioned people about their acquisition and use of English during a preliminary search for participants and during the data collection interviews. I was also able to observe their linguistic and social behavior in informal interaction during my fieldwork in Perambur. To the extent that a fieldworker's personal observations and the participants' self-reported information can be trusted, I was convinced that everyone in my study was a native speaker of English.

⁷ A rough estimate by the head priest of the Roman Catholic parish in Perambur (p.c.)

⁸ My choice of females rather than males was based on the expectation that it would be easier to interview people of my own gender. I had to compromise slightly on my requirement of uniformity in place of residence, because over-strict requirements of this sort would have made it impossible to find sufficient participants for the study. One UMC participant, JR, had resided out of Madras for a brief period some years before the time of data collection; one LMC participant, KM, had studied in a boarding school outside Perambur for the "+2"; and one LC participant, AC, had studied for most of her school years in a boarding school outside Perambur.

⁹ However, a total of 20 were interviewed as a precaution against unexpected problems. Five interviews were then discarded from the final data analysis because of routine problems in the interviews – such as a faulty tape, a participant who was "not in the mood" for the interview, or fresh information about social background which disqualified the participants from inclusion in the study.

¹⁰ The dollar exchange rate used is Rs. 30 to \$1, which was approximately that in effect at the time of data collection. The judgments about assignment of income group to class in this study are based partly upon personal observation of lifestyles and corresponding incomes in Madras, and partly on consultation with faculty members of the Department of Sociology at Stella Maris College, Madras.

¹¹ I am grateful to Anna Fenyesi for suggesting an adaptation of the "twenty questions" game as a tool for eliciting *yes/no* questions.

¹² A stereotypical feature attributed to Anglo-Indians in Madras is that they use alveolar or retroflex stops in cases where IndE has dental stops. However, my data have very few instances of this feature; in most words, retroflex and dental stops have the usual distribution found in IndE.

¹³ The Bangalore variety of AIndE, which also shows *h*-dropping, is spoken in an area where the major regional language is Kannada, a Dravidian language that does have the phoneme /h/. An anonymous reviewer of this article comments that Anglo-Indians in Bangalore tend to be Tamil-English bilinguals, so *h*-dropping in their speech could also be at least partly traced to Tamil influence. Further, W. Bright says (p.c.):

Kannada has /h/ in formal pronunciation, and in the Brahmin colloquial, but not in non-Brahmin colloquial. So if Bangalore AIndE shows *h*-dropping, it could have been influenced by Tamil and/or non-Brahmin Kannada. It would be interesting to know whether Anglo-Indians in Mysore city, where little Tamil is spoken, also drop their *h*itches.

¹⁴ The IndE speakers were fresh arrivals in the US; the AmE speakers were graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh.

¹⁵ Some class-internal differences in the pattern of variation also appear to be a reflection of social factors: VM's rate of *h*-dropping is higher, and her overall rate of AUX-movement lower, than the average for the Middle classes. This difference could be related to the fact that she is Protestant, while the others are Catholics; members of the Catholic parish interact often with each other at various church activities, and VM as a non-Catholic would not be part of this social circle. AC's rate of

h-dropping is lower than the average for the LC, although the difference in rate of AUX-movement is small; this may be related to extensive contact with Tamil-speaking non-Anglo-Indians in her boarding school (see note 7). Although these cases are interesting, the relation of religion and place of residence to linguistic variation is not the focus of this study.

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