

Indianism through *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa*
T.S.
(Poem by Nissim Ezekiel)

<http://www.english-for-students.com/Goodbye-Party.html>

Enjoy

- Once, a person went to a restaurant for lunch. Having completed the lunch, he went to the washroom to clean hands but started cleaning the washbasin. One of the waiters noticed this and enquired why he was doing that. The person said, “Do not underestimate me, I also know English. See, it is written ‘Wash-Basin’.”

Thinking, Sharing and Learning

1. What kind of errors have you noticed in the use of English language by people around you?
2. Recall a character or a scene from movies or serials where the character's fondness of using English creates humour.
3. Share a message/post wherein the incorrect use of English language is shown.
4. When did you have the chance of your first public speaking? Share your experience with the class.
5. Who is your favourite speaker? Why?

NISSIM EZEKIEL

- Nissim Ezekiel (1924–2004) is a very well known post-independence Indian poet.
- His poems depict Indian life from various perspectives. For his contribution to Indian poetry, he has been awarded with the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award in 1983.
- In addition to Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S., Nissim Ezekiel is also famous for poems like “The Night of the Scorpion” and “Enterprise”.

The Poem

Friends,
our dear sister
is departing for foreign
in two three days,
and
we are meeting today
to wish her bon voyage.

You are all knowing, friends,
What sweetness is in Miss Pushpa.
I don't mean only external sweetness
but internal sweetness.
Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling
even for no reason but simply because
she is feeling.

Miss Pushpa is coming
from very high family.
Her father was renowned advocate
in Bulsar or Surat,
I am not remembering now which place.

Surat? Ah, yes,
once only I stayed in Surat
with family members
of my uncle's very old friend-
his wife was cooking nicely...
that was long time ago.

Coming back to Miss Pushpa
she is most popular lady
with men also and ladies also.

Whenever I asked her to do anything,
she was saying, 'Just now only
I will do it.' That is showing
good spirit. I am always
appreciating the good spirit.

Pushpa Miss is never saying no.
Whatever I or anybody is asking
she is always saying yes,
and today she is going
to improve her prospects
and we are wishing her bon voyage.

Now I ask other speakers to speak
and afterwards Miss Pushpa
will do summing up.

Summary of the Poem

Written by Nissim Ezekiel, Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T. S. is actually a farewell speech by one of the colleagues of Ms Pushpa in the office. Like any other farewell party, here also, the speaker wishes her a happy voyage and appreciates her for her nature and dedication to work. However, the speech becomes a mirror to the mistakes committed by Indians who do not have adequate language yet are fond of using it.

The speaker starts the farewell speech with the best wishes for Ms Pushpa's visit to a foreign country.

The speaker refers to Ms Pushpa as a 'dear sister' and mentions that Ms Pushpa is leaving India for better prospects in some foreign land. It is to her honour that the farewell party has been organized.

THEME

- Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S. by Nissim Ezekiel is in the form of a farewell speech delivered by a colleague of Ms Pushpa. However, the focus of the poem is not the loss of a good friend or colleague.
- Actually, the poem makes gentle fun of those Indians who do not know English but are very fond of using it. The poem highlights the errors caused by the wrong translations from Indian languages into English. The errors include grammatical mistakes, arrangement of words, unintentional puns and idioms.
- It also satirizes skill of delivering a speech because of the irrelevant information added.

Indian expression

1. Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa TS
2. Our dear sister
3. is departing for foreign
4. in two three days,
5. we are meeting today
6. You are all knowing, friends,
7. What sweetness is in Miss Pushpa. I don't mean only external sweetness but internal sweetness.
8. Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling even for no reason but simply because she is feeling.

Appropriate expression

Indian expression

9. Miss Pushpa is coming from very high family.
10. Her father was renowned advocate in Bulsar or Surat. I am not remembering now which place.
11. Surat? Ah, yes, once only I stayed in Surat with family members of my uncle's very old friend-his wife was cooking nicely...that was long time ago.

Appropriate Expression

Indian expression

Appropriate Expression

12. She is most popular lady with men also and ladies also.

13. Whenever I asked her to do anything, she was saying, 'Just now only I will do it.'

14. That is showing good spirit.

15. I am always appreciating the good spirit.

Indian Expression

16. Pushpa Miss is never saying no.

17. Whatever I or anybody is asking she is always saying yes, and today she is going to improve her prospect and we are wishing her bon voyage.

18. Now I ask other speakers to speak and afterwards Miss Pushpa will do summing up.

Appropriate Expression

Incorrect use of Present Continuous Tense

Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling
even for no reason but simply because
she is feeling.

Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling
even for no reason but simply because
she is feeling.

In Indian languages like Hindi and Gujarati, it is very common to repeat a word to emphasize it, however, it is not the case with English. Here the speaker's English is influenced by the mother tongue so 'smiling' is used twice.

In the last line 'she is feeling', the wrong use of present continuous tense is shown. Verbs denoting feelings do not take the present continuous tense. The speaker should have used simple present tense as the sentence refers to the nature of Ms Pushpa and not something, which is true of the present moment only.

Ungrammatical English used by People of India

Whatever I or anybody is asking

- As per the rules, whenever, there are more than one subjects, the sequence would be third person, second person and first person. However, here the speaker first refers to 'I' and then the third person 'anybody'. This shows the tendency to translate things from mother tongue to English.

Ungrammatical English used by People of India

She is most popular lady with men also and ladies also.

- Superlative degree is used while referring to her popularity but 'the' is missing before 'most popular'.

Ungrammatical English used by People of India

I am always appreciating the good spirit.

- Here, the speaker refers to the good nature of Ms Pushpa. Nevertheless, the speaker should have either used present perfect tense (I have always appreciated her zeal for work) or simple present tense (I always appreciate the good spirit).

DIGRESSION IN THE SPEECH

- Surat? Ah, yes, once only I stayed in Surat with family members of my uncle's very old friend—his wife was cooking nicely...that was long time ago.
- This is a digression in the speech. A good speaker should avoid this. There is no point in referring to one's experience until and unless they are naturally connected to and/or enhance the effect of the speech being delivered.

COMMONLY USED ERRONEOUS WORDS, EXPRESSION AND PHRASE

Indian English

- By walk- These days I am going to college by walk.
- Dickey- Don't go for this car; it has a very small dickey.
- Good name- What is your good name?
- Tight Slap- I will give you a tight slap on your cheek, if you say that again.
- Get down- I am going to get dawn at the next stop.
- Marriage- Please do come to marriage of my brother.
- On/off the light- Off the light before you move out of the room.
- Time is over- Stop writing; time is over!
- Pin drop silence- There was a pin drop silence.
- Female- Why can't females do all that a man does?

COMMONLY USED ERRONEOUS WORDS, EXPRESSION AND PHRASE

Indian English

- By walk
- Dickey
- Good name
- Tight Slap
- Get down
- On/off the light
- Time is over
- Pin drop silence
- Female

Standard English Usage

- On foot
- Boot/Trunk
- Name
- Hard Slap
- Get off
- Turn on/off the light
- Time is up
- Perfect/complete Silence
- Woman

COMMONLY USED ERRONEOUS WORDS, EXPRESSION AND PHRASE

Indian English

- Expire- My uncle has expired.
- Mrs- What is your Mrs doing these days?
- Madam- Where is Madam? Why have you not brought her?
- Better half- Meet my better half...
- Hotel- The kids are feeling hungry! Why don't you stop at some hotel?
- Shifting one's house- We are shifting our house.
- Too good- The movie is too good! You must go and watch it.
- Give an exam- Stop watching television! You have to give an exam tomorrow.
- How do you do?

COMMONLY USED ERRONEOUS WORDS, EXPRESSION AND PHRASE

Indian English

- Expire
- Mrs
- Madam
- Hotel
- Shifting one's house
- Too good
- Give an exam

Standard English Usage

- Pass away
- Wife/Spouse
- Wife
- Restaurant
- Changing/moving one's house
- Very good
- Take an exam